

BACKGROUND – CANADA’S PAST MATTERS

Canadians’ ability to know our history and cultural heritage is at risk. Federal cuts are undermining the survival of heritage institutions, historical sites, archives and libraries across the country. Academics, genealogists, researchers, librarians, archivists, archaeologists, curators, historians, students and other Canadians are objecting to the systematic dismantling of our collective cultural heritage. They are spreading the message that knowledge of our past is necessary for a strong and equitable future. The “Canada’s Past Matters” (www.canadaspastmatters.ca) campaign calls for immediate action to reverse the harm being done to our historical and cultural heritage institutions.

The 5 parts of the campaign are:

- **Save Library & Archives Canada**
- **Preserve Canada’s Historical Sites**
- **Protect Canada’s Public Libraries**
- **Restore Canada’s Local Archives**
- **Retain the Canadian Museum of Civilization**

SAVE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES CANADA

PROBLEM: Library and Archives Canada is being dismembered

Library and Archives Canada (LAC), the federal institution responsible for preserving Canada’s history and cultural heritage, is seriously threatened. Badly conceived restructuring, a narrowing of its mandate, a refusal to collect important historical records, a serious reduction in service and access, and major budget cuts are undermining LAC. For more information, go to www.savelac.ca.

SOLUTION

- Federal Government
 - Amend the *Library and Archives of Canada Act* to clearly specify LAC’s obligation to maintain a comprehensive collection of Canada’s documentary heritage.
 - Provide the funding required to fulfill its mandate.
- LAC Administration
 - End the moratorium/pause on the purchased acquisitions.
 - Affirm that LAC’s commitment is to the comprehensive acquisition of published material and archival records.
 - End fragmentation of collections resulting from decentralization.
 - Reverse service cuts.

PRESERVE CANADA’S HISTORICAL SITES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

PROBLEM: Cuts to Parks Canada: historical sites and archaeology at risk

The 2012 Federal Budget cut funding for Parks Canada’s programs by \$29 million dollars annually, resulting in 638 jobs cut. Canada’s historical sites, operated by Parks Canada, face reduced hours of operation, lessened public access, reduced maintenance and elimination of interpretative staff. Over 80% of archaeologists and conservators at Parks Canada have lost their jobs. These remaining 20 experts will be responsible for millions of artifacts and the archaeology at 218 national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas. Also, Parks Canada’s archaeology labs across the country will be closed and the artifacts will be sent to Ottawa/Gatineau for storage.

SOLUTION

- Restore Parks Canada funding.
- Rehire the Parks Canada staff that provide essential services at Canada’s historic sites and archeological digs and labs (i.e. archeologists, curators, historians, educators, and interpreters).
- Re-establish Parks Canada’s school education program (Canada Education Outreach Program).
- Maintain the infrastructure of Canada’s historic sites.
- Promote Parks Canada’s archeological research.
- Retain Canada’s regional archeological facilities and artifact labs.
- Ensure that Canada’s archeological artifacts are available locally.

PROTECT CANADA’S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

PROBLEM: Public libraries across Canada are under attack

Elimination of the inter-library loan (ILL) program at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and the Community Access program (CAP) seriously undermine the ability of our public libraries to serve the people in their communities. By ending the ILL program, Canadians will no longer be able to access national library and archives materials in their own regions. Ending the CAP terminates free public access to computers and high speed internet at local libraries, especially affecting rural and remote communities and Canada’s less well-off and vulnerable populations.

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Cutbacks are also affecting several federal departmental libraries:

- Canada Revenue Agency is merging 9 libraries into 1.
- Library and Archives Canada's Staff Resource Center closed Nov. 1, 2012.
- Public Service Commission (PSC) library closed.
- Citizenship and Immigration library closed March 31, 2012
- Parks Canada will consolidate 5 libraries into 1.
- National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy library will close by March 31, 2013.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) closed 7 libraries.
- National Capital Commission Library closed in 2012.
- 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 will close its 3 libraries by March 31, 2013.
- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) to close 6 of 14 libraries by 2013.
- Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) library to be downsized and possibly closed.
- Public Works and Government Services library closed May 31, 2012
- Transport Canada closed its library in 2012.

SOLUTION

- Federal Government
 - Restore funding for the Community Access Program
 - Reverse cuts and closures of federal departmental libraries
- LAC Administration
 - Reinstate the Inter-library Loans Program at LAC

RESTORE CANADA' LOCAL ARCHIVES

PROBLEM: Support for local and regional archives has been cut

On April 30, 2012, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) eliminated the National Archival Development Program (NADP). The NADP was a \$1.7-million program administered by the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) and distributed to 13 archives councils to support local archival activities. Ending NADP means:

- 11 of 13 provincial and territorial archives councils will close within 6 months without additional financial support.
- 90 approved projects for the 2012-2013 year have been retroactively cancelled.
- The CCA's physical office in Ottawa closed its doors on May 4, 2012. Staffing was reduced from 8 FTE to 4 FTE, and will be further reduced to 2.5 FTE.
- 11 Archives Advisors and Conservators will lose their jobs.
- Canada's participation in the National Archival Appraisal Board, the North American Archival Network, and the International Council on Archives is seriously threatened.
- ArchivesCanada.ca 2.0, a revolutionary national-level hub for all archival descriptions in Canada, is threatened.

SOLUTION

- Restore federal funding for regional and local archives and provincial and territorial archive councils.
- Revive and expand the National Archival Development Program.

RETAIN THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF CIVILIZATION

PROBLEM: Canadian Museum of Civilization to be eliminated

On October 16, 2012, the federal government announced \$25 million would be taken from elsewhere in the Heritage Canada budget to dismantle the Canadian Museum of Civilization and replace it with the Canadian Museum of History. The Museum of Civilization is Canada's largest and most popular museum, with 1.3 million people visiting the exhibits every year. The Canada Hall, the Face-to-Face Hall, and the Postal Museum are all slated for replacement under the government's new plans. The museum of civilization is the only national institution with the mandate to increase, throughout Canada and internationally, interest in, knowledge and critical understanding of, and appreciation and respect for human cultural achievements and human behavior.

SOLUTION

- Maintain the Canadian Museum of Civilization with its current mandate.
- Establish a commission to recommend an appropriate mandate and venue for a Canadian Museum of History.
- Ensure that funding for the new museum does not come from the budgets of existing Canadian heritage institutions or Canadian heritage programs.

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