



Hon. Gord Johns, MP
NDP Critic, Heritage

Dear Gord Johns, Member of Parliament,

I am writing to you in my role as President of the Canadian Historical Association. In February, I sent a letter (attached) to the Hon. Marc Miller, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, in relation to the wide-ranging budget cutbacks that have affected many agencies that promote or maintain Canadian heritage. These include institutions like Library and Archives Canada, Parks Canada, the Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian War Museum, and Statistics Canada. On March 18th, we received a response from Minister Miller's office (also attached).

These decisions affect our colleagues who have lost employment in these institutions. But they go beyond that to have widespread implications. Other budgetary choices have eliminated funding opportunities such as the Documentary Heritage Communities Program. This program helped smaller archives across the country maintain appropriate levels of service. Such reductions hurt morale in the sector and also negate the thousands of hours of volunteer labour that keep many local archives in operation. In other words, these decisions are not cost-effective. And as a result, our local communities' access to and appreciation of their heritage will suffer.

The federal government cutbacks are occurring at the same time as similar provincial-level decisions. Therefore, the heritage sector increasingly faces difficult circumstances. In Nova Scotia, for instance, 12 of 28 provincial museums will be closed.

At the Canadian Historical Association, we do not believe that access to and maintenance of our heritage resources is a partisan issue. We hope that members of all political parties share our view that investment in our knowledge of our country's past is vitally important, particularly in the difficult circumstances that Canada is currently facing.

We hope we can count on your support, in your role as NDP critic for Heritage, to defend the sector.

Sincerely,

Colin M. Coates
President, Canadian Historical Association | Société historique du Canada



12 February 2026

The Honourable Marc Miller
Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Miller,

I am writing to you in my capacity as president of the Canadian Historical Association | Société historique du Canada. The members of our association have been distressed to see the recent news about cutbacks in a number of federal government units that are very important to all Canadians who are interested in the history of our country: Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum, Parks Canada, and Statistics Canada. Although we may not have access to all the precise data, we fear that the cutbacks have fallen disproportionately on these agencies, which share a role in creating and maintaining records and providing access to knowledge about Canadian history. I note that the recent cuts to Library and Archives Canada amplify the impact of the earlier reductions in the autumn.

I am sure that you are aware of the key roles these agencies play in encouraging interest in Canadian history. At this particular juncture in the history of our country, active engagement with the complicated Canadian past is more necessary than ever. Canadians need to understand, for example, the features of our past that distinguish us from our neighbours to the south and that have led us to adopt different paths to our concepts of citizenship, democracy, and civic engagement.

Reducing the capacity of agencies of the federal government to help those of us who value the study of history is particularly dangerous when decisions at the provincial level have exacerbated the difficulties of teaching young Canadians about our history. University- and college-level History departments continue to shrink, at a time when increasing attention to critical issues such as the history of residential schools, the roles of women and LGBTQ+ individuals, and the ongoing challenges faced by racialized members of Canadian society are receiving more attention than they ever have in the past. Simply put, the number of specialists in Canadian history continues to diminish at a time when it ought to be growing.

While we cannot expect the federal government to address problems at the provincial level, in your role as Minister of Canadian Heritage, we hope that we can count on you to advocate on behalf of all Canadians to maintain and enhance the role of agencies that collect data and records and make them accessible to broad publics. We recognise that the country faces many current challenges, but we do not want short-sighted decisions to have long-lasting effects on the future study of the country. This is particularly the case with Statistics Canada and its essential work in acquiring useful data which allow governments to make evidence-driven decisions about social and economic programs.

I note that Prime Minister Carney appealed to an understanding of Canadian history in his recent speech in Québec City as a way of establishing the context for current decisions about the many threats that our country faces. Engagement with the history of the country is vital.

We hope that the recognition of the importance of our country's history will be reflected in budgetary decisions that affect the agencies that promote citizens' knowledge of and engagement with our past.

Sincerely,



Colin M. Coates
President, Canadian Historical Association | Société historique du Canada

From: [Honorable Marc Miller](#)
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Subject: Réponse à votre correspondance du ministère du Patrimoine canadien / Reply to your correspondence from the Department of Canadian Heritage
Date: March 18, 2026 9:03:05 AM
Attachments: [CM2026-00359 Courriel de Catherine Charlton.pdf](#)
[CM2026-00359 EN Letter from Colin M. Coates.pdf](#)
[CM2026-00359 FR Lettre de Colin M. Coates.pdf](#)

Monsieur,

Je donne suite à votre correspondance du 12 février dernier, adressée à l'honorable Marc Miller, ministre de l'Identité et de la Culture canadiennes et ministre responsable des Langues officielles, concernant les réductions budgétaires imposées aux organismes du gouvernement fédéral, qui font la promotion et la préservation de l'histoire canadienne. Le ministre Miller vous remercie d'avoir écrit à ce sujet.

Le gouvernement du Canada reconnaît le rôle essentiel que jouent ces organisations dans la préservation du patrimoine documentaire et des collections du Canada, ainsi que dans l'accès aux connaissances sur l'histoire du pays.

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, le Musée canadien de l'histoire et le Musée canadien de la guerre fonctionnent indépendamment du gouvernement et sont responsables de leurs décisions opérationnelles, y compris de la mise en œuvre des mesures prévues au budget de 2025. À l'avenir, Bibliothèque et Archives Canada se concentrera sur son mandat principal en priorisant l'affectation des ressources afin de mieux servir la population canadienne. Au Musée canadien de l'histoire, les réductions prévues visent à accroître l'efficacité et à offrir une plus grande souplesse à long terme dans l'exercice de son mandat. Le Musée continuera de faire avancer la recherche, de concevoir des expositions de calibre mondial et des activités publiques, et de proposer des moyens novateurs pour rapprocher les Canadiennes et les Canadiens de leur histoire.

Par ailleurs, j'ai pris la liberté de transmettre votre correspondance à Mme Leslie Weir, bibliothécaire et archiviste du Canada, ainsi qu'à Mme Caroline Dromaguet, présidente-directrice générale du Musée canadien de l'histoire et du Musée canadien de la guerre, afin qu'elles soient informées de vos commentaires. Si vous souhaitez communiquer directement avec elles, leurs coordonnées figurent ci-dessous.

Recevez, Monsieur, mes salutations distinguées.

Nathalie Robitaille
Directrice p.i.
Secrétariat de la correspondance ministérielle
Ministère du Patrimoine canadien

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

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Dear Mr. Coates:

I am writing in response to your correspondence of February 12, 2026, addressed to the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, regarding reductions in funding for federal organizations that promote and preserve Canadian history. Minister Miller appreciates your taking the time to write on this matter.

The Government of Canada recognizes the vital role these organizations play in preserving Canada's documentary heritage and collections, and in providing access to knowledge about Canadian history.

Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian Museum of History, and the Canadian War Museum operate at arm's length from the Government and are therefore responsible for their own operational decisions, including the implementation measures outlined in Budget 2025. Moving forward, Library and Archives Canada will focus on its core mandate, prioritizing resources to strengthen its service to Canadians. At the Canadian Museum of History, the planned reductions are intended to improve efficiency and provide greater long-term flexibility in fulfilling its mandate. The Museum will continue to advance research, develop world-class exhibitions and public programming, and create innovative ways for Canadians to connect with their history.

Furthermore, I have taken the liberty of forwarding your correspondence to Ms. Leslie Weir, Librarian and Archivist of Canada, and Ms. Caroline Dromaguet, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum, so that they are aware of your comments. Should you wish to contact them directly, their contact information is provided below.

Sincerely,

Nathalie Robitaille
A/Director
Ministerial Correspondence Secretariat
Department of Canadian Heritage

Library and Archives Canada

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