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## Foreword

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# Foreword

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

PROVERBS 29:18

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This is the report by the Committee for the Development of the Dutch Canon, which, as commissioned by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, worked from 1 September 2005 to 1 September 2006 on (recommendations for) the historical and cultural canon of the Netherlands. In that year, there was a huge amount of interest in the committee's work. Evidently, a lot of people are keen to have a say in how the Netherlands deals with its culture and history. We explicitly wish to emphasise this very satisfying fact, now that this report is being published, partly because we sometimes had the impression that the process we had engaged had become associated all too frequently with complaints.

The canon of the Netherlands is neither a litany of complaints nor a monotonous chore. It is a positive creation which is intended to provide valuable support for modernity rather than being aimed against it. That was one of the reasons for our choice of frontispiece. In the clock of cultural history, the canon represents, to a certain extent, the big wheel which appears to be turning less dynamically than the faster, smaller wheel behind the little hand, but which still determines the basic speed. The permanent operation of the big wheel facilitates all the momentary effects of the other components.

Perhaps, in this election period, it is appropriate for us to say that the canon represents that which survives a great many cabinets and committees.

16 October 2006

On behalf of the committee,

Frits van Oostrom,  
Chair

