
Melissa Kluger

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3 July 1997
Aboriginal Peoples

A report is released by the BC legislature’s aboriginal affairs committee indicating that the cost of settling the province’s land claim issues could be up to $1.4 billion. The year-long study advocates a streamlined treaty process as the best direction for settling land claims. The report includes: a call to the BC and federal governments to apologize for injustices that the native people have suffered, elimination of native tax-free status, and the implementation of native self-governments. Their jurisdiction will include: local health and education, language, land use, and taxation. The report endorses the Nisga’a land-claim agreement, the only major treaty near completion; but a minority statement from Opposition members criticizes the agreement for being too vague and urges a provincial referendum before any treaties are signed.

7 July 1997
Fisheries

Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson announces that the government will continue to aid East Coast fishermen and plant workers after the $1.9 billion Atlantic Groundfish Strategy, established in 1994, runs out a year early than expected. Anderson, new to his portfolio, says he is aware of the necessity of transitional measures but does not offer details as to how the new aid will be distributed.
The federal government supports a move to put national unity on the agenda at the upcoming annual Premiers' Conference. The meeting will include a brief from the Business Council on National Issues. Representing high-powered business groups, this package emphasizes the need for a rebalancing of federal and provincial powers, equality of the provinces and recognition of the distinct needs of Quebeccers. On 10 July Premier Lucien Bouchard dismisses the proposal, saying that there is nothing in it that has not already been rejected.

Nova Scotia Liberals choose federal MP Russell MacLellan as their new leader and premier. MacLellan has promised Nova Scotians that his government will work to ease the burden of the blended sales tax, eliminate proposed tolls for the new provincial highway and work toward a better deal for the province on pipeline tolls from Sable Island's natural gas.

Andre Joli-Coeur is appointed by the Supreme Court of Canada to participate in the legal arguments to determine whether or not Quebec has the right to secede unilaterally. Known as a separatist, the Quebec City lawyer will act as a friend of the court in the case that will be brought in the fall. While representing separatist interests, Joli-Coeur will not formally represent the Quebec government, as the province maintains that any decision about secession must be determined by a vote of the people and not through the courts.

Nova Scotia's premier-designate, Russell MacLellan, introduces a new toll proposal for the Sable Island natural gas development. MacLellan wants to scrap the June agreement which gives Nova Scotia's gas distributors a 10-per cent discount on tolls for the first eight years and New Brunswick 4 percent for three years, and to establish a new agreement in which tolls are determined by volume.

Nova Scotia's new premier, Russell MacLellan, and his Liberal Cabinet are sworn in.

Federalist and separatists clash over the unveiling of a statue at the entrance to the Plains of Abraham of Charles de Gaulle. It was paid for by the Quebec government.
25 July 1997  
Health  
Four Canadian hepatitis C victims file a class action suit against the Red Cross, the federal government, and eight provinces for failing to test the blood supply for the dangerous virus. Federal Health Minister Allan Rock says that, if he can get support from the provinces, he will consider compensation. The suit seeks damages of $3.5 billion.

29 July 1997  
Fisheries  
The Fisheries Resource Conservation Council issues a warning about the future of the East Coast fishing industry. The report indicates that not enough action has been taken to improve the cod stocks. While some small commercial cod fishing has resumed, the report warns that there is hardly any opportunity for the industry to grow. The council urges the federal government to work with industry to reduce and restrict fishing activity.

30 July 1997  
Premiers  
Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and Ontario Premier Mike Harris meet in Edmonton. The premiers agree that Ottawa must hand over some of its power to the provinces in the areas of health, education, and welfare. They suggest that such a rebalancing of power would help in convincing Quebec that federalism is viable.

30 July 1997  
National Unity  
Gordon Wilson, head of the BC Progressive Democratic Alliance Party, submits the results of his “National Unity Project” to the BC government which had commissioned the study. The report suggests that BC should play a proactive role in the non-constitutional renewal of the federation while also developing contingency plans in the event of Quebec’s secession. The government of BC distances itself from Wilson’s report which results in his resignation as constitutional advisor to Premier Glen Clark.

31 July 1997  
Aboriginal Peoples  
At an Assembly of First Nations meeting, leader Phil Fontaine speaks of new partnerships with Ottawa as well as with businesses, community, and interest groups which share native concerns. Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart assures delegates that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples will not be ignored and that the report is being studied in order to decide how its recommendations will be implemented.
1 August 1997
Health

The British Columbia Supreme Court rules that the province’s decision to cut the pay of new doctors who refuse to practise in remote areas contravenes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canada Health Act. BC is just one of a number of provinces that has introduced a policy of this nature to prevent doctors from opening new practices in the major cities where there are already more than enough.

6 August 1997
Unity

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard writes a letter to New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna reprimanding McKenna for supporting a Quebec partitionist group. This prompts a response from Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion, who then exchanges letters with Quebec in order to show Quebecers the potential consequences of separation. Dion warns that Quebec will not have international respect without Canada’s support and says that separatists cannot use Canadian law only when it is to their advantage. On 28 August, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien praises Dion’s letters, saying that they have earned Ottawa increased support in the west and have encouraged debate within Quebec.

7-8 August 1997
Premiers’ Conference

Premiers and territorial leaders meet in St. Andrews, NB. The leaders urge Ottawa to reduce Employment Insurance premiums by 25 percent and create a youth employment strategy. Led by Ontario, the provinces agree to ask Ottawa to hand over some of its control in areas such as health, education, and welfare — areas that are constitutionally under the jurisdiction of the provinces. Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard says his province will not be a part of the other leaders’ agreement, explaining that no Quebec premier would accept the premise that Ottawa has jurisdiction over social programs. Also at the meeting, the nine federalist premiers and two territorial leaders agree to meet again in the next few months to discuss Canadian unity without representation from Quebec or from Ottawa. Bouchard calls the planned meeting a waste of time and says that it will lead nowhere.

13 August 1997
Health

The Ontario Health Services Restructuring Commission announces that Ottawa’s Monfort Hospital will not be shut
down, as had been announced previously, but will continue to operate with reduced services. The announcement follows a politically charged campaign to save the province’s only francophone hospital.

13 August 1997
Aboriginal Peoples/
Natural Resources

The Alberta government approves the proposal for a $250-million coal mine on the boundary of Jasper National Park. Local people file a treaty and land claim in an attempt to block the development. The approval, which is waiting for federal sanction, is consistent with recommendations that were put forth by a federal-provincial panel in June.

14 August 1997
Fisheries

In an attempt to prevent British Columbia from escalating the salmon war between Canada and the United States, the federal government files a law suit in the BC Supreme Court. BC Premier Glen Clark had threatened that on 22 August he would terminate the navy’s lease on the Nanoose Bay testing site if the dispute over salmon quotas was not resolved. The federal government argues that BC does not have a legitimate reason for terminating the lease and that its cancellation would violate an international defence treaty with the United States. Clark writes to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien that Ottawa has performed “a great disservice to BC” by undermining the province’s decision and failing to represent national interests.

14 August 1997
Health/Children

In response to recent deaths of children in Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia, the federal Health Department launches its first national study on child abuse. The three-year, $500,000 study will investigate reported cases of neglect and abuse. It will also study the relationship between child abuse and socio-economic factors.

18 August 1997
Aboriginal Peoples

The federal government agrees to buy land from the Quebec community of Oka. The 12,000 square metres of land will be used to expand a Mohawk cemetery. The agreement resolves one of the outstanding issues left over from the 1990 crisis at Oka, in which police raided barricades erected by the Mohawks in protest over the expansion of a golf course in and around the native cemetery. This most recent agreement is part of an ongoing effort by Ottawa to create a continuous land base for the 1,200 Mohawks.
19 August 1997  
*Unity*  
New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna announces that Canada's premiers, minus Quebec's Lucien Bouchard, will meet to discuss national unity. The meeting, scheduled for September, will be held in Calgary in an attempt to confront the controversial issue.

20 August 1997  
*Aboriginal Peoples*  
The General Council of the United Church of Canada expresses its sorrow for its role in the native residential school system, but fails to offer an apology. The Church has gone to court to hold the federal government responsible for its role in the operation of residential schools in British Columbia.

20 August 1997  
*Health*  
Federal Health Minister Allan Rock acknowledges that the cuts in health-care transfer payments have hurt. Speaking to the Canadian Medical Association in Victoria, Rock did not promise new money, but did say that the reduction in transfer payments to the provinces is over – leaving $6 billion more than expected over the next five years. Representatives vote against a BC motion for private health care and urge the government to restore adequate health-care funding in order to prevent a two-tiered system.*

20 August 1997  
*Quebec*  
Leon Dion, dean of Quebec constitutional experts and father of federal Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion, dies in Sillery, Quebec at the age of 74.

22 August 1997  
*Aboriginal Peoples*  
The Sechelt Indian band of British Columbia is offered $48.2 million and 348 hectares of land to settle its land claim. The deal also includes the transfer of 11 commercial fishing licences and a commitment to giving the band municipal powers. In exchange for this offer, the Sechelt band will be required to start paying sales and income taxes within 12 years.

25 August 1997  
*Quebec/Premiers*  
Dr. Vivan Rakoff, former director of the Clarke Institute admits that the psychological profile he drew of Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard was unscientific and influenced by his own political biases. Commissioned by Liberal MP John Godfrey, Rakoff had concluded that Bouchard might suffer from "esthetic character disorder"—emotional zoning in which a person can be passionate about a project only to then drop it and take up an entirely different cause.
26 August 1997
Aboriginal Peoples

The Newfoundland Court of Appeal grants an injunction to Labrador Innu and Inuit to stop Inco Ltd’s construction of a temporary road and airstrip near Voisey’s Bay. The injunction is established pending an appeal of an earlier decision that allowed the construction after determining that the road and airstrip were for exploratory purposes only.

2 September 1997
Sovereignty/Unity

The Supreme Court of Canada grants lawyer Guy Bertrand his request to present partitionist resolutions as part of his intervention in the federal government’s case regarding the legality of Quebec secession. Bertrand says, “we can’t talk about separation without talking about partition.”

5 September 1997
Education

After 73 percent of Newfoundlanders voted in a referendum to move to a non-denominational school system, legislators pass a resolution that asks Ottawa to allow the reform. The Pentecostal and Roman Catholic churches, which have traditionally controlled the province’s church-run school system, vow to continue their fight against the reforms.

9 September 1997
Sovereignty/
Aboriginal Peoples

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard announces that he has resumed talks on self-government with Quebec’s Inuit community. The talks began four years ago, but were pushed aside by the 1995 provincial referendum. The talks are just one of a number of efforts by the premier to improve relations with native communities as debate grows about the partitioning of the Quebec. Quebec’s aboriginal community has opposed separation.

9 September 1997
Aboriginal Peoples

Ottawa introduces third-party management on Alberta’s Stoney Reserve, appointing management firm Coopers and Lybrand to take control of the reserve’s finances. This new arrangement comes in the wake of accusations of mismanagement and corruption on the reserve. In 1996-97, the Stoney’s had a $5.6 million deficit, even though they had received $50 million from Ottawa and natural gas royalty revenue. On 13 September the federal Indian Affairs Department turns financial information about the reserve over to the RCMP for a criminal investigation.
11 September 1997  
**Health**

Canada’s health ministers meet in Fredericton to draft an agreement for a new national blood agency. Federal Health Minister Allan Rock announces that Ottawa will contribute $81 million over the next two years for the establishment of the agency. The ministers agree to establish an interim transition bureau to oversee takeover negotiations with the Red Cross. The bureau will include federal and consumer members and will have representation from all provinces except Quebec, as the province has decided to create its own blood agency. Also at the meeting, provincial health ministers call on Ottawa to grant more power over health care to the provinces since Ottawa is providing less funding. Rock says Ottawa will not surrender any of its power but agrees that the federal and provincial powers should be more cooperative on issues regarding the future of public health care.

11 September 1997  
**Fisheries**

British Columbia’s Premier Glen Clark accuses the federal government of treason for undermining the province’s attempt to force the United States to abide by treaty negotiations established to conserve salmon stocks. Also, on 10 September, BC accused the government of trespassing onto provincial territory off Vancouver. The territory is a weapons-testing site used by the American navy. BC threatened to evict the navy, which, in turn, led to a suit filed by Ottawa.

12 September 1997  
**Social Services**

Social services ministers from the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, except for Quebec, release a paper that outlines steps to reduce the depth and extent of child poverty in Canada and to help low-income parents to remain in the workforce. The new National Child Benefit will by implemented in July 1998 in an effort to improve support for families with net incomes below $26,000. The paper defines the roles of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments in the development and administration of the new system, and reaffirms their commitment to building a better future for Canada’s children.

14 September 1997  
**Unity**

The nine federalist premiers of Canada agree to consult their citizens in order to determine a way in which to recognize Quebec’s unique status. At the Calgary meeting, the premiers declare that Quebec’s unique character is
essential to the makeup of the country, but also insist that all Canadians and provinces are equal and therefore any constitutional amendment that confers powers to one province must be conferred to all. The premiers also schedule a 18 November meeting with aboriginal leaders, who were excluded from the Calgary meeting. Quebec’s minister of intergovernmental affairs, Jacques Brassard, sees no improvement for his province in the premiers’ declaration and explains, “The only thing that could give full satisfaction to Quebecers ... is to recognize Quebec as a people.” On 16 September, Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard rejects the Calgary Declaration, calling it “insipid” and “banal.” Meanwhile, the grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, complains that Quebec has been afforded more attention than Aboriginal peoples and that they have been “lumped in” with all of Canada’s multicultural groups and have therefore not been given a high enough priority in the new unity framework.

16 September 1997
Natural Resources
Heritage Minister Sheila Copps rejects a commercial development plan put forward by the Banff town council. Copps concludes that the plan, which would increase commercial development by 25 percent, would put the national park in grave danger.

17 September 1997
Sovereignty
In response to the rising partitionist movement, Quebec Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Jacques Brassard announces the introduction of a new group in Quebec. This group, which may be called Democracy Quebec, will promote secession without partition and will work to counter the federal government’s strong stand against separation.

19 September 1997
Education
Federal Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Stéphane Dion, says that the government still intends to introduce a constitutional amendment to change the Quebec school system from religious-based to language-based, but adds that opponents to the change will still have the opportunity to raise their concerns before the final decision is made.

23 September 1997
Throne Speech
Prime Minister Jean Chrétien’s Liberals begin their second mandate by announcing that the federal budget will be balanced by 1998-99, but leave open the possibility of eliminating the deficit even earlier. It is announced that
half of future surpluses will go toward social programs and the other half will go toward tax and debt reduction. More specifically, the government pledges to improve health-care services, increase financial assistance to students, invest in technology partnerships, increase the child-tax benefit, expand programs that provide aboriginal assistance, and work with the provinces to develop a framework for financing a national drug plan.

23 September 1997
Senate
Prime Minister Jean Chrétien restores a Liberal majority in the upper chamber by appointing four new senators. The new members of Senate are: former Liberal MP Fernand Robichaud of New Brunswick, who gave up his seat to Chrétien; former premier of Prince Edward Island, Catherine Callbeck; social worker Marisa Ferratti Barth of Quebec, and Sister Mary Alice Butts of Nova Scotia, a Roman Catholic nun. The Senate now comprises 52 Liberals, 48 Conservatives and 3 Independents.

25 September 1997
Health
Ontario Premier Mike Harris announces that his government will delay next year’s proposed $507 million budget cut for hospitals for at least a year. The announcement comes after the Ontario Hospital Association went public with two studies that indicated the dangerous effects of health-care cuts. Since the Conservative government has been in power, hospitals have seen their budgets cut drastically, first by $365 million in 1996-97 and then by $435 million in 1997-98. The association says that hospitals have been forced to close, merge or alter services at such an alarming speed that they have been unable to cope.

25 September 1997
Aboriginal Peoples
Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart cancels planned changes to the Indian Act. The changes, which died on the order paper when the June election was called, were put forward by former Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin. The changes were met with dissent by aboriginal leaders who called for the abolition of the Act rather than an overhaul. Stewart is applauded by the grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, for her statement that she will not make changes to the Act without the support of Canada’s Aboriginal people.
French President Jacques Chirac holds a private meeting with Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard in which he tells Bouchard that "whatever path Quebec chooses, France will accompany it" and that "Quebec can count on the friendship and solidarity of France." Bouchard interprets this to mean that France would recognize an independent Quebec if it voted to secede from Canada. The following day, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin clarifies France's position by saying that his country does not intend to meddle in Canada-Quebec affairs. Also, on 30 September, Canada welcomes France's decision to cancel a postage stamp that marks former President Charles de Gaulle's visit to Quebec in 1967. The visit, in which de Gaulle proclaims "Vive le Quebec libre," fed the Quebec separatist movement.

Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson gives the go-ahead for the establishment of an open-pit coal mine within 2.8 kilometres from Jasper National Park. Environmentalists, concerned about the impact the mine will have on the park's wildlife, threaten a court challenge.

Quebec City lawyer Guy Bertrand announces he is going back to court to earn the right to pay his taxes to Ottawa if Quebec tries to secede unilaterally.

Exactly ten years after he won every seat in the provincial legislature, Frank McKenna announces his resignation as New Brunswick's premier. Treasury Board President Marcel Massé calls the resignation "a loss for national unity," since McKenna played a key role in the development of the Calgary Declaration.

Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow takes over New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna's lead role in the unity discussion. Romanow says he wants to deal with issues of national unity more quickly in order to build enthusiasm for the ideas put forth in Calgary. Romanow plans to hold a conference call among the premiers, who are in the midst of consulting their provinces about unity, to see what progress has been made since the Calgary Declaration on 14 September. Romanow hopes that each provincial
government will introduce unity resolutions into their legislatures by the spring. The resolutions would be non-constitutional statements of intent that would acknowledge Quebec’s “unique” character and deal with the difficulties of unity. In the meantime, Romanow says it is important to remind Canadians of the everyday issues that prove that Canada works.

8 October 1997
Health

Alberta’s first private hospital starts treating patients. The hospital, which Federal Health Minister David Dingwall threatened to shut down, offers services not currently insured by the province’s health plan, such as cosmetic and dental surgery. The hospital is still waiting for permission to perform operations that would require an overnight stay.

9 October 1997
Sovereignty

The Supreme Court of Canada rules the spending restrictions of Quebec’s referendum law to be an unconstitutional restriction of freedom of speech. Under the law, only Yes and No camps can authorize spending. Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard considers using the constitution’s notwithstanding clause to preserve the provincial law.

9 October 1997
Fisheries

Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson says the government will continue to provide transitional support to East Coast fishermen after the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) expires. One option would be for the government to buy back fishing licences, since there are not enough cod stocks to support the number of fishermen. Future income support seems less likely. After Auditor-General Denis Desautels declared TAGS a failure, the Liberal government says it does not intend to “extend, renew or replace” the aid program. Newfoundland Fisheries Minister John Efford warns that, without a clear alternative, many fishermen will be forced to fish illegally.

10 October 1997
Atlantic Canada

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien makes his first visit to Atlantic Canada since the 2 June federal election in which the Liberals lost 20 of the 31 seats it held previously in the region. Speaking in Moncton, Chrétien acknowledges that the Atlantic provinces were the hardest hit by federal spending cuts and defends the losses as necessary.
17 October 1997  
**Education**

Education ministers representing every province, except Quebec, agree to broad guidelines for science education.

20 October 1997  
**Health**

Quebec Health Minister Jean Rochon says that his ministry will manage the province’s blood supply when the Red Cross is replaced. Canada’s nine other provinces have agreed to create a new national agency. Doctors, advocacy groups, and patients who depend on the blood supply warn that Quebec’s decision to exclude itself from the agency could lead to life-threatening shortages for the province and for Canada. Currently, Quebec collects about one-quarter of the country’s blood supply. While Quebec itself uses most of that blood, provinces have traditionally shared blood in times of shortages.

21 October 1997  
**Emergency Aid**

Estimates suggest that the total cost of the Manitoba flooding of last spring amounts to $300 million, a cost to be shared by the provincial and federal governments. Manitoba Finance Minister Eric Stefanson says that up to $100 million will have to be withdrawn from the province’s Fiscal Stability Fund.

23 October 1997  
**Premiers**

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien invites Canada’s premiers and territorial leaders to a First Ministers’ Meeting to be held 11-12 December in Ottawa. Unlike the recent meeting in Calgary, unity will not be on the agenda. Instead, the main topics of discussion will be youth employment, health care, and social policy renewal. Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard says he plans to attend the conference because the issues on the table affect his province.

27 October 1997  
**Energy**

A federal-provincial panel led by the National Energy Board approves the Sable Offshore Energy Project and endorses a plan to build a pipeline through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into Maine. Pending federal and Nova Scotia approval, the $3 billion project and pipeline will pump 85 billion cubic metres of gas from fields near Sable Island.

30 October 1997  
**Health**

Federal representatives meet with BC Health Minister Joy MacPhail in order to assess the best way to deal with soaring rates of HIV among injection drug users in Vancouver. MacPhail accuses Ottawa of neglecting a public health
crisis and says that BC spends more on AIDS and AIDS education, prevention, and treatment than the federal government spends across Canada. Reports suggest that up to half the 6,000-10,000 addicts in the city could be HIV positive.

30 October 1997
Gun Control

The final details of Canada’s gun control law are introduced in the House of Commons. The details are a supplement to Bill C-68, passed in the House in 1995, which mandates that all gun owners register and license their weapons. The new regulations set standards for gun clubs and target ranges, establish a national firearm registry, and set fee structures and timetables for the registry. Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the two territories have gone to court to challenge the registry, charging that it is unconstitutional.

31 October 1997
Education

Ontario’s 126,000 primary and secondary-school teachers walk off the job. The walkout, which is the largest teacher’s strike in Canadian history, is in protest to Bill 160 which would allow the government to decide class sizes, reduce teacher preparation time, extend the school year, and allow non-certified people to teach some classes. The bill will also remove principals and vice-principals from the teachers’ unions.

5 November 1997
Aboriginal Peoples

The Newfoundland government announces that the province’s Inuit will be given direct ownership of 15,700 square kilometres, or 5 percent, of Labrador. The Inuit will also receive 25 percent of revenues from the province’s mining, oil and gas production. A cap is also introduced, stipulating that once the Inuit per-capita annual income reaches that of the Canadian average, provincial royalty payments will be cut off. The Inuit hope that this deal will lead to a land-claims agreement within the year.

5 November 1997
Energy

The Federal Fisheries Department asks the Justice Department to clarify the fact that Sable Island, southeast of Halifax, is federal territory and not part of Nova Scotia. The ownership dispute began in 1971 when undersea oil and gas were first discovered surrounding the island. The dispute has renewed itself since a federal-provincial panel gave the green light to Mobil Oil for the construction of a pipeline from the Maritimes to New England.
7 November 1997  
**Infrastructure**  
New Brunswick Premier Ray Frenette and federal Solicitor-General Andy Scott unveil a $300-million package to improve the Trans-Canada highway in the province.

10 November 1997  
**Aboriginal Peoples/Environment**  
The British Columbia Court of Appeal rules that the province does not have sole control over its forests until aboriginal land claims have been settled. Earlier in the month, the New Brunswick Court of the Queen’s Bench ruled that Aboriginal peoples have the right to cut down trees on Crown land. The Court declared that they have ownership of those trees and that they maintain their title to the property.

12 November 1997  
**Environment**  
Federal and provincial environment and energy ministers, excluding Quebec, agree to set a target of reducing carbon-dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by 2010. Quebec hopes to make an even more significant reduction.

18 November 1997  
**Unity**  
Premiers from every province except Newfoundland, Alberta, and Quebec meet in Winnipeg with native leaders to develop a companion document for the Calgary Declaration. Native leaders had complained that while the declaration recognizes Quebec as having “unique character,” Aboriginal peoples were lumped in with the rest of Canada’s multicultural citizens. The companion document recognizes natives as constituting a distinct society of their own with a separate order of government. The premiers agreed to include aboriginal leaders in future constitutional and social policy talks.

18 November 1997  
**Education**  
A motion is passed, with overwhelming support, in the House of Commons to amend the constitution in order for Quebec to replace its denominational school boards with linguistic boards.

24 November 1997  
**Supreme Court**  
Supreme Court Justice John Sopinka dies at age 64.

26 November 1997  
**Senate**  
Former federal Cabinet minister Serge Joyal and Alberta Metis leader Thelma Chalifoux are appointed to the Senate by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. With the new appointments, 53 of the 104 seats belong to the Liberals, 47 to the Conservatives, and 4 to Independents.
30 November 1997  
**Sovereignty**  
At a Parti Québécois meeting in Quebec City, Premier Lucien Bouchard says he will hold an election, rather than a referendum, if the Supreme Court of Canada rules against the province’s right to secede unilaterally.

1 December 1997  
**Health**  
To mark World AIDS Day, federal Health Minister Allan Rock announces that Ottawa will give $211 million to a new national AIDS strategy. AIDS groups attack Rock for providing insufficient funds, as the number of people infected with HIV continues to rise.

2 December 1997  
**Health**  
The Quebec legislature calls on the federal and provincial governments to consider a compensation package for victims of hepatitis C. Quebec is the first government to extend compensation to these victims.

5 December 1997  
**Justice**  
At a meeting of justice ministers, the federal government agrees to consider the establishment of a public national registry of serious offenders and pedophiles. The ministers also discuss giving victims of crime a stronger voice, toughening the *Young Offenders Act* and cracking down on domestic violence.

8 December 1997  
**Finance**  
Legislation is introduced in the House of Commons to stabilize social and health transfer payments. Fulfilling an election promise, the bill sets a $12.5 billion floor on money to be sent annually to the provinces, thereby giving the provinces an extra $143 million this year and about $6 billion over the next five years.

9 December 1997  
**Finance**  
Provincial finance ministers express discontent over the cuts that Ottawa has made in order to reduce the federal deficit. They decide on ways they would like to see a future surplus spent. The ministers say that they would like to see the reduction of provincial tax burdens and of Employment Insurance rates, as well as the restoration of transfer payments for health, education, and social programs. The ministers urge Ottawa not to introduce any new social programs until traditional funding has been restored. Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin agrees to think about giving the provinces more flexibility in setting tax rates and tax brackets, and in providing tax credits.
9 December 1997  
**Education**

A constitutional amendment is passed in the House of Commons to allow for the elimination of church-run school boards in Newfoundland.

10 December 1997  
**Unity**

Members of the Alberta legislature vote unanimously to support the Calgary Declaration on national unity. In a recent government questionnaire, 75 percent of Albertans supported the general framework of the accord, while 33 percent objected to the recognition of Quebec’s “unique character.” On 2 December, the Newfoundland legislature unanimously adopted the same resolution.

11 December 1997  
**Aboriginal Peoples**

The Supreme Court of Canada rules unanimously that native peoples have a constitutional right to own their ancestral lands in areas where treaties have not been signed. The decision has a great impact on parts of Atlantic Canada and most of British Columbia.

11 December 1997  
**Sovereignty**

After a week-long tour of western Canada, in which he promoted a post-separation partnership between Canada and Quebec, Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe says that if sovereignists win the next referendum, the Bloc will still run candidates in the next federal election in order to provide a separatist voice during negotiations between Canada and an independent Quebec.

12 December 1997  
**Premiers’ Conference**

Canada’s federalist premiers win an agreement from Ottawa to negotiate the country’s social framework. Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard had agreed to participate in the conference but his conditions, including the right of his province to opt-out of any new national program with compensation, could not be met. The nine other premiers demand that Ottawa reinstate some of the $6 billion cut from federal transfer payments for health and other social programs, but Ottawa commits to nothing more than its previous $12.5 billion promise. The premiers also agree to continue to find ways to reduce students’ debt burdens, make youth employment a national priority, and to launch a national child benefit system by 1 July 1998. Ottawa says it is willing to double its $850 million commitment to poor families and children when the provinces establish matching programs to help parents get off welfare.
12 December 1997
**Aboriginal Peoples**
Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart signs an agreement that will compensate British Columbia's Osoyoos Indian band for land that they lost in 1870, when it was sold after a clerical error failed to indicate that it was part of the reserve. Accompanying the deal is $7 million from the federal government and $3.1 million from the province. The band will also be allowed to use $9.5 million of the settlement money to purchase unspecified land to be added to their reserve.

12 December 1997
**Ontario**
The megacity of Toronto learns that under changes to municipal finances, the provincial government's efforts to download services and their costs will leave the municipality with a $163 million shortfall. Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman campaigned for mayor on a platform that promised a tax-freeze, and accuses Ontario Premier Mike Harris of lying when he said that the service exchange would be "revenue neutral." Under the new bill, which was passed 2 December, local governments will now cover the costs for transit, public health, and social housing and will contribute more toward welfare and child care. In exchange, the Ontario government will take over $2.5 billion in education funding and transition funds.

15 December 1997
**Education/Language**
A motion to amend the constitution to allow for Quebec to have language-based school boards, rather than religious-based boards, is passed by the Senate in a 52-17 vote.

15 December 1997
**Environment**
Following a ten-day environmental summit in Kyoto, Japan, Natural Resources Minister Ralph Goodale announces a three-year, $60 million energy efficiency program. During the conference, Canada pledges to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases by 6 percent — a tougher agreement than the provinces and Ottawa had agreed to when federal and provincial environment ministers met in November. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein complains that the new efforts to reduce emissions are too harsh for his oil-dependent province, while environmentalists complain that the new pledge does not go far enough.

16 December 1997
**Fisheries**
The federal government announces that the $1.9 billion Atlantic Groundfish Strategy will not be exhausted as early
as expected. Since fewer people than anticipated have required financial assistance, Human Resources Minister Pierre Pettigrew says that the funds will be extended until 31 August instead of only until mid-May. More than 25,000 people in Atlantic Canada will qualify to receive the extended funds.

18 December 1997
Sovereignty

Quebec Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Jacques Brassard says that the Quebec government will ignore lawyer Andre Joli-Coeur’s attempts to challenge the Supreme Court of Canada’s authority to rule on Quebec’s right to secede.

19 December 1997
Unity/BC

The *Vancouver Sun* releases a survey indicating that 25 percent of British Columbians believe that their province would be better off without Canada.

27 December 1997
Emergency Aid

The total estimated cost of the flooding in Manitoba exceeds $400 million, thereby doubling the initial estimation.

30 December 1997
Energy

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board approves the province’s $3 billion gas project. The board stipulates that certain environmental conditions must be met and that preference must be given to Nova Scotian and Canadian bids for work. The Sable Island’s partners estimate that 5,000 jobs will be created, mostly during the development of the six energy fields.

6 January 1998
Emergency Aid

An ice storm cripples Quebec and continues both east and west, leaving over 1.4 million people in Quebec, Ontario, and the Maritimes without electricity for up to a month. The Canadian Armed Forces send over 14,000 soldiers to aid the devastated areas. The federal government pledges $50 million in aid for Quebec and $25 million to assist Ontario. The Quebec government promises cash payments to residents without power and Ontario announces that it will provide $50 million in emergency relief. In order to respond to the crisis, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Ontario Premier Mike Harris delay their trip to Mexico City for the Team Canada trade mission and Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard cancels altogether. Estimates indicate that the storm could cost approximately $2 billion
dollars and that the reparation of fallen hydro lines could cost as much as $500 million in Quebec and $100 million in Ontario.

6 January 1998
Health
The Red Cross disables Quebec’s plan to establish a blood agency independent of the rest of Canada by announcing that it is not interested in transferring its blood-related assets to the province.

7 January 1998
Aboriginal Peoples
The federal government issues an historic “statement of reconciliation,” apologizing to Canada’s Aboriginal peoples for more than a century of mistreatment. Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart extends a specific apology to those who suffered abuse at residential schools; and she introduces a $350 million healing fund for treatment and counseling of victims. She announces another $250 million will be spent to improve housing and health conditions on impoverished reserves. Stewart also announces that an independent land claims body will be established to ease the current backlog. The Assembly of First Nations grand chief, Phil Fontaine, welcomes the apology.

7 January 1998
Sovereignty
The English-speaking Catholic community of Quebec becomes angry when Jean-Claude Cardinal Turcotte, archbishop of Montreal, says that Quebeckers have the right to decide their future and that the Supreme Court of Canada should not stop Quebec from seceding if the majority of its citizens vote for separation.

8 January 1998
Supreme Court
Prominent Bay Street lawyer, Ian Binnie, is appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

9 January 1998
Unity
Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow expresses his optimism for the Calgary Declaration and points out that Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories have already passed resolutions to support the unity declaration.

15 January 1998
Energy
The Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board approves Newfoundland’s second offshore oil project to develop an oilfield about 350 kilometres southeast of St. John’s. The board’s approval was the project’s last hurdle, having already been cleared by Ottawa and the province.
15 January 1998  
**Justice**  
Four provinces send a proposal to federal Justice Minister Anne McLellan urging Ottawa to crack down on young offenders. Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island propose a ten-point plan including: lowering the age of criminal accountability, publishing the names of convicted youth, and sending 16-year-olds who have committed serious or violent crimes to adult court.

22 January 1998  
**Finance**  
Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin surprises the provincial governments by announcing that a bonus in transfer payments will be distributed to each province in March. The extra $236 million comes as a result of a revision in Statistics Canada figures for economic growth.

23 January 1998  
**Aboriginal Peoples**  
The Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council is established as part of the government's response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The council, made up of cabinet ministers, aboriginal leaders, and corporate heads will work to seek partnerships with business and thereby improve employment for Indians, Metis, and Inuit. Ottawa commits $1.5 million to the council, in addition to $200 million already set aside for aboriginal employment programs.

28 January 1998  
**Education**  
University students across Canada protest rising tuition costs. Education costs have gone up, on average, 9 percent since the federal government slashed $6 billion in education and health-care transfer payments to the provinces.

29 January 1998  
**Environment**  
The nine federalist premiers sign an Accord on Environmental Harmonization — a controversial agreement established to reduce federal-provincial overlap in dealing with particular environmental issues. Quebec Environment Minister PaulBegin criticizes the agreement for not going far enough to eliminate duplication, while environmentalists fear that the provinces have been given too much responsibility.

31 January 1998  
**Emergency Aid**  
65,000 Quebec residents, hardest hit by the ice storm in Eastern Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes head into their twenty-seventh day without power. Hydro-Québec plans to spend $650 million to improve its damaged power
distribution network and Ontario Hydro expects to spend between $100 and $200 million in repairs. On 16 January, the federal government gave out $45 million in aid to hire unemployed people to clean up the wreckage of the storm. This pledge comes in addition to $75 million already announced for relief in Quebec and Ontario.

6 February 1998
Labour

Ottawa and Saskatchewan sign a labour market agreement. The pact, designed to decrease federal-provincial duplication and improve delivery of services, will put the province in charge of current federal employment programs and over 100 federal employees.

8 February 1998
Emergency Aid

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard accuses the federal government of trying to sabotage the province’s plan to eliminate its deficit by the year 2000, after federal Treasury Board President Marcel Massé says that ice-storm ravaged Hydro-Québec does not qualify for federal disaster compensation. Massé explains that like Ontario Hydro, Hydro-Québec is a Crown corporation with its own financial resources. Quebec is seeking more than $1 billion in federal compensation, approximately two-thirds of which would go toward Hydro repairs.

12 February 1998
Budgets

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein provides evidence that the years of fiscal restraint are ending by including a $123 million tax break in the provincial budget. The budget also includes an increase in spending of $222 million for education, $136 million for health and social services, and $260 million for public works. Other budgeted expenditures include a $100 million for municipal grants and $24 million for incentive bonuses to government employees. Much of the surplus from the 1997-98 fiscal year will be used toward the province’s accumulated debt.

12 February 1998
Unity

British Columbia’s national unity panel says that 90 percent of the province’s citizens consider national unity important and that the majority endorses the premiers’ Calgary Declaration.

14 February 1998
Taxes

Cigarette taxes go up by $1.20 per carton in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The hike,
levied by both the provinces and the federal government, is expected to discourage young Canadians from smoking.

15 February 1998
Sovereignty

Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe announces that a series of protests will take place surrounding the Supreme Court’s hearing on Quebec’s right to secede. The case begins 16 February.

17 February 1998
Health

Federal and provincial health ministers fail to agree on a system for compensating Canadians who contracted hepatitis C from tainted blood. Federal Health Minister Allan Rock says that if no agreement is reached, Ottawa is prepared to go it alone in compensating hepatitis C victims.

17 February 1998
Aboriginal Peoples

The Innu Nation of Betsiamites files a $500 million lawsuit in the Quebec Superior Court. The band claims that they were cheated in a land deal with Ottawa and Quebec. The deal, struck in 1973, authorized the government to use the band’s land for a major hydroelectric project. The band, which received $150,000 for the land, thought that they were negotiating a right-of-way for a power line, not a hydro dam. The Betsiamites want compensation for the infringement on their rights and also hope to stop the development of the dam.

17 February 1998
Agriculture

A controversial bill that changes the face of the Canadian Wheat Board is passed in the House of Commons. Under the new legislation, the board will be able to expand its monopoly of grains beyond barley and wheat. In addition, the makeup of the board will change from a few government-appointed commissioners to a 15-person body. The new body will be made up of ten individuals elected by Prairie farmers and five, including the president, to be selected by Ottawa.

19 February 1998
Senate

For the first time in 131 years, the Senate suspends a senator. After coming to work only 47 times in the last 13 years, and only 14 times since 1990, senators say that Liberal Andrew Thompson is in contempt, not only of the Senate, but also of the Canadian people. Just over half the Senate was present for the historic vote, leaving the Senate under much scrutiny. On 27 February, Liberal Senator Len Marchand announces he is resigning from the Senate,
leaving the standings in the red chamber at: Liberals 50, Conservatives 45, Independent 4, and 5 vacancies.

For the first time in a 28-year history of federal deficits, the budget balances at zero. Finance Minister Paul Martin presents this landmark budget with a focus on social spending, tax relief, and debt reduction. In the area of social spending, students make the most gains. Most significantly, Martin announces the establishment of a $2.5 billion millennium scholarship fund to help over 100,000 post-secondary students based on financial need and merit. Tax relief focuses on the lower and middle classes. 400,000 low-income Canadians will be exempt from taxes altogether, while another 46 million will see a tax cut; $9 billion will go toward paying down the $583 billion national debt.

Opposition parties criticize the budget for not providing enough tax relief to middle-income Canadians and, on 25 February, the Quebec government seeks the right to opt out of the education fund with compensation, explaining that education is a provincial responsibility.

British Columbia Premier Glen Clark sends a letter to federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson, urging Ottawa to keep Alaskans away from coho salmon stocks. Calling for a Pacific treaty on salmon quotas, Clark says the stocks in BC’s northern waters are on the verge of extinction as a result of Alaskan fishing. Anderson responds by saying that while a renewed agreement with the United States would be useful, it would only be a small step in dealing with a larger problem — citing El Nino and habitat destruction as the major threats to both Pacific and Atlantic stocks.

Daniel Johnson steps down from his position as leader of the Quebec Liberals. On 13 March, federal Conservative Leader Jean Charest announces that he will consider filling the vacant position.

Three new Liberal senators are appointed to the Senate: British Columbia entrepreneur Ross Fitzpatrick, Newfoundland business woman Joan Cook, and former
president of the Prince Edward Island Federation of Agriculture, Archibald Johnstone. The Senate is now composed of 52 Liberals, 45 Conservatives, and 4 Independents. Three vacancies remain.

6 March 1998
Sovereignty

Andre Jolie-Coeur, the lawyer representing the sovereignist’s side in Ottawa’s court reference on the legality of separation, files a document which argues that Canadians are not one people, but rather are a collection of four “peoples” — English Canadians, Quebecers, Acadians, and native peoples. With this established, he claims that each of these “peoples” has the right to self-determination. On 13 March the federal government submits a response to the Supreme Court citing evidence that there is a Canadian people and suggesting that Jolie-Coeur’s argument defies logic.

6 March 1998
Labour

Newfoundland and Quebec sign a labour-mobility deal that will allow Newfoundland construction workers and contractors to work in Quebec. Before the agreement, Quebec’s residency regulations prevented Newfoundlanders from working in Quebec, while Quebecers were able to work in Labrador.

10 March 1998
Aboriginal Peoples

After a ten-year legal battle, the Blueberry and Doig River bands of northeastern British Columbia receive $147 million from the federal government as compensation for the loss of mineral rights to part of their reserve.

10 March 1998
Aboriginal Peoples

At an Assembly of First Nations policy conference, chiefs vote to support a motion to accept Ottawa’s apology and its establishment of a $350 million healing fund for Aboriginal people who suffered abuse at residential schools.

10 March 1998
Energy

After a 25-year impasse, Newfoundland and Quebec agree to preliminary negotiations for the development of a new hydroelectric project on the Churchill River system in Labrador. Native people protest the negotiations and say that they will not participate in discussions until they are compensated for the flooding of their land in 1971, when the first Churchill Falls project began.
Social service ministers meet to report on how they will spend the extra money that comes out of a new national child benefit. In the recent budget, Ottawa announced that it would put an additional $1.7 billion, over the next three years, toward the benefit provided that the provinces announced matching programs to take children out of poverty and get parents off welfare. All the provinces, except Quebec, have announced such programs.

Environment Minister Christine Stewart tables amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Under the revised legislation, Aboriginal people will be included in a new committee that will advise Ottawa on how to manage toxins.

A motion put forward by the Reform Party to allow Members of Parliament to place Canadian flags on their desks is defeated in a vote of 194 to 51. The vote follows a controversial "flag flap" that began in the House on 26 February when Bloc Quebecois MP Suzanne Tremblay, who had complained that there were too many Canadian flags at the Winter Olympics, was unable to ask a question over the noise caused by Reform and Liberal MPs who were singing "O Canada" and waving flags. On 16 March Commons Speaker Gilbert Parent ruled that the Members were out of order when they silenced Tremblay, explaining that it had been a question of free speech and not of patriotism.

Saskatchewan's NDP government releases its fifth consecutive balanced budget. Finance Minister Eric Cline also announces a 2-percent cut to provincial income taxes, bringing the provincial rate to 48 percent of the federal rate. Cline explains that with this new cut, families making $50,000 a year will save almost $600, while low income families will save even more. Cline also introduces $200 million in new spending, in areas such as health care, education, and programs for low-income children. $500 million will go toward cutting the province's $12.1 billion debt.

Senator Andrew Thompson resigns his seat, one month after being suspended from the Senate.
23 March 1998  
*Fisheries*

The House of Commons fisheries committee releases a report dealing with the collapse of the Atlantic cod fishery. The report lays blame on the federal government and foreign fishing, recommending that the Fisheries Department be decentralized and that foreign fishing be curbed. The report also calls for continued financial support for unemployed fishermen.

25 March 1998  
*Premiers*

Nova Scotia’s Liberal and New Democratic parties tie with 19 seats each in the provincial election. Liberal Premier Russell MacLellan retains governing status because his party was not defeated.

26 March 1998  
*Leadership*

Jean Charest confirms that he will leave his position as leader of the federal Conservatives to seek the leadership of the Quebec Liberal Party.

27 March 1998  
*Health*

Health Minister Allan Rock announces a $1.1 billion federal-provincial package to compensate those Canadians who contracted hepatitis C through tainted blood between 1 January 1986 and 1 July 1990. The announcement sparks outrage and notice of lawsuits from those victims who received the tainted blood before and after the set dates. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien criticizes the provinces for contributing only $300 million while the federal government is contributing $800 million.

27 March 1998  
*Labour*

Federal and provincial ministers responsible for the labour market meet in Toronto to determine ways to tackle youth joblessness.

30 March 1998  
*Health*

The Quebec government confirms its plans to establish its own blood system, thereby eliminating the possibility of a nation-wide system. Quebec Health Minister Jean Rochon says the new arms-length “Hema-Quebec” will be a non-profit entity with a budget of $125 million.

30 March 1998  
*Education*

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard agree to meet in order to find a compromise for problems arising surrounding the new Millenium Scholarship Foundation. Announced in the recent federal budget, the foundation was established to provide financial assistance to students across Canada. Emphasizing that
education is a provincial responsibility, Bouchard says Quebec should be able to decide where the money is spent.

31 March 1998

Budgets

Quebec Finance Minister Bernard Landry tables a budget that tackles the province’s deficit, bringing it down from $2.2 billion to $1.1 billion. In order to accommodate the reduction, Landry announces cuts to education, health, social services, and municipalities. The budget is in keeping with the government’s goal to be deficit-free by 1999-2000. Landry says the deficit cannot be eliminated sooner because the federal government, in its efforts to eliminate its own deficit, have made significant cuts to health care, education, and social assistance in the province. Beyond the deficit, the budget also focuses on job creation — planning to cut taxes for small and medium-sized businesses by $225 million in 2000-2001 and by $300 million in 2001-2002.

1 April 1998

Leadership

Conservative Leader Jean Charest says goodbye to the House of Commons as he prepares to leave his post to seek the Quebec Liberal leadership. Public opinion polls indicate that if a provincial election were held today, Quebecers would choose Charest and his Liberals over Premier Lucien Bouchard’s Parti Québécois.

1 April 1998

Fisheries

Faced with a seventh season of the federal cod moratorium, union leaders representing Atlantic fishermen come to Parliament Hill to seek an aid package to replace the $1.9 billion Atlantic Groundfish Strategy that expires in August. Ottawa says it is looking into the matter.

2 April 1998

Aboriginal Peoples

Quebec Native Affairs Minister Guy Chevrette presents a new strategy for an improved relationship with Quebec’s native peoples. Quebec’s 11 bands are invited to establish self-governments that could include representation in the provincial legislature. The strategy also explores the possibility of giving taxation power to the bands and giving them the opportunity to share revenue from new projects from such things as forestry, mining, and hydro-electricity. The government also proposes a $125 million fund for community projects over the next five years. The strategy is part of Premier Lucien Bouchard’s efforts to improve relations between the government and native communities in Quebec.
8 April 1998
Sovereignty
After Jean Charest predicts that Quebec will try and weasel its way out of another sovereignty referendum, Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard says that a referendum will be held if his party is reelected in the next election.

8 April 1998
Media
Media baron Conrad Black announces plans to launch a new national newspaper.

15 April 1998
Environment
Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Quebec urge Ottawa to repeal its ban on the controversial gasoline additive MMT. The additive may pose environmental or health risks and may interfere with emission controls on automobiles.

20 April 1998
Aboriginal Peoples
The Indian Claims Commission recommends that Ottawa begin negotiations with the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation of Northern Alberta. The band's reserve is located on what once was a flourishing delta that was home to muskrats and other fur-bearing animals. In 1967 a dam was built in the area which drained the delta of water, destroyed the flourishing ecosystem and thereby deprived the Cree band of their fur-trapping livelihood. The band seeks compensation for its losses.

22 April 1998
Aboriginal Peoples
The New Brunswick Court of Appeal rules against an earlier court decision that gave natives unrestricted rights to Crown trees and ownership of Crown lands. The ruling enables the New Brunswick government to order native loggers to stop their logging.

24 April 1998
Environment
Rather than taking immediate action to reduce the level of greenhouse-gas emissions in the country, Canada's environment and energy ministers agree to spend more time researching the economic impact of such a reduction.

27 April 1998
Aboriginal Peoples
British Columbia Premier Glen Clark announces the approval of a $250 million dam project in the West Kootenay area. Two days later, Okanagan First Nations chiefs send a letter to the premier saying such an announcement should not have been made without giving consideration to native concerns. The chiefs referred to a recent Supreme Court case in which it was ruled that native people who have not signed treaties for their land have the constitutional right to own that land and to use it as they wish. The chiefs threaten to ask for a court injunction to stop the project.
30 April 1998

Jean Charest gives his first speech as leader of the Quebec Liberals. Charest attacks the governing Parti Quebecois for making Quebec poorer in its pursuit of separatism. Charest says he wants to begin a new era in the province.

5 May 1998

The Ontario government softens its image by focusing its budget on tax cuts and policies for helping children. Finance Minister Ernie Eves announces that the $5.2 billion 1998-99 deficit will be reduced by only $1 billion, but assures the legislature that future plans for a zero deficit are still in place. In terms of taxes, the budget includes the final phase of a 30-percent provincial income tax cut and the final step of the employer health tax exemption. Business education taxes are to be reduced by $510 million over the next eight years and the small-business tax rate halved. Support for children includes $140 million toward a new child-care supplement for middle and low-income families, an increase of $170 million over the next three years to the Children's Aid Societies, and $25 million in child-care subsidies to help single parents on welfare finish school. The budget also includes $120 million over four years toward marketing Ontario as a tourist destination.

6 May 1998

Ontario’s Education Minister Dave Johnson announces that the government is deregulating tuition in the province. Beginning in 1998-99, sharp increases in tuition will be allowed for all graduate programs and for professional programs for undergraduates such as business, law, and medicine. If a university is able to double its entry-level spaces by September 2000, then that institution will also be able to increase tuition for undergraduate courses such as engineering and computer science. Universities that choose to increase their fees must set aside 30 percent of that new revenue to assist low-income students. Despite this assistance, opposition parties and student groups accuse the government of limiting the accessibility of higher education.

7 May 1998

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard attends the unveiling of a monument in Quebec City which commemorates the 1943-44 conferences between British Prime Minister
Winston Churchill and US President Franklin Roosevelt. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien expresses anger regarding the monument since it fails to recognize the role of former Prime Minister Mackenzie King in those conferences. Federalists protest King's exclusion.

9 May 1998
Unity

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien tells a Quebec news conference that the focus of his government is on jobs and the economy, rather than constitutional change.

12 May 1998
Leadership

Quebec Liberal Leader Daniel Johnson says farewell to Quebec's National Assembly. In March, Johnson announced that he was stepping down in order to make space for a new and more popular leader. Former federal Conservative leader, Jean Charest, was recently acclaimed to fill that leadership position.

14 May 1998
Leadership

New Brunswick Liberal leader, Camille Theriault, is sworn in as premier.

14 May 1998
Unity

British Columbia's NDP government introduces legislation that extends the original scope of the Calgary Declaration. While including the original seven principles, the extended proposal adds: an increase of provincial responsibility in areas important to that province; a federal equalization program for per-person funding of education, health, and social programs; and the establishment of national health standards. British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia are the only provinces that have not approved the original declaration.

14 May 1998
Sovereignty

In conformity with last fall's Supreme Court ruling, the Quebec government tables electoral amendments that will allow limited spending beyond the Yes and No committees for future referendums.

14 May 1998
Health

Health ministers fail to reach a consensus on new provisions for hepatitis C victims. Federal Health Minister Allan Rock is continuously under attack for Ottawa's compensation package that only assists those infected between 1986 and 1990. Meanwhile, on 4 May, Ontario Premier Mike Harris offered to extend compensation by $200 million in order to include all those infected with hepatitis C.
through tainted blood. On 6 May, Quebec followed suit, pledging $75 million more toward those victims outside Ottawa's time bracket. British Columbia says it will also consider an increase in aid, but not without national consensus.

14 May 1998
Aboriginal Peoples

The Saskatchewan Court of Appeal overturns an earlier court decision that would allow the province's 27,000 Metis the same hunting rights as the province's status Indians, who are currently exempt from many provincial restrictions. On 15 May, the Metis announce that they plan to ignore the ruling.

19 May 1998
Quebec

About 500 people attend a public meeting to protest Ottawa's appointment of a former Parti Québécois candidate as chief executive of Ottawa Hospital. David Levine, a Montreal anglophone, ran for the PQ almost 20 years ago in an effort, he says, to unite anglophones and francophones. On 20 May, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien expresses anger toward the PQ and the Bloc Québécois for using the incident to enrage Quebecers and bolster separatist sentiments.

21 May 1998
Immigration

British Columbia signs a five-year deal with Ottawa, giving the province more control over immigration. The deal will give BC increased control over programs to assist new Canadians and will also allow the province to nominate up to 200 immigrants and their families each year to match employment demands. The federal government will direct $45.8 million toward the deal.

26 May 1998
Unity

Ontario formalizes its support for the Calgary Declaration, leaving Nova Scotia as the only original signatory that has not yet passed a legislative resolution.

27 May 1998
Fisheries

As a result of improved stock off the south coast of Newfoundland, Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson announces that quotas on cod in the region will be raised to 20,000 tonnes — doubling last year's limit. Newfoundland fisherman would like to see that quota raised to 30,000 tonnes.
28 May 1998

Health

Federal Health Minister Allan Rock announces a permanent, annual commitment of $42.2 million toward the fight against AIDS. Rock is criticized for guaranteeing funding for all HIV/AIDS victims, while providing compensation to only some victims of hepatitis C.

28 May 1998

Budgets

Nova Scotia Premier Russell MacLellan and New Brunswick Premier Camille Theriault call on federal Finance Minister Paul Martin to use surplus Employment Insurance premiums toward aid for Atlantic fish workers and tax cuts. The Quebec National Assembly calls for Ottawa to use the surplus toward support for young people and seasonal workers. Ontario Premier Mike Harris accuses the federal government of stealing from his province's workers and businesses. The surplus has reached $15.7 billion and is expected to rise to $19.9 by the end of the year.

4 June 1998

Aboriginal Peoples

A BC court rules that both the federal government and the United Church are legally liable for past sexual and physical abuse suffered by aboriginal students at a BC school in Port Alberni and orders that 30 former students be compensated. The ruling prompts the United Church of Canada and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to call on Ottawa to take a leadership role and to seek an out-of-court solution to compensate other aboriginal victims, rather than dealing with the 1,200 law suits on a case-by-case basis. Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart says that while the government is still dealing with the cases individually, Ottawa is looking for a "more human" route to compensation.

5 June 1998

Unity

Bloc Québécois MP Pierre Brien and Reform MP Rahim Jaffer meet in Edmonton to discuss their future visions of Canada. While the Bloc and the Reform Party seem like unlikely allies, both parties are interested in putting more power in the hands of the provinces. Jaffer discusses the Reform's New Canada Act, which advocates the rebalancing of federal and provincial powers, and Brien outlines his party's New Quebec-Canada Partnership.

9 June 1998

Unity

Nova Scotia is the last of the nine federalist governments to approve the Calgary Declaration on national unity.
11 June 1998  
*Transportation*

A report released by the House of Commons transport committee suggests that the federal government should contribute up to $25 million for a new high-speed rail line to run between Quebec City and Toronto.

12 June 1998  
*Senate*

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appoints five new Senators: hockey superstar Frank Mahovlich, Nova Scotia activist Calvin Ruck, chancellor of Lakehead University Lois Wilson, Manitoba businessman Richard Kroft and an Ontario community organizer, Marian Maloney. Wilson will sit as an Independent and the others will sit as Liberals, bringing the standings in the Senate to: Liberals 55, Conservatives 43, and Independent 4. There are two vacancies remaining.

12 June 1998  
*Unity*

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard announces that the Calgary Declaration is doomed, since not even Quebec Liberals are willing to defend the unity proposal. Bouchard held public hearings on the declaration even though his government has publicly ridiculed the proposal. New Liberal Leader Jean Charest refused to participate in the hearings, seeing them as a separatist trap. The declaration, which recognizes the “unique” character of Quebec while maintaining the equality of all provinces, has been rejected by Bouchard, who says that this is the least Quebec has ever been offered to stay in Canada.

15 June 1998  
*Finance*

Provincial finance ministers come to Ottawa hoping to restore the $6 billion that has been cut from funding for health, postsecondary education, and welfare. While Prime Minister Jean Chrétien rejects their request, federal Finance Minister Paul Martin says he will consider the provinces’ proposal.

18 June 1998  
*Social Services*

In its effort to fight child poverty and to reduce Canada’s number of welfare recipients, Ottawa launches a new national child benefit. Human Resources Minister Pierre Pettigrew explains that families making up to $25,921 a year will receive as much as $1,000 in extra child-tax credits. The federal government will start the program off with $850 million and promises to increase its contribution to $1.7 billion by the year 2000.
18 June 1998
Aboriginal Peoples

Land that was taken from Aboriginal people and turned into a military base during World War II will be returned to the Stoney Point natives of southwestern Ontario. Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart and Chief Elect Norman Shawnoo sign a $26.3 million agreement that returns the 900-hectare Camp Ipperwash to the band and provides money for community restoration, economic development, community healing, and environmental assessment.

18 June 1998
Aboriginal Peoples/Taxes

The Supreme Court of Canada rules that New Brunswick has the right to charge its status Indians sales tax. In 1993, the province imposed the 11 percent sales tax on off-reserve purchases and was accused of violating the Indian Act.

19 June 1998
Fisheries

Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson offers $1.1 billion in federal aid to assist Canada’s coastal fisheries. Of that aid, $730 million will be directed to the East Coast, to carry the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) to its original expiry date of May 1999. TAGS ran short of funding after more people than expected applied for assistance. In addition to aiding the 20,000 TAGS recipients, the funding will also go toward licence buybacks, economic development, early retirement, job training, education, and moving expenses. On the West Coast, $400 million will go toward the establishment of a salmon fishery more attuned to conservation. Complaints come from both coasts that the government has not provided adequate funding.

22 June 1998
Economy

The Canadian dollar sinks to an all-time low on North American markets, falling to 67.77 cents US.

24 June 1998
Finances/Territories

Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin announces that the establishment of Nunavut, a new territory in the eastern half of what is now the Northwest territories, will cost Canada almost $100 million more each year. The new territory, which will come into existence next 1 April, will cover a land mass nearly twice the size of Ontario.

25 June 1998
Leadership

Former Prime Minister Joe Clark announces his candidacy in the leadership race for the federal Conservative
party. There are now six men vying for the position of leader, including veteran Tory strategist Hugh Segal and former Manitoba Cabinet minister Brian Pallister.

26 June 1998

Gilles Rocheleau, co-founder of the Bloc Québécois with Lucien Bouchard, dies of cancer at the age of 62.

26 June 1998

Heritage Minister Sheila Copps announces that Ottawa is freezing development in national parks for a year while a strategy to prevent encroachment of business and residential growth is established. She also announces that the federal government will have the final say on development plans in towns that exist within national parks.
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