



Canada's Parliament

Harper goes prorogue

Parliamentary scrutiny may be tedious, but democracies cannot afford to dispense with it

Jan 7th 2010

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JLKrier wrote:

Jan 8th 2010 5:53 GMT

Being an American who has been a Canada watcher for many years I am not a "CPC hack.

It is not surprising to me that so many Canadians dive in to support the Economist on their usual hatchet job on all things Conservative.

But I must assume that most of the kudos on this screed are written by citizens of the "Taker" Provinces.

Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes should realize that taxing the holy hell out of the "Golden Geese" consisting of Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan so they can pay for their social welfare programs will lead to killing said goose eventually. ESPECIALLY if you keep up the drumbeat of environmental regs based on hokey science like AGW and Polar Bear endangerment. (Boy, Chretien joining Kyoto was effective wasn't it?)

Now all you have between you and a huge drop in tax receipts from Alberta etc is a level-headed PM like Harper.

Since your hero Dion turned out to be a disaster now you are placing your chips on a loser like Ignatieff? Cmon think about it!

And don't forget that the Economist always places their imprimatur on the lefty (think Obama) and when he goes disastrous they are SHOCKED, absolutely SHOCKED that the guy didn't do what they thought (hoped) he would do.

JLK

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calpadd wrote:

Jan 8th 2010 5:56 GMT

Please feel welcome whenever you visit the Banana Republic of Canada

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sUbrkGk7M wrote:

Jan 8th 2010 6:10 GMT

Here's what The Economist said about Ignatieff in April 2009: "At last, a credible opposition leader."

"And in helping to push out the hapless Mr Dion, he [Harper] has landed himself with a more formidable opponent in Mr Ignatieff." December 2008

So The Economist's prediction of a mass uprising against Harper may be as accurate as their predictions of Ignatieff's effectiveness.

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Bravo, The Economist! Stephen Harper would like to think that Jan 8th 2010 6:34 GMT
Canadians don't care about his government's handling of the Afghan detainee issue.
This Canadian is deeply troubled, not only that his government knew that detainees
handed over to Afghan authorities were in fact being tortured but also, and equally, by
Harper's arrogance in proroguing Parliament to take the issue off the table. Wouldn't it
be grand if we could all clear our slate when we find ourselves in trouble? Keep up the
good work!

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Valentin Erikson wrote: Jan 8th 2010 7:46 GMT
There's nothing out of the ordinary about doing this. What I like about prorogation in
this specific case, is that it represents a blow to the opposition parties, because it
makes it more difficult for them to criticize the Conservatives until Parliament resumes.
It is a very deft political move from a communications point of view.

I actually admire Mr. Harper even more now. Nobody cares about what liberals and
socialists think. According to poll results released Wednesday by Nanos' research firm,
the Conservatives enjoy a 9.3 per cent lead over the Liberal party. As long as we
remain ahead in the polls, opposition parties will not bring down the government.

And conservatives are soon to have a majority in the Senate!

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Snowbound wrote: Jan 8th 2010 8:22 GMT
Thanks JLKrier, it's always great to hear from the paranoid American right wing, all
singing from the same songbook. As for your knowledge of Canada, are you suggesting
that everyone in Ontario is living on social assistance courtesy of the over-taxed
Albertans? That makes as much sense as me saying that all Americans are narrow
minded, right wing bible thumping zealots (sure a few are, but certainly not the
majority).

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VAXZBqDDiy wrote: Jan 8th 2010 10:00 GMT
Prime Minister Harper's tactic to suspend parliament by extending the parliamentary
recess is a transparent manoeuvre aimed at:

- interfering with a parliamentary review into the Department of National Defence
handling of Afghan detainee abuse, what departmental officials, the Minister of National
Defence and Prime Minister Harper new and did about it; and
- preventing any parliamentary debate or commentary on the appointment of new
Conservative Senators.

This is a Prime Minister who campaigned and was elected on a platform of:

- fixed term elections (then he promptly called an election when poll results favoured
his party);
- greater governmental accountability (he has had fired several top public servants who
bring forward issues of police reform, nuclear safety or environmental concern); and
- being tough on crime (however this prorogation directly interferes with his
Conservative governments bills to address crime)

This is a Prime Minister that believes that Canadians are sheep, that we will be pacified
by the show put on for the world at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver & Whistler.
Just because federal funding for athletics included a logo strikingly similar to the
Conservative party's logo, Mr. Harper would like Canadians to believe that his party
paid for Team Canada, just like the shills that distribute obscenely tainted giant
cheques for public spending, with the logo of the Conservative party. Just how gullible
does he think Canadians are? Canadians have spoken loud and clear in recent public
opinion polling, essentially saying "We're mad as hell, and we aren't going to take it
anymore!"

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mXLmwu4Fov wrote: Jan 8th 2010 10:04 GMT
Harpers motto is "If you don't like the message, shoot the messenger. If you don't like
the whistleblowers' information, fire or defame the whistleblower. If you don't want to
face the music in Parliament, prorogue Parliament!" Thank you Economist for shining
the international light on his disgraceful behaviour. The majority of Canadians do not
want or deserve this kind of leadership. Recent polls indicate we are appalled with our
Prime minister & embarrassed by his performance & very worried about his disdain for
Parliament. The complacent voting public are finally starting to wake up thanks to
articles like yours. Canadians owe you.

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Sheik Spear wrote: Jan 8th 2010 10:26 GMT
"When it reconvenes, those bills will have to start again from scratch."

Because of prorogation, bills passed by the elected parliament will not be obstructed by
the senate. The concept of democracy seems foreign to the Economist.

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This latest ploy proves that Stephen Harper is absolutely Jan 9th 2010 1:17 GMT shameless. I'm disgusted that he can so blatantly refuse to do the work the Canadian taxpayers are paying him to do. We cannot even hold our heads up internationally anymore between our pathetic environmental record and accusations that we knowingly turned people over to be tortured.

I agree with JonnyCanada, It's been a long time since our government has been in good hands.

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IntheNow wrote: Jan 9th 2010 1:47 GMT
A tactician. Exactly! A guy with a tiny narrow minded goal of hanging onto power, no vision for the future of Canada and Canadians. A guy who doesn't even believe in climate science appointed a science minister who doesn't even believe in science. Oh my God! Oops...

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La Vielle wrote: Jan 9th 2010 3:59 GMT
You are absolutely correct, tiscomen, about coalition governments. I don't know if you recall, though, the uproar of Canadians when the Liberals, Bloc and NDP were threatening to form one a few years ago - most Canadians just do not understand the Parliamentary system, and that is exactly what Harper is counting on.

He is, indeed, a very dangerous man !

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Chat.Rana wrote: Jan 9th 2010 4:36 GMT
I rarely, if ever, agree with the Economist. But on this one, yes, definitely. Harper has no more than one third of the population on his side, and he has clearly been using undemocratic and unethical means to hang on to power. Harper should not make the mistake of believing that Canadians will go on indefinitely rejecting an election. People will lose their patience sooner than later.

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Keith Mahar wrote: Jan 9th 2010 6:48 GMT
I was disappointed that Prime Minister Harper has delayed the start of Canadian parliament.

As documented on www.keithmahar.com, I submitted documents to NDP leader Jack Layton in late November respecting evidence of a long-term case of systemic corruption involving the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC), media companies and senior politicians.

I have requested that the NDP address the issue, and the destruction of related documents in CRTC file 1000-121 shortly after Mr Harper became Prime Minister, and while former CRTC commissioner Beverely Oda was Heritage Minister.

It was my hope that the NDP would be able to ask the Harper administration about the case in parliament during January. Now, it appears, any such questions in parliament must wait a spell.

Readers might be interested in reviewing the information sent to Mr Layton that is available on my website.

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Cowgal wrote: Jan 9th 2010 4:59 GMT
Thank you for "Harper goes prorogue". Stephen Harper is from Alberta and Alberta is his template for how to destroy democracy. From deregulation of electricity to the slow starvation of the health care system (to destroy universal health care), to the latest legislation on land rights (removal of, for energy transmission to the U.S.), to control of the media and MLA's voices, Alberta is corporatism run rampant and has no government of the people.

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Joel Cuerrier wrote: Jan 9th 2010 6:00 GMT
Last time, it was to "oppose" the democratically elected Bloc within the coalition. Going as far as to say a coalition government wasn't "democratic".

This time, it is to avoid the questions they don't want to answer. I've been going threw Canadian medias and you'd be shocked, but no one seem to agree with this move. Not even the most conservative Albertan press, no one. Certainly not our leftist press here (Quebec), who use the same silly rhetoric as the Right for similar issues... that is to say, calling this a dictatorial move (Reductio ad Hitlerum works both ways). But Right-Wing and Left-Wing Canada can all get together on this one and feel ripped off by our government. Why even vote, if you're not represented? Why pay taxes if they can't be bothered to tell you what those taxes are for? I think it's time to boot out Ignatieff and work on a new coalition, no choice, that government just discredited themselves.

Mind you, I am very much right-wing and have a hard time with NDP running around wielding any forms of power. I am so disgusted by Ignatieff that I'd rather vote for the Green, the Bloc or the Conservatives despite it all. So, since no one satisfies us... and that is a bully move by the Tory, I do hope a few things happen.

- 1) Stephen Harper lose his job, eventually! Not sure how, it would need to come from his own discontented caucus. What he done now is disgraceful!
- 2) Michael Ignatieff lose his job, as soon as possible! No one take him seriously as an alternative. He may be good for the BBC and the New York Times, he is not to run a country.

We start reforming our parties to something people can feel they want to vote for. In the meantime, don't be surprised if Quebec keep on voting for the Bloc, en bloc... and not just the separatists as the Tories would love you to believe, but everyone.

Don't mention it too loud, but this remind any separatist... why they want to separate! Proroguing the Parliament, with the blessing of Her Majesty? Get us the hell out of this country! D.G. Regina, yes right.

The Economist mention also that Canada have a decentralized Federalism? Now really, we didn't notice? You tell that to Québec (socialist secessionist) and Alberta (conservative secessionist) and see who agree with this. We'd really love to be like the US with Provinces wielding much more power, but that is just plainly not the case. If the Federal government want to get out of the way, fine. Rewrite the Constitution and outsource most of what you do to Provincial, which can trickle it down to Municipal government as well. The Federal can deal with the army, highways and foreign policies. Canada is way too big to allow for a functioning Central Government whom never can understand the problems each regions face. That is a problem every separatists understand... and now other Provinces start to see what we meant, 45 years later or so.

If the Tories themselves hate to respond to questions, maybe we shouldn't have to ask them in the first place. If you don't want to yield the powers granted to you, give it to the Provincial PMs. Time to americanize Canadian politics if you ask me, we're too large for this nonsense, we're not European. Irresponsible central government leave us all in the dark.

What if tomorrow, we had terrorists bombing Toronto or Montreal or, you know, the more likely target that will become Vancouver during the Olympics, under a Prorogued Parliament? I'm not sure exactly how that would play out, but I wonder. What would we do then? How would the decisions for our response be taken? I am a conservative at heart, which characterize me as someone who don't trust the government too much. Who is now responsible for this country if we are attacked? The Governor General exclusively? I don't like that one bit!

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Lloyd MacLquham wrote: Jan 9th 2010 6:20 GMT
For all the non-Canadian readers, here is some context:

It is common knowledge that Harper has the greatest contempt for all Canada's Democratic institutions and is systematically dismantling this nation and abandoning its responsibilities leaving the Provinces to fill the void. To see just exactly what he has planned we simply have to look at what he has done.

Harper caused serious disruption to Parliament and its Committees, obstructing and responding only with insults instead of any serious discussion. He then called an election contrary to the spirit of his legislation, claiming that Parliament is dysfunctional - neat trick, make it dysfunctional and then use that to justify his anti-democratic actions.

Soon Harper will claim Canada is dysfunctional and defer entirely to the Provinces.

The power to do these things has always been there, especially for PM's that have a majority, or even a large majority. So, why is Harper doing this, whereas Mulroney and Chrétien didn't. One need only consider that the previous PM's had the interests of Canada, all Canadians and the future of this nation, at heart.

Whereas, Harper's base is in Alberta. They make up the die-hardest of his supporters, and perhaps the source of the lion's share of the Con's funding. Harper, from the start has done everything to increase Alberta' autonomy and protect its oil industry, and Canada be damned - this is nowhere more apparent than Harper's policies on Global Warming. Natural Resources Department assessment indicates that the projected increase to economic growth from the oil industry is \$885 billion between 2000 and 2020, including growth of \$634 billion in Alberta. Just imagine how much the benefit would remain in Alberta if there were no Federal taxes. Then there is the transfer payments, which would be hugely increased, that would be done away with. You do the math.

Note that: "where much is decided at the provincial level" is 'Con[servative] code' for the above.

Proroguing Parliament is outrageous and a very dangerous precedent. As pointed out.

Now anytime the PM gets his government into trouble they simply has to prorogue. This will have a neutering effect on Parliament and marginalize it to the point of being irrelevant. Without Parliament, who will be in a position to keep Harper and the Con's in check. There is no other Institution that has the right to obtain the information, present it to Canadians and actually do something about it.

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As far as Afghanistan Detainee Transfer Scandal, Harper may be able to Prorogue Parliament. But, he can't Prorogue the the International Criminal Courts at the Hague - those 'For whom the Gavel Falls' - must answer.

How do you get a seat as an onlooker at the Int'l Criminal Court, anyway. Do they sell tickets? Do you to book in advance? Are there Scalpers? Can you apply to be on the prosecution team? Pro Bono? I asked MacKay, you were Foreign Affairs Minister, to check that out for me, but I haven't heard back, yet. Any of your reading know. Thanks.

Lloyd MacIquham cicblog.com/comments.html

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Whalebone wrote: Jan 9th 2010 6:44 GMT
I am a former parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party of Canada and I am appalled at what Mr Harper has done.

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Fabio C wrote: Jan 9th 2010 8:33 GMT
cccc

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Measure twice and cut once wrote: Jan 9th 2010 9:37 GMT
I am amazed at this comment by 2592380 on Jan 7 at 6:30 PM (quoted below):

(By way of a footnote, I was Official Agent for a Tory candidate in a past federal election and worked for my local Tory candidate in 2006; in 2008 I stayed on the sidelines)

'The sad reality is that the Parliament of Canada has become little more than a circus. Proroguing it robs the Canadian people of nothing -- there is no valuable discussion, debate or consideration that happens within the House of Commons. Nor are its committees anything more than a platform for political theatre.

While proroguing does not harm, neither does it provide any solutions. Nothing short of a sea change in political culture in Canada will herald any lasting improvements.'

The key, 2592380, is **accountability**. Yes, the Opposition has fewer resources. Yes, the Opposition is not as well organized as the Harper team. But the Opposition can hold accountable the Government, including the PM and his Ministers, for their actions or lack of action on issues if the House of Commons is in session!!

Harper says he wants to consult Canadians on the proposed March budget; that is behaviour like that of Venezuelan Pres. Chavez with his mass television shows and polls. Why not consult our elected MPs, Prime Minister? Such a puzzling and confusing lunge for power!!

If we degrade Parliament we could well get a Supreme Soviet rubber stamp. Remember, PM Harper in November 2009 sadly wanted to cut research budgets before the Opposition. So sad. That created the first proroguing in December 2009. Please consider writing (postage free) to the PM and your MP to say you want Parliament to resume January 25! The address is The Rt. Hon. Steven Harper, PC, MP, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6. For your MP it is (again postage free) `Name of Member, MP, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6.

Remember e-mails can be deleted but letters have to be opened to see what the comment is.

Also, please be polite as one always gets more bees with honey than vinegar!!

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