Chronology of Events January 2001 – December 2001

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3 January *Alberta* The Government of Alberta reduces its flat rate tax from 10.5 percent to 10 percent. Last spring the province introduced the flat tax rate to separate from the federal tax system, but it made the current reduction coincide with the recent federal tax cuts put into effect on 1 January, since earners in the \$35,000 – \$65,000 bracket would have been better off in the federal tax system. This move is also made to ensure that Alberta has the lowest tax regime in all of Canada.

8 January Health Care/ Organized Labour

Thirteen hundred physicians across New Brunswick reluctantly go on strike to protest poor medical fees and the refusal of the provincial government to hire more doctors. Blame is also placed on federal transfers to the province. The strike is ended three days later without resolution, and there is warning of an exodus of physicians from New Brunswick because of their inability to negotiate with the Progressive Conservative government.

9 January Health Care Federal Health Minister Allan Rock confirms the verbal warnings made by federal officials to the health ministers of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Manitoba to begin covering the full cost of abortions performed outside hospitals. Mr Rock also faces pressure from

26 January *Parliament*

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appoints Liberal Senator Dan Hays from Alberta as the new Speaker of the Senate. He replaces Manitoba Senator Gildas Molgat.

26 January *Party Politics*

Supporters of Finance Minister Paul Martin win a critical power struggle to force an early vote on Jean Chrétien's leadership if he does not announce his intention to resign by the fall of next year. The Liberal Party's constitution requires that the next convention, which would include an automatic leadership vote, be held in March 2002, but the management committee of the party's national executive agreed to an extension out of respect for Mr Chrétien's winning a third majority government. This means that the next party convention, and therefore the next leadership review, will likely be held in the fall of 2002.

29 January Parliament Liberal Member of Parliament Peter Milliken of Kingston, Ontario, is elected the new Speaker of the House, winning by secret balloting by fellow members. As Speaker, he is expected to function in a non-partisan manner, overseeing debates and the House of Commons' approximately \$250 million budget.

30 January Aboriginal Peoples

The departments of Indian and Northern Affairs and Fisheries and Oceans earmark \$500 million to help Aboriginal peoples in the fishery and to expand First Nation reserves throughout Atlantic Canada. The fund is to be spread over the next three years.

30 January Speech from the Throne The new session of the 37th Parliament officially gets underway with the Chrétien government spelling out its agenda for the nation. The throne speech promises a world-leading economy and a more inclusive society to improve the lives of disadvantaged Canadians in the twenty-first century, with particular reference to children and the problems facing Aboriginal peoples. The Liberal government also announces its goal to negotiate a comprehensive free trade agreement that will include the three Americas by 2004 to ensure Canada's economic growth.

30 January Parliament The leader of the Canadian Alliance, Stockwell Day, uses a major speech in the House of Commons to distance himself from western separatists while appealing to Jean

Chrétien to address what he calls the growing alienation of Canadians from coast to coast.

8 February *Municipalities*

Ontario Premier Mike Harris confirms that future amalgamations will be at the request of municipalities – they will not be imposed by legislative decisions: "If other municipalities come to us and say, 'Will you help us save money, operate services more efficiently, be able to deliver more for less?" then it would be our responsibility and obligation to assist them any way we can."

8 February *Ontario*

Ontario Premier Mike Harris shuffles his cabinet, signalling what many call a pronounced shift to the right for the Progressive Conservative Government of Ontario. Among the key changes is the replacement of retired Finance Minister Ernie Eves by Jim Flaherty, who will also take on the role of deputy premier, and Canadian Alliance supporter Tony Clement as the new minister of health. Other changes are Chris Hodgson as the minister of municipal affairs, Bob Runciman as minister of economic development and trade, and Elizabeth Witmer as the minister of environment.

8 February
Saskatchewan

Roy Romanow is officially replaced when Lorne Calvert is sworn in as the thirteenth premier of Saskatchewan, along with his New Democrat-Liberal coalition cabinet. Three new members are added to the cabinet while fourteen remain from the former cabinet. Mr Calvert was elected to succeed Mr Romanow as the New Democratic

Party leader on 27 January this yearAm6 y wis scof retiNete0.1y .4(4

25 February *Municipalities*

Mayors and councillors from twenty of Canada's largest cities agree that the upper levels of the federal and provincial governments need either to share tax revenues or to provide more money for infrastructure programs. Discussion continues to the following day at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities mayors' caucus, where most attention is placed on the inability of cities to unilaterally keep up with demands on municipal infrastructure and social programs through property tax collection.

26 February Natural Resources

At the annual dinner of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Landmen, Nova Scotia Premier John Hamm asks for the same rules on energy royalties with the federal government that Alberta experiences: "We want simply to have our resource treated exactly the same way as the resource was treated here [in Alberta] during a comparable stage of development." For every dollar of royalties from Nova Scotia's offshore oil and gas development, the province keeps \$0.19, while \$0.81 is kept by the federal government as the result of jurisdictional arrangements.

26 February *Equalization*

Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin, at a meeting with three of four of his Atlantic provincial counterparts in Halifax, states that amendments will not be made to the equalization formula. The provincial ministers argued that it is a matter of fairness for Ottawa to lift restrictions on the payments to East Coast governments, but Mr Martin states that nothing will change until the end of the current fiscal arrangement in 2004.

27 February *Nunavut*

In presenting his third budget, Nunavut Finance Minister Kelvin Ng reveals that the territorial government is in financial crisis and is expected to have a \$12 million deficit

21 March
Political Leaders

Preston Manning, the founder and former leader of the Reform Party and the Canadian Alliance, announces that he will resign his Calgary Southwest seat in the federal legislature by the end of the year, quitting elected politics: "As a former leader, I'm in an awkward position in our own party and in our own caucus ... If I vigorously advocate new ideas for change, there's a danger of that being misconstrued as being competitive or undermining the current leadership. If I don't do anything like that, it can also be misconstrued as being not supportive [of the leader]."

28 March Environment

Premier Roger Grimes states that Newfoundland is prepared to defy federal and provincial governments as it pushes ahead with plans to revive the debate over bulk water exports. The previous day, he resurrected the idea of exporting large quantities of fresh water from Gisborne Lake, a plan rejected in 1999 by Premier Brian Tobin.

29 March Aboriginal Peoples

In a signed letter read during the opening ceremonies of the Indigenous Summit of the Americas, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien pledges that he will put the concerns of indigenous peoples on the agenda of the upcoming Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. As well, Chrétien invited the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Matthew Coon Come, to be present at the Quebec Summit to be held on 20–22 April. This is the first time in its history that an indigenous leader has been invited.

29 March *Quebec*

Quebec Finance Minister Pauline Marois announces a tabled \$3.5 billion cut in personal income tax over three years in Queen's 2001–2 budget. The cuts are made to provide the most benefit to lower-income earners. The minister adds that the new budget will help prepare Quebec for independence, making it "into a country capable of taking its place at the forefront of the new world emerging."

1 April Newfoundland and Labrador Two unions representing 19,000 public workers reject a last-minute offer from the provincial government and begin the largest provincewide strike in history. Provincial Finance Minister Joan Marie Aylward admits that public-service workers deserve raises but states that the province can only afford 13 percent over three years and not the 15

percent the unions are asking for. The strike is ended five days later after a severe snowstorm places enormous pressure on both sides to reach an agreement.

4 April Health-Care Commission

The former NDP premier of Saskatchewan, Roy Romanow, is appointed by Jean Chrétien to head a national inquiry into Canada's health-care system. The report, expected to be finished by the end of next year, will assess a wide range of questions pertaining to the future of health care in Canada, such as privatization, payment methods for doctors, and whether medicare should insure new and expensive drug treatments and technologies. Quebec Health Minister Remy Trudel states that he will not participate in the inquiry, because the Government of Quebec sees the commission as a federal intrusion in provincial jurisdiction.

4 April *Municipalities*

In the ongoing battle between the city of Toronto and the Ontario government, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announces that provincial caps on commercial property taxes will not be raised to allow city council to initiate tax increases in this sector. Mr Flaherty states that the industrial and commercial property taxes are already above average, and raising the taxation cap will perpetuate discrimination against business owners.

5 April *Revenue* The federal government introduces a tax hike on cigarettes across Canada and at the same announces that it will pour money into anti-smoking and anti-smuggling initiatives in the hope of reducing the number of smokers and cigarette sales; \$480 million and \$10–15 million, respectively, will be spent on each initiative.

6 April Supreme Court of Canada At a legal conference at York University, Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin appeals to the legal profession and academia for more research to assist the Supreme Court of Canada's "daunting" struggle to set limits on equality rights. She states that new claims are raising increasingly cumbersome and abstract issues that were not contemplated in the infancy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which has led to the "uncertain sea of value judgements" with which the Supreme Court is now faced.

17 April
Natural Resources

The former premier of Alberta, Peter Lougheed, is enlisted by Nova Scotia's premier, John Hamm, to assist in the battle for greater provincial control of revenues produced from its offshore oil and natural gas. Mr Lougheed successfully battled the federal government in the 1970s over royalties from similar resources. The current Alberta premier, Ralph Klein, is also a strong supporter of Nova Scotia's bid for a larger share of royalties, stating that the province should experience the same arrangements that exist between Alberta and the federal government.

19 April Party Politics

associations. The changes will include the legal status of First Nations in terms of self-government, development of democratic and accountable institutions for native self-government, and women's issues. This means that much of the federal control over Aboriginal affairs will be assigned to the Aboriginal peoples.

9 May *Ontario* Ontario Finance Minister Jim Flaherty unveils the new

administration of health care through an independent body, Ontario and Quebec being the others.

24 May Aboriginal Rights In the case of Mitchell v. M.N.R.

1999, is expected to save the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency hundreds of millions of dollars and allow for 750 Aboriginal tax files to be processed, which were on hold pending the ruling.

6 June
British Columbia

Carrying through with his election promise, Premier Gordon Campbell announces a cut on the provincial portion of personal income tax by about 25 percent over the next two years. The intent of the reduction is to stimulate economic growth in British Columbia. When fully implemented, it will give the province the second-lowest marginal tax rate in the country, with the lowest rate for the bottom two brackets.

7 June *Parliament*

The House of Commons votes 211 to 52 to adopt a bill that gives members of parliament and senators a 20 percent salary increase. The base pay of members will move from \$109,000 to \$131,400, while the prime minister will make \$262,988, a 42 percent increase from the original \$184,600. Senators will now earn \$106,000. The bill was introduced by the Liberals and supported by MPs from all federal parties except the NDP.

9 June Health Care/ Organized Labour Over 12,000 Saskatchewan health-care workers begin a strike after talks end between the provincial government and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The union is asking for a 14 percent increase in wages and benefits over the next three years but is being offered only 3 percent in each year of a three-year deal. The strike is ended on the 15 June with a package that includes the latter proposal as well as enhanced benefits and pensions.

14 June Ministerial Conferences Provincial and territorial finance ministers meet in Montreal to advance their work on fiscal arrangements in response to the direction by premiers at last year's Annual Premiers' Conference. They will be reporting to the premiers at this year's conference on options and solutions to issues revolving around federal social service transfers. The ministers issue an urgent call to the federal government to revitalize the federal-provincial relationship by funding an increased and more equitable share of vital social programs, such as health care and education. One of the key arguments discussed involves the diminished

federal financing of services within provincial jurisdictions. Since the federal government has lately been experiencing budget surpluses in the billions, the ministers feel that money should be used to return federal/provincial transfers to the 1994/95 levels.

19 June *Health Care*/

29 June Ministerial Conferences Agriculture ministers from all governments take a step towards securing the long-term success of the sector at a meeting in Whitehorse. They agree in principle on a national action plan to make Canada the world leader in food safety, innovation, and environmental protection by initiating a range of technological advancements and updating farming equipment across Canada. Safety net programming is also discussed in the meeting.

3 July Health-Care Commission Although initially opposing the commission, the Quebec government appoints an official from the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs to assist in the national inquiry on the future of health care, headed by Roy Romanow.

4 July *Alberta* To strengthen the provincial agriculture industry, the Alberta government will assume legislative responsibility for intensive livestock operations. Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan states that money is being lost from operations running outside the province due to relaxed regulations posed by municipalities. Beginning on 1 January 2002, municipalities will hand approval authority for operations to the Natural Resources Conservation Board. The industry accounts for more than 60 percent of Alberta's farm cash receipts.

12 July *Aboriginal Rights*

British Columbia Supreme Court Chief Justice Don Brenner finds the United Church 25 percent and the federal government 75 percent liable for the sexual assaults against six Aboriginals at the Alberni Indian Residential School on Vancouver Island. The *B.* (*W.R.*) v. *Plint* case is seen as a precedent-setting case, since it is the first civil trial in Canada to reach the stage of determining damages for abuse in the Indian residential school system. Across the country, thousands of similar lawsuits have been launched by Aboriginal people seeking restitution for long-term suffering caused by the school systems.

18 July *Equalization* Ontario Premier Mike Harris states that "have-not" provinces should not receive equalization payments from the federal government if they are allowed to keep all offshore oil and gas royalties. As Ontario is a "have" province, federal revenues from the region are used for transfers to

the poorer provinces. Nova Scotia Premier John Hamm has previously stated that the province should remain an equalization recipient if it is allowed to keep the royalties.

19 July *Party Politics*

Twelve rebel Canadian Alliance members of parliament announce they will create a new parliamentary caucus in the House of Commons, although they will not form a new party. Naming the group the Democratic Representative Caucus, the MPs state that they cannot return to the Alliance caucus because of the uncertainty of Stockwell Day's promise of resignation.

20 July Environment An annual report by the North American Free Trade Agreement Environmental Agency places Ontario behind the American states of Ohio, Texas, and Pennsylvania as the

fund the health-care system for the rest of the fiscal year, which would result in dollars being taken from other important social programs. B.C. nurses are still negotiating with the province over contracts, having recently rejected an offer of a 22 percent wage increase.

30 July Education A report by Statistics Canada reveals that Canadian universities received \$8.2 billion for the 1999–2000 school year from federal, provincial, and municipal governments – a 15 percent increase over the previous school year. This indicates funding similar to that of the early 1990s, before transfers were reduced and reorganized by the federal government to create the Canada Health and Social Transfer.

31 July Health Care

A day before the Annual Premiers' Conference, Finance Minister Paul Martin tells the provinces to halt demands for federal health-care funding, stating that the federal government does not have the extra money to distribute: "I certainly don't know where we would find that kind of money ... if you take a look at the amount that we have already transferred to the provinces for health care and education, it would be very hard to find that kind of money." Although the provinces are claiming fiscal imbalances, Mr Martin states that increased spending will create much larger problems in the long run, particularly for the future of the federal pension program and the aging baby boomer generation. This comment is reaffirmed after the premiers' meeting, when the federal government states that provincial demands are unrealistic and threaten to place Ottawa spending on a track towards deficit.

1–3 August Annual Premiers' Conference At the 42nd Annual Premiers' Conference in Victoria, British Columbia, government leaders across the country agree that they will push to restore Ottawa's share of health-care funding, a share that has been steadily dropping over time, since health-care costs have been rising at a much higher rate than federal transfer payments. To achieve adequate and sustainable fiscal arrangements over the immediate and medium term, the premiers ask the federal government to immediately remove the equalization ceiling; to immediately work on the development of a strengthened and fairer equalization program formula; to restore federal health transfers though the Canadian Health

and Social Transfer to at least 18 percent, combined with an appropriate escalator; and to work on alternative CHST measures such as tax points.

Among other discussion topics is the energy sector and its importance to the Canadian economy, as well as the effort for a coordinated North American focus on energy supply and development, but the premiers express concern for the federal government's exclusion of provincial and territorial representatives from the North American Working Group discussions. The premiers also review technology advancements for a variety of energy sources, such as Atlantic oil and gas, additional nuclear and hydropower, and the development of environmentally friendly "green power." They ensure that new projects will adhere to the principles of sustainable development. Revamping equalization payment methods and allowing Newfoundland and Nova Scotia to keep all oil and gas royalties are also some of the main discussion topics in the three-day meeting.

12 August Supreme Court of Canada In a speech to the Canadian Bar Association, Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin states that the capabilities of the Supreme Court of Canada are being pushed to the limit by mandatory appeals that can waste valuable resources. She states that the rising workload and limited space for additional staff is causing administrative backlog, thereby compromising the number of cases the court can handle. She suggests moving the Federal Court of Canada to a separate building, in order to free up space, a move long requested by federal judges.

13 August *Health Care* In its 2001 National Report Card on Health Care, the Canadian Medical Association gives the nation a B, noting that the major deficits in the system are access to specialist services, access to technology, and emergency room services. Another report, released on 24 September, warns that the Canadian health-care system is heading to ruin as a result of systemic underfunding by both the federal and the provincial governments.

13-16 August Ministerial Conferences

A series of meetings take place in London, Ontario, involving ministers and deputy ministers responsible for local government and housing from all provinces and

territories. Drinking water safety is a high priority. They state that the federal government must assist the provinces and territories by building on the work of these governments to meet drinking-water safety needs. The ministers also discuss the provision of the necessary tools and flexibility for local governments to fulfill their responsibilities properly, as well as covering the issues of new legislative frameworks for local governments. On the final day of meetings, all ministers of housing agree on the urgent need for a coordinated effort on an affordable housing program,

expresses particular concern at the rising health-care spending by provinces, the increasing social assistance disability claims, and the federal government's year-end spending sprees.

13 September *Finance*

The federal government announces a \$10.7 billion surplus for the first quarter of this fiscal year. Even after tax cuts at the beginning of the year, which are said to be costing the federal government billions of dollars, it is higher than last year's accumulation for the same quarter of \$10.5-billion.

17 September *National Security*

Members of parliament return to the House of Commons today in unified form to discuss the terrorist attacks against the United States, the role Canada should play in combatting terrorism inside and outside national boarders, and what steps need to be taken to ensure greater national security and the prevention of terrorist activity. Anti-terrorism legislation is proposed by many, including Stockwell Day, who also suggests that border control and immigration policies should be reviewed in order to strengthen national security. Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin announces that the government is prepared to spend whatever it takes to ensure the security of the nation. The extra spending will be afforded by using federal reserves, he says; tax cuts and health care/education spending will not be affected, though he admits that it likely will decrease revenues.

18 September *Aboriginal Peoples*

Mi'kmaq fishermen set lobster traps in Miramichi Bay, against federal government regulations. Although a benign action in itself, this comes after thirty gunshots are fired between native and non-native fishermen who are at odds with one another about fishing rights. A month earlier, there was controversy from both sides of the debate concerning the communal licence issued by federal Fisheries and Oceans Minister Herb Dhaliwal. The licence lasted for a week, beginning on 22 July. Mi'kmaq fishermen stated it was too short a time and was against a Supreme Court of Canada ruling, while non-native fishermen argued against the differential treatment of both groups.

Ontario Premier Mike Harris states that his administration will continue to pay \$800 for predictive breast and ovarian cancer testing, even though Myriad Genetic Laboratories Inc., an American company demanding \$3,850

criticized the tax cuts as a means of stimulating the British Columbia economy, stating that they will merely throw the province into a deeper deficit.

27–28 September *Ministerial Conferences*

Ministers from both levels of government responsible for northern development conclude a two-day conference in La Ronge, Saskatchewan, with an agreement to establish a Northern Development Ministers Forum with a mandate to advance the common and diverse interests of northerners, which will be designed over the next few months.

1 October *Quebec* Quebec Liberals win two of the four open seats in the National Assembly in the provincial by-elections. Françoise Gauthier wins in Jonquière – the riding of the former premier, Lucien Bouchard – and Julie Boulet wins in the Laviolette riding, which has been a Parti Québécois stronghold since 1976. PQ members Sylvain Page and Richard Legendre win in the other ridings.

3 October

British Columbia

British Columbia Finance Minister Gary Collins announces that the provincial government will freeze health-care and education spending and will cut the rest of government spending by 35 percent in order to achieve a balanced budget in three years.

5 October *Agriculture*

Just days after the announcement of a \$160 million bailout package by the federal government to compensate loss of business for Canadian airlines (due to the terrorist attacks in the United States), Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister Clay Serby states that the federal government should compensate Canadian farmers as well: "Like the airlines, agriculture needs interim support to address factors beyond their control." Farmers across Canada have been dealing with severe cases of drought, which is threatening yields and revenues.

11 October *Ministerial Conferences*

Provincial and territorial ministers of finance meet in Vancouver, British Columbia, to discuss economic security, fiscal stability, and the uncertainties that the terrorist attacks on the United States pose for the short-term economic outlook. Low interest rates, reduced taxes, and sound fiscal management on behalf of all governments are

recognized as the key to providing a secure base on which to build economic recovery. The ministers announce their support of federal measures to enhance security while maintaining a strong relationship with the United States, but they call on the federal government to follow through on the demands of the premiers from their annual conference to remove the equalization ceiling and restore transfer funding to 1994–95 levels.

15 October *Aboriginal Peoples*

In a town near Yellowknife, a consortium of energy companies (Imperial Oil, Shell Canada, Conoco Inc., and ExxonMobil Canada) signs a deal with the representative group, Mackenzie Valley Aboriginal Pipeline Corporation, which will give northern Aboriginal people a one-third share in the natural gas pipeline project. The deal, which is believed to be the first of its kind in Canada, will cost about \$3 billion and could take up to ten years to become operational after regulatory applications and construction are completed.

16 October *Aboriginal Peoples*

The Assembly of First Nations issues layoff notices for 70 if its nearly 150 employees, stating that federal funding for the organization has dropped from \$19 million to \$10 million for this fiscal year. National Chief Matthew Coon Come states that the funding shortage is a reactionary measure by Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault because of Aboriginal opposition of the proposed overhaul of the *Indian Act*. Mr Nault has previously stated that but 518ands of the p8(s fra sece feviire -t)5.15ifing for 8he orw y stars

chosen leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of

agreement on the fine print of the Kyoto Accord. The deal provides a detailed rulebook governing the complex treaty aimed at reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide.

13 November Budget The federal Department of Finance announces that the budget surplus is continually shrinking because of declining tax revenues, although the surplus is still at \$14 billion after the first half of the fiscal year.

21 November *Revenue*

Don Drummond, Toronto Dominion Bank chief economist and former senior official of federal Finance Minister Paul Martin, urges the government to increase the GST to 10 percent and spend all additional revenues from the 3 percent increase towards a cut in income taxes. According to Mr Drummond, doing so would boost economic growth because sales taxes, unlike income taxes, do not drive investments out of the country.

28 November Anti-Terrorism Bill (Bill C-36) Bill C-36 passes final reading in the House of Commons with a voting result of 190 to 47 with strong support from Liberal, Canadian Alliance, and Progressive Conservative/Democratic Representative Caucus members of parliament. The anti-terrorism legislation receives royal assent on 18 December after passing through the Senate.

29–30 November Ministerial Conferences Ministers responsible for housing from both levels of government, in a meeting in Quebec City, reach an agreement on a framework to increase the supply of affordable housing across Canada. Under this agreement, the federal government will negotiate bilaterally with each province and territory in an effort to create more affordable housing throughout Canada more effectively.

30 November *Health Care*

An official for Health Canada announces that the department is setting aside \$600,000 to commission a major study on the affects of growing privatization of health care in Canada. The two-year research project has three purposes: to quantify current private services by province or territory and the type of service; to identify existing mechanisms to regulate private services delivery; and to explain the role of guidelines in preventing conflicts of interest in cases of similar services offered by private and public health-care providers.

The Assembly of First Nations votes 126 to 49 against a strategy for cooperation between the organization and the federal government to change the outdated *Indian Act*. Federal Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault, who worked with an AFN committee to outline the new governance

for terrorists; allow preventative arrests for suspected terrorists; allow law enforcement officers to force self-incriminating evidence from suspects in court.

20 December *Justice*

In an 8 to 1 ruling of the *Dunmore* v. *Ontario* case, the Supreme Court of Canada rules that Ontario's *Labour Relations Act* violates constitutional freedom of associa-

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