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Press Clippings for the period of November 18-24, 2011
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English Media

November 23

Better funding the only fix for crippled civil-justice system Little is known about who is and isn't being served, or what it costs

Mention the legal system and most Canadians think of crime - publicly funded overpriced lawyers, interminable gang trials, and judges who are too soft on thugs.

But the vast majority of court time is devoted to civil, family and non-criminal cases. The federal Conservative omnibus crime bill is grabbing attention, but it's the moribund civil system that requires resuscitation and reform.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Better+funding+only+crippled+civil+justice+system/5754247/story.html>

RCMP not bound to union, court told

The RCMP has no obligation to recognize and collectively bargain with any independent member association or union because a process is already in place to deal with such negotiations, Ontario's highest court heard Tuesday.

An internal staff relations program provides a "collaborative model" between the national police force and its employees and ensures that "the RCMP listens fairly and with an open mind," federal lawyer Kathryn Hucal told the three-justice panel at the Ontario Court of Appeal.

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/RCMP+bound+union+court+told/5754041/story.html>

Government defends Sask. labour bills in court

A lawyer for the provincial government on Wednesday began defending the constitutionality of two labour laws being challenged by several Saskatchewan unions.

The first bill requires that certain public sector workers are deemed essential during a labour dispute, which prevents them from being able to go on strike.

The other piece of legislation contained several amendments to the province's trade union act, including a requirement that there be mandatory votes for all union certification applications regardless of how many workers had signed cards.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Government+defends+Sask+labour+bills+court/5757702/story.html>

November 22

The lesson from Canada on cutting deficits

Finance officials bit their nails and nervously watched the clock. There were 30 minutes left in a bond auction aimed at funding the deficit and there was not a single bid.

Sounds like today's Italy or Greece? No, this was Canada in 1994.

Bids eventually came in, but that close call, along with downgrades and The Wall Street Journal calling Canada "an honorary member of the Third World," helped the nation's people and politicians understand how scary its budget problem was.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/the-lesson-from-canada-on-cutting-deficits/article2243702/>

Mounties have no right to union, appeal court told

An Ontario appeal judge has challenged the federal government's claim that RCMP members have no right to be represented by an independent association, saying the argument sounds like something out of a Woody Allen script.

Crown counsel Kathryn Hucal told the Ontario Court of Appeal on Tuesday that freedom of association guarantees under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms give workers only the right to make representations to their employer and to have them considered in good faith.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1090927>

The harm inflicted by public-sector unions

The programs and policies of the welfare state begin with good intentions but ultimately prove naïve. What happens in the real world is that organized groups end up bending the sovereign power of government toward transferring resources to themselves, away from the less

organized. One case I've written about is the "supply management" boards in certain farming sectors.

A new book, *Pension Ponzi: How Public-sector Unions are Bankrupting Canada's Health Care, Education and Your Retirement*, highlights another instance. As you can guess from the title, the culprit in this instance is public-sector unions.

<http://www.canadianbusiness.com/blog/investing/58379--the-harm-inflicted-by-public-sector-unions>

A better way to restrain public-wage growth

A deal is a deal. Provincial Conservative Leader Tim Hudak wants to tear up collective agreements covering more than a million Ontario public servants and impose a wage freeze. The sentiment, in part, is understandable. The ongoing and widening disparity between public- and private-sector union contracts needs to be addressed, and the provincial government certainly needs to reduce spending, including on public-sector wages.

<http://www.thespec.com/opinion/editorial/article/628256--a-better-way-to-restrain-public-wage-growth>

CP targets pension costs

Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd. is proposing cost-cutting changes to retirement plans for employees, illustrating the pressure many major employers are facing because of high pension costs.

CP and the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference are holding labour talks this week as a five-year collective agreement edges closer to expiry on Dec. 31.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/cp-targets-pension-costs/article2245361/>

November 21

RCMP returns to court over unionization

A group of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers is heading back to the Ontario Court of Appeal to argue for the right to unionize and engage in collective bargaining.

<http://www.labour-reporter.com/articleview?articleid=11760&headline=rcmp-returns-to-court-over-unionization>

November 19

Justice system buckling, prosecutors say

New law will mean more work at same time government wants 10% cut from budget

Canada's judicial system is in crisis and unless the Conservative government increases resources to cope with the demands of its new tough on crime legislation, public safety and the rights of accused will be seriously compromised, say the country's Crown prosecutors.

The Canadian Association of Crown Counsel, which is politically neutral and has no official position on the so called Safe Streets and Communities legislation moving through Parliament, says federal and provincial prosecutors and judges are already working to capacity.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Justice+system+buckling+prosecutors/5735921/story.htm>
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Médias francophones

24 Novembre

Plus de juges pour le Québec !

Jean-Marc Fournier, a présenté aujourd'hui à l'Assemblée nationale le projet de loi n°43 modifiant la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires, lequel propose d'augmenter la capacité des tribunaux à entendre des causes et à rendre des jugements.

<http://www.droit-inc.com/article6659-Plus-de-juges-pour-le-Quebec>