



Canadian Council of Archives Conseil canadien des archives

May 24, 2013

Honourable James Moore
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages

Dear Minister Moore:

Re: Selection and appointment of the next Librarian and Archivist of Canada

As Chairperson of the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA), I am writing you regarding the selection and appointment of the next Librarian and Archivist of Canada. This is a matter of great importance to the archival community, and to CCA as the coordinating organization for the Canadian archival system. CCA respectfully requests that the Federal Government take into account the attached *Joint Statement on Qualities of a Successful Candidate for the Position of Librarian and Archivist of Canada* when undertaking selection for the next Librarian and Archivist of Canada.

CCA was founded in 1985 with a mission to coordinate the development of the Canadian archival community. The CCA includes Library and Archives Canada (LAC), and over 800 other archival institutions, large and small, in every province and territory. Together, these institutions preserve for Canadians the nation's historical records in all media.

As Canada's largest archives, LAC is a key participant in the national network of archival institutions that promotes, acquires and safeguards the documentary heritage of Canada. This network has gained international recognition not only for our professionalism and standards, but most significantly we have gained this recognition, and are envied by other countries, for our many tangible accomplishments, which includes on-line access to archival information.

In the 1980s, long before digital records became commonplace, archivists and decision-makers realized that no single institution could provide the solution to preserving and providing access to the primary documents of Canadian history. A consolidated effort was required, so federal and provincial resources combined to create the CCA in 1985. CCA began and remains a combined endeavour of federal and provincial participation. CCA's organizational structure is designed to support a pan-jurisdictional approach. The Librarian and Archivist of Canada is an *ex officio* member of CCA. Every provincial and territorial archives council is also represented, as are Canada's two national professional associations: the Association of Canadian Archivists and L'Association des archivistes du Québec. The mandate of CCA speaks directly to the development of a national archival network:

- Identify national priorities;
- Make recommendations concerning the system's operation and financing;
- Develop and facilitate the implementation and management of Programmes to assist the archival community;
- Advise the National Archivist;
- Promote better communications between the various components of the Canadian system; and
- Communicate archival needs and concerns to decision-makers, researchers and the general public.

The over 800 institutions that participate in the Canadian archival network are required to face the contemporary challenges of knowledge and information management. As with many archives, LAC is at a crossroads: modern bureaucracy and digital information technologies are fragmenting the concepts of archival records and documentary heritage. Canada's archives daily face the challenge of preserving electronic records, as well as the massive amounts

of mid-20th century paper, photographic and audio-visual records; the urgency regarding the preservation and availability of these priceless resources cannot be overstated.

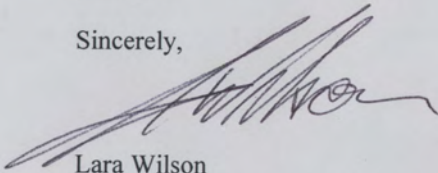
The challenges facing LAC require an experienced leader who understands the library and archives professions, and who values the wealth of knowledge and experience available through the Canadian archival network. The historical record of Canada – its acquisition, preservation and use – requires forward-thinking, collaboration, and experience in the disciplines of archives and libraries.

Now more than ever, as we approach the 150th Anniversary of Confederation, LAC needs a collaborative leader and Canada needs a strong archival system to support innovation in every sector of our information economy.

Many stakeholders in the Canadian archival community believe that LAC has gone in misguided directions in the recent past. In its efforts to engage in a very necessary modernization program, it has embraced a simplistic approach to the complex problems of the digital environment. LAC has isolated itself and its staff from collaboration with, and support of, the Canadian archival network. In April 2012, the former Librarian and Archivist of Canada eliminated the National Archival Development Program (NADP) – the only Federal grants and contributions program that was available to public archives regardless of any museum affiliation. The CCA believes that collaboration and mutual support are essential to modernize LAC and continue the excellent record Canada has previously had as a model of collaborative efforts at all levels to support the preservation and access of Canadian documentary heritage. To this end, we request that the decision to terminate the National Archival Development Program be revisited.

As you consider the selection of the next Librarian and Archivist of Canada, CCA asks that you take into account the needs of the archival community, and recognize the important role of Canadian archives within the Heritage portfolio.

Sincerely,



Lara Wilson
Chair, Canadian Council of Archives

c: Privy Council
c: Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

(1 attachment)