

Liberal Party of Canada
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Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M8

September 16, 2008

Alain Pineau
Director General
Canadian Conference of the Arts
804-130 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5G4

Dear Mr. Pineau,

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

For more information on the Liberal Party of Canada's vision for Canada, please take a moment to review our platform online at www.liberal.ca. This document provides details on Liberal goals and priorities.

On behalf of our Leader, Stéphane Dion, and the entire Liberal team, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. We appreciate your interest in the Liberal Party's policies as they relate to the issues which affect you.

Sincerely,

Doug Ferguson, President
Liberal Party of Canada



A Liberal Response to the Canadian Conference of the Arts

Federal Government's Investment in the Arts and Culture Sector

- 1) Under a government formed by your Party, what priority would be given to the funding of the arts and culture sector? Does your Party have a strategy to replace expiring or cancelled programs and services? If so what is it? Please be as specific as you can.**

Under a liberal government funding of the arts and culture would be a priority.

In fact, the Liberal Party would reverse all the cuts made by the Conservatives to cultural programs.

- 2) Will your Party commit to engaging the arts and culture sector in the creation or review of programs and services provided by the federal government as is done in other sectors of activity?**

We believe that program review is important to ensure that those in place respond adequately to the objectives they were given, and we would do so in an open and transparent manner, consulting the organizations and associations representing artists and creators using the programs. As well, the Liberal Party would be open to creating new programs in partnership with cultural third parties if new needs or situation arise during our mandate.

- 3) Three years ago, a broad consensus was reached with all political parties on the need for a new museum policy supported by an increased budget to museums. Does your Party intend to follow-up on this consensus and invest in our heritage institutions?**

The Conservatives have completely dropped the idea of a National museum strategy in spite of promising they would put one forward during their mandate. Museums play an important role in defining and preserving Canadian and regional identities. The Liberals would be open to support all sizes of museums across the country, both with existing programs and by looking into new ways to improve the condition of Canadian museums.

Advancing the Socio-economic Status of Artists, Creators and Arts Professionals

- 4) Much discussion is taking place by governments around the world about the emergence of a creative economy and what is needed to ensure its continued growth and expansion. Does your Party have any policies regarding the creative economy? If so, what are they? If not, why not?**

Liberals understand the real and many values of culture. Our cultural institutions are paramount to our identity, and play an equally important role in our country's prosperity.

A recent study published by the Conference Board of Canada demonstrates cultures crucial role in Canada's growth and job creation. This is something the Liberal Party wants to build on and invest in.

There is a major spill over of culture into other areas of job creation, such as tourism, small business expansion, and even attracting and retaining a skilled workforce – areas which can be improved by greater investment.

5) Is your Party prepared to proceed with revisions to the Copyright Act as a priority in the next Parliament? What would be the approach of your Party regarding this important issue?

The Liberal Party will pursue an open and transparent process in order to craft its amendments to the new copyright legislation. We want to hold wide consultations and take into account the opinion and suggestions of all parties affected by the potential changes. We feel that appropriate consultations have not been conducted by the Conservatives and we would not have supported Bill C-61 without amendment.

6) Does your party support the notion that the federal government has a responsibility to contribute to the training of creators, particularly in the audio-visual sector?

Yes. That is why a Liberal government will reverse the cuts made to the National Training Program for the Film and Video Sector and would look into ways to improve training in the audio-visual sector.

Enhancing Support for the Production and Distribution of Canadian Cultural Products at Home and Around the World

7) Under a government formed by your Party, would foreign policy include a public diplomacy strategy where arts and culture have a role to play? Would you ensure that the staff in our embassies and missions abroad has the resources (human and financial) necessary to promote Canadian culture?

Yes, a Liberal government would put in place a public diplomacy strategy in order to promote Canada's arts, culture and artists in foreign countries. We also intend to fund these initiatives appropriately. We have already committed to restoring international promotion of Canadian arts and culture through the Public Diplomacy Program (PDP), an investment of \$11.8 million which was cut by the Conservatives in 2006. As well, the Liberal Party would increase the funding for international arts touring and promotion by \$11 million over 3 years.

8) Is your party prepared to raise the question of cultural diversity in all international trade negotiations?

A Liberal government would be committed to transparency in all international trade negotiations, protecting services such as health, public education, social services and culture by making no commitments that would undermine these sectors.

In this regard, a liberal government would never make any commitment that restricts our ability to achieve our cultural policy objectives

9) Recommendations have been made to the outgoing government that the Broadcasting Act and the Telecommunications Act be merged into a single legislative and regulatory framework. How would a government led by your Party address these recommendations and what priority would they be given?

The merging of two important and complex legislations has to be taken seriously. Such a merger could result in unpredictable impacts and a wide variety of changes. As with other complex bills, the Liberal Party favors a careful approach and, if required, further consultations. But the Liberal Party is not opposed to positive change, and in the case of the Broadcasting Act and the Telecommunication Act, would give priority to changes that are supportive of the objectives of both Acts.

10) Will your party commit to maintain the current level of 53% Canadian ownership rules in our media broadcasting and telecommunications systems? Will your party affirm the cultural objectives within the Broadcasting Act and ensure that they are respected and fostered in all program distribution platforms?

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 places a heavy emphasis on Canadian content. Our programs and music give voice to Canadians, their talent and their shared experiences. Economically, it means jobs for thousands of people – from creation to production and distribution on the airwaves. The Liberal Government is firmly committed to not modifying foreign limits on broadcasting or general content.

The Liberals are also committed to respect the cultural objectives as stated in the Broadcasting Act.

11) Does your party support the CRTC recommendation to the Minister of Canadian Heritage that the Canadian Television Fund be split in two streams?

While, the Liberal Party supports stable, long term funding for the Canadian Television Fund, we understand there has been some criticism made concerning the Fund and its operation. That is why we are also ready to look at ways to improve the Fund.

12) Does your Party support the notion of increased and stable funding in the context of a long-term Memorandum of Agreement with the public broadcaster as put forward by the CBC?

The Liberal Party endorsed all of the recommendations of the Heritage committee report on CBC. Among these recommendations was the idea of stable funding allocated for a period of no less than seven years and that the funding be established by means of the proposed memorandum of understanding. As well, the report recommended an increase in funding parallel to an increase in responsibilities or broadened mandate of the CBC.