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Press Clippings for the period of November 25 – December 1, 2011  
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### English Media

December 1

#### **Year of labour strife looms, report warns**

Welcome to the year of labour strife.

The chances of work stoppages in Canada's public sector are heightened next year as government workers -- many of whom will see their contracts up for renewal -- get frustrated by demands for more concessions, a Conference Board of Canada report predicted Friday.

The public sector accounts for a fifth of Canada's labour force and a number of large public sector institutions will be at the bargaining table next year.

Federal and provincial governments are focused on eliminating budget deficits, "and this will limit their ability or willingness to offer much more than modest wage increases," said Karla Thorpe, director of the board's leadership and human resources research.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/jobs/year-of-labour-strife-looms-report-warns/article2257914/>

#### **Union slams 'absurd choice' between balanced budget, public services**

Canada's largest public-sector union is launching a new social media campaign to protest the job losses and service cuts it says will result from the government's effort to reduce the deficit.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada says Canadians are being asked to make "an absurd choice" between a balanced budget and strong public services.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-notebook/union-slams-absurd-choice-between-balanced-budget-public-services/article2257964/>

## **Federal auditors facing budget cutbacks**

### **5% to 10% staff cuts also being planned**

The office that conducts internal federal audits is facing potential cuts as part of the government's multibillion dollar operating review, at the same time the auditor general is chopping its budget and cutting the number of audits it performs.

The federal comptroller general's office - responsible for internal government audits - is located within the Treasury Board Secretariat, which has swollen in size over the past five years. Treasury Board, along with nearly 70 other federal departments and agencies, is submitting scenarios for a five and 10 per cent cut to its budget.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/Federal+auditors+facing+budget+cutbacks/5793151/story.html>

## **Unions brace for tens of thousands of job cuts in public service**

Unions are bracing for potentially tens of thousands of federal job cuts from the Conservative government's operating review, as Treasury Board president Tony Clement argued Thursday he's not getting much help from labour groups in finding savings.

Canada's parliamentary budget officer agrees several thousand federal jobs will almost certainly need to be whacked if the Tory government is to find \$4 billion in ongoing annual savings by 2014-15.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/touch/Unions+brace+tens+thousands+cuts+public+service/5798272/story.html?rel=825269>

## **Battle over labour laws now rests with judge**

Legal arguments in the case against two Saskatchewan labour laws wrapped up Wednesday, leaving the court to rule on whether the legislation is constitutionally valid.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour launched the constitutional challenge, arguing that changes to the province's trade union act and the introduction of an essential services law infringed on the rights and freedoms of workers. Both laws were passed by the Saskatchewan Party government shortly after the 2007 election that saw the party come to power.

<http://www.leaderpost.com/business/Battle+over+labour+laws+rests+with+judge/5793051/story.html>

## **Conservative priorities prompted growth in PS numbers, top PCO official says**

The sharp increase in the size of the public service in recent years is largely the result of the priority the Conservative government has put on defence and border security, a top Privy Council official told hundreds of top public service executives Wednesday.

“The Canadian Forces has grown, DND has grown,” William Pentney, deputy secretary to the cabinet for plans and consultation, told a seminar in Gatineau attended by more than 1,200 top public service executives.

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2011/12/01/harper-government-priorities-responsible-for-ps-growth-says-top-pco-official/>

## **B.C.’s atrophying legal aid system sinking into dementia**

Duty counsel in British Columbia will take collective job action against the B.C. government starting in January and completely withdraw services after April from a system described by B.C. Trial Lawyers Association’s legal aid committee co-chairman Phil Rankin as suffering from “atrophy that has been happening slowly like dementia” from continuous funding cuts.

<http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/legalfeeds/578/B.C.s-atrophying-legal-aid-system-sinking-into-dementia.html>

## **Federal Treasury Board cuts key IT positions**

Canada's Treasury Board is eliminating 27 high-level IT positions, CBC News has learned.

Workers at the chief information officer branch were informed of the decision Wednesday at a meeting in Ottawa. The head of the branch, Corinne Charette, said they are consolidating and reengineering in the coming months.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2011/12/01/ottawa-treasury-board-cuts.html>

<b>November 30</b>
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## **Public service brass head back to school to learn job-cutting skills**

Top public service executives are closeted behind closed doors today, learning how to carry out the staff cuts expected as part of the government’s deficit reduction action plan, iPolitics has learned.

Billed as a “special executive seminar” for senior managers in the EX1-EX3 level, the Canada School of Public Service seminar features a who’s who of top decision-makers in the federal government. The seminar is scheduled to cover everything from clarifying the rules that govern public-service layoffs to advice from a top Privy Council official on “Communication in Challenging Times.”

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2011/11/30/public-service-brass-head-back-to-school-to-learn-job-cutting-skills/>

## **Lawyers up the ante in battle for more legal-aid money**

The war between the government and legal stake-holders over the integrity of B.C. courts is becoming much more public and acrimonious.

Lawyers across the province are sporting light blue ribbons on their robes today as a sign they have become "soldiers in the Battle for Legal Aid."

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Lawyers+ante+battle+more+legal+money/5788303/story.html>

## **Clement slams 'self-serving' union leaders**

The gloves appear to be off between the federal government and one of its largest unions.

Treasury Board President Tony Clement slammed the leaders of the Public Service Alliance of Canada for being "unconstructive and self-serving" in a letter Clement wrote this week to PSAC president John Gordon.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2011/11/30/clement-slams-self-serving-union-leaders>

[Letter from Tony Clement](#)

[Letter from John Gordon](#)

## **Cohn: Unions brace for war against the Tories — and each other**

Big labour is in big trouble in Canada’s biggest province. Morale is down. Unionization is down.

And members are increasingly down on each other: The Ontario Federation of Labour is bleeding support from several key unions that boycotted its latest convention and are still withholding funds.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1095215--cohn-unions-brace-for-war-against-the-tories-and-each-other?bn=1>

November 29

## **Balanced budget plan may be axed**

### **Finance minister warns worsening economy could delay B.C. pledge**

A promise to balance B.C.'s books by 2013 might be abandoned if the global economic situation doesn't improve, Finance Minister Kevin Falcon said Monday.

The admission comes as the government's deficit is projected to worsen by \$313 million this year, to a total of \$3.1 billion, due to falling revenue and a worsening global economy, he said.

<http://www.timescolonist.com/business/Balanced+budget+plan+axed/5782273/story.html>

## **Huge growth in public servants under Tories**

As the federal Conservative government searches for billions of dollars in budget cuts, it does so knowing the federal public service has swollen by one-third over the past decade — far outpacing the growth in the population.

Briefing notes prepared for Treasury Board president Tony Clement — who is leading the multibillion-dollar review of government programs — show federal public service employment grew at an average of nearly three per cent a year between 2000-01 and 2010-11.

The documents, obtained by Postmedia News in an access to information request, note the population of the federal public service (core public servants) soared 34 per cent over the past decade, to 282,955 last year from 211,925 a decade earlier. The increase is nearly 40 per cent if you compare it to the number of employees in the late 1990s.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/11/29/huge-growth-in-public-servants-under-tories/>

November 28

## **Public sector pay freeze possible**

The courts would uphold a legislated pay freeze for Ontario public sector workers in response to the plight of the overburdened taxpayer, Tory MPP Christine Elliott is predicting.

Based on recent rulings, the Ontario government could successfully argue that its need to curb spending should override the section of the Charter that protects collective bargaining, she said.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2011/11/28/public-sector-pay-freeze-possible>

November 26

## **Feds put shine on looming cuts to public service**

The federal government is dressing up its deficit-reduction review as an opportunity to transform and "renew" the public service and the way it delivers services to Canadians.

It's a message that Treasury Board President Tony Clement has been pitching of late while the Privy Council Office is sending similar messages for deputy ministers to bring to their employees as they wait to find out where the axe will fall in the upcoming budget.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Feds+shine+looming+cuts+public+service/5773122/story.html>

## **Give MPs job of overseeing public service**

### **One way to cut costs is to avoid waste in first place**

Every weekday morning, fleets of buses carry federal government workers from Gatineau, Que., across the river to their jobs in Ottawa. This summer, the bus shelters on the Gatineau side had an advertisement from Caisse Desjardins, a credit union. It featured an attractive young woman with a knowing smile and the headline, in French: Advice For Federal Bureaucrats.

"Severance pay: now or later? Consult our experts to discuss the best strategies to reach your financial objectives. Make an appointment."

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/opinion/Give+overseeing+public+service/5771798/story.html>

November 25

## **Budget cuts put court system 'in peril'**

Citing trial delays and other problems resulting from a lack of funds, B.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Bauman has called on his colleagues to speak out about a system that "is threatened, if not in peril."

In a weekend speech to the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association, Judge Bauman said funding cuts are resulting in fewer clerks, registry staff and sheriffs, and the ripple effects are being felt throughout the system – including persons accused of crimes who are going free without trial because their court process has taken too long.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-columbia/bc-politics/budget-cuts-put-court-system-in-peril/article2248285/>

## **Paycheques fighting a losing battle with inflation, stats show**

Canadians' wages aren't keeping up with the rising cost of living and will continue losing ground to inflation over the next 12 months, says CIBC World Markets deputy chief economist Benjamin Tal.

Statistics Canada released data Thursday showing that Canadians' average weekly earnings edged up 0.3 per cent in September to \$872.75. On a yearly basis, earnings rose 1.1 per cent, the smallest increase since November 2009.

Inflation in the cost of living, meanwhile, is rising at an annual rate of 2.9 per cent.

<http://www.theprovince.com/business/Paycheques+fighting+losing+battle+with+inflation+stats+show/5765862/story.html>

## **B.C. justice system "in peril," says top B.C. Supreme Court judge**

B.C.'s justice system is "threatened, if not in peril," says the chief justice of the B.C. Supreme Court, who calls on lawyers to help educate the public on the importance of the institution.

Chief Justice Robert Bauman delivered a blunt speech to the B.C. branch of the Canadian Bar Association last weekend saying government underfunding has left the courts close to dysfunctional.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/breakingnews/bc-justice-system-in-peril-says-top-bc-supreme-court-judge-134470183.html>

# Médias francophones

1er Décembre

## **Quelque 26 postes de gestion abolis au Conseil du Trésor**

Avant même que ne soient entreprises les réductions budgétaires de 5 % à 10 % prévues au gouvernement fédéral, 26 postes de haut placés seront abolis au Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor (SCT), a-t-on appris hier. Une annonce ayant pris de court les syndicats, et qui leur fait craindre le pire pour la suite des choses.

Les 26 postes qui seront éliminés sont pour la plupart des postes de haute gestion dans le domaine des technologies de l'information, a confirmé hier au Droit le SCT. La totalité de ces emplois se trouvent dans la région d'Ottawa-Gatineau.

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-droit/actualites/fonction-publique/201112/01/01-4473673-quelque-26-postes-de-gestion-abolis-au-conseil-du-tresor.php>