

## NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

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LINCOLN

EDNA D. BULLOCK, SECRETARY

27 Ap. 1905.

To the Federated clubs of Nebraska:—

Your efforts in behalf of this Commission during the past winter are hereby acknowledged, and we wish to convey to you a measure of our appreciation of your continued interest and support of the work undertaken. That the effort was unavailing in no way lessens our sense of obligation. We had a narrow escape from extermination at the hands of the Senate finance committee — being saved by the mere accident of friendliness on the part of Senator Good, the chairman of that committee. Many members of the Legislature seemed never to have heard of our Commission, and knew nothing of its work. The next Legislature will, doubtless, contain many such members. They should be educated by their constituents as soon as elected. It is almost useless for anyone to attempt such a mission after the legislative grind begins. Reminders from constituents during the session are helpful. I have personal knowledge that many of your letters to your Legislators induced more or less interest and activity in our behalf. Several members brought me your letters and asked what they could do.

Since we have only \$6000 for the next two years, and our business is constantly increasing, we shall be obliged to curtail our expenditures for books from \$1300 during the past biennium to less than \$800 during the current biennium. This necessitates our asking for gifts of money for books and for more permanent traveling library stations. In this we are following the example of the Wisconsin library commission. Their last annual appropriation was \$18,000 as compared with our \$3000, but no part of it was spent for books. All their books are paid for by generous citizens or permanent stations. It is not unusual for a citizen to give the money to purchase a number of traveling libraries, or for someone to give a traveling library as a memorial — the gift plate in each book bearing the name of the donor and the subject of the memorial.

To increase our book fund in this way is one of our most immediate necessities. Our special loan service will require a good deal of our small book fund, so the traveling libraries must come largely from outside.

I shall, therefore, be grateful for any gifts of this nature that you may be able to obtain for us, and for any suggestions as to ways of securing such gifts. All libraries so given will bear the name of the donor, or such other name as may be agreed upon, and surely, no other gift costing \$40 could be used as a transmitter of "sweetness and light" to so many people in so many places as a traveling library entrusted to this Commission. Recent statistics show that, with fewer books and a sparser population, we make more loans from our traveling libraries than are made in Iowa or Minnesota. In less than 3 years of service, our traveling library no. 6 traveled over 3300 miles and had nearly 1000 recorded loans. Such a work is worth maintaining, and the state failed to make adequate provision for it.

Your attention is called to our collection of outlines for club study. They embrace a wide variety of subjects, and are collected expressly for the use of the clubs. When writing for outlines please state what subjects are desired, as we could not send the entire collection to any club, for the reason that some of them are always in use somewhere.

In the selection of study outlines, and the arrangement of programs, I suggest that greater attention be paid to the probable availability of material on a particular topic in a particular town. I have had requests for books or pamphlets on subjects that either have no literature, or can only be handled by someone who has access to large libraries, and time and training to dig down to the sources of information. There are many sub-

jects that have no literature except in transient form in magazines and newspapers. Bound volumes of magazines are not subject to loan from up-to-date libraries. A magazine collection is not practicable, at present, in our special loan department. We are always glad to look up the references in the indexes for anyone, but we cannot furnish the magazines.

In study, as in other pursuits, we must plan our garment according to the cloth at our disposal. We are ready to furnish any study club in the state a reasonable number of books with which to pursue knowledge along ordinary lines of study, but subjects such as I have described should be avoided in towns where large libraries are wanting.

System, applied to club study would be a great help, both to clubs and to this office. Deliberate study and thinking, stretched across a considerable period of time is more profitable than a hasty and ill considered glance at a subject at the last moment. I receive letters from people who say that they have papers due in a day or two on subjects that they have not studied up, and I am asked to send books at once. This is always done when it is possible, but the books might just as well have been asked for sooner, with a vastly better chance of the books being forthcoming. I sometimes have to send to Chicago for books, or to some point in Nebraska for something that is subject to call, and you are asked to keep this in mind when sending for books.

During the summer our books are not in such great demand as in the study season, so that anyone wishing to use books this summer can easily be accommodated.

Our work grows - the more required of us by citizens, the more useful and indispensable will this Commission become. Kindly extend us your aid in giving wider publicity to our work among people you meet. If possible, help us locate some of our traveling libraries in the country and in villages for the summer.

Very truly,

Edna D. Bullock, Sec'y.