

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

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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?

It doesn't make sense that Canada, a country with enormous resources in oil, minerals and forestry, is exporting its own goods to other countries at a low price and having those goods sold back to us in the form of manufactured products at a higher cost. We also need to diversify in these areas. Many people talk about the development of clean energy. Clearly that is the future. If we're looking at the long term and being fiscally responsible why isn't our government investing more money into this research? So in sum, we need to look at the issues in our trade agreements and we need to diversify our markets.

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?

Recently Canadian companies Zellers and Sears were bought out by two larger American corporations, Kmart and Target. The good news is these companies will be able to create jobs for Canadians. The bad news is Canadian businesses are losing out. Long term it's Canadians who create jobs for Canadians. If we want to enhance trade in our own country this is problematic for us. I think our country needs strong Canadian businesses that have the ability to help their workers with benefits and pensions. Rather, we have other larger foreign interests merging and acquiring our own big players. The government thus has the challenge of stimulating large business without offering massive bailouts that we cannot afford. These businesses need new strategies not more money.

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?

There are tough times ahead. I don't think there is a solution to this other than what we can do to soften the blow. We need young people with education and trade skills but we need training for those individuals. One idea for basic trade skills would be a country wide, federally funded mentorship and training program. Get the able bodied elderly who are moving into retirement volunteering to help youth learn the trades that they know so well. This tradition is very common with our First Nations.

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?

I think my suggestion in the last question, a mentorship program, would be an excellent initiative. Our government should also be investing in the new ideas of young people. In addition, small businesses shouldn't be ignored. They have the potential to become power houses with the right opportunities.

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?

We have a conservative government that believes in free market and liberal ideals. Public services are not a priority to this government. The largest challenges are faced by those services, in particular our Public Broadcasting, Social Services and Arts and Culture. It's a top down approach right now. I am most concerned with mental health patients and at risk youth. They will always get the short end of the stick when we take funding away from our social services. Rather than addressing these groups as the fringes they need to be considered as the centre of our health as a nation. Our youth are the future. They alongside those suffering from mental health disorders and addiction, need our help the most. We can't simply disregard them, we must incorporate them into our own well being.