

## **Canadian Library Association / Association canadienne des bibliothèques Position Statement on Buying Around**

Approved by Executive Council, June 15, 1978

The Canadian Library Association fully supports the expressed constitutional objectives of the Book and Periodical Development Council. The Association recognizes that a vigorous publishing industry plays an important role in national life. Specifically, the CLA hopes to contribute to the continued development in Canada of a climate in which authors, editors, publishers and sellers can flourish.

Several factors must be considered and weighed before a decision is made whether to purchase within or outside of Canada. Net cost and the type and level of service are but two of these factors. CLA at its 1974 Winnipeg conference endorsed a resolution supporting Canadian publisher/agents. This support is reiterated in this statement. However, the Association's concern, strongly stated, is that through support of the Canadian publishing industry, members are not encouraged to support poor business practices, a low level of service or higher than reasonable net costs of books and library materials. In order that members may be protected against unfavourable publisher/agent practices which may occur from time to time, it is the conviction of the CLA that libraries must remain free under the law to buy foreign books and periodicals wherever it is most advantageous for them.

It is noted that the term "most advantageous" includes judgements by members on the basis of criteria which may vary for different types of libraries: price, efficiency, speed of delivery, fill ratios, services of Canadian wholesalers, selection/evaluation services, cataloguing services, sales representation, etc.

Whether agency business is a prerequisite for Canadian publishing is a complex question that cannot be answered in a simplistic manner; while cross-subsidization has never been proven, it is recognized that neither has it been disproven. However, neither the publishers/agents themselves nor any of the commissions of inquiry that have in recent years examined the publishing business have ever been able to establish any recognizable pattern of cross-subsidization. Without strong evidence that such a practice is essential to the existence of a Canadian publishing industry and to the benefit of Canadian authors, the Canadian Library Association must maintain a neutral position, neither encouraging nor discouraging the practice of buying around.

The Canadian Library Association would welcome with enthusiasm the development of a situation in which libraries could obtain all or most of their needs from Canadian sources. The Association takes the position, further, that libraries in Canada should buy the Canadian edition

of a book published both inside and outside of the country, so long as the content is substantially the same. It is recognized that this practice will normally cost more than if the foreign edition were obtained, but it is understood to be justified because of the support it provides to the Canadian publisher.

The Canadian Library Association gives strong support to endeavours that assist authors and publishers of Canada and regrets the harsh realities facing those engaged in the process of issuing books and periodicals. However, while the CLA would back efforts to change the conditions that now make it necessary for libraries to import some books directly, it must reject any move to make direct importations by libraries illegal or more costly.