

Defense and Foreign Affairs

With the Canadian government spending near to 10 billion dollars a year on defense¹ and being a member of 21 international organizations foreign affairs and defense are both topics that come up frequently in the House of Commons.

Although the Canadian government has gradually cut back on defense in recent times the power of the Canadian army has felt little of the effect. This has been down to the modernization of the armed forces and international warfare. Although Canada has no nuclear weapons it remains on the list of countries that could potentially develop nuclear weapons very quickly. Canada remains a key player in international action and defense. At present they are involved in 12 operations overseas, including the struggle in Haiti, Syria and Afghanistan.

Canada has grown into an internationally recognized military force over the years. In the past Canada was often regarded as the peacekeeper of the Western world, more recently however developments in weaponry and training have made them a force to be reckoned with. The Canadian armed forces are a point of pride for the public and the government. The committee will have to consider if any cuts can be made or if any additions to funding must be introduced. Having bills which keep troops and the public safe will be key to making this committee a success.

On top of the defense element the Committee will have to consider Foreign affairs and dealings with the wider world. Canada is a member of 21 international organizations, from the World Health Organization (WHO) to NATO². The Canadian government's ability to communicate and negotiate with these establishments is key to maintaining a good reputation in the wider world.

Canada or on the frontier of international trade agreements, a recent agreement with Korea is almost the first of its kind and will be used to create jobs for Canadians and another boost to the Canadian economy.³ The continuing hard work when dealing with foreign affairs will be crucial to continuing the growth of the Canadian economy.

Economic Development

Canada has been leading in the struggle to bring the public back to work after the economic crisis hit the Western world. Canada has seen a 6.3% improvement in employment over the recovery. This has been down to more cautious lending and borrowing from banks and

¹ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/budget-2014-military-wings-clipped-again-1.2532827>

² <http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/organisations.aspx>

³ http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/korea-coree/index.aspx?lang=eng&utm_source=dfatd-maecd&utm_medium=dfatd-maecd&utm_campaign=ckfta-alecc

government alike and a sensible approach to spending and investment. With a Canadian economy driven by importing and exporting and the production of quality goods the Canadian government has balanced the books.

Canada exports goods all over the world⁴ with key trading ports on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. The Port of Metro Vancouver puts \$20.3 billion⁵ into the economy each year; this is a fraction of the total importing and exporting figures. This is a topic which needs much consideration from the Economic Development committee.

Further to this Canada has a thriving Labor market, with a majority of workers being employed in the sales and service industry⁶. This non reliance on banking and finance has had a hugely positive impact on Canada during the economic crisis. The demand of service industry jobs fluctuated very little and the small cuts that were made were quickly forgotten as the economy began to grow. Employment and levels of unemployment are huge is maintaining public moral, this will be a key area of focus for this standing committee.

This committee will have to analyze in depth any bills effect on the Canadian economy; both the positive and the negative. They will also have to consider what they can bring to the bill that will maintain the fantastic economy and reputation that Canada holds.

Social and Environmental

In Canada's Economic Action Plan of 2013, the Canadian government stated that economic prosperity and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive goals.⁷ Major natural resource projects, such as; gas and oil pipelines, mines, and offshore oil drilling, have to be approved as safe for the environment and for Canadians by the federal government. Companies of major oil pipelines have to be financially capable of spending at least one billion dollars so they will be able to remedy damage in the event of an oil spill. In addition, companies violate environmental standards can be fined between \$25 000 and \$100 000. The government of Canada has the goal of achieving sustainable development - a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social development.⁸

In 2013, the Canadian Government introduced the "New Building Canada" plan which carries on from the "Building Canada" plan that was introduced in 2007. The plan's focus is on supporting

⁴ <http://www.trahhttp://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/eng/trade-offices.jspdecommissioner.gc.ca/eng/trade-offices.jsp>

⁵ <http://www.portmetrovancouver.com/about/factsandstats.aspx>

⁶ <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/subject-sujet/result-resultat?pid=2621&id=3711&lang=eng&type=CST&pageNum=1&more=0>

⁷ <http://actionplan.gc.ca/en/background/r2d-dr2/enhancing-environmental-protection>

⁸ http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/prmny-mponu/canada_un-canada_onu/positions-orientations/environment-environnement.aspx?lang=eng

projects that build infrastructure and also create economic growth and new jobs. There are a number of community and social infrastructure projects that create jobs as well as improve the local infrastructure.⁹ In addition to normal projects, Canada has also set up the Green Infrastructure Fund which allocates funds to projects that will improve the quality of the environment and support sustainable development.¹⁰

While discussing economic development in Canada, the committee must carefully consider environmental and social development. As the government of Canada has taken a strong stance on sustainable development, going as far as to call it "the cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy", any bills must reflect Canada's stance on these issues.

⁹ <http://actionplan.gc.ca/en/initiative-section/community-and-social-infrastructure>

¹⁰ <http://actionplan.gc.ca/en/initiative/green-infrastructure-fund>