

The Steering Group on Prosperity, co-chaired by David McCamus and Marie-Josée Drouin, was created for precisely that task. The Steering Group is composed of 20 distinguished Canadians from across the country, broadly representative of the diversity of Canada. Operating at arm's length from the government since last October, the group has carried out extensive consultations with over 10,000 Canadians from every part of the country and every walk of life. It is now finalizing a plan of action to secure our prosperity.

Overall, the Prosperity Initiative focuses on five sets of issues:

- learning;
- science and technology;
- financing innovation;
- developing a competitive domestic market; and
- taking full advantage of international market opportunities.

All these issues were explored with individual Canadians and business, labour and academic groups.

Community and regional talks were held in over 180 communities in every region of the country. Sectoral talks, task forces, round-table discussions and other kinds of national consultations were held over the last year. The action plan that the Steering Group will be releasing this fall will reflect these consultations. In the next few minutes, I want to give you a flavour of some of the suggestions the Steering Group is considering. I would emphasize that these are suggestions, not necessarily part of the action plan.

Many of you will be aware of the community talks because at least 60 of your members co-sponsored talks in their communities. I want to thank you for your positive contribution to a key element in the Steering Group's consultations. The talks revealed that Canadians have a remarkable convergence of views on how to meet our learning and competitive challenges.

One of the overarching themes that emerged from all the consultations was that Canadians are looking for a much higher degree of co-operation among all stakeholders. They want to see partnerships between business and labour, business and schools, research scientists and business, governments and business. They see these partnerships as transcending the traditional adversarial relationships of many of these groups. Partnerships were suggested in areas ranging from management-labour collaboration in training, through to business-university research, joint curriculum development between business and schools, and government-business trade development.