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For immediate release

PUBLISHERS MOURN THE LOSS OF A PIONEERING FIRM

The Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) is dismayed by the news that Canada's most storied book publisher, McClelland & Stewart, will be downgraded to an imprint of a foreign-owned multinational corporation. Today's announcement marks the end of a long and illustrious history of a Canadian cultural institution.

In the years since the University of Toronto acquired majority interest in M&S, with Random House managing its distribution and other services, there have been those who questioned the degree to which M&S was still "Canadian-controlled." Through those years, however, the editorial department – the core of any publishing enterprise – remained fiercely independent. As of today, the editorial program will be under the full control of foreign ownership.

"I want to cry," said Margie Wolfe, ACP President. "It's a sad day for Canada, and the end of a long and glorious chapter in Canadian publishing. McClelland & Stewart led the way, 50 years ago, in making Canadians aware of the wealth of writing talent in this country. They made Canadian book launches into media events, and turned Canadian authors into household names. They laid the foundation for a Canadian industry, in which they and other pioneering companies, like Coach House and Anansi, could build the reputations of Canadian writers at home and around the world. "

That part of the legacy will live on. Where once only a few companies focused on publishing Canadian authors, now more than a hundred others across the country are committed to the same values that M&S once represented: a truly Canadian publishing industry that brings the richness and excellence of Canadian writing to readers everywhere. No company controlled by interests based elsewhere can match that commitment. All Canadian publishers are indebted to M&S for its leadership in creating a Canadian industry, and all regret its departure today from that industry.

The absorption of M&S by a multinational comes two months after the sale of Canadian ebook retailer Kobo to Japanese interests, and two years after the US retailer amazon was granted permission to operate in Canada. All three of these decisions involved setting aside government policy restricting



foreign ownership in the Canadian book industry, a policy that the Department of Canadian Heritage formally reviewed in 2010. No outcome of that review has been announced, and no information is forthcoming on when an outcome is expected. “While we wait for a decision on ownership policy,” observed Wolfe, “it seems that the policy has become irrelevant in practice.

“All of us need to remember that the foreign ownership policy was initially introduced to both protect and encourage the development of an independent and diverse Canadian cultural sector. Today we have lost one of our greatest homes for Canadian stories. It’s a sad and scary day.”

The Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) is the voice of Canada’s independent English-language book publishing industry, representing 130 Canadian-owned companies. The ACP provides professional development for its members, fosters communication within the book sector, develops collaborative marketing initiatives, conducts research, and provides advocacy to government, the book industry, and the public.

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