

2013

Canadian
Association of
University Teachers

**[COMMENTS FOR ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA EXPERT
PANEL ON THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES IN
CANADA]**

Introduction

CAUT is the national association representing 68,000 academic staff including librarians and archivists at over 120 universities and colleges across Canada.

In the fall of 2010, our members came to us with alarming stories about what was happening at Library and Archives Canada (LAC). We began to investigate and quickly discovered that the situation was more troubling than we had imagined. The situation has deteriorated rapidly since. In the fall of 2011, we launched the campaign, Save Library and Archives Canada, to draw attention to the cuts and reductions to services at our national library and archives and to call for their reversal.

As we advocated against the dismantling of LAC, we began to consider more carefully the context in which these changes are occurring. Recognizing that LAC was one example of a much larger problem, we expanded our campaign to address the impact of federal budget cuts and policies on the ability of Canadians to access our cultural heritage. We launched the Canada's Past Matters campaign in the fall of 2012, which addresses the dismemberment of LAC, cuts to regional archives and libraries, closures to federal libraries, elimination of Parks Canada programs and staff that maintain our historical sites and archeological artifacts and research, the destruction of the Museum of Civilization, as well as the muzzling of government researchers.

The following is an account of what has been happening to our public libraries, archives, and heritage sites across the country. These invaluable institutions are being devastated by cuts to their budgets, their resources and their services to the public. This is of direct concern to our members. However, CAUT is also concerned about the implications for Canadian society as a whole. The systemic dismantling of our collective cultural heritage does terrible damage to us all, both now and in the future.

Library and Archives Canada

In 2009, LAC introduced a so-called “modernization” strategy in which they proposed to limit LAC’s key role to management of legal deposit¹ and the preservation of the federal government

¹ Through an Access to information request regarding digitization at LAC, CAUT learned that legal deposit itself may be imperiled. LAC documents reveal that

record. This interpretation is dangerously limiting and goes against LAC's mandate as developed through past practice – that is, to acquire a comprehensive collection of Canada's documentary heritage. At its inception in 2004, "the bringing together of the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada" was announced to Canadians by Former National Librarian, Roch Carrier, with the promise of "comprehensive collections, expertly organized, properly preserved and accessible to all."² Similarly, in a speech made in May 2005, former Librarian and Archivist of Canada, Ian E. Wilson, asserted, "Our goal for LAC, stated in a few words, is to become a leading-edge knowledge institution... Our objectives are clear: to create a truly national institution to provide Canadians with access to *the whole of their documentary heritage*."³ (emphasis added)

The move away from a dedication to the preservation Canada's full documentary heritage is an irresponsible move for a national library and archive, one that will have devastating implications for Canada's present and future researchers.

Losing our documentary heritage

The new interpretation of LAC's role was rapidly put into practice. In 2009, LAC announced a 10-month moratorium on purchasing acquisitions which now, four years later, still has not resumed. Purchased acquisitions constitute an essential part of the LAC collection mandate. They offer insight into the unofficial stories of Canada's past. The gaps that have been created in our historical record as a result of the cessation will seriously compromise the ability of present and future generations to know our history.

Antiquarian booksellers, previously an important supplier of rare material to LAC, have all but given up on offering their significant Canadiana to our national library and archives. According to Liam McGahern, president of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of Canada (ABAC),

ABAC (The Antiquarian Booksellers of Canada) remains disappointed that the Harper Government continues its active role in the destruction of Canada's historical depository, Library and Archives Canada. Because of the policies and cuts of this government, the library has abandoned the acquisitions of historical pieces of

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1. the number of *born digital records* for published titles that have been acquired by LAC has increased by over 50% since 2009.
 2. The number of *analogue records* for published titles that have been acquired by LAC has steadily decreased by 27% since 2009.

This either means that there has been a 27% reduction in analogue published material in Canada since 2009 or that LAC is not living up to its legislated mandate with respect to legal deposit.

² Roch Carrier, "Message from National Librarian of Canada," Library and Archives Canada, December 31, 2002, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/50th/012009-210-e.html>>

³ Ian Wilson, "Speech given to Ontario Historical Society, May 7 2005," Library and Archives Canada, Oct. 2005 <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/about-us/012-203-e.html>>

Canadiana, and now most booksellers have given up offering LAC important pieces of Canadian history.⁴

There are many examples of important pieces of Canada's heritage that LAC is not acquiring. Many of these pieces have been or will be bought by other national libraries and private collectors both inside and outside Canada. Here are three examples:

Music History

- Possibly the earliest Canadian publication of Jewish liturgical music from 1915 12 pages of chants with words and music written in Hebrew and Yiddish composed by Rev. L. Herzig, Montreal. (The only known copy.)

Children's Literature

- 2 books of nursery rhymes and engravings by Catharine Parr Traill (one of "Canada's most important 19th-century writers" according to LAC's website) from 1825 and 1830. First Editions. (No other copies located.)

Aboriginal and Settler History

- From 1903-5 a series of journals containing detailed information on history & legends of settlers & First Nations people of north shore of Gulf of St. Lawrence & Labrador Coast. Contains geographical description, First Nations' lore, missionary activity & was the journal published in this region. (Previously unrecorded. No other copies. A rare survival.)

Significantly, in June 2013, Library and Archives Canada acquired the Sherbrooke Collection, a large collection of War of 1812 documentation. The collection whose value the auction house had estimated at \$160,000 to \$225,000, was sold to LAC for \$720,000.

Internal documents obtained by the Canadian Press through Access to Information show that LAC was not aware of the pending sale until just one month before the auction. As a result, LAC likely missed out on the opportunity to acquire the materials for a much lower price.

Over the past several years LAC has systematically dissembled its acquisitions infrastructure. Without the necessary connections and expertise, the process of communicating and negotiating with the auction house was "frantic and reactive."⁵

⁴ For more about the effects of the shift in acquisition policy see Joseph Hall, "Historical letters not wanted at Library and Archives Canada, critics say", *Toronto Star*, March 10, 2013 <http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2013/03/10/historical_letters_not_wanted_at_library_and_archives_canada_critics_say.html>

Also, given on the ongoing cessation of private acquisitions at LAC and the apparent arms-length status of LAC as a government agency, it is notable that this acquisition of War of 1812 material is in-keeping with the governments' well-documented interest in a limited depiction of Canadian history and identity.

Loss of knowledgeable staff

Not only are we losing importance pieces of our national collection, we are also losing the knowledgeable staff at LAC:

On April 30, 2012, LAC announce that it would cut approximately 20% of its staff -- a loss of 215 positions from 1065 to 850 staff.

These cuts were over and above the more than 48 full-time positions lost since 2004.

Most recently, all specialist archival portfolios at LAC have been eliminated. Specialist portfolios have been replaced by generalist portfolios. So, for example, there is no longer anyone available at LAC working in the Aboriginal portfolio to specifically help researchers navigate the Aboriginal collections. The lack of these essential positions raises serious concerns about how this absence will affect the important research being done at LAC, for example, by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Specialist archivists are vital to the accessibility of LAC collections. As Canadian author and archive-user, Susan Crean, aptly pointed out, the real treasures are the archivists, the clue givers. The people who know the terrain and the context in which a given archive exists. The more complex your project, the further off the beaten track you stray, the more likely it is that you will depend on them. With collections that are not used enough to merit the expense of developing finding aids, they can be your only hope. And often they do much more than just make the guesswork informed—they make significant contributions.⁶

Many of us will find our research greatly impoverished without the specialist archivists to help guide us through the collections with which they are so familiar. The impacts of their elimination are already being felt. Some researchers have reporter to us that they been told that certain fonds are not available to them because the archivist expert with knowledge of the particular fond(s) is no longer in the position.

⁵ "Canada's Archives Missed Chance at Private Sale of Underpriced Sale of Canada's Maps, Manuscripts", *McClean's*, <<http://www2.macleans.ca/2013/09/08/canadas-archives-missed-chance-at-private-sale-of-underpriced-maps-manuscripts/>>

⁶ Susan Crean, "National Archives Blues," *Literary Review of Canada*, <<http://reviewcanada.ca/essays/2011/01/01/national-archives-blues/>>

This is not simply an issue of access to specialized material for individual researchers; this is will affect all Canadians. Without access to our historical materials, how can Canadians know and understand our history?

De-professionalization at LAC is coupled with contempt for the essential work performed by librarians and archivists of maintaining our collective documentary heritage. This is evidenced by the fact that the institution announced in 2012 that the descriptions of collections would no longer be written by archivists and librarians:

Up to now, most of the descriptions of LAC holdings were written by archivists and librarians. These descriptions, known as metadata, will be done by creators, donors and users.⁷

As Janet Friskney, President of the Bibliographic Society of Canada indicated in a letter to all MPs in august 2012:

Every Member of Parliament should be deeply disturbed that LAC/BAC officials are willing to compromise the integrity of record keeping of Canada's documentary heritage by having people untrained in archival or library practices do the major and fundamental work of writing official descriptions. Such an action will inevitably produce records of uneven quality, detail, and accuracy. To propose or condone an approach so lacking in professionalism demonstrates tremendous contempt for Canada's documentary heritage.⁸

LAC's new Code of Conduct

In January 2013, LAC's Code of Conduct: Values and Ethics came into effect. The code is a clear indication of the contempt with which LAC administration treats its staff. The code outlines severe restrictions on staff behavior both in their public and personal lives.

Professional development activities such as attending conferences, teaching, publishing, or working with LAC client organizations were all activities which were promoted, even celebrated, as important staff activities in the past. LAC's new code of conduct qualifies these activities as "high risk" and lays out a series of restrictive conditions that employees must meet before they can engage in these activities without discipline.⁹

⁷ < <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/about-us/modernization/Pages/Initiatives.aspx>>

⁸ <<http://www.bsc-sbc.ca/en/letter.pdf>>

⁹ < <http://www.scribd.com/doc/130187655/LAC-Code-of-Conduct-Values-and-Ethics>>

LAC employees' personal activities, including use of social media, are also restricted. The code goes as far as to assert that an employee could be subject to disciplinary measures if their commentary about LAC or the Canadian government, made in a limited access forum, accidentally became public.

The code further includes a provision encouraging employees to report on one another.

The outcry over the muzzling of LAC staff exploded in the media.¹⁰

Less public access

While the LAC administration asserts that "modernization" will bring increased access, what we have thus far seen is

- Reduced hours
- Restricted access to materials and archivists
- Restricted resources for reference staff
- Genealogy inquiries reduced to 'by appointment only'
- Elimination of the Inter-Library Loans Program (more on page 9)

Access to the full range of LAC's collections is further compromised by the recent management decision to reduce fields for describing fonds from 25 to 10. Having less descriptors will make accurate online searching more difficult. One of the fields being eliminated is "provenance" which allows researchers to trace the origin of a particular book or document.

LAC "not meant for public access"

In a telling exchange on Twitter, Minister James Moore responded to questions about deteriorating funding and access at LAC by stating "Is why (sic) we're creating the History Museum: access. The LAC main building is not designed or meant for public access. History is."

The subtext here is clear: While the government is denying the public access to resources that make independent historical research possible, it is simultaneously eager to represent a version of Canada's past that supports its own ideological vision in the present.

CAUT's Executive Director has written to Minister Moore requesting clarification about his statement. Thus far, we have received no response.

¹⁰ < <http://margaretmunro.wordpress.com/2013/03/20/abcs-of-behaviour-regulation-for-federal-librarians-and-archivists/> >

The real scoop on digitization at LAC

Cuts to staff and services at LAC have been consistently justified by promises that digitizing LAC's material and online access would make up for the deficiency of on-site services. But, this argument makes little sense given that LAC has reduced digitization staff by 50%. As a result, CAUT made an access to information request to find out the truth. This is what we found out:

Total percentage of records digitized

- LAC internal estimates indicate that approximately **0.5%** of LAC holdings (both textual and non-textual) have been digitized to date.
- Based on LAC's estimated costs for the digitization, from January 2012, we can calculate the following:
 - Digitization of the *published* books, journals, and newspapers in LAC's holdings (which in 2004, Ian Wilson indicated numbered about 19 million) would cost between **\$1.5 billion and \$3.5 billion**
 - At the current rate of spending on digitization (approx \$5 million annually) it would take LAC **300-700 years** to digitize its published holdings (acquired pre-2004).

NB: These are only the costs incurred for the physical process of digitizing the material. These numbers do not reflect the time, labour, and technology involved in cataloguing and preserving the material once it has been converted into a digital file format.

LAC: Lender of no resort

In the wake of LAC's elimination of the popular and effective Inter-library loans program at LAC, researchers are at a loss. LAC officials have indicated that a "Lender of Last Resort" policy would be in place by September 2013. There is still nothing. In the meantime, researchers are being told that unless they can travel to Ottawa, they are simply out of luck.

Next Librarian and Archivist of Canada

The resignation of Daniel Caron, former Librarian and Archivist of Canada, has created an opportunity for the federal government to appoint a successor who has a proper vision for Canada's national library and public archives and provide leadership in undoing the damage of the past several years. This will require a person of exceptional vision and skill and, given the controversies of the recent period, someone from outside the ranks of current Library and Archives Canada (LAC) management.

The CAUT believes that LAC's next head must:

- Be committed to the acquisition and preservation Canada's full documentary heritage;

- Value LAC librarians and archivists as vital to the institution and the wider archive and library communities in Canada;
- Recognize the importance of both on-site and online services;
- Engage, consult, and communicate with its various user-communities;
- Defend the role of LAC and of libraries and archives more generally;
- Be willing and able to reverse the destructive changes that have taken place over the last four years. This involves:
 - Advocating for an amendment of the LAC Act to more clearly specify LAC's obligation to maintain a comprehensive collection of Canada's documentary heritage
 - Advocating for the resources LAC requires to support its full mandate
 - Restoring LAC's comprehensive acquisition of published material and archival records
 - Restoring public services, including access to archivists and librarians; access to the general reference collection; and re-establishment of specialist archivist positions
 - Re-committing LAC to its central role as the steward of Canada's documentary heritage
 - Restoring the National Archival Development Program (NADP) to support local archives
 - Restoring LAC's Inter-Library Loans program
 - Scrapping LAC's Code of Conduct
 - Restoring the staff positions lost through recent budget cuts.

Under new direction, LAC has the opportunity to recommit to providing all Canadians on-site and online access to a comprehensive collection of this country's documentary heritage. CAUT hopes that the next Librarian and Archivist of Canada will be able to face the enormous challenges ahead with knowledge, vision, courage, integrity, and respect for the importance of Canada's cultural and historical heritage.

Reduced funding

LAC's annual budget is, in constant dollars, \$33-million less than it was in 1990. This is before the cuts announced in the 2012 budget.

The 2012 federal budget has further reduced LAC's funding by \$3.5-million this year, \$6.6-million next year, and \$9.6-million in 2014-15, and each year thereafter.

By 2014-15, adjusted for inflation, LAC's budget will be just 58% of what it was in 1990-91.

Public Libraries

Interlibrary Loans service closed

In spite of widespread protest from user groups from across the country, the Interlibrary Loans Service (ILL) of Library and Archives Canada officially closed its doors on Friday, February 15, 2013.

The ILL at LAC allowed any Canadian library to borrow material from our national library at Library and Archives Canada when the material is not available elsewhere.¹¹ Without this service, the only access is if individuals travel to Ottawa to consult books and other documents that previously could have been forwarded directly to their local library.

Elimination of the Community Access Program

Since 1994, the Community Access Program (CAP) provided free public access to computers and high speed internet at libraries across Canada. The program has been particularly important for rural and remote communities and for Canada's less well-off and vulnerable populations.

While the Conservative government says the program has "outlived its usefulness," local libraries which provide the service say otherwise. According to the Canadian Library Association (CLA) April 2012 press release:

The continued need for CAP programs is borne out by users: at sites across Canada, indications are that use of the computers, as well as for assistance, have been constant or are increasing. CAP operators report that many of the most remote sites serve as community gathering and sharing spaces where there are no others, and that public libraries depend on CAP sites to deliver their services remotely.¹²

Without public access points, internet access will not be available to many Canadians who cannot afford the costs of broadband. As CLA points out, only 79% of Canadian households have internet connections and 54% of those who don't are in the lowest income bracket.

¹¹ In the fiscal year 2012-2013 alone LAC filled 21,294 requests for loans and copies from its collections and helped locate materials at other facilities in response to another 11,658 requests. The loss of ILL is a huge blow to Canadians' ability to access to our collective history. See farewell letter from ILL staff: <http://anglo-celtic-connections.blogspot.ca/2013/02/60-years-of-interlibrary-loan-service.html>

¹² Canadian Library Association, Press Release April 12, 2012
<<https://clagov.wordpress.com/2012/04/12/community-access-program/>>

As former CLA president Karen Adams pointed out, “CAP programs provide much more than connected computers... they provide training and help to the public to increase their digital literacy. Without this assistance disadvantaged groups would not be able to benefit from the ability to connect with information and services essential to their well-being.”¹³

The government is fully aware that the decision to eliminate CAP will have a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable Canadians. Industry Canada’s own Internal Audit indicates that “the digital divide continues to persist in Canada among a number of demographic groups including Canadians in rural and remote communities, low income earners, those with low levels of literacy and education, francophones over 50 years of age, seniors and others.”

Federal Libraries

The cuts to and closures of federal departmental libraries will put at risk the preservation of our documentary heritage and access to our cultural heritage.

Federal libraries are an important part of Canada’s cultural heritage. These specialist libraries house some of Canada’s most important collections. For instance, the Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSDC) Libraries include the largest collection of books in Canada on the social sciences. The libraries’ physical collections will be entirely phased out by March 31, 2013.

The fate of the HRSDC libraries is not unique. Dozens of federal departmental libraries across the country have been closed or are destined for closure within the next two years.¹⁴ No studies were done to assess the impacts of these closures, and for many of the libraries affected there is no clear plan for what will be done with their collections. Where plans have been developed, many departments indicate that their libraries’ historically valuable material will be relocated to Library and Archives Canada. However, given that acquisitions at LAC have been dramatically diminished, the likelihood that it will be able to cope with a massive influx of material from departmental libraries is small. Library material qualified as “non-mandate” by departments will be offered to other departments or employees, sold through Crown Assets Distribution, or destroyed.

CLOSED

Canadian Heritage

- LAC’s Staff Resource Center closed November 1, 2012.

¹³ Canadian Library Association, Press Release April 12, 2012
<<https://clagov.wordpress.com/2012/04/12/community-access-program/>>

¹⁴ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Sessional Paper No. 8555-411-785, September 17, 2012.

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- As of April 2013, the Public Service Commission (PSC) was in the process of closing and plans regarding the disposition of PSC's Library collection have not been finalized.

Citizenship and Immigration (CIC)

- The CIC library closed March 31, 2012.

Environment Canada

- National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy was eliminated. Its library was closed March 31, 2013.

Foreign Affairs

- The Documentation Service and library of the Canadian Cultural Centre at the Canadian Embassy in Paris closed June 21, 2012.

Human Resources and Skills Development

- HRSDC closed its libraries in Gatineau, Quebec, and Montreal on March 31, 2013.

National Capital Commission

- National Capital Commission Library closed in 2012.

Intergovernmental Affairs

- Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) is expected to significantly reduce and eventually close its library.

Public Works and Government Services

- PWGSC closed its library on May 31, 2012.

Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

- Transport Canada closed its library in 2012.

CONSOLIDATED

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

- CRA is consolidating its nine existing libraries into one, the location of which has yet to be determined.

Environment Canada

- Parks Canada will consolidate five libraries into one. Regional libraries located in Calgary, Winnipeg, Quebec City, and Halifax will be consolidated into the Cornwall, Ontario location.

Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

- The DFO will close seven of its libraries, leaving two principal and two subsidiary locations. Consolidation completed September 2012. Researchers have serious concerns about the consolidation and de-accessioning process which insiders indicate was not well thought out and has been rushed.

Natural Resources

- Natural Resources Canada is set to close six of fourteen libraries in 2012-13: two in Ottawa, one in Varennes, Quebec; one in Edmonton, Alberta; and another in western Canada. In 2014, another Ottawa library will be closed.

Regional & Local Archives

On April 30, 2012, without consultation or notice, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) eliminated the National Archival Development Program (NADP). The NADP was a \$1.7-million program administered by the not-for-profit Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) and distributed to 13 archives councils to support archival activities locally. All funds allocated through the program had to be matched with funds or in-kind contributions from applicants.

Funding must be restored

In 2010, a LAC evaluation committee described the NADP as “highly relevant” and “an effective means of supporting the archival community and its activities.” They noted that the NADP was the sole source of funding for many institutions and recommended that funding be increased to adjust for inflation and to help local archives manage in the digital environment.

NADP: A crucial resource for local and regional archives

The goals of the NADP were to:

- Increase public access to Canada’s archival heritage through the development of a national on-line catalogue of archival descriptions (ARCHIVESCANADA.ca)

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- Increase awareness and broaden use of Canada's archival heritage
- Increase representation of Aboriginal peoples and under-represented ethno-cultural groups in Canada's archival heritage
- Increase the capacity of archival networks to undertake strategic and development activities
- Increase the capacity of archival institutions to preserve Canada's heritage

Services provided through the NADP included:

- Archival and preservation advice to archives
- Job opportunities for new graduates from Canada's archival and information studies programs
- Online Access to archival holdings
- Outreach and educational activities in communities to help small institutions manage their treasures
- Cataloguing of archival materials to make them publicly accessible
- Training opportunities for local archives run by volunteers or one-person operations
- Site assessments to both urban and rural archives, to safeguard Canada's documentary heritage

Impact of eliminating the NADP

The elimination of the NADP is devastating for the Canadian archival community. According to the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA):

- All 13 provincial and territorial archives councils are in "survival mode". One is already dormant.
- The CCA has downsized their physical headquarters significantly and staffing has been reduced from 8 FTE to 2 FTE and 2 PTE positions
- Services provided by Archives Advisors and Conservators have been reduced. These people were stationed in every province to provide professional support to small institutions; without them many institutions are without access to professional expertise. Many provinces and territories (including Manitoba, Quebec, NWT, PEI) are without Archive advisors and conservators altogether. Others have seen a reduction in the f/t positions and hours of service.
- The participation of Canada in the National Archival Appraisal Board, the North American Archival Network, and the International Council on Archives is seriously threatened
- The imminent launch of ArchivesCanada.ca 2.0, a revolutionary national-level hub for all archival descriptions in Canada, is threatened.

Outcry over Funding Cuts

In the wake of the elimination of the NADP there was a groundswell of outrage.

On May 28 2012, archivists and supporters from across the country came together in Ottawa to protest the elimination of the NADP. They marched in silence to LAC's offices where a mock funeral was held. Speakers included the Lara Wilson, president of the Canadian Council of Archives, a representative from CAUT, and three Members of Parliament.

On May 31, 2012, the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) withdrew from LAC's Pan Canadian Documentary Heritage Network (PCDHN) on the grounds that LAC has violated its mandate to "support the development of the library and archival communities" and to "provide professional, technical and financial support to those involve in the preservation and promotion of the documentary heritage and in providing access to it." According to the ACA, the PCDHN cannot possibly address the "diverse needs and interests of archives across Canada." Since then, the Canadian Council of Archives, the Association of Provincial and Territorial Archivists of Canada, and the University and College Archivists of Canada have all withdrawn from the PCDHN. The Canadian Historical Association has written a letter to the Librarian and Archivist of Canada stating: "We remain convinced that the best way to provide the services that were lost with the cancellation of NADP is to reinstate this program."¹⁵

Numerous organizations and individuals have condemned the cuts, including:

Silence from Heritage Minister on potential reinstatement of NADP

In June 2013 in the wake of enormous public pressure, the former Minister of Heritage, James Moore, indicated that he was considering reinstating the National Archival Development Program (NADP).¹⁶ This would be an important victory for local and regional archives across the country; CAUT unequivocally supports the restoration of the NADP.

However, there has been nothing forthcoming about this this since the original statement and no confirmation of funding. Especially troubling is that, former Minister Moore has indicated that any money for the NADP would have to come from within the already depleted Library and Archives Canada (LAC) budget. His successor has taken no action on the issue.

¹⁵ Letter from Lyle Dick to Daniel Caron, August 14 2012 < <http://www.cha-shc.ca/english/advocacy/the-cha-and-lacs-stakeholders-forum.html> >

¹⁶ "[Heritage minister looks at restoring local archives program](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/heritage-minister-looks-at-restoring-local-archives-program-1.1415052)", *CBC*, June 10, 2013 <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/heritage-minister-looks-at-restoring-local-archives-program-1.1415052>>

The Canadian Association of University Teachers calls on all Canadians to contact the Heritage Minister and voice support for restoring the NADP, insisting that the \$1.7 million annual cost of the program be added to the current LAC budget.

Historical sites

Cuts to Parks Canada

The 2012 Federal Budget cut funding for Parks Canada's programs by \$29 million annually. This will mean the loss of 638 jobs and will compromise Canada's ability to maintain and protect its cultural heritage.

Canada's Historical Sites & Archaeological Heritage in Danger

Parks Canada manages Canada's 42 national parks and park reserves and 167 of Canada's national historical sites. Many parks and sites face closure, a reduction in the hours of operation and loss of public access, and elimination of interpretative staff.

At Parks Canada's Historical Research Branch – where sites are reviewed for their eligibility for historic designation – all three positions that relate to First Nations' culture, history, and archaeological sites have been cut.

Over 80% of archaeologists and conservators at Parks Canada have lost their jobs, reducing the number of archaeologists and conservators at Parks Canada to 12 and 8 respectively. The remaining 20 people will be responsible for millions of artifacts and the archaeology at 218 national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.¹⁷

As one Parks Canada Conservator noted, "At this moment there are more people employed in a single Tim Horton's than are employed by Parks Canada nationally to preserve and care for millions of archaeological and historic objects in storage and on display."¹⁸

The cuts also mean that all six of Parks Canada's archaeology labs will be closed and all the artifacts from these regional centers will be shipped to a central facility in Ottawa/Gatineau for storage.

Impact of the Cuts

¹⁷ <<http://elfshotgallery.blogspot.ca/2012/05/what-is-happening-to-archaeology-at.html>

¹⁸ <<http://heritagebusinessjournal.com/2012/06/05/canadian-archaeology-and-the-age-of-austerity/#more-417>>

These cuts will make it more difficult for Canadians to visit, understand, protect, and research many of the historic sites and regions that have been significant in shaping our history and culture.

The closure of historical sites is a direct attack on Canada's history. Replacing interpretive staff with self-guided tours at many of the remaining sites will deprive visitors of a full understanding of the significance of the site. Sites at which interpretative staff will no longer be available to the public include high-profile heritage sites such as the Banff Park Museum, Ottawa's Laurier House, and the Riel House. Michel Lagace, president of the St. Boniface Historical Society notes: "There will be no one to explain what the history of this place is and what its meaning is and what its importance is."¹⁹

Archaeologists, conservators, historians, curators, and interpreters at Parks Canada are needed for the discovery, restoration and protection of Canada's historic sites and artifacts. They interact with and educate the public about Canada's wild spaces and historical sites, enriching our connection to both our environment and our history.

The removal of artifacts from Parks Canada's regional labs means that communities across the country are losing access to their cultural artifacts, and an important connection to their history.

Ironically, in 2011 Parks Canada celebrated archaeology and the contributions archaeology has made to our history. According to the Parks Canada website, "Canada's human history is revealed through these [archaeological] resources that in many cases are the only or one of very few pieces of evidence or information that exist."²⁰

While the federal government has tried to defend the cuts as saving taxpayer money, according to the Canadian Archaeological Association the massive reduction to Parks Canada staff and infrastructures does not even make business sense. In November 2011, Environment Minister Peter Kent estimated that the national parks contributed \$3.3 billion to the Canadian economy in 2008-2009 at a cost of \$587 million.²¹

As one archeologist has aptly questioned "why would you make cuts to a program that is not only a national and international source of pride, but a program that brings billions of dollars into the Canadian economy?"²²

¹⁹ "Voices from Canada's Past Being Silenced", *Toronto Star*, June 15 2012, <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2012/06/15/voices_from_canadas_past_being_silenced.html>

²⁰ < <http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/arch/page2.aspx> >

²¹ Canadian Archaeological Association letter to PM, < http://canadianarchaeology.com/caa/sites/default/files/page/draconian_cuts_to_parks_canada/pdf/ca_a_letter_to_prime_minister.pdf >

²² "What's Happening to Archaeology at Parks Canada?" <<http://elfshotgallery.blogspot.ca/2012/05/what-is-happening-to-archaeology-at.html>>

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The cuts include the closure of the brand new custom-built storage facility in Dartmouth. This facility was designed with climate controlled labs and holds thousands of artifacts from Atlantic Canada. Now, only 3 years into the 20 year lease, Parks Canada plans to close down the facility as part of the merger. To pay out the remainder of the lease will cost the government over \$7 million.

Silencing Dissent

Parks Canada employees have been muzzled from speaking out about the threats to Canada's national and cultural heritage. Employees received letters warning them not to criticize the department or the federal government.

Museum of History

On October 16, 2012 the federal government announced that it was allocating \$25 million from the Heritage budget to dismantle the Canadian Museum of Civilization and replace it with the Canadian History Museum. In September 2013 Bill C-49 died with prorogation, but the Bill was quickly brought back when parliament reconvened and passed its third and final reading in November 2013.

On December 4, 2013 Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) along with the Canadian Anthropology Society (CAS) and the Canadian Historical Association (CHA) appeared before Senate to condemn Bill C7, the changes to the museum act, and to argue for amendments to the bill. Despite the forceful objection of our organizations that collectively represent the vast majority of historians, anthropologists, and academics across the country, the Senate passed the bill without amendments on December 5 2013 and it received Royal Assent on December 12, 2013.

The Museum of Civilization is the most popular museum in the country, with 1.3 million people visiting the exhibits every year. The rebranding of the museum is absurd, but this rebranding is only symptomatic of a much more serious problem: an attempt to change the whole nature of the institution.

The Canada Hall, the Face-to-Face Hall, and the Postal museum are all slated for destruction under the government's new plans. These extensive sections of the museum have provided a space for Canadians and visitors alike to learn about the diverse cultural and geographic identities of our nation. The Museum of Civilization is the only national institution that exhibits and celebrates the lives of everyday Canadians – their settlement histories and their cultural diversity.

CAUT opposes destruction of Museum of Civilization

The Canadian Museum of History Act, indicates not only narrows the focus from that of the erstwhile Canadian Museum of Civilization, but ends the institution's mandate as a knowledge-creating institution. While the Act creating the Museum of Civilization stated that the museum's purpose was the increase of understanding, knowledge and appreciation for "human cultural achievements and human behaviour," the new Act refers only to the "events, experiences, people and objects that reflect and have shaped Canada's history and identity." More strikingly, the reference in the previous act to collecting and developing collections "for research and posterity" has been dropped entirely from the statement of purpose of the Canadian Museum of History.²³

The suspicion that this change will involve a significant decline in the research and collections function of the new institution is supported by actions taken by management of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. In May 2012 the office of Vice-President of Research and Collections was abolished, and the museum's curators and collections managers were placed under the management of the Vice-President of Exhibitions. Fears that this action foretold a regime in which the nature and scale of research would be driven solely by the requirements of exhibitions now appear to be justified.

Who will decide on the exhibitions that will be developed in such an organization? The world's great museums are knowledge-creating institutions, in which exhibits flow from a dynamic relationship between the discoveries of researchers and the interests of public audiences. This was recognized in the Statement of Principles of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, which affirmed that "Museum activities focus on the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Our research is rigorous and creative, thereby contributing to new understanding. Our exhibitions and programs are knowledge-based and provide clear information to the public."²⁴ In an institution in which research is relegated to the gathering of facts required to support particular exhibits, the choice of exhibit topics and content are entirely driven by the judgment of administrators and, to a much greater extent than has existed to this time, subject to the influence of political forces.

Scope and Mandate

The government has created a narrowly conceived "Canadian Museum of History" (CMH) in place of the existing Canadian Museum of Civilization violates the CMC's broad legislative mandate (Museums Act, S.C. 1990, c.3), which calls for "establishing maintaining, and developing for research and posterity a collection of objects of historical and cultural interest, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada" (emphasis added).

²³

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/LegislativeSummaries/bills_ls.asp?Language=E&ls=c49&Parl=41&Ses=1&source=library_prb>

²⁴<http://www.civilization.ca/app/DocRepository/1/About_The_Corporation/Corporate_Reports/Annual_Reports/arpt0809e.pdf>

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At a meeting of the Canadian Heritage Committee, Former museum CEO Victor Rabinovitch told MPs that the new mandate being proposed for a rebranded Canadian Museum of Civilization is “narrow and parochial... The wording is subtle, but the intention seems clear... In essence, it aims to restrict and reduce the activities of the renamed Museum of History.”²⁵

Media coverage of the government announcement of this initiative repeatedly suggested that the CMC has put more emphasis on non-Canadian exhibitions, but in fact it has devoted most of its resources to Canadian history and cultures, and only in a much more limited way presented exhibitions that focus on other parts of the world. More importantly, as the government and virtually all other parts of our society embrace globalization, it is surely more appropriate to keep our national cultural institutions open to the widest possible range of global histories.

Existing Profile

The government’s announcement of its new initiative and subsequent media coverage did a serious injustice to the excellent work that has been done at the CMC over the past quarter century. The staff of that institution engaged in extensive research, collection, and consultation with many groups in Canadian society in order to put together a richly textured panorama of Canadian historical experience. They responded with sensitivity and imagination to the latest developments in the writing of Canadian history, and produced a range of exhibitions that incorporated the diversity and complexity of our past. In any rethinking of the CMC’s profile, all that work cannot be shunted aside. It should be respected and preserved. The tens of thousands of visitors to the CMC every year have voted with their feet for the exciting mix of programming that has been available there.

A History of Diversity

The government’s announcement of what will be included in the new CMH emphasizes dates, events, heroes, and narrative time-lines. The writing and teaching of Canadian history has moved decisively away from such a restricted perspective of our past, because it leaves out the experience of the great majority of the Canadian population. Such a “great man” approach to history gives no opening for crucial processes that don’t fit on a rigid time-line or into a political biography – the colonization of First Nations, industrialization, gender relations, migration and ethnic conflict, environmental change, and much more. Certainly political history is an important component in any presentation of our history, but it must be situated within the rich diversity that Canadians at all levels of society contributed to our collective past.

Keep Politics Out

The government’s high-profile announcement about transforming the CMC into the CMH fits into a pattern of politically motivated heritage policy that has been emerging in the past few

²⁵ <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6209352&Language=E&Mode=1>>

years. Alongside the great quantities of public funds that were directed into the celebration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812, this initiative reflects a new use of history to support the government's political agenda – that is, the evocation of particular features of our past as worthy of official endorsement and promotion. This is a highly inappropriate use of our national cultural institutions, which should stand apart from any particular government agenda and should be run instead according to sound professional standards. Our past should not be a political plaything.

Offloading Costs

The government's announcement included a promise to draw provincial museums into joint ventures, ostensibly to be able to share artifacts and other resources and thus to include a wider range of regional experience in the new museum. In essence, however, this approach would mean downloading at least part of the cost of organizing a large part of the CMH's exhibition space to the provinces.

Cuts to Other Heritage Organizations

The announcement of \$25 million to remake the CMC into the CMH reveals a shocking inconsistency in government policy. Last spring, the government slashed funding to Parks Canada, Library and Archives Canada, and a longstanding program that supported local archives across the country. Instead of using scarce money to re-orient the CMC, the government should be using the funds to ensure that key institutions for discovering and presenting our past are adequately funded.

A Flawed Process of Consultation

The CMC set up a lively website to encourage public input into the new programming of the new museum. Aside from the oddity of such an approach (did the government do the same in drafting its budget, or in setting new environmental or trade policy?), it is troubling that visitors to the site were encouraged to express their preference for a number of options on a time line that contains very few entries and are not encouraged to identify longer-term processes, such as migration and settlement, native dispossession of their lands, changing class structures, or evolving gender relations. It would have been far more productive to convene a large panel of senior scholars, teachers, and museum staff to undertake a more thoughtful and informed process of conceptualizing a new museum.

Political interference

Conservatives on Canadian history: reviewing or revising?

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The federal government has revised its plan to launch a review of Canadian history. The "comprehensive review" initially proposed to scrutinize the teaching of Canadian history in primary and secondary schools as well as municipal, provincial, and federal programs designed to preserve history and heritage. In the wake of strong public protest, the government has now indicated that the review will be limited to municipal, provincial, and federal programs. This review will encourage a limited understanding of Canadian history with a focus on "pre-confederation, early confederation, suffrage, World War I, with an emphasis on battles such as Vimy Ridge, World War II including the Liberation of Holland, the Battle of Ortona, Battle of the Atlantic, the Korean conflict, peacekeeping missions, constitutional development, the Afghanistan conflict, early 20th century Canada, post-war Canada, and the late 20th century."²⁶

This review is part of a larger attack on Canada's cultural memory. We must protect our history from political interference. If governments want people to appreciate history, they should invest in the record-keeping, the archives, the library services, the world-class museums, and the basic research that allow for the development of multiple and challenging narratives of our past.

²⁶ <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6120246&Language=E&Mode=1>>