

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Bill Longstaff

### 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?*

Federal government policies should aim at a sustainable, no-growth economy. Specifically, this means designing an economy that fits into a healthy environment. A healthy economy in the long term requires a healthy environment in the long term. We cannot continue to grow in a world of finite resources without threatening the environment and ultimately civilization itself.

#### 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?*

To remain competitive, we must move in major ways toward the economy of the future, i.e. a green economy. The federal government should therefore promote job creation in green industries, an area in which we are sadly lacking.

#### 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?*

Economic forecasts indicate there is no need for significant policy changes to deal with the aging population. As for skill shortages, we might emphasize training for our currently under-utilized Native population.

#### 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?*

To increase productivity we need a well-trained, well-paid, fully-involved work force. This means, among other things, strong labour unions and worker participation in management, along the lines of the remarkably competitive German economy.

#### 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?*

Obviously the communities facing the greatest challenges are Native communities. They remain largely unable to fully participate in Canadian society. Federal action is required to ensure these communities have social and physical services designed to bring them fully into the Canadian mainstream. The federal government should address this challenge with appropriate research leading to actions in those areas necessary. The community in second greatest need is that of single mothers. Federal actions should

assist in establishing programs to help every mother at risk raise her children in a healthy, productive manner.