

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Russell Kollin

### 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?*

I believe the time has come for the Federal Parliament to re-visit the issue of MP pensions. I understand the issues of costs to the MP's involved with running for office, the expenses of maintaining dual residences, and the economic implications if they are not re-elected or choose to retire. However, the perception of most Canadians is that these MP pensions are completely out of line with the pensions which the rest of us can expect to receive, if we can expect a pension at all. If this government wishes to avoid the perception of hypocrisy with it's Economic Action Plan, these pensions must be adjusted to come in line with those which the average working Canadian can expect.

#### 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?*

I do not believe that the issue is so much of creating job growth, but of streamlining rules & regulations in regards to trade. I spent most of the last 40 years hauling freight throughout Canada & the US. In the US, the rules pertaining to interstate commerce are fairly uniform. The rules in Canada are "Balkanized" with the 3 western provinces having one set of rules, Ontario doing it's own thing and Quebec setting it's own requirements, thus forcing the Maritimes to follow suit. Manitoba tries to please both Ontario & the west, therefore pleasing nobody. The untold millions if not billions this costs Canadian trade annually is prohibitive. There needs to be a vision of a united Canada in this matter. I believe much has been done to streamline border crossing procedures with the US. As I no longer travel to the US, I cannot speak to this.

#### 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?*

Many Boomers, of which I am one, thoroughly enjoy working. The thought of being forced into retirement is abhorrent. I will not likely have this happen to me as I have just started my own business again. If my health holds up, I intend to be active in my work till I am in my eighties. I believe incentives (probably tax credits) should be in place for companies to re-train existing seniors into positions where they will be most usefull. Encourage companies to use flex-time, possibly shorter hours, 2 or 3 people to form a team to do a job or run a department. Most seniors have such a wealth of knowledge & experience. Companies need to harness this. Low interest start up funding should also be made available through banking institutions, for those who qualify, for those seniors who are determined to form new businesses, to make the most of new ideas & opportunities.

#### **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?*

There tends to be a way of thinking, particularly among the youth of our country that if they "show up" for work, they should get paid top dollar, whether they have earned it or not. Many folks in-debt themselves with large student loans, to obtain un-marketable educations. There is a need for a reality check in the educational system. Since that isn't likely to happen, how about advertising on internet, social media, billboards, etc. Is it possible to tie Federal funding to Universities, Community Colleges, etc. to focusing on training people in areas where there are labour shortages. Possibly reduce certain types of funding, but re-direct it to where we need skilled workers. Specifically with Doctors, nurses, other health care professionals and trades people; make an economical incentive for the institutions of learning to train what we as Canadians need.

#### **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?*

I think Health Care, Low Income Housing, and the abysmal conditions on many First Nations Reserves are the most pressing needs as perceived by most Canadians. It is time for a public/private health care system as is used in Germany and several other European countries to be made official. We already have it, just stop skirting the issue and make it legal. Residents on First Nations reserves need ownership of their homes so they can start to have pride of ownership as well as build wealth. The conditions under which the corruption on many reservations runs rampant need to be changed. This black eye on the Canadian Landscape must be addressed, not a band-aide fix but a thorough over haul. Low income housing is a black hole in which a tremendous amount of money has been spent & much more will be spent. Many people who want low income housing need to be re-trained so they make better money & therefore won't need it. Those who can't be trained, need it. An annual means test should be part of every Federally sponsored low income housing units tenant(s).