

All in all, it has been an interesting week because, in spite of the Christmas break in Ottawa, Justin Trudeau has made some of his most definitive statements yet on what a Liberal government will do. He has done a number of those traditional year-end interviews with the major media outlets and has revealed some key elements that will be the focus of the upcoming campaign. Links to some of those interviews are below.

Income and wealth inequality regained higher profile last week, with a study released by the Broadbent institute showing just how much of our nation's wealth is concentrated in less than 100 families. The report was picked up by the Toronto Dominion Bank, which examined the damages to our social and economic wellbeing that result.

Falling oil prices and difficulties in building pipelines continue to be a drag on the Conservatives, who maintain that come hell or high water, Canada will record a surplus in 2015. Their measures to produce this surplus - cutbacks to public services and the public service - and their dedication to income-splitting, continue to draw broad-based criticism.

Prime Minister Harper has also done some year-end interviews, but has taken positions that have drawn criticism, particularly his non-support of an enquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Our messages to the public:

Liberals focused on growth for middle class families

Liberals believe that government must not only create the right conditions for economic growth, but also ensure that growth is sustainable and will finally help struggling middle class families.

The Conservatives' income splitting plan favours the wealthy, is bad for growth, and is bad for the middle class. Middle class families should not have to pay to give families like the Prime Minister's a \$2,000 tax break.

This week, Justin Trudeau sent [a letter](#) to Finance Minister Joe Oliver outlining the need for Budget 2015 to help middle class families.

Mr. Trudeau is offering a bold vision for Canada. His priority is clear: we must bolster the strength and prosperity of middle class Canadians, who have not had a decent raise in 30 years. Canadian families deserve a real and fair chance at success.

Items of interest from the news and the party:

-This week, the Party released two new radio highlights highlighting problems with the Harper government's [income splitting](#) plan and mismanagement of [veterans affairs](#).

-Leader Justin Trudeau announced two new advisory councils:

Economic Council -

<https://www.facebook.com/JustinPJTrudeau/photos/a.101277015648.106166.21751825648/10153015872980649/?type=1&theater>

International Affairs Council -

<https://www.facebook.com/JustinPJTrudeau/photos/a.101277015648.106166.21751825648/10153015946675649/?type=1&theater>

-Here are links to some of Mr. Trudeau's year-end interviews:

Unmuzzling Canadians - http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/12/22/trudeau-promises-unmuzzle-accessibility_n_6365040.html

Countering the Tories' cynicism and division -

http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/12/19/cynicism_and_division_are_legacy_of_tory_rule_trudeau_says.html

Re-establishing relations with provincial premiers -

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/trudeau-pledges-annual-meeting-with-premiers-if-he-wins-election>

-On the issue of the inequitable sharing of wealth and income:

Ed Broadbent narrates a video demonstrating the scope of the issue -

<http://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/wealthgap>

The TD Bank says addressing the issue will be good for the country -

http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/12/19/why_one_of_canadas_big_banks_is_calling_for_greater_income_equality.html

No party is looking out for the bottom 40% -

<http://www.hilltimes.com/opinion/2014/12/17/parties-ignoring-bottom-40-percent-in-pursuit-of-middle-class-votes/40610>

-PM Harper 'botched' the Keystone XL Pipeline

file: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/globe-politics-insider/how-harper-misread-obama-and-botched-keystone-xl/article22100412/>

-Unspent federal budgets called 'stealth budget

cuts': http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/colin-kenny/canada-budget-cuts_b_6249122.html

-And finally, the impact of Justin Trudeau on the Liberal Party has been a big story this year, while his impact on Canada is the news story to watch in 2015:

<http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2014/12/21/michael-den-tandt-fate-of->

[election-rests-in-trudeaus-hands-and-whether-he-can-live-up-to-his-skywalker-brand/](#)

Much more can be found on our Seniors Commission Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bclibs/> If you do not have access, please e-mail me for an invitation to this group.

Looking ahead:

Click here > [Season's Greetings!](#)