

Part One: A New Vision for Quebec and Atlantic Canada – Member of Parliament Maxime Bernier addresses AIMS

On Friday, February 4th, Member of Parliament for Beauce Maxime Bernier addressed the crowd at an AIMS lunch.

Having worked at the Montreal Economic Institute, Mr. Bernier was able to share his background in public policy, while addressing the fundamental Canadian issue of having too much government.

Using the example of Quebec, which has one of the largest and most interventionist governments in Canada, he explained that both Quebec and Atlantic Canada are too reliant on Ottawa for equalization payments, rendering the regions as fiscal burdens. Ultimately, this negatively impacts the citizens of Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

Bernier explained that multiple studies have shown that the less government intervenes in the economy, the more prosperous a society will be. Implementing more government, more spending programs and more economic redistribution is actually accelerating many social and economic problems.

In *A New Vision for Quebec and Atlantic Canada*, Bernier proposes that instead of asking for more money from Ottawa, Quebec should become sufficiently rich so as to not be on the receiving end of the equalization program anymore. Perhaps Atlantic Canada could explore that option as well.

[Click here](#) to read the full commentary.

Part Two: Which university would you like to close?

On February 2nd, the Dalhousie University Senate voted to give students academic amnesty to attend the Canadian Federation of Students lower tuition protest at the Nova Scotia legislature.

AIMS President Charles Cirtwill explains in *Which university would you like to close?* that despite the fact that the NS government coughed up around \$900 million to universities over the last three years, that our universities spend far above the national average, and the fact that our system, on a per capita basis is significantly larger than the national average, Dalhousie still sent the students to ask for more money.

National average funding is lowest in Nova Scotia. If the benchmark is “national average” tuition, Cirtwill suggests we at least consider all of our options. If we had a university system that was nationally average in scale we would have 700 fewer professors and 10,000 fewer full-time students. That equates to closing the Mount, X, CBU and Kings, or shuttering Dal.

We could also choose to shutter several government departments, or, as the union representing professors have suggested, simply increase our already high taxes.

In order to reduce tuition for everyone, Nova Scotia's debt will go up, our taxes will stay high and our total collective costs will be higher. This will result in fewer students staying in Nova Scotia – a number that is already frighteningly low.

For Cirtwill, suddenly, Dr. O'Neil's suggestions are not sounding so bad.

[Click here](#) to read the full blog post.

Part Three: Family Matters; the Lebanese Success Story

Based on remarks to the Annual Celebration of Lebanese Independence Day, AIMS Board Member Wadih M. Fares discusses the benefits of immigration to Nova Scotia, drawing on the Lebanese community in Halifax as a successful example. He asks, do we underestimate family and community when focusing on “economic immigration”?

Fares tells the story of Lebanese emigration across the world, emphasizing the specific success found in the Halifax example. Addressing the challenges that the Lebanese community has faced in many different places, he concludes that the easier immigration process to Canada has created a remarkable immigration phenomenon for the country.

Family Matters; the Lebanese Success Story sheds light on the Nova Scotian Lebanese example, illustrating the benefits of immigration on many levels, including cultural, political, philanthropic and entrepreneurial.

[Click here](#) to read the full commentary.

Part Four: “Up is down, right is left” in Atlantic Canada

AIMS President and CEO Charles Cirtwill explains how the public policy environment in Atlantic Canada has been shaped by a long history of big government. Founded largely by people with direct connections to government success, big government is historically its core business enterprise.

Fast forward to 2011, and Cirtwill can see the light at the end of the tunnel for classical liberals. The long age of big government in Atlantic Canada may be coming to an end. As our population ages and declines, there are fewer and fewer people left to pay big government’s bills. The shift to the right even seems to be reflected by recent Atlantic Canadian political leaders.

“Up is down, right is left” in Atlantic Canada begs the question: with an inevitably receding government, will Atlantic Canadians be ready to take advantage of their newfound opportunity?

[Click here](#) to read the full commentary.

Part Five: Health Care: Why the veil of secrecy?

In this piece, David Zitner, family doctor and Professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Policy Fellow with the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, explains that the health care system in Canada has major flaws when it comes to information systems.

In [Health Care: Why the veil of secrecy?](#), Zitner explains that doctors rarely follow up with patients to see if they are better or worse after their treatment. This raises the question of how the government, health system owners and insurers possibly know if they are spending taxpayers' money efficiently, if they aren't asking the pertinent questions.

Most Canadians don't have access to an electronic health record, and health providers are usually unable to obtain and link laboratory information with your family doctor's record, or your hospital record. Compare this with inventory control systems in supermarkets with tens of thousands of different products, and banks where it takes less than a minute, online, to get all of the information you need about your account.

Canadians deserve to know if their health care system is as good as it could be. Zitner encourages readers to ask their legislators to improve our health information systems, and make them more sophisticated.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Part Six: Nostalgia isn't a strategy

In this commentary, originally published for *Maine Ahead Magazine*, Perry Newman of the Atlantica Group LLC addresses the current state of political campaigns and leadership in Maine. Political candidates and leaders tend to reminisce about "the good old days," instead of focusing on solutions to the economic problems that have presented themselves today.

Rather than obsessing over the time when a young man could count on a job at the mill upon graduation, Newman suggests Maine's leaders address themselves to Maine's new realities. Such as the fact that Maine's agriculture sector has very little chance of moving the state's economy forward. Or that the same can be said for the paper industry. While important, these sectors are unlikely to rise to the level where they were once the central drivers in Maine's economy.

In [Nostalgia isn't a strategy](#), Newman calls for Maine's leadership to focus on the future, not the past. Policymakers need to avoid trying to rescue old ways and instead make every effort to help Maine industry, new and old, be competitive for the future. Leadership must level with the voter and explore economic development policies that will benefit them today and tomorrow, not yesterday.

[Click here](#) to read the full commentary.

Part Seven: AIMS in the Media

[Former Deputy Minister says New Brunswick top heavy with Bureaucrats](#) – AIMS numbers reveal bloated civil service in New Brunswick compared to other provinces.

[Auditor questions industry funding program](#) – NB Auditor General says Business New Brunswick should set targets and make public whether they are getting value for money from industry-funding program. AIMS President Charles Cirtwill says auditor general's recommendations won't stop Business

NB from making bad funding decisions; suggests not funding companies or providing payroll rebates.

Required Reading for Friday, February 4th – Straight Talk! - AIMS President Charles Cirtwill asks, which university would you like to close?

Maxime Bernier: An eventful week in Atlantic Canada – MP for Beauce Maxime Bernier had breakfast and interesting discussion on public policy issues with a group from the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, Atlantic Canada's free market think tank.

Future of rural schools in doubt – AIMS President Charles Cirtwill says we need to have a panic-free discussion about education without calling each other names – which is what's happening presently. The issue of declining enrolment must be addressed. Our kids need quality education.

More hydro, More profit – Heavy rains behind increase in output for New Brunswick Power – AIMS President Charles Cirtwill comments.

Highway tolls unwanted tax, say industries – New Brunswick government considers implementing highway tolls. AIMS President Charles Cirtwill says tolls can be useful as a value-added alternative, but in New Brunswick they're talking about putting a charge on an already existing asset.

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