



Office of the University Librarian

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May 27, 2016

The Office of the Premier
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Confederation Building, East Block
P.O Box 8700
St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6

Attn: The Honourable Dwight Ball

RE: Cuts to Public Libraries

Dear Premier Ball:

I write on behalf of Memorial University Libraries. As Premier, you have heard the many valid concerns expressed over the proposed cuts to the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries and the proposed 10 per cent sales tax on books. It is time to focus attention on a renewed dialogue between government, specifically Minister Kirby, and those who have devoted their professional lives to libraries, reading, information literacy and community development.

My position as interim university librarian provides me with a unique vantage point on the topic of libraries. I understand the complex world of modern libraries in both an academic context and a public library system. I know that we can evolve and be innovative while operating in a constrained fiscal reality. Memorial University Libraries has made, and continues to make, difficult budgetary decisions. Importantly, however, these decisions are being made with meaningful consultation between faculty and librarians. Through similar means, we can achieve a public library system that is sustainable and robust while remaining economically viable.

We all have a vested interest in the social, cultural, and educational prosperity of this province. Newfoundland and Labrador has given Canada its best writers: Lisa Moore, Michael Crummy, Kathleen Winter, E.J. Pratt, Percy Janes, and the list continues. This prosperity is deep and it sustains us all. There is much at risk when decisions such as the

closure of libraries and the taxation of books are made without a rigorous consultation process. We believe strongly that there is yet time to collaborate, find compromise, and, together, build a legacy of which we can all be proud.

We encourage Minister Kirby to take the important step of meeting with the Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association (NLLA), the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador (WANL), community leaders, and other organizations that share a vision for libraries in this province. Our strength lies in our ability to find creative solutions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "L".

Louise White

University Librarian (Interim)