

## The Death of Jim Flaherty

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Thursday, April 10, 2014

<https://politicsrespun.org/2014/04/the-death-of-jim-flaherty/>

*"We are, of course, not in the world alone and our lives here are finite."*

*"Our individual and family responsibilities are primary. Yet the desire to accumulate private goods in the end does not lead to satisfaction simply because, as we all learn, enough is never enough."*

- [Jim Flaherty](#), October 2011, *Western*

<https://twitter.com/JimFlaherty/status/446020311381602304>

It is always sad when people die, including former federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty.

He will easily be remembered as an intelligent man who lived a life of public service, despite the fact that his economic policies were justifiably vilified by millions.

I have not been a fan of his economic policies. I especially don't like that he announced a cut to federal healthcare spending increases which will lead to a \$36 billion cut in healthcare funding to provinces over the next decade. Federal funding increases were designed to get the federal government up to covering 50% of the cost of our public healthcare system; that is now in jeopardy.

And I didn't like most of the economic policies of his party, and their financial mismanagement that led to things like losing track of \$3.1 billion.

But it was clear that as an intelligent man, at least at times he paid more attention to facts and research than lots of his party colleagues. [Recently he publicly opposed Harper's tax cut plan of income splitting](#) for Canadian families. [Facts indicate](#) that the policy would help the 1% and some other rich folks and do nothing or virtually nothing for most of the population.

The biggest value of income splitting to the neoliberal Conservative Party of Canada is a justification for yet another tax cut and consequent service cuts, because they believe government is bad and needs to be reduced in size and scope.

Flaherty eventually opposed that income splitting policy, publicly, acknowledging that it would not be good for the country. When he stepped down from politics last month it looked as if that opposition ended his political career. And while he said he wasn't leaving politics for health reasons, it looks like that might have been the case. Time will tell on that.

I also noticed the esteem that people all around Canada held for him as a person of integrity, in part

because of his devotion to public service in [talks like this](#). This is what kept him high in people's estimation of who could take over the party if it or the country finally tired of the soft fascist rule of Stephen Harper. I heard of no one who felt any MP had a better shot at taking over for Harper than Flaherty.

Ultimately, though I didn't support most of his economic policies, his death appears to be on par with Red Tory Joe Clark's last day in parliament. While he was no iconic progressive leader, his departure leaves behind many far lesser people.