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English Media

June 7

PBO says Parliament's request for details on feds' spending cuts has 'constitutional significance'

Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page is calling the government's bluff in his office's quest to get the details from the government of its billions of dollars in federal cuts, saying the request has "constitutional significance" for Parliament.

<http://www.hilltimes.com/news/news/2012/06/04/pbo-says-parliament%E2%80%99s-request-for-details-on-feds%E2%80%99-spending-cuts-has/30974>

Tories headed down 'dangerous road' with prison closures

Public Safety Minister Vic Toews this morning took on critics of the government's decision to close the Kingston Penitentiary – including prison guards who attended his speech – and said he makes no apologies for the government's law-and-order agenda.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/story/2012/06/07/pol-prisons-toews.html>

Wisconsin recall vote shows it's about math, not politics

History is sometimes made in unlikely places. This week, it was Wisconsin's turn. Wisconsin, best known as the land of dairy cows and cheeseheads, is a test case in the crisis of the entitlement state. The test was whether a political leader can take on the government unions and survive. He did.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/wisconsin-recall-vote-shows-its-about-math-not-politics/article4237376/>

Canadian Lawyer's Legal Fees Survey

What to charge? It's a question that vexes lawyers and law firms every year when the talk turns to the bottom line. It can be a guessing game at best to find the right balance between affordable rates that meet clients' expectations and making enough money to pay the rising cost of fuelling the law firm engine. This has particularly been the case in recent years, with individual clients and major corporations aiming to prudently navigate volatile economic times.

<http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/4189/the-going-rate.html>

[Full Report](#)

June 6

New crime laws stretching Crowns to limit: new CACC prez

Crown lawyers are not getting the support they need to keep up with demand for their services, says the new president of the Canadian Association of Crown Counsel.

Rick Woodburn, who was elected to the office in May at the CACC's annual meeting in Quebec City, says the federal government's omnibus crime bill, which created new mandatory minimum sentences and eliminated conditional for certain offences, will have a significant effect on many of his roughly 6,000 members.

<http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/legalfeeds/895/New-crime-laws-stretching-Crowns-to-limit-new-CACC-prez.html>

Budget officer prepares for battle

Canada's budget watchdog is laying the groundwork for a possible court battle with the federal government but insists court is a last-case scenario.

Parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page is consulting with outside lawyers as he builds a case that he has a legal right to know the details of spending cuts.

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/canada/104325-budget-officer-prepares-for-battle>

Anti-government ad campaign launched by union

The P.E.I. Union of Public Sector Employees launched a major ad campaign Wednesday against the provincial government and its cutting of jobs and services.

The campaign uses evocative images: a child's face asking, "Who will be there for me now?" Another shows a car wrapped around a telephone pole. The union wants to make the point that there are consequences to the government's cuts.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/story/2012/06/06/pei-government-cuts-union-campaign-584.html>

June 5

2012 New Brunswick: Proposed Pension Changes

On Thursday, May 31, the New Brunswick government tabled legislation for a new pension model developed by its Task Force on Protecting Pensions. Our colleague, Susan Rowland, is a member of the three-person Task Force which developed and recommended these proposed changes.

The model is a shared risk plan. Risks are shared between the employer/sponsor and the members. Basic benefits will be paid but certain other benefits, such as cost of living increases, will only be paid if there is sufficient funding. The model provides for rigorous risk management practices.

<http://www.goodmans.ca/files/file/docs/06.05.2012%20Pensions%20Update.pdf>

Critics find Tory intransigence over release of information on cuts perplexing

The refusal of Canada's top bureaucrat to release information on the nature of the Conservative government's \$5.2 billion in spending cuts is "unlawful" and prevents Parliament from doing its job to hold the government to account, says the parliamentary budget officer.

Kevin Page said he's prepared to go to Federal Court as a "last resort" if his office and Privy Council Clerk Wayne Wouters are unable to resolve their differences over the timing and release of information about the cuts.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/Critics+find+Tory+intransigence+over+release+information+cuts+perplexing/6734956/story.html>

June 4

The cost of the public sector in Canada

According to much of the country's political left, the principal problem holding back the Canadian economy and chipping away at social equity is a public sector that is inadequately resourced.

From the federal NDP to the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, one hears a constant refrain that, because of previous tax cuts and finance ministers who are too timid to ignite the engines of public spending, governments simply aren't "investing" enough in programs, services, and infrastructure.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/cost+public+sector+Canada/6728984/story.html>

June 2

Unions see benefit to open membership

Two of Canada's biggest unions are considering opening membership to everyone, including the unemployed and retired, when they merge. A committee working on the merger of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers unions floated the proposal in a recently released report outlining the potential structure of the new union.

"A new category of membership would be developed to allow unemployed workers, workers in workplaces where the union is not yet certified, young people, and precarious or temporary workers to also join the union - albeit without traditional bargaining status," the report reads.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/jobs/Unions+benefit+open+membership/6720039/story.html>

June 1

Mounties may always get their man, but can't get a union, court rules

The Mounties may always get their man but, Ontario's top court ruled Friday, they don't get their union.

The ruling in favour of the federal government upholds a section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Regulations, which establishes a mechanism under which officers interact with management.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/mounties-may-always-get-their-man-but-cant-get-a-union-court-rules-156442125.html>

N.B. follows recommendation to overhaul pension system

Employers and employees in New Brunswick would pay more in pension plan premiums under changes introduced Thursday that the provincial government says are intended to make pensions more sustainable.

The changes follow the recommendations of a government task force launched last September to review public sector pensions.

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/canada/102481-nb-follows-recommendation-to-overhaul-pension-system>

Court orders 11 federal lawyers, clerks off national security case

Eleven federal lawyers and assistants have been ordered to step down from a long-running national security case in an unusual court ruling that stops short of staying the proceedings.

The order comes after the government inadvertently took confidential legal files belonging to Mohamed Mahjoub, who has been imprisoned or under house arrest for a dozen years based on secret evidence.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/story/2012/06/01/toronto-court-majoub.html>

Budget cuts shouldn't be excuse for choking off information

There's some good news and an ominous warning in a new report from Ottawa's information watchdog, Suzanne Legault, about how much Canadians are able to find out about what's going on in their federal government.

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/article/1203894--budget-cuts-shouldn-t-be-excuse-for-choking-off-information>

Solomon Friedman: Crown's role to be fair, not necessarily to win

In the past several columns, we have explored the role of defence counsel as fearless and unyielding advocate of his or her client. The defence's counterpart in the criminal justice system is the prosecuting lawyer, generically referred to as the Crown Attorney, or simply, "the Crown."

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Solomon+Friedman+Crown+role+fair+necessarily/6710257/story.html>