

improve our training systems, our research and development situation, and so on. But even if most Canadians agreed on the solution, there is no way that the federal government could effectively address the challenges in these areas by acting alone.

The issues tackled, now, as part of the Prosperity Initiative, are questions whose solutions lie beyond the capacity of government -- any government, federal, provincial or municipal -- to devise or implement on its own.

Competitiveness and prosperity must be a truly national project -- one that Canada commits itself to for the long term. It is a project that will require a broad consensus and action, not just on the part of our different levels of government, but also by the private sector, labour, academe, and individual Canadians everywhere.

We are extremely fortunate that David McCamus and Marie-Josée Drouin have agreed to serve as Co-Chairs for the private-sector Steering Group that will lead national consultations and develop the plan of action.

As many of you know, David McCamus is the Chairman of Xerox Canada; he has spent the better part of his career so far in this dynamic, competitive company, including the last decade as President and Chief Executive Officer. As Chairman of the Corporate Higher Education Forum, Mr. McCamus has already shown his commitment to the issues being addressed in the Prosperity Initiative.

Since 1973, economist Marie-Josée Drouin has been associated with the Hudson Institute of Canada, and, for the last several years, she has been its Executive Director. We are very fortunate to be able to draw on Mme. Drouin's extensive public and private-sector experience both in North America and Europe.

Canadians count on your support and that of your members. Canada needs your help. And for those who say, we've had enough consultations, we know what the problem is, I say we must work together to find a solution. What we want to achieve is not just a forum to tell government what is wrong. We need a forum to discuss what all of us -- business, labour, employers, employees, educators and parents, as well as governments -- all Canadians can do to improve our competitiveness.

I was in Japan three weeks ago and I found that one of the reasons for the astonishing success of Japan is that government, business and labour work together to create a national consensus, with results that we know about. Thirty-five years ago, "made in Japan" meant a cheap low-quality product. Today it's top quality and high technology.