

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Balfour and District Business and Historic Association

### Responses

#### 1. Economic Recovery and Growth

*Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?*

The federal government needs to recognize that rural areas, made up of small communities, rely heavily on tourism as a base for their economy. Funding support for the tourism industry is crucial, as a way to bring visitors to our somewhat remote communities. A huge percentage of residents in these tourist-based economic units rely on tourism and tourism-related business and improvement to survive. Therefore the federal government needs to at least maintain current levels of funding support for tourism, to help grow local businesses both large and small.

#### 2. Job Creation

*As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?*

Canada needs to concentrate on building jobs and economic stability IN CANADA. There are lessons to be learned from the US and European debt crises that should be warning our government to take care of Canada and Canadians first. Enhanced internal and international trade relationships is a perfect springboard to advertise Canada's intrinsic natural beauty to encourage visits within our country by Canadians, and by tourists from abroad. Canadians should be persuaded to spend their vacation dollars in Canada rather than travel outside the country; federal funds spent on supporting the development of in-Canada tourism will keep and create jobs in the tourism sector which would otherwise not be available.

#### 3. Demographic Change

*What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?*

Continue to invite skilled immigrants to bring their talents to Canada. Make post-secondary education, particularly in the trades, more affordable for Canadian youth. Some jurisdictions direct lottery proceeds to education grants for students who maintain a certain level of grades.

#### 4. Productivity

*With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?*

Corporations need to pay their executives less and offer better wages and benefits to workers. Stop corporations from out-sourcing jobs and production to China and other countries; raise the minimum wage and get people off welfare and back to work at a fair wage to make quality made-in-Canada product. Working people pay taxes.

## 5. Other Challenges

*With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?*

In my opinion rural Canada is often overlooked by government at both federal and provincial levels. For example, the carbon tax is intended to make us drive less and take urban transit where possible. There is no urban transit in most rural communities. Huge taxpayer-funded projects such as the Olympics bring absolutely no benefit to rural communities, yet we have to pay for them. Our health care is difficult to access and often involves travel and associated costs, yet all we get is a tax credit, not a refund; most people in rural areas who are paying to access health care in larger centres don't make enough money to benefit from the tax credit, because they can't work due to their health concerns...a vicious circle. I would like to see some tax relief for those and other costs the rural Canadian has to bear. We all pay just as much in taxes as the urban Canadians but don't see much coming back to us in the form of job creation etc. The small businesses in the tourism sector are also facing challenges because of the rising cost of fuel, the high Canadian dollar, and the US economy. Travellers are not as numerous over the last several years and more of them are camping or RVing, not staying in hotels and motels. The brief tourist season is when tourism based businesses have to make the majority of their money for the entire year and unless there is federal funding support for tourism some of these businesses will fail.