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The Income Gap between Aboriginal Peoples and the Rest of Canada

According to an April 8 study released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the income gap between aboriginals and non-aboriginals is still stubbornly high. Aboriginals earned only 70 cents for every dollar earned by non-aboriginals in 2006. While this is an improvement over the 1996 numbers which saw aboriginals earning only 56 cents for every dollar earned by non-aboriginals, the study indicates that wage parity remains a distant goal.

The full report is available here:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/reports/docs/Aboriginal%20Income%20Gap.pdf>

Development Confusion

In this Canadian International Council article by Ian Smillie, the author explores the distinctions between foreign aid and funding for development. He also looks into recent changes to the way Canadian aid is being delivered to developing nations, and points out the links much of this money has to furthering commercial, strategic and political gains for both the donor and recipient nations.

The full article is available here:

<http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/blogs/cicommentary/developmentconfusion>

Freeing up Food: The Ongoing Cost, and Potential Reform, of Supply Management

The C.D. Howe Institute recently released this paper looking into the “supply managed” farm sector in Canada. The authors highlight the main problems with the system and suggest ways to phase out these controls. Under the current supply management system, domestic producers are able to control the price and supply of their goods; production quotas limit what leaves farms’ gates, and large tariffs block the entry into the country of similar goods. The management of supply keeps prices of these agricultural products artificially high, discourages new entrants to the market and decreases consumer choice. The Canadian government’s support of maintaining supply management is increasingly seen as an impediment to free trade negotiations. The option suggested by the authors would allow the quotas on supply managed products to be increased over 20 years, allowing for a gradual expansion of the market, coupled with an immediate elimination of the direct producer price administration currently in place.

The full backgrounder is available here:

http://www.cdhowe.org/pdf/backgrounder_128.pdf

The Competition for Water: Striking a Balance among Social, Environmental, and Economic Needs

In this article published by the C.D. Howe Institute, Canada Research Chair in Water Policy Management at the University of Lethbridge, Henning Bjorlund, explores how the water-use balancing act underway in Alberta perfectly illustrates the challenges in allocating scarce water resources to meet rising demand and growing environmental concerns. The paper examines how water resources can be better allocated to operate more efficiently, and what legislative fixes are necessary to enable an appropriate framework to be enacted. While the regional implications are specific to Alberta, the driving social, economic and political concerns behind sound policy development are applicable to other regions of Canada where water scarcity is a growing concern.

Read the full article here:

http://www.cdhowe.org/pdf/commentary_302.pdf

Canadians agree with Prime Minister on restricting pensions for federal prisoners

In a report on survey results released April 8, 2010, by EKOS, Canadians indicated their strong support for an initiative to restrict pensions for federal prisoners. Of respondents who want to see restrictions imposed, 59% support eliminating Canada Pension Plan benefits for all federal inmates. The remainder, 25%, would only institute restrictions for those inmates who are serving life sentences. Only 17 per cent of respondents support maintaining the status quo, where federal inmates collect pension benefits while serving their sentences.

The full results of the EKOS poll are available here:

http://www.ekospolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/full_report_april_81.pdf

Liberals and Conservatives Remain Stuck

According to a Harris Decima poll conducted in early April, both the Conservative and Liberal parties are failing to meet voter expectations when it comes to handling the major challenges Canada is facing today. When asked who had the best plan to balance the budget in the next five years, 28% of respondents weren't sure, and 22% felt no party was best suited to do so. Additional responses indicate the Conservatives maintain their three-point lead over the Liberals nationally, with the following breakdown of support: Conservatives 32%, Liberals 29%, NDP 17%, Green 11%, and BQ 9%.

Full survey results can be found here:

<http://www.harrisdecima.com/sites/default/files/releases/2010/04/07/hd-2010-04-07-en616.pdf>

From Martin to Flaherty: Balancing the books all over again

According to a report by the Institute for Research on Public Policy's (IRPP) senior scholar Thomas Courchene, Jim Flaherty faces the same challenges in bringing Canada back to fiscal balance as did Paul Martin in the mid 1990s. This report compares and contrasts the challenges and options, both politically and economically, confronting each in the struggle to reign in significant federal deficits and return to the surplus budgetary situations many Canadians seem to have come to expect.

The full article is available here:

<http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/apr10/courchene.pdf>

Toward an aid quality index

An April 6, 2010, article presented by the UN's humanitarian news and analysis service, IRIN, discusses the movement towards an accepted aid quality index to improve the accountability of donor commitments. According to the article, academics and institutions are working to create an accepted, independent index to evaluate donor commitments and effectiveness of aid. The overall movement is to improve the transparency and accountability within the global development context.

Read the full article here:

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88696>

Liberals say honest debate needed to address deficits, but won't talk taxes

This Hill Times article by Harris McLeod summarizes the recent policy conference held by the federal Liberals in Montreal. The Canada at 150 Conference, dubbed the thinkers conference by many, was intended to be a policy discussion around the issues and challenges Canada faces as it approaches its 150th birthday in 2017. Leading economic and social experts were tapped to give their thoughts on health care, pensions, eliminating the deficit, and improving productivity in Canada.

The full article is available here:

<http://hilltimes.com/page/view/deficit-04-05-2010>

Is Charest's budget courageous or cruel?

A roundup of provincial press reaction presented by the Globe and Mail's Kalli Anderson assesses Quebec media reaction to the controversial budget unveiled by the Quebec Premier Jean Charest last month. The proposal to introduce user fees to access health services in the province has become one of the most discussed components of the budget.

Reaction and analysis from Quebec media is available here:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/is-charests-budget-courageous-or-cruel/article1525542/>

The CNA Review is produced on a bi-weekly basis by the Public Policy Department of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) to inform nursing leaders about events and issues outside of Canada's health care system that influence the future of the nursing profession. It analyses social, political and economic trends in Canada and abroad according to their impact on nursing and the Canadian health care sector.

Readers should consider *The CNA Review* as complementary to the *Health Edition* (www.healthedition.com), which reports on health care developments and which is sponsored by CNA. Views expressed in *The CNA Review* are not necessarily those found in the policies and declarations of the CNA. For further information concerning the *CNA Review* contact Lisa Little, Director of Public Policy, at: llittle@cna-aiic.ca
