

Liberal Party of Canada
Parti libéral du Canada

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December 21, 2005

Mr. Alain Pineau
National Director
804-130 Albert St.
Ottawa, ON
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Dear Mr. Pineau:

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party's response to your questionnaire.

On behalf of our leader, the Right Honourable Paul Martin, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. Your interest in the policies of the Liberal Party as they relate to these issues is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Mike Eizenga
President
Liberal Party of Canada

Canada Conference of the Arts Questionnaire

1. On November 23, just days before the election was called, the Government of Canada announced its ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, as well as a multi-ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the diversity of Cultural Expressions, as well as a multi-year increase in federal funding for the arts. The February 2005 budget included a historic fiscal year investment in culture, as the "Tomorrow Starts Today" program was extended through March 2010.

The proposed International Policy unveiled this past spring has eliminated the third pillar of Canadian foreign policy, the promotion of Canadian culture and values. The cultural sector needs to understand the impact of this realignment of our international policy and its impact on the presence of Canadian artists and creators on the world edge.

The CCA is asking all political parties about their commitment to these initiatives if they are elected as our next government.

The Liberal Government is committed to supporting and promoting Canada's artists and creators on the domestic and international stage. Support for Canada's major arts institutions is a long-term objective of the Liberal government. The Liberal commitment to the arts is typified by our commitments to the *Tomorrow Starts Today Initiative*, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In 2001, the Liberal Government announced the *Tomorrow Starts Today* initiative, which provides major support for Canadian arts and culture. Since its introduction, the initiative has provided almost \$740 million to all aspects of the creative process.

On December 15, 2004, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced that this initiative would be extended for another year with a budget of up to \$192 million. Budget 2005 further extended \$172 million of new funding per year for another four years, for a total of \$688 million. This brings total new funding for *Tomorrow Starts Today* to \$860 million over five years. This multi-year investment will help create stability within the arts and culture community by providing predictable levels of funding in the years to come.

On November 23rd, 2005, the Liberal Government committed \$342 million over the next three years to increase funding for arts organizations throughout Canada. This type of investment helps build vibrant communities that contribute to the social and economic development of every part of Canada. The new funding will allow arts organizations in all regions of Canada to attain new

standards of creative excellence and innovation and provide for artists' tours and shows, both in Canada and abroad.

- 2. Canada's artists and creators continue to face challenges in having government recognize and respect their rights as self-employed workers, access to social benefits, moral and economic rights, and federal labour standards that accommodate non-standard working arrangements.**

The CCA is looking to the next potential government to address these issues with concrete and durable solutions.

The Department of Canadian Heritage offers a number of important programs to provide support to Canadian artists. One example is the *Cultural Initiatives Program*, which facilitates the involvement of artists from across Canada in over 150 national and international art festivals and special art events. Canadian Heritage also operates a national arts training contribution program, supporting national institutions that prepare young people for professional arts careers.

The Canadian Council of Arts, an arms-length government organization that fosters and promotes the study and production of works in the arts, is another key mechanism that supports Canada's artists. In 2004, the Council distributed \$132.3 million in grants and prizes to 6,100 artists and art institutions and 14,441 writers.

The Liberal government also recognizes that reduced taxes help ease the financial burden on low-income Canadians, including many of our artists. That is why the Liberal government, starting with Budget 2000, consistently implemented policies to reduce taxation. The tax rate for individuals who make less than \$35,000 annually has now been reduced to 16 percent.

Furthermore, Budget 2005 committed to the progressive increase of the basic amount Canadian's can earn without paying federal income tax. By 2009, the taxation threshold will increase from \$8,000 to \$10,000. This will keep more money in the pockets of the Canadians who need it the most, including our artists and creators.

- 3. As innovations in broadcasting and content distribution elbow their way into our lives, the CCA wants to know how the next government will deal with the modernization of our broadcasting and communications systems in a manner that will bolster Canadian content and investment in new programming.**

Will the next government address the chronic under-funding of the CBC and when? Will you commit to maintain the current level of 53% Canadian ownership rules to our broadcasting telecommunications

system, and ensure that Canadians will always own our own airwaves? Is the current Broadcasting Act sufficient to address new communications technologies such as satellite radio, iPod broadcasting and television-enabled cellular phones to ensure that they respect and contribute to the objectives of legislation?

The Liberal Government is committed to supporting Canada's vibrant communications industry, and ensuring that the integrity and sovereignty of Canada's culture is protected. The Liberal Government will continue to provide sustainable funding for key cultural institutions such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), protect Canadian companies from the threat of foreign ownership, and help Canada's broadcasting industry keep up with the technological advancements of the digital world.

The CBC plays a unique and essential role in telling Canadian stories and showcasing Canadian talent. In Budget 2005, the Liberal Government committed an additional \$60 million in 2005–06 for the CBC. The Liberal government will also ensure that the CBC Board of Directors delivers a strategic plan for enhancing CBC television services in both French and English. The Liberal government is committed to providing the CBC with stable, predictable support to ensure that they can continue to operate at the highest level, and continue to uphold the principles of Canadian content legislation.

The Liberal government places a heavy emphasis on Canadian content. Culturally, Canadian programs and music give voice to Canadians, to their talent and their shared experiences. Economically, it means jobs for thousands of Canadians – from creation to production and distribution on the airwaves. In light of conflicting reports from two House of Commons committees on the issue of foreign ownership, the Liberal Government firmly reiterated that it has no intention to modify foreign limits on broadcasting or general content.

In response to the many challenges in technology, the Liberal Government will focus on addressing the remaining digital transition issues that are not being dealt with by the current proposed regulatory approaches. This includes encouraging HDTV broadcasting and production, preserving our audio-visual content, and the role that the public broadcaster can play in the digital transition.

The Liberal Government recognizes that it needs to take the necessary steps today to plan for the future of the Canadian broadcasting system. As such, we will undertake several initiatives to assess the trends in the adoption of various technologies, and evaluate their impact on current regulatory and policy models.

- 4. Globalization is a phenomenon that has radically altered how business is conducted around the world. Canadian cultural policies have sought to implement measures that promote sustainable**

enterprises in book and magazine publishing, film and television production, sound recording and new media.

Canada faces increasing pressure to extend more liberal trade measures to our cultural enterprises. It is reasonable to assume that such pressures will continue. The CCA is asking political parties what instructions they will give to trade negotiators on the issue.

The Liberal Government is committed to sustaining Canada's distinctive cultural industries. Through its membership in the WTO, Canada has entered into a number of General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS), and has established itself as one of the most open service economies in the world. At the same time, however, Canada has reserved its right to maintain certain measures that are not consistent with the market access and national treatment obligations of the GATS. The purpose of this is to ensure that Canada preserves policy flexibility in areas of key domestic importance such as cultural products.

The Liberal Government will not make any market access commitments that restrict its ability to achieve its cultural policy objectives until a new international instrument for culture can be established. Work on a convention with these objectives is now under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

- 5. Before Parliament was dissolved, the Minister of Canadian Heritage was working on a new Canadian museums policy. The proposed policy would be a substantive commitment to honouring and preserving Canadian heritage. The CCA is asking all political parties about their intentions regarding a new museums policy, which would provide a solid financial base for our museum and heritage communities and increased access by Canadians to our national treasures.**

The aging of the Canadian labour market is a concern for the cultural sector. Many artistic directors, senior administrators and performers will soon retire. The CCA is asking all parties what plans they would implement to address succession issues in a coherent manner across the Canadian labour force in general and the cultural sector in particular.

The Liberal Government is committed to developing a new museums policy that enables Canada museums to enhance their infrastructure and reach the objectives of participation, preservation and sustainability. By enhancing Canadians' knowledge of their rich shared past, a new policy will strengthen their sense of who we are. The Liberal Government is committed to working with stakeholders in developing an updated policy that will assist museums to position

themselves to meet the challenges they face and to mobilize the support they need from all stakeholders.

The Department of Canadian Heritage has undertaken several different forms of consultation with key industry stakeholders, including a Round Table Discussion in late June 2005. The Liberal Government was in the process of developing a new program to support Canadian museums when the Opposition parties forced an early election.

Over the next decades, Canada will experience the aging of its population, as the baby boom generation enters retirement age and is replaced by fewer younger workers. This poses challenges to Canada's economic and fiscal prospects that need to be addressed now. The Liberal Government is committed to making the investments necessary to assist Canada's emerging generation in succeeding those that have come before them.

To ensure that Canadians can acquire the skills they need in the coming years, the 2005 *Economic and Fiscal Update* commits \$7.6 billion over this year and the next five years to ensure Canada continues to benefit from a world-class learning system. This funding will ensure that the Canadian labour force and members of the cultural sector in particular, have opportunities to develop and enhance their skills, thus preparing them to lead Canada into the 21st century.