



Lloydminster and District Centennial Commemorative Association

(Owner/Operator of the Lloydminster Regional Archives)
#27 5012 49 St., Lloydminster, AB, T9V0K2

18 June 2012

Mr. Leon Benoit, M.P.,
Vegreville-Wainwright Constituency,
(via e-mail, benoil1@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Mr. Benoit:

Thank you for your letter of May 28, 2012, in response to our letter of concern regarding your government's cancellation of the National Archival Development Programme (NADP). Our Board of Directors is grateful for your effort in bringing our concern to the attention of the Minister responsible. You asked us to let you know if there were other ways in which you could be of assistance. We appreciate your willingness to be of help.

Unfortunately, the response that you got from the Minister's office only echoes the press releases that were issued earlier this spring. With respect, their rhetoric misses the point of our concerns and, not to put too fine a point on it, is designed to mislead the public (and perhaps our members of Parliament).

We do not dispute that Library and Archives Canada continued to receive some financial support in the budget to advance certain projects such as the Canadian Feature Film Index and the *Lest We Forget Project*. We also appreciate the general direction that Library and Archives Canada is taking to increase the public's access to resources on-line. Our issue, however, is the very serious impact that we and other local, "grassroots" archives have incurred as a result of the abrupt and ill-thought-through cancellation of the NADP! The response that you got from the Minister's office does nothing to address our needs.

Our Association believes very strongly that the people and events of East-central Alberta and West-central Saskatchewan are important both locally and in the Canadian context. We are committed to preserving the historic record of our region. Our NADP application (that was vetted and approved at the provincial level and forwarded to Ottawa) was to digitise the videotapes of locally produced television

news, sports, agriculture and public affairs programmes (1992-1995). These videotapes have been donated to us by Newcap Broadcasting. In addition to digitising the programmes for preservation and sharing with the public, we proposed to develop a searchable database so that researchers could easily locate the stories in which they were interested. (I would point out that last year - with our own limited resources - we successfully completed Phase 1 of the project that dealt with the 1988-1991 collection.) Ultimately, we want to complete the entire series of locally produced programmes so as to preserve the rich historical record that is provided by daily television coverage.

The preservation of the videotapes in question is time-sensitive. The tapes are deteriorating and must be digitised soon or they will be unplayable. As well, we cannot be assured that the required playback equipment and competent technicians will be available for many more years. Cancellation of the NADP jeopardises the preservation of this important history resource.

Our argument is simple... NADP was the source of funding that we needed for our Project. It was the only federal grant available that would support our effort to preserve our region's historical record. In cancelling the NADP, Library and Archives Canada has struck a significant blow to our local project and has similarly crippled important projects in every other region of the country.

NADP projects were, by definition, both efficient and effective. The grants were made on a "matching" basis and so built on local resources. They could not have given the Government of Canada any "bigger bang for the buck"! As well, the application, approval and monitoring processes were very rigorous thus ensuring that the grants would be used in the most accountable and effective ways.

We accept the argument that the Government of Canada must be fiscally responsible. However, in eliminating the NADP, the Department made a serious mistake. This mistake should be corrected as soon as possible. You asked how you could be of further assistance to us. We respectfully ask that you go back to the Minister and help him understand that the NADP is very important to your constituents and to everyone interested in preserving and sharing the history of Canada's regions.

Thank you for your interest in supporting our important work.

Yours truly,

Donald B. Duncan, Ph. D.,
President, LDCCA.

cc. Hon. Gerry Ritz

