Harper: Canada will recover before others

by UPI

BRAMPTON, Ontario - Canada will emerge from the global recession first and strongest, Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Tuesday outside Toronto.

In his first major speech on the global recession and Canada's pending budget, Harper spoke at a board of trade luncheon in Brampton, Ontario. He said while unemployment is growing, he expected Canada to face a labor shortage when the recession ends.

"Canada was the last advanced country to fall into this recession. We will make sure its effects here are the least severe, and we will come out of this faster than anyone and stronger than ever," Harper said.

Harper said it was incumbent on the United States to restore economic stability.

"We will not turn the corner on this global recession until the American financial sector is fixed," he said. "Our stimulus plan will help us to sustain economic activity and make transitions, but it cannot fix the problem of the global financial system."

As his minority government's budget is under review in the senate after being passed by the House of Commons, Harper stressed early in his speech part of the stimulus plan includes measures to cut bureaucratic red tape and get the bulk of the billions of dollars into recipients' hands by April for such things as infrastructure, research and development and trade.

He also said Employment Insurance payments to the growing number of unemployed workers would be increased by April, while employers' premiums would be frozen.

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