



Press Release

For immediate release

Another Unimaginative Budget Designed to Pave the Way for the 2015 Election

Ottawa, March 21, 2013 – The Canadian government today tabled a budget so devoid of innovative measures and oblivious to the economic challenges facing Canada that we can only wonder what planet the Minister of Finance is living on. We note, however, that the Minister did announce the government’s intention to review its human resources management methods and the total compensation of its employees, and we wish to remind the Minister that any changes in terms and conditions of employment must be negotiated at the bargaining table with the unions representing federal employees.

After the 2012 budget caused public and private sector job losses in the tens of thousands and hampered GDP growth, the Minister of Finance clearly seems to have turned a deaf ear to the pleas of numerous economists and analysts calling for him to promote economic growth.

“We knew that the government only listens to those who support its ideas,” said Claude Poirier, President of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE), “so it is therefore worrisome for us to read that it intends to consult with “key stakeholders” in its review of the public service’s total compensation. If the government only listens to suggestions from organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Fraser Institute and the C.D. Howe Institute, we know what direction this review will take, because those organizations want to downgrade working conditions. However, we are prepared to discuss working conditions in the forum that already exists for that purpose: the bargaining table.”

“The review of the human resources management process and of the regulations governing labour relations is a project that’s been on the table for years and has had numerous incarnations. Since the budget is short on details, we will have to wait for the government to clarify its intentions,” Mr. Poirier noted.

“The government also announced that it would be merging the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT),” Mr. Poirier observed. “Here too, the details of this plan are rather sketchy, but we know that CIDA and Foreign Affairs both suffer from a chronic lack of personnel to fulfill their mandates. The merger will have to address that problem.”

The President of CAPE added, that “we would have appreciated it if the Minister had listened to suggestions from credible organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Monetary Fund, which are encouraging governments to choose growth over belt tightening and to correct the fiscal inequities that favour high-income earners and corporations.”

CAPE represents approximately 12,000 economists and social science services employees who advise the government on public policy, 925 translators, interpreters and terminologists who provide the bilingual face of the government, and 90 analysts and research assistants at the Library of Parliament.

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