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Press Clippings for the period of January 13-19, 2012  
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### English Media

January 19

#### **Tories ponder cuts to MP pensions after watchdog details lucrative trough**

Treasury Board President Tony Clement is eyeing lucrative MP pensions as way of finding savings in his review of government spending – a move that could find support in the majority Conservative caucus.

Making the rounds of political talk shows Wednesday, Mr. Clement picked his words carefully about how he will handle the contentious issue. He said he has been “tasked with putting some options forward” on pension reform.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-notebook/tories-ponder-cuts-to-mp-pensions-after-watchdog-details-lucrative-trough/article2307785/>

#### **MP pension plan mega-outrageous**

How did your RRSP do in 2008 during the recession and the market's spectacular meltdown?

Like most people, you'd rather not remember.

It was the year, for example, that the Canada Pension Plan lost 18%, and the Toronto Stock Exchange lost 33% of its value.

But, it was also the year the pension fund for your member of Parliament grew a seemingly impossible 10.4%.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation is enraged by this, and you should be too, because, as the CTF told us Wednesday, taxpayers are actually kicking in \$23.30 for every buck put in by their MP.

<http://www.winnipegsun.com/2012/01/18/mp-pension-plan-mega-outrageous>

## **Before reforming pensions, MPs must tackle their own**

Debate over retirement income is hot. It's partly that Canadians are getting older. But it's mainly the growing realization that the next generation of retirees may live less comfortably than their parents have done. People are living longer, and returns on investment are lower. So hitting the targets their parents achieved means today's workers must retire later and save more.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/before-reforming-pensions-mps-must-tackle-their-own/article2307264/>

## **Pension plan for MPs faces \$1B shortfall: report**

A report from a prominent think tank says Canada's parliamentarians are facing even graver pension woes than the rest of the country.

The C.D. Howe Institute says the pension plan that secures retirement benefits for members of parliament and senators is underfunded by up to \$1 billion.

[http://www.cp24.com/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20120119/011912\\_pension\\_report/20120119/?hub=CP24Home](http://www.cp24.com/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20120119/011912_pension_report/20120119/?hub=CP24Home)

## **Can private jails come to Canada?**

A controversial report from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) slams private prisons and mass incarceration in the U.S. for harming imprisoned individuals and the government's bottom line while making companies extremely wealthy.

Legal experts in Canada say that the same jailhouse problems — escalating violence, increased costs, and overcrowding — exist in this country, and the federal government's new omnibus crime bill may sow the seeds for private prisons here. There is, however, a constitutional issue that may make this impossible. The federal government is also saying private prisons are not coming to Canada.

<http://www.lawyersweekly.ca/index.php?section=article&volume=31&number=34&article=1>

## **Veterans Affairs union urges federal Conservatives not to cut staff**

The union representing workers at Veterans Affairs urged the federal government Thursday not to cut hundreds of staff, saying former military members with increasingly complex problems will be the ones to suffer.

Yvan Thauvette, president of the Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees, said staff are already overburdened, with some case workers handling up to 900 files.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1118298--veterans-affairs-union-urges-federal-conservatives-not-to-cut-staff>

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## **MPs' pensions 'a true injustice,' Taxpayers Federation says**

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation says the federal government's plans to cut public service jobs in P.E.I. while MPs make millions in their pensions is a true injustice.

The federation released its calculations Wednesday of estimated pension and severance payments paid to the 113 MPs who were either defeated or did not seek re-election in the May 2, 2011 general election.

Defeated and retiring MPs will collect \$4.9 million in pension payments in their first year, reaching a cumulative total of \$111.5 million by age 80. In addition, another \$4.3 million in severance cheques will be issued to former MPs that did not qualify for pensions.

<http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/News/Local/2012-01-18/article-2867998/MPs-pensions-a-true-injustice-Taxpayers-Federation-says/1>

## **Red-tape reduction ideas solid. Will they stick?**

In January, 2011, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced he would create a Red Tape Reduction Commission to fight what he called a "silent killer of jobs" and a "hidden tax."

Small-business owners would add "killer of entrepreneurial morale" to the list: 25 per cent of them say they may not have gone into business if they had known about the burden of red tape.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/red-tape-reduction-ideas-solid-will-they-stick/article2306445/>

## **Union President Says Federal Government Has Promised If Public Servants Pay More into Pensions Then Those Won't Be Touched**

With all the speculation about Conservatives taking aim at federal pensions, the biggest union is counting on Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's word that he wouldn't touch pensions as long as public servants paid a bigger share of the cost.

John Gordon, president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, said Flaherty promised him that if public servants committed to paying 40 per cent of the yearly contribution rates for their pensions by 2013, the government wouldn't be looking for more savings from the plan.

<http://blogs.ottawacitizen.com/2012/01/18/union-president-says-federal-government-has-promised-if-public-servants-pay-more-into-pensions-then-those-wont-be-touched/>

## **Public pensions help sustain, not erode, economic stability**

In their Jan. 7 Opinion piece under the headline, "Courage is needed to tackle far too-generous pensions," Bill Tufts and Lee Fairbanks attack one of the last vestiges of social security by targeting public-sector pension funds in Montreal and elsewhere.

Tufts and Fairbanks are using the ongoing economic crisis to foster a climate of insecurity. They proclaim that there is a crisis in public-sector finances, and that public sector workers must therefore tighten their belts.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Public+pensions+help+sustain+erode+economic+stability/6013939/story.html>

## **Minister Bernier Unveils Red Tape Reduction Recommendations Report**

Created through Canada's Economic Action Plan, the Red Tape Reduction Commission, chaired by the Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, today released its Recommendations Report at an event attended by the President of the Treasury Board, Minister Tony Clement and the CEO of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Catherine Swift.

<http://www.northumberlandview.ca/index.php?module=news&func=display&sid=12639>

## **Indifference ends on public wages**

A seismic shift is taking place in Canadian labour relations as taxpayers take note of public workers' salaries and benefits.

Public service wages, once a trade-off of career security for a lower pay than private sector equivalents, was ushered out by citizen indifference to public service labour negotiations. Today, Canadian public servants collectively earn \$19-billion more than private sector workers performing similar tasks, never mind the many public service jobs with no private sector equivalent.

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/01/18/indifference-ends-on-public-wages/>

## **Scrap lucrative pension plan for MPs: taxpayers group**

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation says MPs have one of the cushiest pension fund programs in Canada and it's time to shut it down.

The federation says with belts being tightened everywhere, it's time for a more modest system in which the government matches MP contributions to the plan on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

<http://regina.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20120118/mps-pension-reform-taxpayer-federation-120118/20120118/?hub=Regina>

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## **Paying more into pensions, PSAC hopes to avoid Flaherty's axe**

With speculation about the Conservatives taking aim at federal pensions, the biggest federal union is counting on Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's word that he wouldn't touch pensions as long as public servants paid a bigger share of the cost.

John Gordon, president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, said Flaherty has promised him that if public servants committed to paying 40 per cent of the yearly contribution rates for their pensions by 2013, the government wouldn't be looking for more savings from the plan.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Paying+more+into+pensions+PSAC+hopes+avoid+Flaherty/6011086/story.html>

## **Part Two: Public concern over pensions in the nation's capital Federal employees' generous plans lead to questions about sustainability — and whether it's a proper use of our tax dollars**

A tiny group of British Columbians are part of a federal public sector pension plan that is under increasing scrutiny from critics who say it is both unsustainable and overly generous.

Private sector interest groups and think-tanks like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the C.D. Howe Institute argue that the federal scheme should be reformed and made less generous in the coming 2012 budget.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/pensions/Part+Public+concern+over+pensions+nation+capital/5999490/story.html>

## **Canada's looming battle over labour**

**With contracts for half a million public sector workers to be negotiated this year, things could get very ugly**

The Occupy movement, globally ubiquitous and proudly obtrusive, is remembered as one of the top news stories of 2012. In reality, the effort by various species of crank to take over public parks probably wasn't even the most important "people occupying stuff" news item of the year, at least in North America. That honour rightly belongs to the February swarming of the Wisconsin legislature by up to 100,000 protesters dedicated to stopping Gov. Scott Walker's "budget repair bill." The new Republican governor, hoping to balance the state budget without reversing tax cuts of the past decade, struck at the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers, taking away their right to negotiate benefits and capping pay increases at the inflation rate.

<http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/01/17/will-it-happen-here/>

## **The looming crisis of public sector pension shortfalls**

Some suggest that a discussion to rein in public sector pensions is nothing but a propaganda war. Many defenders of public sector pensions resort to emotional rhetoric to create controversy and make the issues a divisive one. Public sector employee pension plans are hundreds of billions of dollars short and clear headed decisions need to be made to fix them.

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2012/01/17/the-looming-crisis-of-public-sector-pension-shortfalls/>

## **'Intense discomfort' in public service as civil servants wait for knife to come down**

News that the government may be cutting more than 10 per cent of some departments' operating budgets is demoralizing public servants, says John Gordon, president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

"Now that things seemed to have risen to a higher level, now people are really, really, getting demoralized. They're feeling that this government is out to get rid of the public services at any cost. That's worrisome, and no one is saying anything to alleviate their fears at all," he said.

<http://www.hilltimes.com/news/news/2012/01/16/%E2%80%98intense-discomfort%E2%80%99-in-public-service--as-civil-servants-wait-for-knife-to-come/29289>

## **Public-service cuts won't impact food safety, Agriculture Minister says**

Cuts to federal meat inspection that will take place as early as April demonstrate how reductions in public services widely anticipated in the coming federal budget could affect ordinary Canadians.

The union that represents federal meat inspectors held a news conference on Monday to highlight plans by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to eliminate 234 jobs in the next fiscal year – mostly food safety personnel who were hired after a listeriosis outbreak in 2008 killed 23 people.

[http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/public-service-cuts-wont-impact-food-safety-agriculture-minister-says/article2304721/?utm\\_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm\\_source=Politics&utm\\_content=2304721](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/public-service-cuts-wont-impact-food-safety-agriculture-minister-says/article2304721/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=Politics&utm_content=2304721)

## **Provincial court backlog threatens thousands of cases**

Nanaimo NDP MLA and attorney general critic Leonard Krog is calling on the province to hire more judges in light of the number of cases at risk of being thrown out due to unreasonable delay.

Numbers recently released from the Provincial Court of B.C. show there are now 125.65 full-time provincial court judges – down from 143.65 in 2005.

<http://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/137431043.html>

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## **Harper warns of "tough" economic choices to be made in 2012**

With Europe on the verge of a new recession and the rest of the world facing economic uncertainty, Prime Minister Stephen Harper warns that 2012 will undoubtedly be another challenging year for Canada.

But he wants Canadians to know that he feels their pain.

<http://www.canadianbusiness.com/article/66034--harper-warns-of-tough-economic-choices-to-be-made-in-2012>

January 15

## **Stephen Harper wants public input before 2012 budget**

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is warning that Canadians face “tough choices” and to brace for the challenging economic year ahead.

“There are tough, important choices that must be made to create jobs, keep our economy growing and keep Canada as the greatest country in the world,” Harper says in a letter to Conservatives MPs and senators.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1115919--stephen-harper-wants-public-input-before-2012-budget>

January 14

## **Tossed-out court cases soar**

**Bounced on Island: 5 in 2009, 10 in 2010, 35 in 2011**

Thirty-five court cases were thrown out on Vancouver Island last year due to delays - more than triple the number stayed in 2010, according to statistics released by Attorney General Shirley Bond.

"Those were 35 cases where there was a substantial likelihood of conviction," said Samiran Lakshman, spokesman for the B.C. Crown Counsel Association, arguing the statistics are a clear symptom that the justice system doesn't have the resources to have trials heard in a timely manner.

<http://www.timescolonist.com/news/Tossed+court+cases+soar/5996231/story.html>

January 13

## **Public service jobs: The cuts are adding up**

Public Service job cuts have been announced on a regular basis over the past several months. Here is a list of some of those announcements.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/travel/Public+service+jobs+cuts+adding/5994536/story.html>



## **The war on public sector pensions**

In 2011, a propaganda war was launched attacking the generous pensions paid to Canadian public sector workers. The attack was initiated by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) in its Pension Tension campaign. The campaign was then further bolstered by the release of the book Pension Ponzi by Bill Tufts and Lee Fairbanks (with a forward by Catherine Swift of the CFIB), and recently joined by the C.D. Howe Institute in its December 2011 paper, "Ottawa's Pension Gap: The Growing and Under-reported Cost of Federal Employee Pensions."

<http://www.benefitscanada.com/pensions/db/the-war-on-public-sector-pensions-24482>

## **Crown prosecutors call for more full-time judges**

Vancouver Island's courts need more regular full-time judges, says the spokesman for the B.C. Crown Counsel Association.

Samiran Lakshman says courts are increasingly being staffed by part-time judges, which causes problems when cases are adjourned, then need to be continued. Lawyers often struggle to find the same judge sitting.

<http://www.timescolonist.com/news/Crown+prosecutors+call+more+full+time+judges/5994787/story.html>

## **Unions' universe is a strange place**

Ontarians capable of arithmetic know that government must sharply curtail its spending in order to balance its budget by 2017-'18. Provincial consultant Don Drummond will fill in the details in a few weeks, but expect a world in which the public sector shrinks a bit, there is competition for delivering public services and wages are restrained.

For Ontario's public sector unions, it's a nightmarish awakening from the public sector expansion, generous pay increases and lack of accountability to which they have grown accustomed.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/health/Unions+universe+strange+place/5988810/story.html>

## Médias francophones

19 Janvier

### **Le fédéral a un œil sur le régime des députés**

Le gouvernement fédéral laisse entendre que des changements pourraient être apportés au régime de retraite des députés, qui a été dénoncé mercredi par la Fédération canadienne des contribuables.

<http://fr.canoe.ca/infos/quebeccanada/archives/2012/01/20120119-152948.html>

18 Janvier

### **Députés et ministres fédéraux Des régimes de retraite coûteux**

Au terme de son présent mandat en 2015, le premier ministre du Canada, Stephen Harper, aura droit à des prestations de retraite d'au moins 223 500 \$ par année du gouvernement, affirme un rapport de la Fédération canadienne des contribuables.

Selon le document, le chef conservateur est le grand gagnant du régime de retraite des parlementaires fédéraux canadiens.

<http://fr.canoe.ca/infos/quebeccanada/politiquefederale/archives/2012/01/20120118-141422.html>

### **Régimes de pension des employés de l'État: un trou de 143 milliards**

Les divers régimes de pension des employés du gouvernement canadien - les fonctionnaires, les policiers, les militaires, les juges, les députés et les sénateurs - représentent un imposant boulet financier pour les contribuables canadiens: 143 milliards de dollars.

[http://lapresseaffaires.cyberpresse.ca/economie/canada/201201/18/01-4486885-regimes-de-pension-des-employes-de-letat-un-trou-de-143-milliards.php?utm\\_categorieinterne=traficdrivers&utm\\_contenuinterne=cyberpresse\\_BO4\\_la\\_2343\\_accueil\\_POS2](http://lapresseaffaires.cyberpresse.ca/economie/canada/201201/18/01-4486885-regimes-de-pension-des-employes-de-letat-un-trou-de-143-milliards.php?utm_categorieinterne=traficdrivers&utm_contenuinterne=cyberpresse_BO4_la_2343_accueil_POS2)

## **Une organisation dénonce les onéreux fonds de pension des députés fédéraux**

Charité bien ordonnée commence par soi-même: alors que le gouvernement considère sabrer dans les régimes de pension des fonctionnaires fédéraux, il devrait donner l'exemple et réduire celles de ses ministres et députés, suggère la Fédération canadienne des contribuables.

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/actualites/quebec-canada/politique-canadienne/201201/18/01-4487187-une-organisation-denonce-les-onereux-fonds-de-pension-des-deputes-federaux.php>

**16 Janvier**

## **Régimes publics de retraite : l'heure est aux compromis**

Les régimes de retraite à prestations déterminées sont présentement sous les feux de la rampe en raison des importants déficits qu'ils affichent depuis plusieurs années déjà.

Dans le cas des régimes publics (fédéral, provincial, municipal ou scolaire), il faut se demander à qui il revient de porter ce fardeau financier. Le gouvernement doit-il être le seul à assumer cette responsabilité puisqu'un régime de retraite fait partie des avantages sociaux, ou bien les travailleurs doivent-ils également contribuer?

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/la-tribune/opinions/201201/16/01-4486270-regimes-publics-de-retraite-lheure-est-aux-compromis.php>

## **C'est assez, les campagnes de dénigrement contre les fonds de pension**

Nous assistons aujourd'hui à une campagne sans précédent contre les régimes de retraite à prestation déterminée parce que, dit-on, certains de ces régimes ont un déficit actuariel.

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/la-voix-de-lest/opinions/courrier-des-lecteurs/201201/15/01-4486064-cest-assez-les-campagnes-de-denigrement-contre-les-fonds-de-pension.php>

**14 Janvier**

## **Période d'austérité**

Le ministre Tony Clement, président du Conseil du trésor, prévient que le gouvernement Harper devra encore sabrer ses dépenses en prévision du budget fédéral 2012- 2013, qui sera axé sur l'emploi et l'économie. Le Journal s'est entretenu avec lui hier, alors qu'il était de passage à Montréal dans le cadre des consultations pré-budgétaires qui ont lieu chaque année.

<http://fr.canoe.ca/infos/quebeccanada/politiquefederale/archives/2012/01/20120114-055509.html>