
Chronology of Events

January 2000 – December 2000

Victoria Crites

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4 January 2000
Environment

Documents reveal that the federal government has long been considering legislation to ban bulk fresh-water exports. However, only five provinces have thus far signed on to an accord with Ottawa that would create a national ban on bulk fresh-water exports, since the accord was introduced nearly a decade ago. Currently, Canada only sells its water in bottles and approximately 80 percent is shipped from Quebec to the United States. Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba refused as recently as two months ago to sign on.

6 January 2000
New Brunswick

New Brunswick Premier Bernard Lord's "200 days of change" come to an end and Premier Lord seems to have accomplished 19 of his 20 promises. He is still working on one of the most controversial promises — that of eliminating tolls from all roadways in New Brunswick.

7 January 2000
Political Parties

Reform Party leader Preston Manning sends a letter to all 65,000 party members, in which he promises to quit as leader if the delegates to an upcoming national convention reject his initiative for a new United Alternative party. Manning's announcement comes as a surprise to

Reformers and prompts BC MP Jay Hill, who has been against the United Alternative proposal, to say now that he will stand behind Manning and his plan.

8 January 2000
*British Columbia/
Political Parties*

Former BC Finance Minister Joy MacPhail withdraws from the provincial New Democratic Party (NDP) leadership race and puts her support behind front-runner Ujjal Dosanjh. Now only three candidates remain: Dosanjh, Gordon Wilson, and Agriculture Minister Corky Evans. NDP party members will elect a new leader and premier at a convention in Vancouver 18–20 February. The new leader will replace the interim premier, Dan Miller, who has held the office since Glen Clark resigned amidst scandal last August.

12 January 2000
Supreme Court

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin is officially sworn in as head of Canada's Supreme Court at a Rideau Hall ceremony. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, several federal ministers and Supreme Court judges were in attendance. McLachlin replaces the retiring Antonio Lamer.

12 January 2000
Supreme Court

Ontario's Attorney General Jim Flaherty says it is his duty as government protector of the vulnerable to defend Ontario's right to prosecute child pornographers. Therefore, he intends to appear before the Supreme Court of Canada next week when they hear arguments about the controversial child pornography possession legislation.

13 January 2000
Budget

Ottawa's Finance Department reports a budget surplus of \$7.8 billion in the first eight months of the 1999–2000 fiscal year. The surplus is expected to provoke further demands for tax cuts in the upcoming budget, to be announced in late February.

13 January 2000
Newfoundland

Newfoundland's Premier Brian Tobin shuffles his Cabinet, which causes speculation regarding the future of the Voisey's Bay mining project and the Churchill River hydro-electric proposal as Tobin replaces Roger Grimes, his energy and mines minister, who has been the chief negotiator on the projects. Opposition House Leader Loyola Sullivan suggests that Grimes and Tobin could not agree on how best to proceed with the proposals. The major Cabinet shuffle also results in new postings in health, finance, justice, and municipal affairs.

13 January 2000
Agriculture

Federal Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclicf announces an aid program designed to give struggling farmers access to \$1 billion over the next two years. The program will be cost-shared, with Ottawa picking up 60 percent of the tab and the provinces, the remainder.

14 January 2000
Premiers' Meeting

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard announces the date for the next Premiers' Meeting. It is set to take place in Quebec City on 3 February. The premiers and territorial leaders will gather to discuss a strategy to pressure the federal government into sharing some of the budget surplus, which is estimated to reach \$95 billion over the next five years. The highest priority for all the premiers is the allocation of more money for health and education. All premiers are expected to attend.

15 January 2000
Quebec

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard declares that his government's first priority is health care. Next on the list of priorities are: youth and education, tax cuts, and then, sovereignty. When asked about the possibility of a sovereignty referendum this year, Bouchard responds by saying that "winning conditions" must be met before Quebecers wade into another referendum, and stabilizing the health-care system is an important aspect of stability — one of the necessary "winning conditions." Bouchard's declaration comes on the heels of the flu crisis, which exacerbated the health-care situation in Quebec over the New Year's holiday. Emergency rooms across the province are still overcrowded.

17 January 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The Snuneymuxw (Nanaimo) First Nation rejects a joint federal-British Columbia government offer which included \$40.3 million and 2,128 hectares of land. The 1,500 member band, which is currently living on 263 hectares south of Nanaimo, wants 4,300 hectares of Crown land plus 14,450 hectares of private land (potentially to be purchased from those willing to sell). The Snuneymuxw stated that they plan to take the land claim to court if the government does not substantially improve its offer. Peter Smith, of BC's Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, says the package offer was the beginning of the process, not the end.

17 January 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Phil Fontaine, the Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, says that the federal government's Clarity Bill is a "major cause of concern," for the 43 First Nations living in Quebec. Fontaine explains that although he partially supports the goal of the proposed legislation, he is concerned that the legislation does not take into account the viewpoint of First Nations people residing in Quebec with respect to any possible future secession negotiations between Quebec and the federal government.

18 January 2000
Ontario

Ontario Premier Mike Harris calls on the federal government to give Canadians a 20 percent cut in income tax. The request was forwarded in writing to federal Finance Minister Paul Martin by Ontario's Finance Minister Ernie Eves. Harris's provincial government has cut personal income taxes by 30 percent since it was elected in 1995.

18 January 2000
Ontario

Ontario Premier Mike Harris says that he will not be persuaded by pressure from Ottawa to provide funding for all private religious schools. A recent United Nations ruling found that Canada is violating international law because Ontario does not fund non-Catholic religious schools. Ontario remains the only province that does not, in some way, fund religious schools.

19 January 2000
Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Canada's hearings on the controversial child-porn possession law wrap up today after the nine judges hear two days of arguments. At dispute is the question: Is the infringement upon Charter rights justifiable (under section 1 of the Charter) in the pursuit of child protection? Vancouverite Robin Sharpe, who was charged under the law nearly five years ago in BC, successfully challenged it; both a BC trial court and the BC Court of Appeal have struck down the law as a breach of the constitutional protection provided by the Charter. Lawyers for the federal and BC governments say they are using the court to put children's rights ahead of those who would create or possess child pornography, while civil liberties groups argue that the law is too broad and should be redefined to criminalize only those who abuse children in the production of child pornography.

19 January 2000
HRDC

An internal audit by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) reveals that as much as \$1 billion in annual federal grants has been spent with few checks into how that money was being used. The audit discovered that at least 80 percent of the projects funded show no evidence of any financial monitoring by the federal government. Also, 87 percent of the projects received no supervision by officials, and 25 percent of the files did not even show what kind of activity Ottawa was funding. Opposition Reform Party's human resources critic Diane Ablonczy says this discovery will diminish Canadians' confidence in the government's ability to handle their money. Human Resources Minister Jane Stewart admitted to "sloppy administration," but said they were working to correct the problem. The audit examined programs funded by HRDC from April 1997 to June 1999.

25 January 2000
Quebec

The Quebec government refuses to renew a ten-year-old federal-provincial agreement that provides funds to ensure access to English-language health services in Quebec. The agreement was a 50-50 deal where the federal government contributed \$359,000 per year as did Quebec. The program funds a group of coordinators who act as liaisons between Quebec's English community and the provincial health-care network. The deal was originally penned in 1989 when Lucien Bouchard was then a senior Cabinet minister in the federal Conservative government. At that time, Bouchard wrote, "It seems eminently possible to follow in Quebec, without contradiction, the objectives of the promotion of the French language and the respect of the minority English population." The deal was renewed in 1994 by Jacques Parizeau's PQ government. Bouchard's current PQ government justifies its denial of the renewal by accusing Ottawa of intruding into a provincial jurisdiction.

29 January 2000
Political Parties

After much debate, at the Reform Party's annual three-day meeting, the new name is official: the Canadian Conservative Reform Alliance or the Canadian Alliance for short. Reform delegates worked on the new policy platform for the new party, which is similar to the Reform Party platform, but now supports official bilingualism and

a specific flat tax rate of 17 percent. Reform Party members will vote on joining the Canadian Alliance through February and March. A two-thirds majority is required for the Canadian Alliance to become a registered party.

31 January 2000
Political Leaders

Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow declares that Ottawa must give struggling farmers more support than the recently announced \$1 billion over the next two years. Romanow explained that farmers are facing the worst crisis since the Depression due to low commodity prices and he intends to lobby his fellow premiers at the upcoming Premiers' Meeting in Quebec City on 3 February.

1 February 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

At a native conference, Alex Denny, the leader of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council warns that more violent clashes between native and non-native fishers are likely to occur again in the spring. Federal negotiators have been working out deals with individual bands in New Brunswick since the Supreme Court rendered the *Marshall* Decision last September. The decision upheld an Aboriginal treaty signed in 1760 that allows Aboriginal people in Atlantic Canada to fish year-round in order to maintain a "reasonable livelihood." Disputes over whether or not this means *any* restrictions apply to Aboriginal fishing led to rising tensions and some violent incidents between the native and non-native communities in New Brunswick last fall.

3 February 2000
Premiers' Meeting

As expected, the health-care issue dominated the Premiers' Meeting that was held in Quebec City. The premiers emerged at the end of the day united in support of their letter to Prime Minister Chrétien asking for an immediate rescue of Canada's failing health-care system. This should include both a cash infusion and a possible future restructuring of the system itself. The premiers also repeated their call for transfer payments to the provinces to be restored to the levels that existed prior to the extensive cuts, which the Liberals began implementing in 1994. Also mentioned was support by the provinces for the tax cuts that have already been promised by Chrétien for the upcoming federal budget.

21 February 2000
HRDC

At a news briefing today, David Good, an assistant deputy minister at HRDC explains that it is difficult for businesses to make a go of it in the depressed regions of the country that the Canada Jobs Fund targets. His comments were an attempt to reply to the recently released audit that found that the Canada Jobs Fund gave more than \$12 million to 51 companies between 1997 and 1999 that went bankrupt or simply closed down before any projects were completed or any jobs created.

21 February 2000
Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Canada begins hearing arguments made on behalf of eight provinces and territories that are challenging the federal government's power to realize a national system of gun control. The challengers include Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. With Alberta leading the way, the provinces claim that since guns are private property, their regulation falls under provincial rather than federal jurisdiction. Justice Frank Iacobucci pointed out that the *Firearms Act* is about not only the registration of guns, but about the registration of gun users, and moreover that Parliament has said that the issue is rooted in concern for public safety and criminal law.

The *Firearms Act*, which was passed by Parliament in 1995, compels all gun owners to be licensed by the end of this year and every gun to be registered by the end of 2002. Over the next two days, the Court will also hear from the Coalition for Gun Control and several victims' organizations.

21 February 2000
Atlantic Canada

Provincial spokespersons in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island state that the provinces will not be seeking taxes from those cash settlements the federal government recently awarded to merchant marine veterans. The four provinces had previously threatened to seize the cheques issued by Veterans Affairs Canada in order to garner a portion in taxes. The federal Cabinet allocated \$50 million for the program, which will include lump-sum payments of up to \$24,000; the payments have been declared non-taxable by Revenue Canada.

22 February 2000
Atlantic Canada

The two-day truckers' blockade at the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border of the Trans-Canada highway ends. The blockade had been organized to protest the steep rise in diesel fuel prices. A trucker's protest on Parliament Hill prompts Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to remark, "these prices have increased around the globe. The level of taxation by the federal government on these products is the lowest of probably any other country in the world." Similar trucking industry protests are also happening in the United States.

23 February 2000
*Aboriginal Peoples/
Clarity Bill*

Chief Ted Moses of the Grand Council of the Crees tells the parliamentary committee on Bill C-20 that his nation supports the goal of clear rules for a sovereignty referendum, but he also believes that the bill ignores the constitutional rights of Aboriginals. Moses emphasized the need for Aboriginal participation in any secession negotiations with Quebec.

23 February 2000
Clarity Bill

Joe Clark tells the parliamentary committee studying the Clarity Bill (Bill C-20) that the bill would tie the hands of future politicians with respect to preventing Quebec's possible separation. Clark says that the bill would make it impossible for politicians to employ "ambiguity ... and find ways in which we might save Canada."

23 February 2000
Justice

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations demands that the province hold a public inquiry into the allegations surrounding the Saskatoon police force. More than 100 complaints of police threats and abuse have been called into the federation since two police officers were suspended in connection with a complaint from Darrell Night who alleges that the officers took his coat, dropped him outside town and told him to walk home. The RCMP is currently investigating the incident and the freezing deaths of four other Aboriginal men.

25 February 2000
New Brunswick

The federal Fisheries Department plans to buy back more than 1,000 commercial fishing licences, as well as boats and equipment from fishermen who are ready to either retire or change careers. The move is aimed at easing the pressure on fish stocks in Miramichi Bay, New Brunswick and will allow more expansion within the native

fishery. However, Robert Levi, the chief of Big Cove reserve in New Brunswick says that Aboriginal fishermen do *not* require licences under the *Marshall Decision*, rather they only need to proceed in an "orderly and regulated fashion."

28 February 2000
Budget

Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin delivers the annual federal budget. The message of the budget is a focus on the future and the underlying theme is, as Martin puts it, "the days of deficit are gone and they are not coming back." Accordingly, Martin's budget framework is based generally on the following principles: sound fiscal management, lower taxes to promote economic growth, investment in providing Canadians with skills and knowledge for jobs, and to build an economy based on innovation. Tax relief is the cornerstone of the budget. The personal income tax system is to be fully indexed and applied retroactively to 1 January 2000, actual tax rates are to be lowered over the next five years, and the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) will increase from \$1,975 to \$2,265 by July 2001 and up to \$2,400 over the next five years. Higher taxed industries (like high technology services) will see their tax rates lowered from 28 percent to 21 percent over the next five years and investors will now be allowed a \$500,000 tax-free rollover when investing in new ventures.

Other highlights of the budget include: increased funding of \$2.5 billion to the provinces for postsecondary education and health care (CHST) over the next four years (Ottawa expects the provinces to spend \$1 billion next year and \$500 million in each of the following three years), \$900 million in funding over five years for 2,000 new research chairs at universities, \$900 million in funding to Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI: a foundation that helps postsecondary institutions, research hospitals to modernize their equipment, labs, etc.), \$700 million toward environmental technologies and research, an additional \$240 million in relief for prairie farms, and as promised in the Speech from the Throne — an increase in maternity and parental benefits under the employment insurance program.

29 February 2000
Budget

An angry Premier Mike Harris demands that Ottawa give an explanation of the meager health-care funding

announced in yesterday's budget. The additional \$2.5 billion over four years to provinces for health care, social programs and postsecondary education is not enough for even health care alone, according to Harris. He further suggests that the federal government has a top-down overhaul of the health-care system in mind and is deliberately underfunding the provinces in order to force them on board with the plan.

1 March 2000
Justice

Saskatchewan Justice Minister Chris Axworthy calls on his federal counterpart, Anne McLellan, to help formulate a plan that will restore the Aboriginal peoples' faith in the justice system. Axworthy's request comes in the wake of the unresolved freezing deaths of two Aboriginal men outside Saskatoon. Two Saskatoon police officers have been suspended with pay in connection with the incident, while an RCMP task force investigates.

1 March 2000
Health

Federal Health Minister Allan Rock offers to meet with his provincial counterparts as early as next week to discuss the problems of the health-care system. The offer comes in response to the provinces' laments about the budget's shortfall on health-care funding.

1 March 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The new grand chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations Ed Schultz accuses the federal government of deliberately stalling on First Nations land claims agreements, while at the same time expediting the devolution of natural resources from Ottawa to the Yukon government. Schultz and other chiefs representing 11 First Nations communities warn that they may not support devolution if the federal and provincial governments do not move negotiations forward much more quickly.

2 March 2000
Ontario

Ontario Corrections Minister Rob Sampson asserts that Parliament's proposed changes to the young offender laws are insufficient. The new *Youth Criminal Justice Act* proposes lowering the age at which young people can face adult sentences from 16 years to 14 years, also the names of youth who face adult sentences would become public. Currently, the publication of the names of young offenders is banned.

3 March 2000

Environment

An environmental agreement is signed between Diavik Diamond Mines, the Northwest Territories (NWT) and the federal government which will potentially allow Diavik to start work on its \$1.3 billion mine. Aboriginal and environmental groups have expressed concerns regarding the effects of Diavik's construction plans in the northern area. Diavik still requires a building permit from Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault and a licence from the NWT water board. Diavik has already awarded \$90 million in construction contracts.

3 March 2000

Quebec

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard states that on an upcoming trip to Paris he plans to denounce Ottawa's Clarity Bill as being undemocratic. In early April, Bouchard plans to meet with France's Prime Minister Lionel Jospin to discuss political, economic, and cultural issues. Federal Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion sees this appeal to the international community as a sign of desperation within the separatist cause.

8 March 2000

*Newfoundland/
Aboriginal Peoples*

Amid continuing stories of sky-high suicide rates and substance abuse in native communities, the Newfoundland government announces plans to form a committee to study the problems of Aboriginal communities in Labrador. Provincial Justice Minister Kelvin Parsons pointed to factors such as isolation, insufficient housing, high unemployment, substance abuse and unresolved land claims as the largest burdens on Aboriginals in Newfoundland and Labrador. Premier Brian Tobin is slated to lead the committee.

9 March 2000

Political Leaders

Alberta Treasurer Stockwell Day announces his bid for the leadership of the nascent Canadian Alliance Party. In turn, Reform Party leader Preston Manning, in an effort to focus on his own political future, says he will hand over his duties as opposition leader in the House of Commons to deputy leader Deborah Grey if Reformers vote for the new Canadian Alliance Party. The referendum results on the new party will be released 25 March and the subsequent leadership vote is set for 24 June.

9 March 2000

Health

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein announces that the provincial health ministers will meet the week of 21 March to discuss the problems plaguing Canada's health-care

system. Klein also expressed the hope that a follow-up premiers' meeting on health care will happen in April.

9 March 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear the Benoit case which will examine the question of whether or not Ottawa granted tax-free status to Aboriginals under Treaty 8 when it was signed in 1899. The Benoit family of Ft. McMurray, Alberta argues that the federal government violates the treaty by compelling Aboriginals who earn off-reserve income to pay income tax and to pay GST on goods and services purchased off-reserve. Bonnie Moon, of the federal Justice Department, says that if the Benois win, she expects that other treaty natives would file similar lawsuits.

13 March 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

A two-year pilot project aimed at providing culturally-sensitive justice programs in Northern Manitoba will cost \$703, 088 and is set to be cost-shared by the federal and Manitoba governments. Six First Nations of Manitoba will participate in the community-based project.

13 March 2000
Political Leaders

In an interview with *le Journal de Montreal*, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien states that he intends to stay on the job. While acknowledging that some Liberals would like to see Finance Minister Paul Martin replace him, Chrétien emphasized that he is in charge of the party and is preparing for the next election. He also pointed out that 60 percent of Canadians are satisfied with his government according to recent polls and this suggests that winning conditions exist for a Liberal government at the election. "What more could you ask for?" Chrétien mused.

14 March 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal fishermen walk away from the federal negotiating table in Fredericton. A councillor at the Burnt Church First Nation, Kathy Lambert says the reserve has given up hope of an agreement with Ottawa and instead they intend to come up with their own plan for managing the fisheries. Federal Fisheries Minister Herb Dhaliwal recently stated that he hopes to have agreements in place prior to the opening of fishing season on Miramichi Bay on 1 May.

15 March 2000
Clarity Bill

The House of Commons overwhelmingly passes Bill C-20, the Clarity Bill, by a vote of 208 to 55; this was accomplished after 36 hours of recorded votes on nearly 400 Bloc Québécois amendments, which were all defeated. Two NDP amendments that proposed changing the bill to include Aboriginal peoples as political actors in the referendum review process passed. Bill C-20 is based on the 1998 Supreme Court of Canada decision which outlined broadly the required criteria for a province to secede. The bill states that the federal government will only negotiate secession with a province if there has been a clear question and a clear expression of the will of the citizens of that province. The Bloc Québécois has vigorously opposed the bill, calling it undemocratic. Stéphane Dion claims that the bill protects the interests of all Canadians in that it helps to protect federalism. It remains for the Senate to approve it before it becomes legislation.

21 March 2000
*Reform Party/
Quebec*

At a hearing on Quebec's Bill 99, Reform MP Grant Hill says that the Reform Party would propose changes to the federation that would accommodate Quebec's long sought-after demands, thereby resolving the national unity problem. Hill stated that the Reform Party would propose a legislated "withdrawal of the federal government from health, education, language and culture, family policy, natural resources, manpower training, municipal affairs, sports and recreation, and housing and tourism." Joseph Facal, Quebec's intergovernmental affairs minister said he was appreciative of Hill's remarks. The Bloc Québécois created Bill 99 in response to the Liberals' Clarity Bill.

22–23 March 2000
Agriculture

In what is said to be an excellent example of cooperation among federal, provincial, and territorial governments, agriculture ministers from these governments, in a meeting in Ottawa, agree on a tentative plan that includes basic safety-net programming and an income disaster component. After ratification, the plan is later signed at the annual meeting of agriculture ministers and deputy ministers in Fredericton on 5 July. At the latter meeting, there is also agreement on the general principles of a proposed Canadian Farm Income Program — an initiative for disaster assistance programming. CFIP will contribute \$2.2 billion of the \$5.5 billion, three-year agreement by ministers.

23 March 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Chief Ted Moses of the Grand Council of the Crees declares that the Cree are not a part of the Quebec people and they will not be assimilated. Moses's comments are in response to the Quebec government's Bill 99, which refers to "the Quebec people." The Cree have denounced the proposed legislation as "colonial and anti-democratic." The bill is currently before a legislature committee.

23 March 2000
Political Parties

After a Liberal caucus meeting, MPs emerge united behind Prime Minister Jean Chrétien as their leader. In recent weeks, squabbling between Liberal supporters of Paul Martin and Chrétien loyalists had intensified over Martin's prospects for leadership. At the caucus meeting, Chrétien discussed plans for a possible fall election and reminded his caucus that there will be no leadership race until he retires.

24 March 2000
Quebec

Ottawa pledges \$700,000 in funding in order to ensure that Quebec anglophones will have access to health and social services. The money will pay for English health-access coordinators whose continued employment in the province was in question earlier this year when the Quebec government refused to renew a long-standing intergovernmental agreement that had obligated the Quebec government and Ottawa to share the cost of the coordinators.

30 March 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Some Aboriginal fisheries start opening for the season in Atlantic Canada while federal Director General of Resource Management David Bevan declares, "fishing will be orderly and regulated." The Fisheries Department is currently negotiating agreements with several First Nations bands in the area in an attempt to ease tensions between the native and non-native fishing communities. Tensions remained and have often erupted into violence, since the Supreme Court's *Marshall* Decision last September upheld the 1760 Aboriginal treaty right to "hunt, fish and gather" in order to maintain a moderate living. Subsequently, the Supreme Court also released a statement clarifying that the federal government still had the right to regulate Aboriginal access to resources like lobsters, trees or minerals. Bevan said that three of 34 bands have signed agreements and negotiations continue on a band-by-band basis.

4 April 2000
Political Parties

Stockwell Day, candidate for the leadership of the Canadian Alliance Party, drops in on Tory leader Joe Clark's fundraiser in Regina in order to let Clark know that the "door is open" to the federal Tories. Day emphasized that many Tory members are coming over to the Canadian Alliance. Clark, in turn, suggested that Day's momentum would not hold, especially given his tough opponent in the leadership race, Preston Manning.

4 April 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The First Nations National Accountability Coalition releases a report condemning the spending practices of several bands. The report is the result of the hearings that were held across the country to gather information on band management and spending. Leona Freed, president of the coalition says that unless changes occur, many band members are ready to engage in uprisings. Among the coalition's recommendations are: direct delivery of federal funds to band members rather than through chiefs and councils; a native ombudsman for dispute resolution; and an overhaul of the election method for chiefs and council that would eliminate the "family connection advantage" and promote competitive appointments. The Canadian Alliance Party helped to finance the hearings.

7 April 2000
Senate

The Prime Minister's Office announces the appointments of entertainer Tommy Banks and former lieutenant-governor/farmer Jack Wiebe to the Senate. Liberals in the Senate now number 55, Progressive Conservatives total 40 and there are five independents and five vacancies. Recently, Prime Minister Chrétien expressed confidence that the Senate will likely ratify Bill C-20 and these appointments should further support his conviction.

7 April 2000
Clarity Bill

Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion states that Ottawa will not define specifically what percentage of the vote in a Quebec referendum would constitute a clear majority. Many circumstances would need to be considered, says Dion, including the views of all political parties in Quebec and those of Aboriginal peoples. Bill C-20, which was passed by the House of Commons on 15 March, outlines the rules for any province's future secession. The bill stipulates that a clear question in a referendum and a clear expression of the will of the people

must occur if secession negotiations with the federal government are to begin.

9 April 2000
Quebec

Quebec's Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Joseph Facal says that public hearings on Bill 99 have made it clear that the bill requires revisions. More than 60 submissions were made over the course of the hearings. Yet, despite the many requests for changes to the bill, many feel that the bill has failed to stir nationalist emotions among Quebecers.

20 April 2000
Supreme Court

The Supreme Court agrees to hear the precedent-setting case in which the Osoyoos First Nation is appealing the decision made by the BC Court of Appeal that denied the band the right to tax the nearby town of Oliver for an irrigation canal that runs through reserve land. The case will not be heard for at least several months.

27 April 2000
*Atlantic Canada/
Fisheries*

Ministers responsible for fisheries in Quebec, Nunavut, the Atlantic provinces and federal government meet in St. John's to discuss the implementation of the *Marshall* Decision in the Maritimes, with universal support for access to the commercial fishery for affected First Nations groups, based on the Supreme Court of Canada ruling. The Nova Scotia minister emphasizes the importance of keeping the commercial sector informed of the details on the interim agreements.

4 May 2000
Environment

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and BC Premier Ujjal Dosanjh visit Clayoquot Sound to mark the region's designation as a UN biosphere reserve. The beautiful, densely-forested area was the focus of international scrutiny when protestors took on the logging companies there in the early 1990s. A huge road blockade in 1993 led to over 800 protestor arrests. International pressure combined with a near riotous demonstration at the BC legislature led then-premier Mike Harcourt and his NDP government to change its logging industry policy. Prime Minister Chrétien is set to formally hand over \$12 million in federal funds for the reserve to begin an endowment fund dedicated to research and training.

7 May 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

On a visit to Yellowknife, Minister of Indian Affairs Robert Nault announces the creation of an intergovernmental forum between Aboriginal leaders, the territories, and Ottawa. The aim of the forum is to organize agreements that will transfer more money and control over northern resources (such as diamonds and natural gas) to the territories from Ottawa. NWT Premier Stephen Kakfwi stated that this move toward local control could result in the Northwest Territories becoming Canada's first "have" territory.

8 May 2000
National Unity

Premier Lucien Bouchard rallied 1,800 delegates at a Parti Québécois convention on the weekend by affirming the party's objective of independence and promising that the next vote on sovereignty will be held "as soon as possible." The stance earned Bouchard a 91 percent confidence vote despite the fact that he failed to offer any firm sovereignty deadlines to party hardliners.

8 May 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Settlement of a land claims agreement creates a new First Nation in Northern Alberta. The Alberta government will transfer 7,689 hectares of unoccupied Crown land and \$3.2 million to the federal government. The federal government agrees to transfer a one-time payment of \$28 million and 1,000 hectares of land within Wood Buffalo National Park to the Smith's Landing First Nation. Chief Jerry Paulette says the historic agreement fulfils the obligations the government made to his people under Treaty 8, signed in 1899. Smith's Landing First Nation has 272 band members.

8 May 2000
Political Leaders

Progressive Conservative leader Joe Clark challenges the Canadian Alliance leader, who is yet to be decided, to run against him in a by-election in the Calgary centre riding. Clark issued the challenge at a Tory fundraising banquet, where he also called the Alliance Party's policies "racist, homophobic and anti-French." Clark has yet to hold a seat in the House of Commons since he took over the leadership of the Tory Party nearly two years ago.

9 May 2000
Health/ Ontario

The Ontario government pledges \$25,000 in compensation for each person who contracted hepatitis C from infected blood, but was excluded from last year's federal-provincial compensation deal. That \$1.2 billion national

agreement only applied to victims who contracted the disease between 1986 and 1990, whereas the Ontario deal will extend compensation outside that window. \$25,000 is the same compensation amount given to victims under the federal-provincial plan of last year.

10 May 2000
*National Unity/
New Brunswick*

New Brunswick creates a team of lawyers to work on constitutional matters such as Quebec sovereignty questions, native treaty rights, and French-language education. The province intends to budget \$800,000 for the current seven-member team.

12 May 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Federal Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault and BC Premier Ujjal Dosanjh attend festivities in the Nass Valley of British Columbia as hundreds of Nisga'a members celebrate the formal enactment of the historic Nisga'a Treaty. The treaty gives self-governing powers, approximately 2,000 square kilometres of land and cash to the 5,000-member band. The deal, which has been approved by the Nisga'a people, the federal government, and the BC government, is being challenged on a constitutional basis by the BC Liberal Party.

15 May 2000
Atlantic Canada

Canada's four Atlantic premiers sign an agreement that creates the Council of Atlantic Premiers. The premiers believe that the Council will give the Atlantic provinces more clout in Ottawa and strengthen regional unity. One of the first items on the Council's agenda is to pressure Ottawa to remove the ceiling on equalization payments to provinces.

17 May 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Federal Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault announces a new \$75 million fund created to stimulate Aboriginal economic development. Nault explains that the money will not be used on a per capita basis, but rather on strategic investments in the hope of reducing long-standing, high unemployment in Aboriginal communities.

19 May 2000
National Unity

Quebec Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Joseph Facal and federal Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion mark the twentieth anniversary of the first sovereignty referendum (20 May 1980) by discussing sovereignty at an academic conference. Facal declared that

he is confident that Quebecers will “choose the path of a modern sovereignty,” while Dion told attendees that most Quebecers are very attached to Canada and would prefer to see improvements in Canada and Quebec’s place in the federation since “Canada belongs to Quebecers just as much as it does to other Canadians.”

22 May 2000
Clarity Bill

Ontario Liberal Senator Anne Cools claims that the Prime Minister’s Office has deliberately excluded senators who might be critical of Bill C-20 from studying it. She argues that the PMO set up a special Senate committee to study the bill that does not include members of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs — of which Senator Cools is a member. Senate Leader Bernie Boudreau replied to Senator Cools and other Liberal senators who are critical of the bill by saying that the Senate’s role in constitutional affairs is a limited one.

23 May 2000
Premiers’ Meeting

The Western Premiers’ Conference gets underway today in Brandon, Manitoba. The two-day meeting will focus largely on health-care issues but is set to include discussions on the environment and the deterioration of services in the airline industry since the Air Canada/Canadian Airlines merger.

24 May 2000
Premiers’ Meeting

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein spends much of the Western Premiers’ Conference defending his controversial Bill-11 legislation. The bill, which allows for overnight stays in private clinics for medicare-covered procedures, has been widely criticized both inside and outside Alberta as a step toward a two-tier health-care system. Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow, although critical of the bill, suggests that the premiers should focus on the bigger picture — the ailing health-care system, which simply provokes provincial responses like Bill-11. Premier Gary Doer of Manitoba agreed and remarked that in the past five years the four western provinces have had to come up with an additional \$7.5 billion in health-care funding while Ottawa has withdrawn \$2.4 billion. The premiers are united in calling on the federal government to restore health and social transfer payments to pre-1995 levels.

25 May 2000

Agriculture

A meeting between the four western premiers and two US governors (North Dakota and Idaho) concludes at the International Peace Garden on the Canada-US border. A number of issues were discussed, including the role of the Canadian Wheat Board in grain marketing, but nothing was resolved. The one conclusion of the short afternoon meeting was an agreement among all the attendees that agriculture subsidies to both Canadian and US farmers require study.

27 May 2000

Aboriginal Peoples

An agreement to begin negotiations on Aboriginal self-government is signed by the federal government, the Saskatchewan government, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Saskatchewan has 74 First Nations groups which are collectively represented by the federation. The agreement outlines guiding principles for developing new relationships between the three governing bodies, which is intended to facilitate extensive future negotiations in specific areas such as justice, lands and resources, health, housing, and taxation.

30 May 2000

Health

Provincial and territorial health ministers meet in Quebec City, unanimously agreeing on the following requests and initiatives: immediate unconditional reinstatement of the Canadian Health and Social Transfer to 1994-95 levels of funding; an appropriate CHST escalator; to continue to explore innovation and adaptation deemed necessary to ensure the sustainability of a quality publicly-funded health-care system.

31 May 2000

Atlantic Canada

Federal Natural Resources Minister Ralph Goodale announces the creation of a binding arbitration panel to end the 14-year-old dispute between Newfoundland and Nova Scotia over the boundary line in the North Atlantic. The dispute can be traced back to the 1986 Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Accord, which drew a boundary that gave a larger share of a potentially oil-rich 60,000 kilometres to Nova Scotia. Retired Supreme Court Justice Gerard LaForest will head the panel.

13 June 2000

Clarity Bill

Federal Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion tells the Quebec Cree that if they challenge Bill C-20, they would likely fail because of the bill's constitutional

strength. Grand Chief of the Cree Ted Moses has said that his people may challenge the bill unless the Aboriginal right to be included in any secession negotiations is explicitly recognized in the bill. Dion says it is unnecessary to include Aboriginal participation in the bill since the constitution already guarantees Aboriginal people the right to participate in any negotiations that would affect their interests.

15 June 2000
Supreme Court

In a unanimous judgement, the Supreme Court upholds Parliament's 1995 gun control legislation. The nine justices clearly reject the provinces' arguments that guns do not fall under federal jurisdictional powers. The decision stated that, "Gun control has traditionally been considered valid criminal law because guns are dangerous and pose a risk to public safety."

Justice Minister Anne McLellan took the opportunity to announce changes to the gun control system that are geared to simplify and reduce the costs of the registration process, in an effort to encourage more gun owners to comply with the *Firearms Act*.

19 June 2000
Political Parties

Membership in the Canadian Alliance jumps significantly — from approximately 78,000 members in March to over 200,000 this month. Ken Kalopsis, the party's co-president also adds "the memberships reflect interest in every part of the country."

19 June 2000
Finance

Ottawa outlines a new \$90 million fund designed to create awareness of the federal government's activities across the country. The fund, which is to be spent over the next three years, will largely be used directly for advertising purposes (\$57 million). The remainder will support projects at the Canada Information Office to ensure federal presence in the provinces. This new fund is in addition to the \$45 million that is already earmarked in the annual budget for federal government advertising.

20 June 2000
Political Parties

Current and former Tory Party members in Quebec and Ontario receive free and unsolicited Canadian Alliance membership cards in the mail. The cards bore their addresses but other people's names. The incident adds to the Alliance's growing credibility problem, since a recent

check into the approximately 2,800 new members in the Gaspé revealed that at least 600 of the new memberships are spurious.

21 June 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The government of Nunavut decides to back a major Aboriginal group in its court challenge of the federal government's gun control legislation. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the firm that administers the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, argues that the *Firearms Act* contradicts the land claim agreement which extends to the Inuit the right to hunt without fees or licences.

23 June 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

One day after the BC Treaty Commission releases its annual report, in which it states that the treaty process is at a stand-still, Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit calls on Premier Ujjal Dosanjh to become involved in the treaty negotiations before the process dies entirely. John claims that both the federal and provincial governments are not living up to the agreement made in a 1991 Claims Task Force Report where all parties promised that no pre-conditions would apply to the negotiations. John states that both the federal and provincial governments are maintaining positions that preclude discussions on shared resources and jurisdictional powers.

24 June 2000
Political Parties

The two-day Canadian Alliance Leadership Convention ends today without a definitive leader being chosen. Candidate Stockwell Day received 44 percent of party member support, while Preston Manning garnered 36 percent and Tom Long 18 percent. Of the 205,000 Alliance members, only about 120,000 voted in the leadership contest. Both the Manning and Day camps are expected to campaign aggressively until the run-off ballot, which is to be held 8 July.

6 July 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The BC Court of Appeal decides that Canada's fisheries minister does have the right to set up a separate commercial fishery for natives. The BC Fisheries Survival Coalition has been struggling for seven years to put a stop to the Aboriginal fishery in BC claiming that a "race-based fishery" is unfair to all Canadians. The coalition is considering taking its case to the Supreme Court of Canada.

7 July 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Federal officials and representatives of the Westbank First Nation of BC sign an Aboriginal self-government agreement, which dispenses with much of the *Indian Act*. The signing marks the end of nearly ten years of negotiations.

8 July 2000
Political Leaders

In a much-anticipated run-off vote, Stockwell Day claims victory as the leader of the newly named Canadian Alliance Party with 64 percent of the vote. Day is formerly the Treasurer of Alberta.

12 July 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Matthew Coon Come, a Cree leader from northern Quebec, receives 58 percent of the vote at the Assembly of First Nations to become its new national chief. Of the 494 votes cast by eligible chiefs, Coon Come garnered 287 supporters, while current chief Phil Fontaine conceded defeat with 207 votes. Coon Come gained national prominence when, as the Cree Grand Chief he fought the Hydro-Quebec project planned on Cree land. As the new AFN national chief, Coon Come says he plans to use international organizations like the United Nations to shame Canada into recognizing Aboriginal rights and sharing natural resources.

Coon Come's campaign emphasized that the AFN under Fontaine's leadership had become too much of a service provider for Ottawa rather than an organization aggressively fighting for native concerns, whereas the Fontaine camp focused on the accomplishments of the AFN in recent years because of Fontaine's "bridge-building" approach. Marilyn Buffalo, former president of the Native Women's association won only 13 votes and Lawrence Martin, Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuk First Nation (near Timmins, Ontario) received 26 votes.

16–18 July 2000
Atlantic Canada

The 25th Annual Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers takes place in Halifax. A number of resolutions are made, such as each member government of the conference will make efforts to identify and, if possible, remove unnecessary impediments restricting the further development of the knowledge economy, and to work collaboratively in its further development; a call to respective university-level organizations to explore significant expansion of university-level exchange programs; the establishment of the Standing

Committee on Trade and Globalization; a call to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Canada to intensify efforts for the implementation of effective emission reduction strategies.

18 July 2000
Environment

Pollution Probe, a Toronto-based environmental group, presents an environmental report card to the Atlantic premiers at the conclusion of the two-day conference of Atlantic Canadian premiers and New England governors held in Halifax. Prince Edward Island received an "F," Nova Scotia a "B-," and New Brunswick and Newfoundland both received "Ds." The aim of the conference was to promote business relations between New England and Atlantic Canada. However, several Canadian and US environmental groups were also given some time at the meetings during which they emphasized the goals of reducing acid rain and mercury emissions.

25 July 2000
Local Government

Walkerton, Ontario receives \$3.5 billion in an interest-free loan from the provincial government to replace pipes that cannot be cleared of the E. coli virus. In May of this year, Walkerton's water supply was contaminated with the E. coli virus causing the deaths of seven residents and illness for over 2,000 residents. A public inquiry into the cause(s) of the tragedy is currently underway.

25 July 2000
Political Leaders

Joe Clark announces his intention to run in the Kings-Hants Nova Scotia riding. Current MP Scott Bryson will step aside to allow the federal Progressive Conservative leader to run in the traditional Tory stronghold riding. The by-election now remains to be called by Prime Minister Chrétien, and although he has six months to do so, Clark has made it known that he would like to be in the House of Commons by September.

25 July 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The BC Supreme Court rejects the BC Opposition Liberal Party's challenge of the Nisga'a Treaty. Justice Paul Williamson said in his 76-page ruling that "[a]lthough the right of Aboriginal people to govern themselves was diminished [by Canada's Confederation] it was not extinguished." The BC Liberal Party plans to appeal the ruling.

4 August 2000
*British Columbia/
Aboriginal Peoples*

Justice Douglas Halyard of the BC Supreme Court reserves his decision in the Haida court challenge to Weyerhaeuser's licence to log in the Queen Charlotte Islands. The BC Forest Ministry first issued the licence in 1961 to MacMillan Bloedel and it was transferred to US-based Weyerhaeuser after the company took over MacMillan Bloedel. The Haida Nation argues that the licence (which covers one-quarter of the Queen Charlotte Islands) should not have been transferred without settling the outstanding Haida land claim first.

5 August 2000
Health

Ontario Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Norm Sterling says the federal government is stalling on paying its share of health-care costs and furthermore, it is trying to break up the unity among provincial governments on the health-care issue. Sterling's comments were a reaction to a letter sent this week to premiers from Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. The letter outlined Ottawa's position on health care.

9–11 August 2000
*Annual Premiers'
Conference*

The forty-first Annual Premiers' Conference takes place in Winnipeg, with a strong focus on the future of federal transfers in Canada. The premiers release a final report on the sustainability of the health-care system called "Understanding Canada's Health Care Costs," which includes a number of facts and reasons that support a call by the provinces and territories for the federal government to restore cash funding to 1994–95 levels, or before the CHST was implemented. Fiscal imbalance is also a hot topic, with discussion once again returning to a call for a restoration of federal transfers — the premiers support their argument with "A Federation Out of Balance," a paper commissioned by the western finance ministers. Overall, the major agreement among premiers is a call to the prime minister to restore the \$4.2-billion to the CHST along with some guarantee of annual funding increases. Jean Chrétien has stated that he wants an agreement on health-care reform before any increased funding takes place.

Early childhood development is also discussed, with the premiers agreeing on the importance of family and community support for the well-being and proper physical, emotional and social development of children. The

premiers list a number of priorities, principles and recommendations to enhance progress on this issue, particularly on cooperation and assistance from the federal government.

The premiers release the *Fifth Annual Status Report on Social Policy Renewal*, which provides updates on the status of the Social Union Framework Agreement and the National Children's Agenda, as well as a number of other social programs.

15 August 2000
Environment

Federal Environment Minister David Anderson promises that Aboriginal people will have input into upcoming legislation regarding the protection of endangered species. National Chief of the AFN Matthew Coon Come applauded the announcement and added that guaranteed harvest levels would be a part of the establishment of a list of endangered species. Environmental groups such as the World Wildlife Fund and the Sierra Club acknowledged the importance of recognizing Aboriginal traditional knowledge where endangered species are concerned.

17 August 2000
Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Canada agrees to hear arguments and decide whether sections of BC's *Heritage Conservation Act* surpass provincial jurisdiction when it comes to the protection of Aboriginal artifacts and historical sites. The Kitkatla First Nation located near Prince Rupert is appealing a January 1999 ruling by the BC Court of Appeal that said that BC did have the power to make decisions regarding native sites. Lawyers for the Kitkatla band argue that the Kitkatla people specifically have the Aboriginal right to a coastal tract of land that has been logged by Interfor Ltd. since 1982, and the area contains marked trees of significant cultural and spiritual value to the band. The case will not be heard for several months.

23 August 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Lasting tensions in Miramichi Bay, New Brunswick boil over as several Aboriginal fishermen throw rocks at Department of Fisheries and Oceans officers who were seizing native lobster traps. One officer is in hospital awaiting reconstructive surgery to his face. Two native boats sank during the violent clash, while the RCMP helped fisheries officers seize 553 native lobster traps and one native boat and arrest two native fishermen. Indian Affairs

Minister Robert Nault plans to be in Burnt Church in a few days for more discussions on the issue. The RCMP are expected to maintain a strong presence in the Burnt Church area while the tensions continue.

25 August 2000
Quebec

Premier Lucien Bouchard tells a news conference in Granby, Quebec that Quebecers will not support Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day because Day's values are too different from those of Quebecers. Particularly, Bouchard pointed to Day's support of the death penalty and his opposition to abortion and gun control as fundamentally irreconcilable with Quebec voters. Bouchard also took the opportunity to tell the press that he is frustrated because Prime Minister Chrétien never calls him.

31 August 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Approximately 30 Tyendinaga Mohawks block off a major commuter bridge east of Belleville, Ontario in support of the Mi'kmaq natives of New Brunswick. The blockade was in place from early morning to early evening, but protestors were allowing motorists to pass after handing them information on the Mi'kmaq cause.

5 September 2000
Alberta

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein announces more than \$200 million in spending initiatives which include funds for postsecondary institutions and energy-rebate cheques for taxpayers and businesses. Alberta's budget is currently in a \$5 billion surplus position thanks to even higher than expected oil and natural gas revenues. Klein also hinted at the possibility of a spring election.

5 September 2000
Ontario

Thousands of Ontario students return to school today amidst the fight between Ontario teachers and the provincial government over class size and extracurricular activities. Students will also be getting used to a new "code of conduct" which includes mandatory singing of the national anthem every morning.

5 September 2000
British Columbia

An all-day kindergarten class funded by user fees gets underway at West Bay elementary school in Vancouver. User-pay public education is a first in BC where 12 families are each paying \$350 per month to allow their children to stay in school until 3:00 pm, rather than 11:30 am when other public-financed classes end. BC Education Minister

Penny Priddy says she has "huge difficulties" with the program and wonders whether it will lead to a trend toward privatization within the province's public school system.

7 September 2000
Justice

Manitoba's Justice Minister Gord Mackenzie plans to bring the issue of establishing a national child-support collection system to the annual meeting of Canada's ministers of justice set to take place next week in Iqaluit. Mackintosh hopes to streamline the jurisdictional process for enforcing support orders when they apply to parents who are delinquent in paying support and have moved to other provinces.

8 September 2000
Justice

The Ontario government calls on the federal government to make DNA testing mandatory upon arrest. Blaine Harvey, a spokesman in the federal solicitor general's office, responds by stating that Ottawa has already considered the idea but ruled it out because it "posed too great a Charter risk." Ontario's Attorney General Jim Flaherty acknowledged the challenge that exists under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. However, he suggested that the law could be "designed in such a way to withstand constitutional challenge." The issue is expected to be discussed at the justice ministers' meeting in Iqaluit next week.

8 September 2000
Health

Ontario Premier Mike Harris announces that if Quebec does not sign off on a potential new health-care deal with the federal government, then he will not sign either. The surprise announcement was made at a joint press conference with Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard.

10 September 2000
First Ministers' Meeting

The First Ministers' Meeting is launched over dinner at 24 Sussex Drive. The meeting, which is expected to centre on health-care reform and funding, will take place tomorrow.

11 September 2000
First Ministers' Meeting

The First Ministers' Meeting concludes with Prime Minister Chrétien announcing a health-care deal that gives the provinces an additional \$23.4 billion in transfers over the next five years for health and social programs (of that, \$2.2 billion is earmarked for early childhood education), plus an extra one-time payment of \$2.3 billion specifi-

cally for diagnostic equipment. The prime minister and the premiers appeared to be uniformly satisfied with the agreement, which appears to many to be a signal that a federal election is on the horizon.

Also briefly discussed at the meeting was the \$2.65 billion infrastructure program, which was part of last February's budget. The plan is geared to repairing Canada's aging roads and water and sewage systems. However, no details of the plan were worked out. Ontario and Quebec both have concerns (Ontario about its share of the money and Quebec about how the federal-provincial jurisdictions will be worked out).

11 September 2000
Elections

Two new MPs will be joining the House of Commons. Joe Clark surprises nobody by winning the Kings-Hants riding of Wolfville, Nova Scotia in a by-election. Likewise, Stockwell Day wins his seat easily in his chosen riding of Okanagan-Coquihalla, BC.

11 September 2000
Political Leaders

Former Ontario Premier Bob Rae is appointed as mediator in the Mi'kmaq fishing dispute in Burnt Church, New Brunswick.

12 September 2000
Political Parties

Quebec Progressive Conservative MPs Diane St-Jacques and David Price defect to the federal Liberal Party. Pundits see this as another sign of an upcoming federal election as Prime Minister Chrétien holds a news conference introducing the two new Liberal MPs as being part of a strong team.

18 September 2000
*Local Government/
Environment*

The city of Hamilton, Ontario is fined \$300,000 under the federal *Fisheries Act* and an additional fine of \$150,000 levied by the provincial Ministry of the Environment for allowing toxic waste to seep into Red Hill Creek and then Hamilton Harbour from a nearby landfill. The city pleaded guilty to the charges after a study was completed by the Environmental Bureau of Investigation. The investigation had been prompted by water samples that were collected and brought forward by environmentalist Lynda Lukasik and other Hamilton residents.

21 September 2000
Environment

A House of Commons Environment Committee unanimously recommends a federal environmental assessment

of the already Ontario government-approved plan for Toronto to dump its garbage into an abandoned mine near Kirkland Lake, Ontario. The committee also plans to hold a public hearing on the issue. Liberal MP Benoit Serre of Temiskaming-Cochrane riding in Northern Ontario declared that the Adams Mine project must be stopped, while the Chief of the AFN, Matthew Coon Come said the project could be a disaster for Aboriginal peoples in the northern regions of Canada. Federal Environment Minister David Anderson has asked the arm's-length organization — the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency — to advise on the matter.

25 September 2000
Political Leaders

Saskatchewan NDP Premier Roy Romanow resigns after nine years as premier and 35 years of political service. Romanow was first elected to the Saskatchewan legislature in 1967 and between 1971 and 1982 and he served as both deputy premier and Saskatchewan's attorney general. In 1979, after being appointed Saskatchewan's first minister of intergovernmental affairs, Romanow became an integral part of the federal-provincial negotiations, which led to the deal to "bring home" the constitution in 1982.

26 September 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Federal Fisheries Department boats launch another raid on Aboriginal lobster traps in Miramichi Bay, New Brunswick. Although there were no direct confrontations between the fisheries' boats and native boats, the RCMP and Coastguard helicopters maintained a presence in the area. More than 1,300 native lobster traps have already been seized, but native fishermen have been trying to replace them on an ongoing basis. The Mi'kmaq band council has declared that the lobster fishery will close down 17 October.

28 September 2000
Political Leaders

Former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau dies in his home in Montreal. Born in 1919, Trudeau graduated from the University of Montreal's law faculty in 1944. He also went on to study at Harvard, the London School of Economics, and in Paris. In the 1950s, Trudeau co-founded the small but influential magazine *Cité Libre*. Entering politics in 1965, Trudeau remained an advocate of a "just society" and an opponent of Quebec nationalism throughout his career. As justice minister in 1967, Trudeau gained

public attention when he spearheaded the amendments to the criminal code that liberalized the laws pertaining to homosexuality and abortion.

In 1968, he was elected leader of the Liberal Party and in short order became prime minister when the Liberals won the June election. The *Official Languages Act* was introduced under his guidance in 1969. Trudeau remained prime minister until the Liberals lost to Joe Clark's Tories in 1979. After the Tory government failed in 1980, Trudeau returned to his posting as prime minister, which gave him the opportunity to patriate the constitution and introduce the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982. Trudeau retired from politics in 1984, returning to a career in law in Montreal.

28 September 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

National Chief of the AFN Matthew Coon Come delivers an intense speech to a group of 300 at the University of Alberta. He declares that Ottawa is proceeding illegally in the Burnt Church fishing dispute and he accuses Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day of having a dangerous lack of understanding with respect to Aboriginal issues. Coon Come also accused Fisheries Minister Herb Dhalilwal of endangering lives by "playing cowboys and Indians." Coon Come warned that more disputes and road blocks were on the way if political leaders did not begin to take Aboriginal negotiations seriously.

30 September 2000
Political Leaders

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien receives Pierre Trudeau's coffin in Ottawa. Trudeau will lie in state in Parliament's Hall of Honour today and tomorrow, then in Montreal on Monday. A state funeral will be held Tuesday at Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal.

4 October 2000
Environment

The Pembina Institute, an environmental think-tank, delivers a report stating that Canada's five largest provinces (BC, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan) have failed to take any real action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Since the provinces have jurisdiction over areas like fossil fuel production, their action is fundamental to Canada's international environmental commitments. The United Nation's Kyoto Protocol was signed by Canada in 1997 and is due to be ratified by all the signatories by 2005. Under the agreement, Canada promises to reduce

its gas emissions to 6 percent below 1990 levels sometime between 2008 and 2012.

5 October 2000
Political Parties

A new poll by Leger Marketing show the Liberals have risen in popular support to 48 percent, while the Canadian Alliance has slipped to 19 percent. The poll also shows that support for the Tories is at 10 percent, the Bloc Québécois at 9 percent and the NDP at 10 percent. Rumours about a fall election persist and Prime Minister Chrétien has stated that he intends to invoke Trudeau's legacy on the campaign trail as he considers himself a key defender of Trudeau values. Chrétien explained that these values include tolerance, compassion, and social justice.

10 October 2000
Finance

Thirteen private sector economists meet today with Finance Minister Paul Martin to complete economic projections for the next five years. The group projects that the federal government will have approximately \$121.5 billion to use toward a combination of new spending, tax cuts, and debt repayment between now and 2006. The panel also pointed out that the Canadian Alliance Party's tax reduction plan would cost Ottawa between \$22 and \$25 billion per year, which would use up all of \$121.5 billion, leaving nothing for spending or debt reduction. Martin is expected to base his upcoming mini-budget on the forecasts offered by the group of economists.

11 October 2000
Local Government

Toronto City Council approves the controversial 20-year contract to send Toronto's garbage north to an abandoned mine near Kirkland Lake, Ontario. Hundreds of anti-dump protestors have gathered at City Hall over the past four days and many of the protestors vow that they will not allow Toronto to go forward with the plan. Both the Ontario and Quebec environment ministers have now signed off on the project, but City Council gave the federal government the option to decide whether or not they would carry out any environmental assessment on the project. The deadline for the federal government's decision on the assessment is 15 February 2001.

13 October 2000
Political Parties

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appears to have successfully persuaded Royal Bank economist John McCallum and Newfoundland premier Brian Tobin to run for the Liberal Party in the still-to-be-announced federal election.

14 October 2000
Environment

Canada and the US reach a draft agreement to cut smog-causing emissions on both sides of the border. The pact calls for Ontario to reduce by 50 percent emissions from power plants that burn coal, oil, and natural gas by 2007. In return, the US would reduce their emissions of nitrogen oxide by 35 percent. Ontario Environment Minister Don Newman criticized the federal government for not demanding more of the US. Newman lamented that the 35 percent reduction in US emissions is the standard that the US Environmental Protection Agency has already set for the US. Federal Environment Minister David Anderson, on the other hand, stated that he was pleased with the deal and that, in fact, Ontario presented the biggest obstacle in obtaining tighter restrictions in the pact.

15 October 2000
Political Parties

Brian Tobin prepares to step down as premier of Newfoundland, so that he can enter federal politics. The move fuels further speculation that the federal Liberals are about to make an election announcement.

17 October 2000
Environment

Ontario rejects a national program to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, the province insists that its own air-quality plans should set national standards. At a meeting of environment ministers, Ontario's Environment Minister Don Newman expressed disappointment with Ottawa's plan, while federal Natural Resources Minister Ralph Goodale said that it was regrettable that Ontario did not endorse the plan "but the door is still open." Environmentalists at the meeting criticized Newman, charging that Ontario's plan was too weak. Since Mike Harris's Conservative team formed the government, severe cuts have been made to the Environment Ministry and the province has been criticized for its use of coal-fired power plants.

17 October 2000
Political Leaders

Lloyd Axworthy officially steps down as minister of foreign affairs and confirms that he is moving to a position at the University of British Columbia. John Manley is appointed the new minister of foreign affairs and Brian Tobin replaces Manley as the minister of industry.

18 October 2000
Budget

Finance Minister Paul Martin unveils his mini-budget in the House of Commons. The key component of the mini-budget is the largest tax cut in Canadian history. The

five-year, \$100 billion tax plan is aimed at largely reducing the tax burden for Canadians at all income levels, but will especially benefit the middle-class (or upper-middle-class, depending on your definition) with the creation of a fourth income tax bracket for those earning between \$60,000 and \$100,000. Most of the tax changes are slated to come into effect on 1 January 2001 after the new legislation is passed. Also included in Martin's plan was a pledge to pay down the public debt by another \$10 billion in the 2000–2001 fiscal year. The debt currently sits at \$564.5 billion.

20 October 2000
Political Leaders

New federal Industry Minister Brian Tobin meets with shipyard owners and union leaders who are jointly demanding a national shipbuilding policy that they say would put thousands back to work. Les Hollaway, the director of the Marine Workers Federation expects cooperation, given that the minister had expressed support for the plan in his previous capacity as the Newfoundland premier.

22 October 2000
Elections

After a visit to Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson, Prime Minister Chrétien officially calls the much-anticipated early federal election for 27 November. The last federal election was held on 2 June 1997, just a little over three years ago.

24 October 2000
Political Parties

Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney introduces Joe Clark at the Progressive Conservatives' first major campaign event. Tory organizers are hopeful that Mulroney's presence will help revive support for the party.

25 October 2000
Political Leaders

Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day promises to give Newfoundland a break on resource development. Day pledged that, if elected, he would suspend Ottawa's clawback of equalization payments.

1 November 2000
Elections

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien releases the Liberals' election platform in the form of the *Red Book III*. Since most of the plans have already been detailed over the past few months, the Liberals emphasize their focus on new technologies, the Internet, and education.

6 November 2000
Elections

A new poll by Léger Marketing shows that the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois are tied in popularity with Quebec voters. Although the Bloc has the majority of francophone support, once all voters are considered each party has exactly 43 percent of popular support in the province.

6 November 2000
Elections

Alliance leader Stockwell Day spends the day campaigning with Peter Stock, the Alliance candidate in the Ontario riding of Simcoe-North. The move triggers renewed criticism of the Alliance Party as "anti-gay." Peter Stock is the director of the Canadian Family Coalition, which promotes the strict definition of family — as two married people of the opposite sex and their children — as the only definition that should be recognized by law. Alliance spokesperson Phil von Finckenstein says that the Alliance Party welcomes people of all backgrounds and viewpoints and although Peter Stock is a party member, he does not speak for the party as a whole.

9 November 2000
*Newfoundland/
Quebec*

Newfoundland Energy Minister Paul Dicks releases the province's new plan to dramatically cut back on the \$12 billion hydro-electric joint project with Quebec, originally proposed by former Premier Brian Tobin. Dicks said the project is now cut down in size to a \$3.7 billion project and there is no longer any intention to include Quebec. "It's a lot cleaner for [Quebec] to buy power than to get into a construction project with another province," Dicks explained. Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard seems to agree. Bouchard responded to Newfoundland's plan by saying that Hydro-Québec will buy the electricity and that prices are under discussion. Dicks also added that the province will not move forward with the plan unless a potential US buyer of electricity is also secured in advance.

16 November 2000
*Newfoundland/
Aboriginal Peoples*

After an emergency meeting is held to discuss the intensifying crisis of gas-sniffing and suicidal children in Sheshatshiu, the largest Innu community in Labrador, the Innu leaders call on the Newfoundland government to remove the high-risk children from the community for their own safety. Newfoundland Health Minister Roger Grimes says that the province has no intention of forcibly removing

children from their parents' homes without permission from the parents. Rather, he plans to first send additional social workers to the overwhelmed community to talk with and assess the 30-40 children considered to be at risk. Innu Nation president Peter Penashue says the unprecedented move is necessary because of the rapidly increasing rate of addiction for youth in the communities and that the removal of children would allow the parents to get counselling and treatment for their own addictions. Penashue added that the Innu call on the Newfoundland government because they do not have the authority to remove children from unsafe environments, but the province does have that authority.

20 November 2000
Political Leaders

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien rejects calls by Alliance leader Stockwell Day, Tory leader Joe Clark and NDP leader Alexa McDonough to hold an inquiry into his actions with respect to his involvement in securing a \$615,000 loan for the owner of the Auberge Grand-Mère, which is located in his riding. Chrétien insists that he acted appropriately, that all details are already public information and therefore an inquiry is unnecessary.

21 November 2000
Nova Scotia

A child poverty report released in Nova Scotia shows that 19.1 percent of the province's children live in poverty, which is an increase of 18.6 percent over the 1989 level. Annual child poverty reports continue to compare their figures with the 1989 numbers since that was the year in which the House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution to end child poverty by 2000. Poverty groups report that child poverty is on the rise in nearly every province, and nationally approximately 1.3 million children are poor, which is a 43 percent increase since 1989.

22 November 2000
Political Leaders

Ethics Counsellor Howard Wilson rules that Prime Minister Jean Chrétien did nothing inappropriate by calling a bank president on behalf of a constituent — the owner of the Auberge Grand-Mère. Wilson concludes that the prime minister had no personal financial interest in the arrangement and his communication with the then-president of the Business Development Bank of Canada, François Beaudoin, "did not violate any government rule."

The Auberge Grand-Mère is owned by Yvon Duhaime, who purchased the hotel from a company partly owned by Chrétien in 1993, before Chrétien became prime minister. However, the deal to also sell the shares Chrétien held in the golf course adjoining the hotel fell through in 1993, and he did not receive payment for them until 1999. Ethics Counsellor Wilson pointed out that Chrétien's business dealings have been held in a blind trust since 1993 and thus Wilson again ruled that the prime minister had no conflict of interest. Critical of the fact that Wilson was appointed by the prime minister and that Wilson reports to him directly, Stockwell Day, Alexa McDonough and Joe Clark all pledged to continue to press the issue. Interestingly, many of the provinces (including Ontario and BC) have their ethics counsellors report directly to the legislature instead of the premier so as to keep them separate and independent.

26 November 2000
*Political Leaders/
Aboriginal Peoples*

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien meets with Innu leaders in his home riding of Shawinigan on the day before the federal election. The Innu leaders travel from Labrador to discuss the much-publicized crisis of youth addicted to gas-sniffing in the communities of Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu. Also, Industry Minister Brian Tobin makes the twin announcement that "millions" will be spent to build a detox centre to help addicts and their families in both communities; and the Innu people will now be included under the *Indian Act*, which will qualify the Innu for tax exemptions and food subsidies not previously available to them.

26 November 2000
Elections

The 36-day election campaign draws to a close today and the party leaders make their last-minute efforts to sway undecided voters. Speaking in his Shawinigan riding, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien tells Canadians that they should elect a majority Liberal government as a strong bulwark against the Quebec separatist movement. Alliance leader Stockwell Day recorded a 15-minute "infomercial" in which he urged Canadians not to vote Liberal because their leader "cannot be trusted to spend Canadians' money wisely."

27 November 2000
Elections

As many pundits had predicted, the Liberals garnered their third majority under the leadership of Jean Chrétien in today's federal election. Additionally, the Liberal Party made significant headway in Quebec, winning 36 seats to the 38 seats won by the Bloc Québécois (the BQ lost six seats). The Canadian Alliance, while increasing its overall number of seats, failed to make its critical breakthrough in Ontario, winning only two seats in the province. The lowest voter turnout since Confederation (62.8 percent) gave the Liberal Party 40.8 percent of the popular vote, which translated to 172 seats; the Canadian Alliance formed the Official Opposition with 25.5 percent of the vote and 66 seats; the Bloc Québécois won 38 seats; the NDP 13 seats; and the Progressive Conservatives 12 seats. Of the 301 elected MPs, 62 are women.

30 November 2000
Saskatchewan

The entries for the leadership of Saskatchewan's New Democratic Party are known and the seven candidates that party members will choose from are: Environment Minister Buckley Belanger, farm activist Nettie Wiebe, former Social Services Minister Lorne Calvert, former Justice Minister Chris Axworthy, lawyer Scott Banda, Labour Minister Joanne Crofford and Highways Minister Maynard Sonntag. Members will vote for the new leader at a convention on 27 January in Saskatoon, or by mail. The new leader will become premier, since Roy Romanow announced his retirement in September. Lorne Calvert is considered by some to be the front-runner.

30 November 2000
Political Parties

Canadian Alliance aide Bob Runciman, who acted as co-chairman of the Alliance's Ontario election campaign suggests that a "new party on the right," is the only way to challenge the federal Liberals. Runciman also claims that there is not a lot of difference between the platforms of the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservatives, and therefore a merger between the two parties should be possible. Runciman further suggested that PC Leader Joe Clark was an obstacle to such a plan and that possibly even Stockwell Day may have to step down as a new party would need a new leader.

1 December 2000
Finance

Health Canada cuts funding to a native treatment centre on the Sagkeeng reserve 145 kms northeast of Winnipeg.

The funding is cut as a result of centre staff refusing to cooperate with a forensic audit that was ordered by Health Canada in October after the controversial story about 70 treatment centre employees taking a Caribbean cruise funded by the centre. Health Canada has been providing more than \$7 million annually to help the centre treat those suffering from drug, alcohol, and solvent abuse.

1 December 2000
Ontario

The Ontario government introduces legislation that will separate Ontario income tax rates from federal tax rates starting in January 2001. Ontario Finance Minister Ernie Eves emphasized that tax forms will still be processed the same way; Ontario will simply now be levying tax on an individual's income rather than collecting a percentage of federal income tax. The freedom to levy their own rates allows Ontario to give tax cuts beyond those offered by the federal government, Eves explained.

1 December 2000
Quebec

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard cancels his trip to Mexico City to attend President-Elect Vicente Fox's inauguration ceremony after he receives a downgraded invitation from the Mexican government. Bouchard angrily accused Ottawa of sabotaging his visit to Mexico as a national leader, claiming that Ottawa must have contacted Mexico after Bouchard received an invitation that was meant for heads of state. However, the Mexican government was quick to point out their error and send out the correct invitation as soon as the error was caught.

4 December 2000
Atlantic Canada

The Council of Atlantic Premiers calls on the prime minister to hold a First Ministers' Conference in January to discuss increasing equalization payments to poorer provinces. The Council explained that even with current equalization payments, the ability of their provinces to generate funds is far below the national average. Equalization payments to Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Atlantic provinces totalled \$9.8 billion this year. Premier Bernard Lord of New Brunswick stressed the importance of resolving the issue quickly since most provincial budgets are due in March of next year.

4 December 2000
Quebec

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard defeats a motion to use public funds to re-establish the Council for Sovereignty.

He argues that this is not the right time to push for sovereignty with public money when health-care services in the province already exceed the budget by \$430 million. However, the separatist hardliners see the Council for Sovereignty as an important step in showing that the PQ is serious about working toward sovereignty, and that commitment, they argue, requires public funding.

9 December 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

Speaking in Port Alberni, BC, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs Shelley Serafini apologizes on behalf of the federal government to the Nuu-chah-nulth people who were the victims of abuse at residential schools. The lawyer for seven former residents of the Alberni Indian Residential School on Vancouver Island questioned the timing of the apology since a prolonged civil trial in which his clients are seeking damages for alleged physical and sexual abuse is due to close in two days. The result of the civil suit is expected to be precedent-setting with approximately 5,000 outstanding claims of former students of residential schools throughout Canada.

10 December 2000
Local Government

Tens of thousands of peaceful protestors gather in downtown Montreal to show their anger over Bill 170, which mandates municipal mergers in Quebec. The PQ government plans to amalgamate the 28 municipalities that surround Montreal, creating a megacity. Protestors from all 28 communities took turns voicing their concerns over the potential loss of services and community spirit that could result from the merger. Bill 170 is expected to pass in the Quebec National Assembly on 18 December. Further plans to merge the Quebec City and Hull regions are in the planning stages by the provincial government.

11–12 December
2000
Finance

Provincial and territorial finance ministers meet in Winnipeg to follow up on issues raised at the Annual Premiers' Conference, and state that a number of these have remained unresolved, resulting in a call to their federal counterpart for an immediate meeting to address the following issues: expenditure and tax pressures; strengthening equalization and the Canadian Health and Social Transfer, which includes the removal of the equalization ceiling; transfers outside CHST and equalization; taxation issues, such as tax collection agreements.

13 December 2000

Budget

Finance Minister Paul Martin announces that there will be no traditional February budget next year since the Liberals are not planning any new spending initiatives. Martin further explained that the mini-budget that was announced in October goes into effect on 1 January 2001 and is expected to guide the government's spending for the next year provided that there are no drastic changes in the economy.

15 December 2000

Supreme Court

One of the Supreme Court's most anticipated decisions this year blames Canada Customs for 15 years of harassing a Vancouver gay and lesbian bookstore, but only strikes down one provision under section 152(3) of the *Customs Act* that supported the actions of Customs agents. Reaction to the 6-3 majority decision are mixed. The president of the Civil Liberties Association John Dixon called the decision a "landslide victory," but many other civil libertarians expressed disappointment that the court did not clarify or alter the existing "community tolerance" standard for obscenity (under section 163(8) of the Criminal Code) which allows the seizure of materials if the "community believes it could potentially cause harm." The striking down of the *Customs Act* provision reverses the onus of proof from the importers to Canada Customs agents; agents will now have to prove within 30 days that any seized materials are obscene. Previously, importers had to prove that a seized item was not obscene.

18 December 2000

*Ontario/Local
Government*

Stan Koebel, former manager of the Walkerton, Ontario public utilities admits, at a public inquiry into the E coli water contamination crisis, that he had neither the skills nor the education to perform the job he held for the past 12 years. Koebel corroborated the evidence given earlier this week by his brother (who also worked at the utilities commission) that they had mislabelled bottles and falsified reports in an attempt to keep up with their jobs. Koebel also said that since the Ontario Progressive Conservatives amalgamated local municipalities and deregulated public utilities, he held managerial responsibility for both the electrical and water utilities and was spending only 5 percent of his time managing the town's water supply.

21 December 2000
Aboriginal Peoples

The Ontario Court of Appeal rules that the social costs of returning more than 1,000 hectares of land in Sarnia, Ontario outweigh the necessity of returning the land to the Chippewa band over a bureaucratic error made back in 1853. The land in question was originally protected by a 1827 treaty which stipulated that the Chippewa band members must collectively consent to any sale of their land. However, three Chippewa chiefs did sell the land and surrendered it improperly to a land speculator. And no record of the band's collective consent has ever been found. Earl Cherniak, the lawyer for the Chippewa band says that the court's decision will affect all land claims cases since the idea of applying discretion to the sanctity of Aboriginal title is new.

22 December 2000
*Aboriginal Peoples/
Health*

A Health Canada report prepared in light of last May's water crisis in Walkerton, Ontario, states that at least 10 percent of native reserves' water supplies are at risk. Several reserves' water-treatment plants show higher than acceptable limits for contaminants, while many of the reserve water managers have insufficient training for their position. Seventy-nine treatment plants were highlighted as potential problems and of those, 30 are in Saskatchewan, 27 in BC, and 14 in Ontario. One of the Saskatchewan reserves — the Yellowquill First Nation — has been under a boil-water order for four years because of farm run-off in their reservoir. Gilles Rochon, the director general for community development for Indian Affairs, says that his department is reviewing existing regulations and water funding for reserves.

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