

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Pierre Simpson

### 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?*

Increase support for arts and culture funding. As arts and culture are also significant economic drivers, this sector contributes to the economic vitality of the communities. Some 640,000 Canadians hold jobs in the cultural sector (Conference Board of Canada, *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding the Canadian Creative Economy*, 2008). In other words, the number of artists and cultural workers in Canada is slightly greater than the number of employees in its automotive industry, twice the number of workers in the forest industry and more than twice the number of workers employed in banks in Canada. The arts and culture sector generates approximately \$25 billion in taxes, more than three times the total public investment by all levels of government combined. Investments in the arts and culture sector very often have a multiplier effect because they encourage players to join forces through productive partnerships. The government must continue its commitment to arts and culture as it has done with other sectors of the Canadian economy.

#### 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?*

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#### 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?*

Labour shortage? At last count, many young people across the country were looking for work. Let's offer businesses incentives to hire and even train a younger workforce and people in mid-career who are required to transition from a previous job.

#### **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?*

Greater investment in education will help better train young people for this changing labour market.

#### **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?*

The fact that French Canadian communities are scattered over a wide area. This situation, which is very different from those of our counterparts in Quebec's Anglophone minority, complicates access to services. Our artists and artistic organizations must travel enormous distances to appear before an audience. On a tour of our communities, the creators and their works can travel from Saint John to Whitehorse, stopping at hundreds of small communities along the way. To address this situation, we must establish and maintain infrastructure (physical, organizational, virtual) that permits the creation, production, dissemination, distribution and circulation of the Canadian Francophone community's cultural products. The physical infrastructure stock of the arts and culture sector is extensive and just as important for the development of our communities as the system of schools, colleges and other institutions. Galleries, libraries, theatres, cultural centres and other institutions require investments at the design and construction stages, but also for their regular maintenance over the long term. These facilities are major assets for our communities.