

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? A year in review of the current Liberal government



Another year has passed for the current Liberal government.

Sadly, 2017 didn't amount to much for this government, except for scandals, more broken promises, growing deficits, and increased taxes for ordinary, hardworking Canadians and their families. Looking back on the last year for this government, there is little to celebrate leaving Canadians concerned about what 2018 will bring, given the current government's track record to date.

In March, Finance Minister Bill Morneau delivered Budget 2017 in the House of Commons. The current Liberal government enthusiastically claimed that it was "a long-term plan to create jobs and strengthen the middle class." However, it was anything but. The only thing that was consistent in the Budget was more reckless spending, no results and higher taxes. The tax hikes contained in Budget 2017 only make it harder for struggling families to make ends meet. Furthermore, the Budget confirmed that the Prime Minister broke his promise to keep deficit spending under \$10 billion a year and to balance the budget by 2019. It puts the deficit for 2017-18 at \$28.5 billion and shows Canada running deficits into the foreseeable future.

Budget 2017 also hiked taxes on public transit users, Uber and ride sharing; beer and wine; donated medicines; child care; small business owners (farmers, fishermen, doctors, lawyers, accountants, etc.); oil and gas companies; and tourism. It also hurt seniors by scrapping the Public Transit Tax Credit; eliminating the Family Caregiver Tax Credit; and the Prime Minister's continued refusal to appoint a Minister for Seniors.

During the summer, the Prime Minister went out of his way to explain that hard-working fishers, farmers and small business owners weren't really paying their fair share of taxes and were, in fact, tax cheats. The Trudeau Liberals are targeting them with a massive tax hike, threatening jobs and the communities that are sustained by our local businesses. The Finance Minister has been looking for additional tax money, as it's needed to pay for the Prime Minister's out-of-control spending. They have not only been targeting small businesses for that tax money, but also Canadians with type 1 Diabetes, mental health issues and autism. While at the same time, their well-connected friends have been avoiding paying taxes here in Canada, as was revealed in the Paradise Papers this fall. This fall, Canadians also became aware of the Finance Minister's vast assets and his failure to properly disclose, divest or place them in a blind trust as required by the Conflict of Interest Act. This was Liberal hypocrisy at its best, as the Finance Minister was making the most important financial decisions for our country and trying to place tax hikes on those he calls tax cheats, while at the same time, standing to personally benefit from those very tax changes.

The fall did not end well for the current Liberal government either. The Auditor General tabled his Fall 2017 Reports which examined the bungled Phoenix Pay System, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Call Centres, Settlement Services for Syrian Refugees, Oral Health Programs for First Nations and Inuit, Preparing Women Offenders for Release and the Royal Military College of Canada. His reports confirmed a number of concerning issues that are plaguing the current Liberal government. The Auditor General estimates that because of Liberal inaction, the Phoenix Pay System will cost the taxpayer more than half a billion dollars to fix and more than 150,000 public servants still have outstanding pay requests waiting to be processed.

The Auditor General's report on CRA call centres highlighted that the Prime Minister's tax collection agency only answered 36 per cent of incoming calls, while blocking 29 million calls from Canadians. Worse still, 30 per cent of the time the Agency couldn't even provide an accurate response! The Prime Minister's adding insult to injury when he hikes taxes on middle-class Canadians and then allows his tax collectors to ignore or mislead the very people forced to pay for his \$100 billion deficit.

Throughout 2017, Canadians became increasingly and understandably frustrated by the mounting scandals, tax hikes and hypocrisy displayed by the current Liberal government. We, the Conservative Opposition, have a simple message for Canadians ? you cannot trust Justin Trudeau. He and his government created the problems of the last year. Real leadership and vision are required to fix the problems they've made. In 2018, we will continue to be the voice of ordinary, hardworking, taxpaying Canadians by holding the

current Liberal government accountable.