



BULLETIN

Conférence canadienne des arts ~ Canadian Conference of the Arts

CULTURE'S JUST "SQUEAKING BY"

Ottawa, le 21 avril, 2004

« Je pense que la manifestation de notre culture est tout à fait essentielle à notre identité »

*Paul Martin au sujet du Fonds canadien de télévision,
Hôtel de ville de Toronto, 29 avril 2003*

Contexte actuel

Paul Martin occupe le poste de premier ministre du Canada et Hélène Chalifour Scherrer celui de ministre de Patrimoine Canada depuis 4 mois maintenant - peut-être est-il temps de faire le point et de se demander quelle est la position de ce gouvernement au sujet du financement des arts, du patrimoine et de la culture.

Un porte-parole d'Hélène Scherrer, la nouvelle ministre de Patrimoine Canada, a indiqué que l'administration du ministère sera beaucoup plus rigoureuse que sous Sheila Copps. « Je ne pense pas qu'il sera la banque qu'il avait l'habitude d'être », a dit Alexandre Lanthier après l'assermentation de Scherrer.

CBC Arts Report, 12 décembre 2003

La ministre du Patrimoine, Hélène Scherrer, a reconnu que les arts n'occupent pas une bien grande place dans le document officiel du budget de 400 pages rendu public cette semaine, parce que ce n'est pas une priorité pour le gouvernement de Paul Martin...

CBC Arts Report, 26 mars 2004

Bien peu semblent comprendre la nécessité d'adopter une approche holistique pour soutenir le secteur; plutôt que de réagir n'importe quand à n'importe quel petit grincement, le gouvernement devrait avoir une vue d'ensemble.

« J'ai demandé aux gens dans chaque province quelle était la priorité », a dit la ministre du Patrimoine, Hélène Chalifour Scherrer, dans une entrevue téléphonique hier soir, « et partout on a dit qu'il fallait rétablir le fonds de télévision ».

*Rétablissement du fonds de télévision, comme promis,
par Rick Westhead, The Toronto Star, 24 mars 2004*

« Nous allons faire en sorte que le téléchargement reste illégal », a dit Hélène Scherrer, ministre assermentée en décembre dernier et une recrue dans les rangs des députés du Québec. « Nous allons en faire une priorité pour agir aussi rapidement que possible... Maintenant je sais vraiment en quoi consiste l'industrie de la musique...je retourne à Ottawa avec la volonté de faire quelque chose. »

*La ministre jure de lutter contre l'échange de fichiers musicaux,
par Keith Damsell, Globe and Mail, 13 avril 2004*

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All aspects of the cultural continuum, from creation and training to production, distribution, preservation and consumption must be considered. It is very important that the federal government understands that it is the **whole** sector which needs adequate, stable, multi-year funding - not just one element here and there in a "flavour of the week" approach.

Mr Martin's accession to the position of Prime Minister was greeted with considerable fanfare. Rhetoric from the Liberal party may look good on paper, but the reality has been disappointing.

"We will work with parliamentarians to modernize our arts and culture policies and federal cultural institutions"

*Liberal policy paper: Great Places to Live:
A New Deal for Communities,
taken from www.liberal.ca*

"A new deal that helps our communities become more dynamic, more culturally rich A new deal that delivers reliable, predictable and long-term funding..."

Speech from the Throne

Consider the following:

- ⇒ the main estimates released earlier in February will need to be reconfigured post-Budget, leaving the cultural community unsure what programmes are available for the current fiscal year (2004-05);
- ⇒ the one year extension of the Tomorrow Starts Today funding was made last November, **prior** to the current Minister taking office; no commitment has yet been made to support the cultural sector after the current fiscal year, leaving many organizations unable to plan for the short term and in an untenable situation for the long term;
- ⇒ several arts and cultural festivals are being hard hit in the wake of the sponsorship debacle, despite DCH's promise to provide assistance through existing departmental programmes, where funding and criteria permit;
- ⇒ there are several high-profile issues occupying the sector, among them renewal of the Canadian Television Fund, foreign ownership, freedom of expression (Bill C-12), and updating copyright legislation; these issues are crucial to the sector but need to be addressed within the context of ongoing support to the sector as a whole.

"We're still (short) a lot of money in arts and culture and we are just trying to invite the private sector to be a partner also," [Minister Scherrer] said. "It's even been mentioned in the (federal) throne speech culture is an important foundation of Canada, so we really have to make sure there's more money invested in that."

*"Feds draw up money for arts" by Bill Lay,
The Calgary Sun, 28 March 2004*

What is needed

What is needed, ultimately, is a comprehensive federal cultural policy, something that is still lacking in this country.

In June 1998, the CCA produced the Final Report of the Working Group on Cultural Policy for the 21st Century, a document which remains just as valid today as when it was written. This report calls for the establishment of a new Department of Canadian Culture and Heritage to address, among other things

- ⇒ the linkage between cultural content and carrier issues; and



- ⇒ the key objectives of a Canadian cultural policy framework, including
 - recognition of government's vital role in the sustenance, promotion and development of the arts, heritage and cultural industries
 - acknowledgement of two official language communities, and their importance to Canadian artistic and cultural life
 - facilitation of the broadest possible access by Canadians to works and productions by Canadian artists and cultural producers
 - promotion and respect for the values of regional and ethnocultural diversity, and the role of the First Peoples.

The report also calls for the newly formed Department to have overall responsibility for creating an environment respectful of and conducive to the work and rights of Canadian creators and artists through revisions to the Copyright Act, the Status of the Artist Act, the Cultural Property Act, and other instruments at the disposition of the state. With a coherent cultural policy in place, the Department would have a framework within which to make policy decisions rather than shooting at each moving target as it comes to the fore.

What you can do

As was clearly stated by several eminent speakers at the CCA's recent Chalmers Conference, cultural organizations will be heard more clearly if they speak with one voice. First and foremost, what is needed is a commitment by the government to adequate, stable, multi-year funding for the sector as a whole.

Beyond this imperative, there are a number of other issues you might wish to mention. To assist you, CCA is developing backgrounders and questions on a number of key issues together with quantitative and qualitative information, and useful quotes, to help you make the case. Some of this information is already on our website (www.ccarts.ca, election section); the balance will be added over the next couple of weeks. If cultural issues are raised frequently enough, they are more likely to register on this government's radar screen going into the election.

CCA urges its members to take action now: you can ask a question directly of our Prime Minister by going to the Liberal Party's new website (www.liberal.ca), clicking on Paul Martin Times, and then on "Ask Paul a question" (right side of screen).