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*Where Tomorrow's Public
Policy Begins Today*

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Part One: Calling Ottawa - Topics of importance for Atlantic Canada

As so many new members of Parliament begin to familiarize themselves with the issues that define our economic and social policies, AIMS would like to draw attention to some of our previously published articles that highlight topics of importance to Atlantic Canada.



You CAN Get There From Here

Co-authored by AIMS Director of Research Don McIver and AIMS Senior Fellow Brian Lee Crowley, this report is based on extensive research on the impact of federal policies to the region. You CAN Get There From Here is an invitation to all federal political parties to re-examine how they will bring Atlantic Canada into Canada's economic mainstream.

Definitely NOT the Romanow Report

Roy Romanow, head of the Royal Commission on the future of health care, recommends not only retaining, but expanding the centrally-planned, government monopoly model of health care in Canada. In place of Mr. Romanow's defence of the status quo, this AIMS paper proposes a system that concentrates scarce public health dollars where they'll do the most good.

Equalize People, not Provinces

A special publication of *Ideas Matter*, released by AIMS in 2002 in collaboration with FCPP and MEI, provides a summary of our Sir Antony Fisher Award-winning Equalization Initiative.



Part Two: Wow, but at what cost?

In this commentary, AIMS Board Chair John Risley discusses China's increasing importance on the world stage. China alone accounts for over 50 per cent of the world's growth in oil consumption in the past five years and is now the second largest such consumer (68 per cent of all current nickel consumption, 44 per cent of aluminum, 31 per cent of all iron ore, the list goes on). Its economy is the second largest in the world and continues to produce growth rates which are the envy of every other country.

Risley explains some of the political history of China to shed light on how it became a great power. When Chairman Mao took power in the late 1940s he restored a stable political order and unified the country (albeit after forcing Chiang Kai-Shek to flee to Taiwan). Deng Xiaoping's leadership (from 1978 to 1992) was responsible for serious economic reform. It was his vision which understood and contemplated the use of foreign capital and modern technology, together with a new sense of engagement with the West. However, these same policies were accompanied by a continued muzzling of any opposition.

In *Wow, but at what cost?* Risley advocates for China to strengthen their currency, take stronger and more reasonable stances on foreign policy, and unshackle Google to allow the Chinese people intellectual freedom. The world needs China and Chinese growth, but the right sort of China.

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

Part Three: Friday the 13th

In this commentary, Harry Koza explains that the history of the suspicion surrounding Friday the 13th stems from an old sovereign debt crisis back in the fourteenth century.

French King Phillip IV was faced with great debt when he came into power. To pay it off, he debased his country's currency, but it wasn't enough, so he taxed the Church, too. Pope Boniface VIII issued a Papal Bull in 1302 forbidding the clergy to pay these taxes. Phillip retaliated, and Boniface VIII issued another Bull which stated that the Papacy was superior to all secular rulers. The monarchy itself was at risk. Phillip was forced to seek refuge from his own subjects by hiding out in the Knights Templar headquarters in Paris.

The Templars were rich, but the Papal Throne was their authority. Phillip grabbed their assets by accusing them of heresy, removing them from the Vatican's protection. On Friday, October 13, 1307, with the blessing of Pope Clement, Philip IV attacked the 15,000 Knights Templar in France with a dawn raid. All the Templars were arrested and charged. Phillip's debts to the Templars were wiped off France's balance sheet, restoring the Treasury to fiscal stability. That day became so infamous that Friday the 13th has ever since been a synonym for ill fortune.

In *Friday the 13th*, Koza explains that Phillip IV solved his debt problems by persecuting the Templars and stealing their wealth. There're no Templars around anymore, so that solution is out this time around, but there are still plenty of taxpayers around to be squeezed. Be afraid.

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

Part Four: Freedom in Education – The Edmonton Model

In a speech delivered remotely to an education forum put on by the Italian *Istituto Regionale Di Ricerca Dealla Lombardia* in 2008, AIMS President and CEO Charles Cirtwill explains the Edmonton Model of Education. The speech, entitled “Freedom of Choice in Education,” highlights the importance of responsibility and personal choice in a public education system.

The Edmonton model has been discussed internationally as an effective model to emulate across the globe. The system, rooted in parental choice and decentralization, allows for more tailored learning for individual students, based on the recommendations of their parents. In this publicly-funded model, the funding follows the students, making the approach more student-centred. Principals and teachers have more freedom to practice whichever forms of education they find most effective. Parents and children have more freedom to choose their schools and prosper within them. This is an education model that truly fosters excellence in students.

In these video clips, Cirtwill explains the Edmonton Model in more detail, and clarifies why freedom and responsibility in our education system is so important.

[Click here](#) to view part one of two.

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[Click here](#) to check out the video on the AIMS website.

Part Five: AIMS blog update – Michael Zwaagstra’s ten-part series on education

Michael Zwaagstra, author of *What’s Wrong With Our Schools...and how we can fix them (2010)* is featured in a ten-part series on education on AIMS blog *Straight Talk!* On April 1st, AIMS hosted Michael Zwaagstra to speak at a [public forum on education](#) in Halifax. This ten-part series on education features excerpts from Zwaagstra’s book and explains how he believes we can fix our public education systems in Canada.

Read parts five and six: [What’s Wrong With Our Schools? – Direct Instruction is Good Teaching](#)

In this piece, Zwaagstra et al argue that traditional direct instruction is a positive approach to teaching children. Paired with knowledgeable teachers who are able and willing to answer students’ questions and engage them in conversation, this form of teaching is highly effective and should not be easily dismissed, as we have seen recently by progressive romantic education theorists.

Read part seven: [What’s Wrong With Our Schools? – Rote learning and practice are important](#)

In this piece, Zwaagstra et al discuss the positive aspects of rote learning. Critics of rote learning often fail to ask whether the absence of certain kinds of rote learning and well-developed practice exercises makes it impossible to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Follow AIMS blog *Straight Talk!* for more pieces from this series as they are posted.

[Click here](#) to read the posts on AIMS blog *Straight Talk!*

Part Six: AIMS in the Media

A tale of two Nova Scotias, and may the best one win - In this op-ed, AIMS President and CEO Charles Cirtwill says the new Conservative majority sparked two public-relations campaigns in our region: one government-led effort to start laying the foundation for the upcoming renegotiation of federal transfers to the provinces, and one privately led and publicly fed campaign to get our "fair share" of the federal shipbuilding contract for our local yards.

Gas regulation: five years of folly – The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies estimates that across our region, consumers have paid \$155 million more than if gasoline markets had remained unregulated.

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