



Downturn, Recovery and the Future Evolution of the Labour Market

Policy Brief

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Introduction

Economic downturns draw attention to labour market conditions that directly affect the economic well-being of Canadian workers and their families. Concern is naturally focused on the decline of job prospects and the increase in unemployment. Beneath the headlines, however, an interesting picture of the dynamics of the labour market emerges.

To provide a more complete understanding of the effect of the recession, this paper examines the performance of Canada's labour market in 2009 (year-over-year changes in employment levels between December 2008 and December 2009) across a range of demographic categories, industries and regions. It compares recent employment trends with past recessions and finds some stark differences. The paper also draws attention to the principal forces - changing demographics, globalization and technological innovation - shaping the future workforce and workplace and their implications for the size and



composition of the workforce. Lastly, it focuses on initiatives that could help to ease the projected slowdown in the working-age population in the coming years.

The Canadian Chamber is committed to fostering a strong, competitive and profitable economic environment that benefits all Canadians. This paper is one of a series of independent research reports covering key public policy issues facing Canada today.

We hope this analysis will raise public understanding and help decision-makers make informed choices. The papers are designed not to recommend specific policy solutions, but to stimulate public discussion and debate about the nation's challenges.



2009 in Review

The recession took a toll on Canada's labour market. As 2009 came to a close, employment in Canada was down 189,000 from a year ago, a loss of 1.1 per cent on a seasonally adjusted basis. The private sector felt the brunt of the recession, shedding 272,800 net jobs, a drop of 2.5 per cent. Public sector payrolls were relatively unchanged (+2,000 or 0.1 per cent). Typically during economic downturns, many people try new and creative ways to cope with job loss: the 2008-2009 recession was no different. The ranks of the self-employed swelled by 81,800 (+3.1 per cent) over the course of 2009. Approximately 16 per cent of employed Canadians (2.7 million) were self-employed at the end of 2009.

The national unemployment rate stood at 8.4 per cent in December 2009, up from 6.8 per cent a year ago. The average duration of employment steadily increased – from 13.8 weeks in December 2008 to 19.4 weeks in December 2009.¹

Only seven per cent of firms reported labour shortages in the final quarter of 2009, down from 36 per cent before the start of the recession in Canada.²

Employment Changes across Individual Characteristics

The demographics of unemployment are quite apparent. Job losses were particularly severe for men, especially those in their prime working years (25 to 54 years of age). The unemployment rate for men hit 9.6 per cent in December 2009, up from 7.4 per cent in December 2008, while that of women edged up to 7.1 per cent from 6.2 per cent. The difference in the unemployment rate between men and women can be partially related to the respective fields of work in which gender is most represented. In 2009, there was a high

concentration of job losses in traditionally male-dominated and cyclically-sensitive industries, like manufacturing and construction – the hardest hit sectors. Women, on the other hand, were highly represented in recession-resistant fields like health care, social assistance and educational services.

Recently landed immigrants (less than five years in Canada) in the prime working age group also experienced heavy employment losses.³ Immigrants who lost their jobs tended to be newly employed younger men earning at the lower end of the pay scale.

Young Canadians were hit especially hard by deteriorating economic conditions. The unemployment rate among Canada's youth (15 to 24 years of age) soared to 16 per cent in December 2009, up from 13.1 per cent a year ago. Across the OECD, youth employment is more than twice as sensitive to business cycle fluctuations as that of prime-aged workers.⁴

Interestingly, employment of older workers (55 years of age and over) increased for both men and women. The loss of household net wealth emanating from the global financial crisis may have influenced that segment's participation, prompting some to defer retirement or re-enter the workforce.

Trends in education levels were also observed. Individuals with a high school education or less experienced the greatest employment losses. However, employment for those without a post-secondary degree has been slowing for many years, so part of the decrease in employment observed during the recession would have likely occurred regardless.

1 Statistics Canada. CANSIM. Table No. 282-0047.

2 Bank of Canada. "Business Outlook Survey." January 11, 2010. The survey was conducted November 16 to December 11, 2009.

3 OECD. "Employment Outlook 2009 – How Does Canada Compare?" September 28, 2009.

4 Ibid.

Net Employment Changes across Age Groups⁵

	Employment - Dec/09, year-over-year change	Employment - Dec/09, year-over-year per cent change	Unemployment Rate, Dec/09
15 years and over	-189,000	-1.1%	8.4%
men	-187,700	-2.1%	9.6%
women	-1,300	0.0%	7.1%
15-24 years	-155,000	-6.1%	16.0%
men	-114,900	-9.0%	19.1%
women	-40,000	-3.2%	12.8%
25-54 years	-163,200	-1.4%	7.1%
men	-129,300	-2.1%	8.1%
women	-33,900	-0.6%	6.1%
55 years and over	129,200	4.8%	6.7%
men	56,600	3.8%	7.6%
women	72,600	6.1%	5.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. CANSIM table 282-0087.

Compositional Changes in Job Type

Job losses also varied based on hours of work and wages paid. Almost 200,000 net full-time positions were eliminated over the course of 2009, substantially more than were created on a part-time basis (+10,200). The number of permanent jobs declined substantially and there was a slight increase in temporary positions. Job losses were concentrated in the low-end of the pay scale⁶ – workers earning less than \$10 per hour saw a large decline in employment, consistent with the large job losses experienced by younger workers.

Compositional Changes in Sectoral Employment

The recession's ill effects have not been distributed evenly across industries. Manufacturing and other goods-producing industries contributed disproportionately to changes in the overall erosion of jobs in 2009. Employment in good production fell to 22 per cent in December 2009 from 23.3 per cent a year ago. Pummeled by a strong Canadian dollar, weak export markets and restructuring in many key sectors (including automotive), employment in manufacturing was down by 176,800 (-9.1 per cent) in December 2009, compared to a year ago.

On a positive note, by the end of 2009, the services-producing sector had recouped all the net jobs lost during the recession and posted a net gain in jobs. Its share of total employment jumped to 78 per cent in December 2009, from 76.7 per cent a year ago.

⁵ Over the business cycle, jobs are lost and new jobs are created. It is the net number that is shown.

⁶ Statistics Canada. "Study: Canada's Employment Downturn." *The Daily*. November 12, 2009.

Net Employment Changes Across Industries

	Employment - Dec/09, year-over-year change	Employment - Dec/09, year-over-year per cent change
All Industries	-189,000	-1.1%
Goods-Producing Sector	-252,600	-6.4%
Agriculture	-5,100	-1.6%
Forestry, fishing, mining, and oil & gas	-36,400	-10.6%
Utilities	-5,300	-3.5%
Construction	-29,000	-2.4%
Manufacturing	-176,800	-9.1%
Services-Producing Sector	+63,600	+0.5%
Retail and wholesale Trade	+3,700	+0.1%
Transportation & warehousing	-74,500	-8.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	+29,100	+2.7%
Professional, scientific and technical	+41,000	+3.4%
Business, building and other support	-54,400	-8.1%
Educational	+51,300	+4.4%
Health care and social assistance	+59,300	+3.1%
Information, culture and recreation	+10,300	+1.3%
Accommodation and food	-4,800	-0.5%
Other Services	+23,300	+3.1%
Public administration	-20,500	-2.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. CANSIM table 282-0088.

Compositional Changes in Regional Employment

Canada's regions represent a rich cross section of economies and, as a result, are typically impacted differently during recessions. As 2009 came to a close, seven of Canada's 10 provinces had a lower level of employment than a year ago. Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador defied the trend, posting slight increases.

In percentage terms, employment declined much more modestly in the rest of Atlantic Canada. The region did not suffer the ill effects of the recession as much as the rest of Canada, largely due to ongoing capital investment projects in both the private and public sectors. Nonetheless, unemployment rates remain stubbornly high in the region.

Ontario experienced the greatest employment losses, in absolute terms and in percentage terms, largely due to its higher concentration of manufacturing industries, especially automotive. British Columbia and Alberta were also hard-hit amid a sharp reduction in commodity-sector activity, reflecting weak global demand and pricing for key commodities.

Employment in Quebec and Manitoba dropped 0.5 per cent and 0.8 per cent, respectively, well below the national average (-1.1 per cent). The lesser impact of the recession on Quebec's labour market is mainly due to increased investments by both the public and private sectors. Manitoba's well diversified economy helped it weather the storm better than most provinces.

Net Employment Changes across Provinces

	Employment - Dec/09, year-over-year change	Employment - Dec/09, year-over-year per cent change	Unemployment Rate, Dec/09
Canada	-189,000	-1.1%	8.4%
Newfoundland & Labrador	+700	+0.3%	15.2%
Prince Edward Island	+2,300	+3.3%	10.8%
Nova Scotia	-1,200	-0.3%	9.6%
New Brunswick	-2,700	-0.7%	8.9%
Quebec	-17,900	-0.5%	8.4%
Ontario	-120,800	-1.8%	9.2%
Manitoba	-4,900	-0.8%	5.8%
Saskatchewan	+2,400	+0.5%	4.8%
Alberta	-20,000	-1.0%	6.6%
British Columbia	-26,800	-1.2%	8.3%

Source: Statistics Canada. CANSIM tables 282-0087 and 282-0089.

Recent Employment Trends – Comparisons with Earlier Recessions

Employment declined much faster in the early months of the 2008-2009 recession than in the early months of the 1981-1982 and 1990-1991 recessions.

After peaking in October 2008, employment fell 2.3 per cent over the next five months (-388,500), while five months after peaking in 1981 and in 1990, employment declined by 0.7 per cent and 0.4 per cent, respectively. Employment levels over the next nine months of 2009 (April to December) essentially stabilized, while employment continued to decline in previous downturns. Employment losses after the peak continued for 17 months in 1981-1982 and 11 months in 1990-1991.⁷ As a result, job losses 12 months after the peak in employment were similar in proportion to the early 1990s downturn (-2.2 per cent) and were proportionately smaller than the recession of the 1980s (-3.8 per cent).⁸

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – the backbone of communities across the country – weathered the recession relatively well, due to strong domestic demand. About 75 percent of SMEs operate in the service sector, in industries like retail, professional services, non-institutional health care, and accommodation and food and 25 per cent are concentrated in goods-producing industries (especially construction and forestry).⁹

Canada’s job market is recovering much faster than past recessions when employment lagged economic growth during the recovery.

Employment increased in three of the last five months of 2009, with 94,600 net new jobs created between July and December 2009 (20,700 in the fourth quarter of 2009).

Typically, in the early stages of an economic upturn, hiring lags the recovery in output. This occurs because businesses tend to increase output first by boosting productivity and raising the number of hours existing employees work. Adding to payrolls occurs somewhat later. During the initial stages of this recovery, the job market is rebounding as economic growth rebounds. However, as history indicates, the path upwards is not always smooth.

Productivity by the end of most recessions was higher than at the beginning. This was not the case in the 2008-2009 downturn.

While the economy slumped (fourth quarter 2008 to second quarter 2009), employers did not reduce labour inputs (i.e. jobs and hours of work combined) as fast as output fell. As a result, business sector labour productivity fell slightly marking a departure from recent recessions in Canada.¹⁰

⁷ Statistics Canada. “Canada’s Employment Downturn: October 2008 to October 2009.” *Canadian Economic Observer*, Volume 22, no. 11. November 12, 2009.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Industry Canada. “Key Small Business Statistics.” July 2009

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. “The Changing Cyclical Behaviour of Labour Productivity.” *Canadian Economic Observer*, Volume 23, no. 1. January 14, 2010. Firms may have been hesitant to let workers go because they had experienced labour shortages, and were unclear how long or how severe the recession would be.

In the third quarter of 2009, both employment and hours worked per job grew, but there was no output gain to show for it. Real GDP of businesses edged down and, as a result, labour productivity of Canadian businesses fell.¹¹

In contrast, businesses in the U.S. reduced jobs and hours of work sharply during the downturn and have already realized solid gains in productivity coming out of the recession.

The number of business bankruptcies typically rise in a recession, but not so this time around.

As of November 2009, business bankruptcies in Canada were down 21.7 per cent from a year ago. For the 12-month period ending November 2009, the cumulative number of business bankruptcies was down 10.1 per cent compared to the same period in 2008.¹² This suggests that, for many businesses, their primary strategy during the downturn was to downsize rather than shut down completely. Consequently, the job market is reviving sooner than otherwise due to a lesser number of business bankruptcies.

2010 Job Prospects

Canada's economy will continue to create jobs in 2010, albeit at a relatively modest pace, as some sectors, especially manufacturing, remain under pressure. Net job creation is expected to average about 20,000 to 25,000 per month. Thus, by December 2010, we will have more than recouped the net jobs lost over the course of 2009.

The unemployment rate is anticipated to hover around 8.3 per cent in the first half of 2010 as rising participation (i.e. individuals entering the labour force who were previously discouraged from looking for a job) offsets hiring. It is then expected to slowly trend down but likely remain above eight per cent into 2010.

Labour Market Challenges

Three principal forces are driving change in Canada's labour market: demographics, the accelerating pace of international economic integration and technological advances. The impact of these forces will increasingly be felt over the coming decades.

Demographic Trends

Demographic pressures, such as population aging and slower growth in the working age population, will have an adverse impact on labour supply. In the last 30 years, growth in the Canadian working

age population has slowed by more than a third. Based on Statistics Canada's projections, growth in the working age population is projected to slow further, averaging just one per cent per year over the next five years, and less so over the next two decades. The composition of the workforce is also changing. The proportion that is 55 years of age and over has been increasing rapidly since 2001 and will grow substantially over the next two decades. Individuals over 55 years of age typically have lower labour force participation. Thus, the population shift towards older workers

¹¹ Statistics Canada. "Labour Productivity, Hourly Compensation and Unit Labour Cost." *The Daily*. December 15, 2009. Labour productivity is a measure of real GDP (of businesses) per hour worked.

¹² Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada. "Insolvency Statistics in Canada - November 2009." January 21, 2010.

will put downward pressure on the aggregate employment rate; i.e., the share of the working age population that is employed.

The possible loss of many key experienced workers could create labour shortages in skilled trades and professional/managerial occupations, with far-reaching consequences for Canada's economy. Sectors will increasingly be competing against each other for scarce young workers.

Globalization

Economic globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for the workforce and the workplace.

Advances in communications and information technology, liberalization of trade and investment policies and enhanced mobility of labour are accelerating the pace of global economic integration, intensifying competitive pressures and creating ongoing adjustment pressures for the workforce. Industries and segments of the workforce, relatively insulated from trade-related competition in the past, are feeling globalization's expansive reach, which sometimes results in job losses. Particularly at risk of experiencing major adjustment difficulties are production workers who have accumulated many years of tenure.

Additionally, globalization is changing the way businesses and production are structured; for example, multinational corporations are no longer limiting production to a single country, but may transfer labour-intensive production to lower-wage nations. Functions peripheral to the core business may be outsourced domestically or internationally. Firms are becoming more specialized and decision-making more decentralized. This puts a premium on recruiting and retaining highly-skilled and educated individuals.

Canadian consumers and the economy generally benefit from open global markets. Foreign competition provides an incentive to improve quality, produce new and higher value-added products and services, and introduce new or



improved production methods. Foreign direct investment creates jobs and leads to an infusion of innovative technologies, management strategies and workplace practices. Free, rules-based global trade opens up markets for Canadian businesses – large and small – boosting their sales and possibly reducing costs through economies of scale.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) extend Canadian international trade, accounting for 20 per cent of the total value of Canada's exports.¹³ For growth-orientated SMEs, globalization can create new market niches and export can be an important strategic option to grow the business. Export diversification can lead to higher performing businesses, more jobs for Canadians and stronger economic growth.

¹³ Government of Canada. "PM Highlights Government Investments in Small Businesses in Canada." October 2009.

Technological Change

The pace of technological change will almost certainly accelerate in the years ahead, impacting the size and composition of the workforce. Technological advances, whether in information technology, nanotechnology or environmental technology, will propel demand for highly-skilled, well-educated workers. Employees will need to continuously develop and upgrade their skills and knowledge across the jobs spectrum, whether they are working for small or large companies.

“While technology has meant great and positive changes for the world’s economy, it brings with it the obvious requirements that those wielding that technology must be sufficiently trained to harness it effectively, efficiently, and productively.”¹⁴

New technologies will spawn new products and industries, transform the way firms in established industries are organized and labour is employed, and how capital and labour inputs are

combined. Advances in technology have already facilitated telecommuting and other forms of distance work and are revolutionizing the way education and training is delivered. E-learning is imparting education and knowledge the Internet, networked or stand-alone computers and offers potential for improving workers’ skills anytime, anywhere.

Advances in communications technologies and falling prices for voice and data transmission are affecting where labour is deployed. For example, information technology and business-processing services are increasingly being shifted overseas to countries like India. For services like these, the physical location of the workforce is increasingly irrelevant. Thus, “the smallest firms and the largest corporations can both compete in the global scene.”¹⁵

Responses in Light of the Evolution of the Labour Market

Going forward, growth in the Canadian labour force will slow considerably and the percentage of the population 55 years of age and over will escalate. Fully utilizing the pool of potentially available labour will be critical to sustaining labour force growth. Additionally, demographic developments, technological change and globalization will accelerate the shift towards more skilled and educated workers. Economic growth and business success will depend very much on the availability of talent and the productivity of the workforce.

Tapping The Pool of Underutilized Talent

Labour force participation can be increased by tapping underutilized segments of the population, like older workers, Aboriginal peoples, the disabled and recently landed immigrants.

Older Workers: To fully utilize the growing pool of potentially available older workers, as well as permit employers to benefit from the skills of existing older workers for a longer period, business could consider implementing innovative firm-based work arrangements more suited to their lifestyle needs. Flexible work arrangements,

¹⁴ Beatty, Perrin and Claire M. Morris. “The Key to Meeting Canada’s Crucial Skills Challenge.” Opinion Piece. The Globe and Mail. February 26, 2008.

¹⁵ Ibid.

such as part-time or part-year schedules, flexible working hours, compressed work weeks, job sharing, telecommuting, homesourcing (i.e. working from home) and contract work can make a valuable contribution to increasing labour force participation.

Aboriginal Peoples: Aboriginal Canadians represent the fastest growing segment of Canada's population and a significant potential source of skilled labour as Canada's population ages. An estimated 400,000 Aboriginal Canadians will reach the age to enter the labour market over the next decade.¹⁶ Lower levels of education remain a major obstacle to the full participation of Aboriginal Canadians in the workforce. More than one-third have not completed high school and less than 10 per cent have a university degree, compared to the national average of 23 per cent.¹⁷ The full participation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada's education system is crucial to meeting future labour market challenges.

People with Disabilities: Approximately 30 per cent (about 570,000) of Canadians with some type of disability are able to work, yet do not participate in the labour force.¹⁸ Of those that do, about one-third require job redesign or a modified or reduced work schedule to be able to work. Technological advances in medicine and in information technology may allow greater work participation among the disabled.

Recent Immigrants to Canada: The national unemployment rate for immigrants in the prime working age group who landed in Canada within

the last five years is more than double the rate for Canadian-born individuals.¹⁹ Despite the fact that more than half have a university degree, compared to less than a quarter of the Canadian-born population, many face difficulty in finding employment or finding employment related to their background and experience.

The most severe impediments to labour force integration for recent immigrants are lack of Canadian work experience, lack of recognition of foreign credentials and language barriers.²⁰ Settlement and integration programs and services that focus attention on employment-related language training, internships, mentoring and other labour market access supports can help to fully integrate immigrants into the workplace. Employers need to be more open to hiring new immigrants so they can get that important first job.

In the past five years, Canada has relied on immigration for more than two-thirds of its population growth and, within the next decade, it is projected that immigration will contribute 100 per cent of net labour force growth in Canada.²¹ That is to say, without immigration, the Canadian labour force will simply not grow. Many countries are aggressively competing with Canada for the world's talent pool. To succeed, Canada must continue to build a more responsive and proactive immigration system that fast tracks individuals with the skills needed by employers and aggressively market Canada abroad as a destination for skilled immigrants and international students.

16 Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. "Notes for a presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology." October 7, 2009.

17 Ibid.

18 Williams, Cora. "Disability in the Workforce." *Perspectives on Labour and Income, Volume 7, no. 2*. Statistics Canada. February 2006.

19 Gilmore, Jason. "The 2008 Canadian Immigrant Labour Market: Analysis of Quality of Employment." *The Immigrant Labour Force Analysis Series*. Statistics Canada. November 23, 2009.

20 Statistics Canada. "Study: Canada's Immigrant Labour Market." *The Daily*. September 10, 2007.

21 Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration." 2009.

Responding to Increased Labour Demand for Higher Levels of Human Capital

Education

Over the last 20 years, demand for post-secondary graduates has driven all of Canada's employment growth.²² Going forward, Canada's economy will demand ever-higher levels of formal education and skills for employment. "Canada's relative under-production of graduate degrees, especially compared to the United States, is widely identified as a barrier to increasing our country's international competitiveness and productivity."²³

An affordable, accessible and high quality post-secondary education system is key to ensuring a large and growing pool of skilled and knowledgeable workers to meet future labour market needs. In 2006, Canada sat 20th among OECD nations in the proportion of youth enrolled full-time in university soon after completing secondary school.²⁴ For First Nations, Métis, Inuit and the disabled, post-secondary education participation rates continue to be very low. Canada needs to do more to ensure affordable access to a high-quality education for them.

Additionally, with an aging population, post-secondary institutions will need to be more responsive to the needs of mature adult learners by offering more flexible programs, providing a greater variety of delivery methods and accommodating different learning styles.

A highly educated and skilled workforce will enable Canada to shift its economic activity to higher value-added production and services as well as encourage the use of new technology

and make its national economy more resilient to economic shocks. Higher value-added economic activity supports rising wages and living standards. Additionally, better skilled and educated workers are more mobile across occupations, industries, and regions, making for a more flexible labour market.

Training

Rapid technological change and globalization necessitate that both businesses and individuals embrace life-long learning - education, training and re-training of the workforce. Businesses will need to partner with government and educational institutions to expand training opportunities to address tomorrow's labour market's needs. Apprenticeship training programs are an effective path to a career in the skilled trades, while internship programs can provide extensive workplace experience and co-op programs can offer relevant work experience as well as focus on education. All three work-based models are an essential component to building a highly skilled and productive labour force for an innovative, strong and growing economy.

Many small business owners are doing their part to provide employee training despite facing some unique challenges. They encourage informal, on-the-job training because, unlike large firms, many do not have the financial resources to dedicate to formal employee training. Additionally, many small businesses generally do not have the flexibility to take workers offline to allow them to develop their skills outside the workplace.

22 Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. "Notes for a presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology." October 7, 2009.

23 Beatty, Perrin and Claire M. Morris. "The Key to Meeting Canada's Crucial Skills Challenge." Opinion Piece. The Globe and Mail. February 26, 2008.

24 Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity and the Martin Prosperity Institute. "Opportunity in the Turmoil." *Report on Canada 2009*. April 2009.

Conclusion

After three quarters of decline, real gross domestic product (GDP) grew in the third quarter of 2009 and data suggest that economic activity increased at a solid rate during the final quarter of 2009. Although the economy has emerged from recession, the path upwards is not always smooth and this is reflected in the labour market's performance. Job market data in recent months have been conflicting – very encouraging in some months, disappointing in others – but the overall picture indicates the job market has stabilized. Nonetheless, more than 1.5 million Canadians are still out of a job.

The recession and rising unemployment may have diverted attention from labour shortages, but the shortages that existed before the recession will resurface after the economy fully recovers. Over time, an aging population and low birth rate will exert significant strains on Canada's labour market. We will have too few workers to meet the needs of our economy and of society. Thus, we must do everything possible to tap into the pool of underutilized talent – older workers, Aboriginal peoples, the disabled and recently-landed immigrants.

Demographic trends are not alone in exerting pressure on Canada's labour market. With the rising clout of a number of emerging economies (like India and China), Canada will need to continuously develop new sources of comparative advantage, deeply rooted in the quality of its workforce. "Ensuring our country's long term economic growth and continued prosperity – and realizing this country's promises – will depend on the education and skill levels of Canadians and their success in creating and applying ideas and knowledge."²⁵ Investing in education, skills, training and life-long learning will be essential.

Looking to the future, Canada faces many skills-related challenges and opportunities. The success we have in addressing these challenges as well as the continued competitiveness of our nation is of great importance to both our businesses and our workforce.

²⁵ Perrin Beatty and Claire M. Morris. "The Key to Meeting Canada's Crucial Skills Challenge." Opinion Piece. The Globe and Mail. February 26, 2008.

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