



ARISTOTLE

FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Championing Reason, Democracy, and Civilization

Across Canada today, one theme appears again and again in public debate: the claim that our country is fundamentally unjust, that its foundations are illegitimate, and that our history must be constantly apologized for—or even dismantled.

At the Aristotle Foundation, we take a different view.

Canada is one of history's most remarkable achievements: a peaceful, prosperous country built by generations of people from every corner of the world. Indigenous Canadians whose ancestors arrived thousands of years ago. French explorers and traders. British settlers. Immigrants who arrived fleeing poverty, war, communism, and tyranny.

All helped build the country we share today.

That shared story matters.

Because when the past is misrepresented—when Canadians are divided into categories such as “colonial” versus “indigenous,” or when sweeping claims are made that Canada itself is illegitimate—it erodes the sense of common citizenship that has helped make this country work.

Our approach at the Aristotle Foundation is simple: respond with facts, research, and informed history. And remember that identity politics is divisive and inferior to superb ideas that unite people.

On the claim that Canada was “stolen,” Canada's prosperity did not exist when this country was founded. It was built gradually by generations of Canadians who cleared land, built businesses, created institutions, and helped transform a vast and difficult landscape into one of the most stable and prosperous societies in the world.

For more on this, read the essay I co-authored with Tom Flanagan here:



National Post:

Opinion: Canada wasn't 'stolen' from indigenous people

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But the debate about Canada's history is not merely academic.

It increasingly affects real policies—and sometimes the rights of ordinary Canadians.

Consider what is happening in British Columbia. The lack of treaties in some parts of that province has led courts (who started down this road in the 1990s) to take radical positions about First Nations in that province. A recent decision ([Cowichan](#)) endorsed the notion one First Nation now has a legitimate land claim to much of the City of Richmond, including private property.

Except that ignores all the federal and provincial spending on the Cowichan First Nation. So too all the *other* spending on other BC First Nations without treaties.

In other words, if we are going to have honest conversations about reconciliation in Canada, shouldn't the tens of billions spent annually on First Nations—including on those without treaties—be included in the reconciliation "ledger"?

Or consider what is now happening in Ontario.

In the Township of North Dumfries near Waterloo, development plans were halted after the discovery of Indigenous artifacts. The result has been uncertainty for property owners and developers, raising concerns about whether private property can effectively be restricted or rendered unusable without compensation.

One senior has been asked to fund the dig at a cost of \$400,000. It is fine for governments to require that artifacts be protected. **But to be fair to private property owners, governments should then pay for such public priorities out of the public purse.** (We can provide a long list of where governments should stop wasteful spending if they need suggestions on how to fund this.)