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English Media

February 23

Lack of transparency on budget cuts ‘strains credibility,’ Liberals say

The Conservatives need to come clean on government-wide spending cuts and share the details immediately, Liberal Treasury Board critic John McCallum says.

Despite reassurances from Treasury Board President Tony Clement that he will investigate a gag order from his department that would keep the details of spending cuts secret months after the 2012 budget is released, Mr. McCallum said that is not enough.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-notebook/lack-of-transparency-on-budget-cuts-strains-credibility-liberals-say/article2347771/>

Though mum on date, Flaherty vows budget won’t be ‘draconian’

The 2012 federal budget will be moderate, not “draconian,” and will focus on making government programs sustainable for future generations, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty says.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/though-mum-on-date-flaherty-vows-budget-wont-be-draconian/article2347581/>

February 22

Conservative spending cuts could tip Canada into recession, federal union economists say

The Conservative government could tip Canada into a recession if it reduces federal spending by up to \$8 billion, says an analysis by the union representing government economists and social scientists.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/Conservative+spending+cuts+could+Canada+into+recession+federal+union+economists/6190292/story.html>

Pension deficits aren't the fault of public-sector workers

Today and tomorrow in a hotel in downtown Montreal, some 600 representatives of the Canadian Union of Public Employees are holding a think-tank session to discuss the future of their pension plans.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Pension+deficits+aren+fault+public+sector+workers/6190979/story.html>

Public Service cuts will hit Ottawa hard: NDP leader

As federal officials finalize plans to trim federal spending, interim NDP leader Nycole Turmel says she fears the federal government's plan to cut thousands of public service jobs could plunge the Ottawa region into an economic malaise.

<http://www.leaderpost.com/business/Public+Service+cuts+will+Ottawa+hard+leader/6194100/story.html>

February 21

Public pensions' day of reckoning is coming

Few subjects raise average citizens' ire quite as quickly as taxpayer-supported public sector pensions. People who work in (or are retired from) the private sector or self-employment perceive them as overly generous or lucrative. Throw indexing into the conversation and steam comes out of some people's ears. Not a small amount of this has been about resentment, even jealousy.

<http://www.thespec.com/opinion/editorial/article/673877--public-pensions-day-of-reckoning-is-coming>

B.C.'s justice system faces a reckoning with modernity

Like many long-standing institutions designed for another era, the B.C. court system wouldn't look the way it does if it was being built today.

Many of the country's legal edicts have changed over the decades, which have had unintended consequences on the administration of justice. The rights of the accused have grown. Accordingly, so has the length of time it takes people to work their way through an ever-complex court system.

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-columbia/gary_mason/bcs-justice-system-faces-a-reckoning-with-modernity/article2344201/

February 20

The evolving crisis of a B.C. justice system “in peril”

British Columbia’s justice system is facing a crisis that runs deep. Across the province and here at home on the Sunshine Coast, trial delays have grown long in the face of a choked structure that is being forced to operate with fewer resources. It’s a problem that continues to fester, with the legal community issuing warnings that the system itself could collapse. Charter rights, broken families and the accused are being forced to sit in limbo throughout B.C. as those who operate the judicial system worry that the public could lose faith.

<http://www.coastreporter.net/article/20120220/SECHELT0101/302209998/-1/sechelt/the-evolving-crisis-of-a-bc-justice-system-in-peril>

You be the judge on the judges

Judges don’t actually negotiate their salaries. That would be unseemly. An association speaks for them — sort of a union, but with a gentler sounding name and less formal power. Who needs formal power when you’re speaking for judges?

Judges can’t strike. A three-member tribunal hears submissions from their association, the government and anyone else who cares to comment. The tribunal considers those arguments and then decides.

Binding arbitration, if you will, but without the baggage.

<http://www.metronews.ca/halifax/comment/article/1103423--you-be-the-judge-on-the-judges>

Cuts to Ontario’s justice system necessary to stave off rising debt: Drummond report

Putting the federal government in charge of incarceration for sentences that are longer than six months, upgrading or replacing 117 deteriorating courthouses, and diverting less complex cases away from the province’s courts are just some of the changes cash-strapped Ontario will have to make if it hopes to avoid doubling its deficit by 2017-18, economist Don Drummond warned last week.

“We have a serious problem in how we look at jailing people,” says John Rosen.

In his report, Drummond warns if all 10 of his recommendations are not implemented, the province's justice system will suffer. He points to deteriorating courthouses and facilities that he says will cost the province more in the long run if they are not updated or replaced.

<http://www.lawtimesnews.com/201202218938/Headline-News/Cuts-to-Ontarios-justice-system-necessary-to-stave-off-rising-debt-Drummond-report>

February 19

B.C. justice in dire need of attention

Justice is a simple system, but with a thousand details which make it seem complicated. The simple foundation for justice is that individuals experiencing a legal crisis have the opportunity to have that issue resolved by an independent and impartial judge, while represented by an independent counsel, in a timely manner.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/justice+dire+need+attention/6178026/story.html>

February 17

Across Canada, economic woes put public-service pension plans in the spotlight

Governments at all levels are grappling with massive deficits in their public pension plans thanks to a combination of factors, including low interest rates, sluggish investment returns and an aging work force that is retiring in record numbers.

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/across-canada-economic-woes-put-public-service-pension-plans-in-the-spotlight/article2341570/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=Home&utm_content=2341570

Pension tensions could flare between public and private sector employees

Ontario public sector unions may not be keen on accepting economist Don Drummond's pension reform proposals, but they could face difficulty in drumming up sympathy from private sector employees whose own plans are eroding.

<http://fftimes.com/node/249286>

Drummond report: The alchemy of public service reform

Don Drummond's report on reforming Ontario's public services is the most significant blueprint for government reform ever seen in Canada. It starts by describing in compelling detail the true

state of Ontario's finances and makes a convincing case for rapid and sustained action to move the province toward firmer fiscal ground.

But the core of Drummond's mandate was to advise on how spending could be reduced in ways that will also protect important public services, if not improve them.

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1132787--drummond-report-the-alchemy-of-public-service-reform>

Federal prosecutors have rough ride during Senate committee appearance

After a few minutes of questioning at the Senate banking, trade and commerce committee Thursday, you could tell it wasn't going to be a good day for the two officials from the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. The duo had come before the committee reviewing the country's anti-terrorist financing legislation to see what changes should be made to the legislation.

<http://blogs.canada.com/2012/02/16/federal-prosecutors-get-rough-ride-during-senate-committee-appearance/>

Médias Francophones

21 Février

Lutte au déficit fédéral : quand l'idéologie dicte les choix

Au cours des derniers mois, le discours politique dominant martèle l'importance de parvenir à l'équilibre budgétaire le plus rapidement possible, que ce soit à Ottawa ou à Toronto où vient de paraître la semaine dernière le rapport Drummond. À cet égard, le gouvernement Harper s'apprête à sabrer de 5%, voire 10%, les dépenses des ministères et organismes fédéraux, représentant des économies estimées entre 4 et 8 milliards de dollars annuellement, qui entraîneront vraisemblablement la disparition de milliers d'emplois.

http://www.cyberpresse.ca/opinions/201202/21/01-4498270-lutte-au-deficit-federal-quand-lideologie-dicte-les-choix.php?utm_categorieinterne=traffiddrivers&utm_contenuinterne=cyberpresse_B9_debats_1242600_accueil_POS1