

## *COMMUNIQUÉ*

### **CARL Responds to Program Cuts at LAC**

**OTTAWA – May 10, 2012** – The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) expressed concern today about the effect of the recent federal budget cuts on the programming of Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

“We can understand the government’s need to find savings in order to address its large deficit,” said Tom Hickerson, President of CARL, “but we are very worried that the deep cuts at LAC will compromise the work, not only of LAC, but also of Canada’s other libraries and archives that depend upon LAC. Certainly, we sympathize with the LAC leadership and staff who must make or experience the effect of difficult decisions.”

The federal budget introduced on March 29 called for a \$9.6 million cut over this and the next two years in the budget of LAC, the expenditures of which were about \$114 million in 2010. Some 200 positions at LAC are expected to be eliminated. This week, LAC announced that it would cancel the National Archival Development Program and no longer provide its interlibrary loan service.

Mr. Hickerson added that “although CARL is not in a position to judge the government or the particular decisions that the LAC administration has made to address their budgetary pressures, we worry about the longer-term effects of cutting programs.” Brent Roe, CARL Executive Director, noted that “LAC has never had sufficient funding to fulfill its mandate and now it will inevitably have to do less with less. While LAC is mandated to preserve government records, as a national library, it also has a national role to collect, preserve and make available Canada’s documentary heritage, as well as fulfilling other important roles for research libraries to support the work of scholars.”

In the present instance, CARL is concerned that LAC is being forced to step back from its important role as a national library in the inter-library loan of Canadian materials that can often not be found elsewhere. Mr. Hickerson said that “in a country as geographically extensive as Canada, our universities’ faculty members and graduate students cannot frequently travel to Ottawa for access to the rare documents necessary for the study of our country.” CARL is hoping that the full details, once announced, will be far more nuanced than what we have heard so far.

Canada’s researchers also depend upon the archival resources collected by many archives across the country, so their future work will be affected by the cancellation of the National Archival Development Fund. The Fund cancellation will result in many smaller archives no longer being able to collect and process the records that document their regions—or perhaps even to stay in service. These smaller archives, of which the Fund leveraged the work of many volunteers and the generosity of local donors, collectively play a significant role in the preservation of Canada’s cultural heritage.

Mr. Hickerson stated that “CARL worries that the recent government budget cuts will harm the documentation of Canadian society not only through affected programs at LAC, but also through the deep cuts at Statistics Canada and through the closure of several federal departmental libraries that have research collections.” He stressed that “CARL and its university library members are open to working with government agencies to find ways to minimize the long-term damage that the current cuts may entail. We hope to begin that conversation with LAC at the CARL meetings in Calgary next week.”

CARL is the leadership organization of Canada’s research library community. Its members include the 29 largest university libraries in Canada.

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