



The Honourable James Moore, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

June 20th, 2012

Dear Minister,

The British Columbia Library Association wishes to express its concerns regarding the budget cuts to Library and Archives Canada. These budget cuts will result in the erosion of our documentary heritage and our ability to understand ourselves as Canadians. We ask you to reconsider the action and to reinstate and restore the services that Libraries and Archives Canada provides to Canadians.

The Library and Archives Canada Act declares that ‘Canada be served by an institution that is a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society;’ and that amongst its objects and powers is ‘to acquire and preserve the documentary heritage’ and to ‘to support the development of the library and archival communities.’ Cutting 9.6 million dollars from LAC’s budget, eliminating the National Archival and Development Program, and reducing staffing by over 200 positions will make it impossible to fulfill these legislated objectives.

The Government’s claim that it is increasing access to LAC’s unique collections through digitization is erroneous. Estimates indicate that only a small percentage of the collection is available electronically. Access to the collection is further restricted by eliminating the Interlibrary Loan Department and thus privileging only those Canadians able to travel to Ottawa.

The membership of British Columbia Library Association, at its Annual General Meeting on May 12th, 2012, passed a resolution to support the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) campaign to save Library and Archives Canada. BCLA requests the following actions from the Government of Canada:

- Amend the *Library and Archives of Canada Act* to remove any ambiguity about LAC's mandate to maintain a comprehensive collection of Canada's documentary heritage;
- Ensure funding required to fulfill this mandate;
- Restore LAC's full acquisition of published material and archival acquisitions;
- Restore public services, including access to archivists and librarians; access to the general reference collection; and re-establishment of specialist archivist positions; and
- End fragmentation of collections resulting from decentralization and partnerships.



BCLA wishes to add the voice of its membership to other Canadian voices speaking in support of Libraries and Archive Canada. Building a Canadian identity, supporting Canadian citizens, and ensuring that future generations understand what it means to be a Canadian necessitates a strong, well-supported national library and archives. Continued access to unique collections in all formats along with the specialists who understand these collections, is invaluable to researchers, business interests and the Canadian public.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J Stockdale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the last name being a large, prominent 'J'.

June Stockdale,
President
British Columbia Library Association

cc: Daniel Caron, National Librarian and Archivist of Canada
Mr. Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Opposition, New Democratic Party
The Honourable Bob Rae, Leader, Liberal Party of Canada
Ms. Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada