

Library School



McGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL

September 28th, 1964

Dr. Thomas H. Raddall,
Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

Dear Dr. Raddall,

Many many thanks for your prompt reply to my letter. I have read your article with great interest. It contains exactly the information I required. I am returning it with thanks. I would have been interested in your opinion as to why the people on the South Shore area have not co-operated in the formation of a Regional Library. If you care to express an opinion I will be grateful. In my travels in the Province I have been led to understand that as a whole the people of the South Shore are not as interested in education and cultural affairs as those in the eastern section for instance. Would you say this is true?

Sincerely,

V.L. Coughlin

V.L. Coughlin,
Assistant Professor.

Encl.

October 4, 1964

Professor V.L.Coughlin,
Library School,
McGill University,
Montreal, P.Q.

Dear Mr. Coughlin:

Your letter of September 28. Many years ago I was present at a conference in Bridgewater N.S., called together by Miss Norah Bates (or some such name), an Englishwoman at that time in the employ of the Nova Scotia government. Her job was mainly the promotion of libraries in the province, and in our case it was the promotion of a regional library service for the south shore counties of Lunenburg and Queens. Obviously the main library for the region would be built or set up at Bridgewater, the central place, with subsidiary libraries in the towns of Mahone, Lunenburg and Liverpool. We private delegates agreed on this; but when the proposition went before the town councils or municipal councils outside of Bridgewater they turned it down.

Their argument:- (1) We refuse to tax our people for anything that will benefit Bridgewater chiefly. (2) We cannot afford it in these hard times. In other words, oldfashioned regional jealousy plus a sharp watch on the tax rate.

I cannot remember her exact words of course, but here is the gist of what Miss Bates confessed to me:- " I find that the towns and municipalities most eager for regional libraries are those in the eastern parts of the province, chiefly in the mining regions, which are all on the edge of bankruptcy and cannot qualify for a government grant to cover part of the library cost. Your fishing, farming and lumbering towns in western Nova Scotia, more careful in all their expenditures, are solvent but unwilling to take on any new expenditure."

I don't think, myself, that the coal miners are more conscious of education and cultural affairs than our fishermen, farmers and wood-mill hands. The mining communities, being bankrupt anyhow, had nothing to lose by voting new expenditures. The western communities were solvent simply because they had been more careful with their money, and they chose to stay that way.

Since that time our town of Liverpool has built a library of its own. A few days ago I was shown the beginnings of a library in Bridgewater, two rooms of good size, newly painted, well furnished, heated and lighted, with a stock of books for child, teen-age and adult reading. This is an enterprise of the ladies of the IODE in Bridgewater. Most of the books have been donated, but they are raising funds for new purchases.

J.H.R.