

SENATE



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SENATOR PERCY E. DOWNE
CHARLOTTETOWN

SÉNATEUR PERCY E. DOWNE
CHARLOTTETOWN

June 4th, 2015

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Valoree McKay, CAE
Executive Director
Canadian Library Association
1150 Morrison Drive, Suite 400
Ottawa, ON
K2H 8S9

Dear Ms. McKay:

Thank you for letter of May 22nd regarding Bill C-51, outlining your concerns about the Bill in its current form. My main concern about Bill C-51 that it would provide government agencies with increased powers, it does not provide for the public and parliamentary oversight necessary to ensure that these powers are used responsibly. Without this oversight, changes to individual aspects of the Bill are insufficient.

We have seen in the past what can happen when intelligence agencies act without public and parliamentary oversight. In fact, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service was formed in response to the activities of the old RCMP Security Service. Good intentions and legitimate concerns about foreign and domestic threats do not justify the absence of a comprehensive system of review and oversight.

The existing review arrangement is inadequate for the expansion of powers included in this Bill. It is time for Canada to follow the example of countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand and institute public and parliamentary oversight of Canada's intelligence and security agencies.

In the absence of such oversight, I cannot support this Bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Percy E. Downe".

Percy E. Downe
Senator

