

Union of National Defence Employees

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?

A sustained economic recovery starts with a strong, focused public service. This strong foundation is best achieved with a stable, knowledgeable workforce which can deliver services in a cost effective and safe manner. Unions, in the past, have been part of the process in assisting in the "right sizing" of the public service. We have provided input on effective government spending, cost saving measures and the proper approach to reducing the size of the public service. This Government needs to input from the Union in order to achieve their goals.

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?

Job creation and retention is probably the most important element for ensuring a strong and steady economic recovery. The Government has, over the course of the past several years, launched a number of strategic reviews geared towards reducing the size of the public service. The Union agrees and fully supports the idea of an effective and properly sized public service but moving employees from the front line of service delivery to the unemployment lines, while replacing those employees with outside contractors is actually costing Canadians more and is not supporting effective job creation. The Government, as part of the strategic review exercise has asked for various business cases to be developed by various government departments to show how services can be delivered in the most cost effective manner. The Union of National Defence Employees has assisted members in producing various business cases which clearly demonstrate how savings can be achieved, but the Department of National Defence refuses to accept or review these documents. As part of the pre-budget consultation process, the Committee should be asking Departments as to how many business cases have they reviewed where the bases of the case is to promote and protect the jobs of Canadian workers.

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?

The Union of National Defence Employees represent employees in some of the most vulnerable employment areas of the Country. We see first hand how the lack of proper training and skill shortages affect the service delivery that our members provide to Canadians. We have also seen that the lack of training has lead to health and safety issues at various work sites. The Government must first understand which skills are needed in each part of the country including those required in smaller centres. Training programs should be focused on the local needs which could keep people closer to their homes which could help reduce the amount of population migration to the larger urban centres. As the work force ages, younger Canadians could be encourage to stay "at home" if they see that they

have a Government willing to assist in training them in the trades needed in their local community.

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?

Productivity in Canada will continue to be an issue unless Canada can establish greater trading relationship with some of the emerging foreign markets. Canada must however first develop a strategy as to which markets should be the focus. Clearly we do not have the resources to develop relationships with all countries, however, the focus should be on countries which require our finished products and not just our raw resources. As the work force ages, technology will become a bigger factor in manufacturing goods and services, so Canada needs to continue to support the high tech sector in the Country to assist in producing productivity gains.

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 current trend in the Canadian population is the migration to major urban centres, which is producing incredibel strains on infrasture and support services required to support Canadians. One of the most affected groups from this trend are Cananda's rural communities. The Union of National Defence Employees represent people in this most vunerable areas of the Country and are fighting to keep qualified, skilled labour in the rural communities which support the various DND military sites across Canada. The Union is also encouraging the Government to follow through on apprenticeship programs that they agreed to start but have yet to deliver on. The Government already has a number of tools in its toolkit to assist communities in facing their challenges. They just need to implement the programs and follow through on past promises.