

2013 – MHF Comment – The Economy – Prosperity with Purpose

A fundamental goal is greater prosperity – but it should be **prosperity with purpose**.

A large part of my focus is economic – this is partly because of my own personal experience, in both big and small business, in international commerce, in needing student loans and grants to get through school, in raising three kids without, at times, much to work with. Whether it's domestic economics, international trade and foreign investment, competition, innovation, productivity – we are in an increasingly global, and globally competitive, world. To compete and succeed, we need to **embrace** global opportunities.

The alternative – putting up walls, trying to avoid the challenges of globalization – will only shrink us and take us backward. Canada is one of the countries – if not *the* country in the world – best poised to take advantage of global markets for greater prosperity. We have the most multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-capable, well educated population in the world. We have resources the world needs. We have incredible comparative advantages to set us apart, but we have to be bold, and confident, in reaching out.

But what is that prosperity for? It's not just to see the numbers get bigger. Canadian prosperity has been in the past, and should be again, **prosperity with purpose**.

Too many Canadians are still unable to achieve their full potential – equal opportunity is key. Prosperity must help in achieving greater equality of opportunity, and the more Canadians who can achieve their potential, the more prosperous we will become.

There are also, simply put, people who will always need a hand. Helping those who really need it is also very Canadian – or should be. The irony is that addressing the challenges of mental illness, physical disabilities, job-bridging, and affordable housing is NOT a drain on our economy, as so many believe – on the contrary – poverty and its effects cost our economy far, far more than the cost of reducing or even preventing it.