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*Where Tomorrow's Public
Policy Begins Today*

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Part One: Losing Our Edge: How uncertainty and mistrust are destroying the potential of oil & gas on the east coast.

Another opportunity lost. The dramatic announcement of the suspension of activities around Hebron Ben Nevis provided further evidence of the ongoing decline of the east coast oil and gas industry.

It has many people in the region shaking their heads in bewilderment. How could an industry that was held up by all as having the potential to revitalize the region be withering away?

For those who keep a close watch on the papers and commentaries produced by the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, there's understanding.

[Click here](#) to learn more about how we are losing our edge.

Part Two: When Tea & Sympathy aren't enough: Atlantic Canada's gap in catastrophic drug coverage.

Catastrophic drug coverage. It's a phrase used to describe those many Canadians who have weak or non-existent pharmaceutical insurance who find themselves in a "catastrophic" situation when an illness strikes and pharmaceutical drugs become a way of life.

Unfortunately for thousands of Atlantic Canadians it is also a reality of life. Atlantic Canada has the biggest gap in prescription drug coverage in the country, which means the problem is the biggest here.

AIMS is focusing attention on this critical public policy issue through a half day conference in Halifax. Experts in the field of pharmaceuticals and prescription drug coverage will examine the issue and discuss solutions.

The keynote speaker is Ken Fraser, who advised the Kirby Senate Committee on health care reform. He'll set the stage for the day's discussions by laying out the dimensions of the challenge of catastrophic drug coverage nationally and regionally.

The special guest speaker is Grace-Marie Turner, the founder of the Galen Institute, a think tank in Washington that specializes in the policy problems around insuring the medically uninsured. She played a major role in the design of last year's Medicare Bill in Washington and is now a member of the President's Commission on Medicare. She will reflect on what she has learned from a long career striving to extend health care coverage to the uninsured.

To learn more about this conference, or to register, [click here](#).

Part Three: The Bad Idea that will not Die: Gasoline price regulation

As you sit at the gas pump fuming at the dollars that roll past faster than the litres, it sounds reasonable, regulating the price of gasoline. New Brunswick has already announced its plans, there are rumblings in Nova Scotia.

But as Brian Lee Crowley explains in this column, appearances are deceiving. He writes, *"regulation cannot lower prices for gasoline. The price to get gasoline into our local markets is set internationally and we have no control over it whatsoever. We either pay the going rate or we don't get what we need."*

He continues:

"The federal government's Competition Bureau has studied the behaviour of gasoline markets more than anyone in the country. When Nova Scotia was holding legislative committee hearings on retail price regulation, Richard Taylor of the Bureau testified "free markets that rely on competitive forces provide the best mechanism for competitive prices".

Politicians that genuinely have the interests of consumers at heart do not, therefore, propose price regulation. However attractive the price stability it creates, that stability comes with a stiff price tag. Politicians on the way up do not succumb to the short term allure of regulation."

To read the complete column, [click here](#).

Part Four: It is FARMING, not Fishing: Re-thinking how we view Canada's aquaculture industry.

The latest AIMS paper in the How to Farm the Seas series shows how Canada is missing the boat on what could be a lucrative industry.

Author Robin Neill, professor of Economics at UPEI, examines the bureaucracy surrounding the industry in Canada and calls for a fundamental reorientation. Aquaculture in Canada needs to be recognized for what it is: farming. He says aquaculture needs to be separated from the administration of the wild fishery, which means taking it out of the jurisdiction of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). He concludes:

"Aquaculture in Canada is being held back by a dysfunctional government bureaucracy, by an obsolete property rights system, and by the machinations of environmental activists operating through pressured, unthinking mass media.

"As one critic put it, the government's oversight of aquaculture is analogous to 'a chicken farm being managed by the Migratory Birds Act'," Neill says. "In Canada, fish farming falls under the jurisdiction of the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, not the Department of Agriculture as are other types of farmed animals, such as hogs, chickens and cattle."

To read the complete paper, [click here](#).

Part Five: The meaning of Ralph: The rise and fall of Alberta's premier provides a lesson in resource revenue economics.

"As every lottery winner quickly discovers, spending a windfall wisely is no easy matter," writes AIMS president Brian Lee Crowley. In this commentary, he uses the political life of Ralph Klein to show that massive natural resource endowment can be a curse, not a blessing.

"Few of the world's most vibrant economies have many natural resources. Many of the richest —Japan, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, France, Taiwan, Korea —are resource poor. The same is true within countries. In the United States, resource-rich Texas and Louisiana have lower incomes than resource-poor Connecticut and Massachusetts," he says.

Crowley concludes, "If Albertans are smart, their next premier will forswear gimmicks in favour of a credible plan to treat natural resource revenues like the precious assets

they are, rather than a cash windfall to be squandered before the crash.”

[Click here](#) to read the complete article, and find links to additional AIMS work that shows how best to spend resource revenues.

Part Six: Le cas de Ralph

En 'Contradictoire', l'auteur Brian Lee Crowley, président de Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, écrit: "Si Ralph Klein était une valeur négociable, il aurait une caractéristique un peu particulière. Lorsque le prix du pétrole serait bas, le prix de Ralph serait élevé. Mais l'inverse s'observerait également; si les prix du pétrole flambaient, la demande de Ralph chuterait. Qu'est-ce qui explique cette curieuse relation inverse?"

[Cliquer ici](#) pour lire le texte intégral de la chronique parue dans La Presse dimanche le 9 avril 2006.

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