



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Canada Periodical Fund

Questions by:

The Honourable Maria Chaput  
The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

## THE SENATE

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[Translation]

### CANADIAN HERITAGE

#### CANADA PERIODICAL FUND

**Hon. Maria Chaput:** Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. In April and May 2012, I asked questions about the Canada Periodical Fund regarding aid to publishers.

Honourable senators, I am bringing this issue up again today. Everyone seems to recognize that there are some specifics that are not taken into consideration in the funding formula and that this formula, as I mentioned before, represents a step backwards for minority French-language newspapers, since they are facing a rather significant drop in the financial support they had been getting until now.

The government has always been willing to support minority official language publications. My question is this: since it is now acknowledged that it is possible to make the necessary adjustments to the existing funding formula, why have these adjustments not yet been made?

Could the leader tell Minister Moore that a ministerial directive on his part is urgently needed so that the formula can be adjusted to the specific reality of minority official language publications?

[English]

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** The honourable senator asks specific questions about specific programs. I do recall her making inquiries about this program in the spring and, as I think I answered at the time, the various organizations are funded through this program. I will be very happy, though, as I always am, to take the honourable senator's question as notice. The honourable senator asks specific questions about a specific program within a specific department and I do not have the answers at my fingertips.

[Translation]

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I also asked questions about this issue, and it seems to me that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages could have taken advantage of the fact that there were fewer applications to the Canada Periodical Fund during the last fiscal year to make the necessary adjustments to the program, without adversely affecting all the applicants. This issue has already been discussed, examined and presented.

The solution is well known and easy to implement. Everyone is waiting for the minister's directive. A letter was sent by the Association de la presse francophone, asking for a meeting with the minister. Will the minister at least agree to the request of the association, which has wanted to meet with him for several months to present its case face to face? Can the minister tell us whether he will at last agree to this meeting?

[English]

**Senator LeBreton:** I will be happy to pass on the honourable senator's request to the minister. As honourable senators know, these changes were made three years ago to strengthen the program. The goal was clear, namely, to provide readers with more quality Canadian stories in the magazines of their choice.

• (1440)

I believe I made clear, when I answered these questions in the spring, that official language minority publications have special eligibility exemptions under the Canadian Periodical Fund.

I will ascertain, honourable senators, the program as it stands at present and will pass on the request to Minister Moore.

[Translation]

**Senator Chaput:** Honourable senators, I would like to point out to the minister that the problem arose when the program was renewed and after the new formula was introduced. Meanwhile, during the discussions between employees of the department and members of the community, minority francophone communities learned that it was possible to change the formula by taking into consideration the specific needs that result from having a French-language newspaper in an official language minority community.

Could the leader please ask Minister Moore about this and ensure that he will meet with the representatives who asked to see him in order to discuss the situation?

[English]

**Senator LeBreton:** I thank the honourable senator for the question. As I mentioned to her colleague Senator Tardif, I do believe there were special eligibility exemptions for minority-language publications.

However, I will, as I indicated to Senator Tardif, refer the questions to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and we will respond by written answer.