



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 93

CANADIAN HERITAGE
Library and Archives Canada

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, June 19, 2012

THE SENATE

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*[Translation]**[English]***CANADIAN HERITAGE**

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

As Senator Chaput mentioned, the leader indicated yesterday that a written response to my question about the National Archival Development Program was tabled in the Senate last week.

However, I would like to point out that this response did not even mention the program in question. Instead, it spoke about a new age of technology, as Senator Chaput said, without taking into consideration the work required to make archival documents accessible. It is the local archives that find the documents in our communities and preserve and organize them to make the rich history of our country available online.

Why does Library and Archives Canada not consider this program to be fundamental when the government boasts that it promotes history?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, again, it is the same with many programs that are funded over the years. Other programs receive funding and programs from the past do not receive funding. This is the normal course of events that takes place when funding envelopes are managed by arm's-length organizations such as Library and Archives Canada.

As Leader of the Government in the Senate, it is not for me to suggest that the government or any member of the government should intervene and influence the arm's-length process of any agency such as Library and Archives Canada, which has expanded its services through the new technology.

Again, I can only stress to the Honourable Senator Tardif, as I did to the Honourable Senator Chaput, that this organization has been provided the necessary funding to deliver on its mandate, and it is an arm's-length organization. It is up to the people assessing applications to make decisions on behalf of their organizations and ensure that everyone gets a fair hearing. At the end of the day, this is a decision of these arm's-length organizations.
