



The Honourable James Moore,
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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by email to: james.moore@parl.gc.ca

14 June 2013

CLA response to the outline of the LAC/Canadiana.org Heritage Project

Dear Minister Moore

The Canadian Library Association is writing to encourage you to support the Library and Archives Canada/Canadiana.org Heritage Project. CLA appreciates the work of LAC and the Canadian academic community to create a partnership model that will provide access to the digitized content for that community as well as making it open to others.

CLA Executive Council was provided with an outline of the details of the Heritage Project, and after extensive discussion, wishes to express its support for the proposal. The Preamble to the LAC Act indicates that the institution is to be “a source of enduring knowledge, accessible to all...” and to “facilitate in Canada cooperation among communities involved in the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge”. This project serves both of those purposes.

The mass digitization of materials, supplemented by the creation of transcriptions of handwritten records, the development of metadata for the digital images, and infrastructure to maintain access, is an enormous undertaking. In our submission to the government pre-budget consultation for the 2013 federal budget, CLA called on the government to reinvest in the capacity of libraries, particularly through increased funding to Library and Archives Canada, to preserve, digitize and provide access to our documentary heritage. Without sufficient funding, LAC does not have the capacity to undertake in-house digitization on this scale; the only way this work can be accomplished is through creative partnerships, such as the one proposed in this project.

CLA strongly supports the organizations selected to work with LAC on this project. Canadiana.org, as a not-for profit organization created and supported by the library community, is a solid partner in this initiative. CRKN has considerable experience in successfully negotiating complex agreements in the interest of their users. CLA congratulates the academic community in developing a partnership model which will provide access to material of national significance, and of great value to a variety of user communities.

We are reassured that Canadians will not be denied access to this content, and that it is not going to be restricted by a “paywall”, as reported in the media. Digitized images will be available for free on the Canadiana.org website, making them more accessible than they are in their current format. Those who provide financial support to this project will have the added value of access to the metadata being created to support the images; and even that metadata will gradually be made publicly available so that, after 10 years, all elements of this project will be freely accessible to all.

Again, CLA Executive Council wants to express its appreciation and congratulations for the creative model that has been proposed. We hope that this project can move forward with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the whole national library community.

CLA would be pleased to discuss this further with you or your staff.

On behalf of CLA Executive Council



Pilar Martinez
CLA President

Cc:

Hervé Déry, Acting Librarian and Archivist of Canada

Leslie Weir, President, Canadiana.org, and Chief University Librarian, University of Ottawa

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