

Canadian
Historical Association



Société historique
du Canada

Ottawa, 20 June 2017

Mr. Luc Fortin,
Ministère de la Culture et des Communications
Édifrice Guy-Frégault
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Dear Minister Fortin:

I write on behalf of the Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada to echo the concerns of L'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française [IHAF] about changes to the budget for the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec [BAnQ]. You will have received a letter from Martin Pâquet and Karine Hébert, President and Vice-President of IHAF, detailing their significant concerns following the report on new budgetary constraints at BAnQ published on 9 June 2017 in *Le Devoir*.

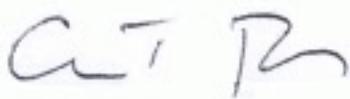
The CHA/SHC is a bilingual, not-for-profit organization devoted to fostering the study and communication of history in Canada. With almost a thousand members, we are the largest organization of this kind, and one of the largest scholarly organizations in Canada. Our members' work depends on the adequate funding, staffing, and maintenance of archives and libraries, and we read about the new budgetary constraints at BAnQ with concern. Both *Le Devoir* and the *Montreal Gazette* report that a leaked letter indicated that BAnQ will lay off 40

positions over the next six months. This would be the fourth wave of layoffs at BAnQ in the last decade.

This kind of reduction in funding is likely to have a real and harmful impact on researchers' experience at BAnQ. The layoff of forty positions over a six-month period will necessarily effect front-line service, either directly or indirectly. Of additional concern is reported changes in support to digitization efforts. BAnQ is a major repository for historians of French Canada and Quebec, with important holdings that are not replicated elsewhere. In recent years, BAnQ has undertaken important work digitizing archival records, including newspapers. The funding cuts described in the leaked correspondence would directly compromise the digitization programme, which would have a direct impact on historical researchers who access BAnQ's resources online or through inter-library loan programmes. Cutting the digitization program is truly unfortunate as the BAnQ programme was about to put the province's digitally searchable newspapers on par with the collections of many other Canadian provinces.

The CHA/SHC encourages the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications to clarify the changes to BAnQ's funding as soon as possible. Beyond that, we join our colleagues at IHAF in reminding your office of the importance of BAnQ to scholarship about Quebec and Canada, and urge your office to reconsider any cuts to BAnQ's budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adele Perry'.

Adele Perry
President