



Policy

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

Welcome to our issue on Budget 2016, the first of the new Liberal era. In fiscal terms, this budget represents a departure from Stephen Harper's orthodoxy on balanced budgets so bold that it was an election promise of Justin Trudeau's. In economic terms, it represents a Keynesian embrace of stimulus as a path to growth. In political terms, we offer two clichés: The jury is out and time will tell.

In this Issue: Budget 2016

- Our take on the budget begins with an overview from BMO economists [Douglas Porter and Robert Kavcic](#), who note the budget projects “a string of deficits as far as the eye can see.” [Jack Mintz](#), President's Fellow at University of Calgary's School of Public Policy, writes that “it is hard to believe that deficits will come in below \$30 billion in any year.”
- BMO Vice-Chair [Kevin Lynch](#), a former clerk of the Privy Council and deputy minister of finance, offers a beyond-the-budget view of the larger and longer-term growth challenges facing the Canadian economy.
- Across the aisle, Conservative finance critic [Lisa Raitt](#) offers an Opposition critique of Budget 2016. Raitt reiterates the Conservatives' contention that they left the Liberals with a balanced budget for 2015, indeed, a small surplus, and is unsparing about the deficit.
- And our columnist [Don Newman](#), who has covered budgets going back several decades, offers his impressions of Bill Morneau's first budget.

Beyond the budget...

DEMOCRATIC REFORM:

- We've decided to make *Democratic Reform* an ongoing feature in *Policy*. In an article titled “Referendum, Yes or No”, Contributing Writer [David Mitchell](#) notes that while waiting for the proposed reforms, “there appears to be support at this stage for a referendum to approve changes to the way we vote.”
- From the Institute of Governance, [Davide Cargnello and Karl Salgo](#) consider the Westminster system meeting the challenge of the digital age. “Governments,” they write, “are being confronted with the reality that they no longer hold the monopoly on defining citizens' roles, responsibilities and interests.”
- And in a *Guest Column*, Green Party Leader [Elizabeth May](#) predicts “There will be an open and honest national consultation” on electoral reform, and writes that Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef “is off to an impressive start.”

CANADA AND THE WORLD:

- In our *Canada and the World* section, [Jack Hughes](#) looks at the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, and feels “certain that Canada will be part of it.” How could Canada not be, given our reliance on trade, especially with the U.S. and Mexico in NAFTA, with the 12-nation TPP opening up 40 per cent of the world's economy?
- [Jeremy Kinsman](#), our lead writer on foreign affairs, considers the Middle East as a failed region, with Syria at the epicentre of it.
- From the University of Regina, Fulbright Fellow [Cheryl Camillo](#) notes that eight provinces and 11 U.S. states have a shared border, and suggests that provincial health ministers could benefit from a dialogue with their U.S. colleagues. Time for a meeting, Camillo suggests. Hands across the border on health.
- [Michael Bourque](#), CEO of the Railway Association of Canada, writes that short-line railways are essential lifelines for remote communities, and for moving their products to markets in Canada and the U.S.
- Finally, in a *Verbatim* from a keynote at the Manning Conference, *Washington Post* columnist [Michael Gerson](#), former chief speechwriter to President George W. Bush, weighs in on the candidacy of Donald Trump and concludes that “Trumpism is Putinism by another name.”

Enjoy the issue!