

CBC's future in doubt

The CBC is important to Canadian heritage and culture, which is why the Liberal Party is fighting to ensure that the Harper Conservative government does not achieve its goal of dismantling such a pivotal part of our heritage.

On March 25, CBC-Radio Canada announced that as a result of an anticipated \$171 million revenue shortfall, it would be forced to lay off 800 people and make significant changes to its services. This represents about 10% of its total workforce and does away with the traditional one-third to two-thirds sharing arrangement between French and English networks, respectively, for federal funding.



Destroying CBC-Radio Canada has long been part of Stephen Harper's ideological agenda for over a decade, and he and his government are using the pretext of tough economic times to fulfill that agenda.

The Conservative government could have taken steps to mitigate the damage but refused to do so.

The Liberal party introduced a motion in the House of Commons on March 31st calling on the Conservative government to provide CBC-Radio-Canada with the bridge financing it requires to maintain its 2008 staffing and service levels. They refused to provide the needed \$125 million and they delayed providing its annual \$60 million top-up to its budget until after the cuts to CBC were announced.

The average investment by industrialized countries in public broadcasting is \$80 per citizen, yet the CBC-Radio-Canada only receives \$33.

At the Liberal Convention in April, an emergency resolution was passed regarding the future of CBC-Radio Canada where Liberals agreed that the Conservative government must ensure it preserves the role and mission of the CBC-Radio Canada and guarantees that any plan put in place to help conventional television channels must include CBC-Radio Canada.

Canadians take great pride in their culture and national identity and we must take every step necessary to protect that culture. We need to see our culture in our television and radio programming. We need to share and reflect upon every corner of our country.

It is time to go back to CBC's original mandate which was to promote our Canadian heritage and national unity through cultural programming.

The Conservative government seems to forget that there are many rural and isolated communities that depend on the CBC not just for jobs but also for information. The

CBC-Radio-Canada should be supported and encouraged and a Liberal government would take the initiative to ensure this happens.