

In addition to the parliamentary review, interdepartmental discussions involving senior officials of the departments of Finance, National Revenue and Communications have begun. The Department of National Revenue is also conducting internal reviews both of a general nature and with specific reference to the arts and artists. These interdepartmental and departmental deliberations are similarly encouraging if long overdue.

While parallel official discussions are important and necessary, the review commissioned by the House of Commons has the advantage of being conducted in public, with public participation and by elected representatives of the public. The Canadian Conference of the Arts therefore looks to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture as the primary vehicle and the main motive force in effecting change to the manner in which the arts and artists are treated for tax purposes.

The task of the Committee will not be an easy one. You -- the Chairman and Committee members to whom this brief is addressed -- may however be assured of the full support and cooperation of the Canadian Conference of the Arts and our organizational and individual members in this undertaking. You may also rest assured that your work will not be in vain, will not be relegated to the same shelf upon which the Disney Report has languished for so long.

Given the developments of the last year, the feelings of the arts community on the subject of taxation are running at an all-time high, and members of the CCA have been understandably contemplating public manifestations of their displeasure. To date, however, the Canadian Conference of the Arts has counselled the deferral of such actions for the moment and, instead, the active participation in your review. We have encouraged our members to provide the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture with the detailed information and opinion upon which sound conclusions and recommendations may be based. Upon completion of your review, however, we will encourage our members to spare no effort in ensuring that the recommendations of the Standing Committee are speedily implemented.

When the Canadian Conference of the Arts last appeared before the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture as you began consideration of the report of the Applebaum-Hébert Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, we were struck by the level of interest manifested by Committee members in the issue of taxation and the arts. Since then, we have been impressed with the non-partisan approach to the subject, and the all-party agreement as to its importance. The countless