

Nebraska Public Library Commission

Lincoln, June 9, 1905.

The object of this Commission in placing books in the Junior normal schools is to encourage the establishment of school libraries, and to promote the more intelligent use of books by the teachers in charge of the schools. The great drawback is not so much the scarcity of books as the teacher's ignorance of what the books contain, and how to use such material as happens to drift her way. If, for instance, her class is studying England, she should weave into the prosaic geography enough of history, legend, and literature to keep her pupils more than interested. No matter what the age of the children, she can use Blaisdell's "Stories from English history", Baldwin's "Fifty famous stories retold", Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare", Eggleston's "Strange stories from history" and other books among the \$25 worth that we have selected for purposes of illustration.

The observant and inventive teacher will study each book carefully as it is added to the school library, and also learn about it from the children. She should know that in Dodge's "New baby world" are two charming lullabies -- one Norse, the other Japanese. When Scandinavia or Japan is in question, a musically inclined pupil might be encouraged to compose music for these lullabies. In this same book, a picture of a little child about to take a dip in the ocean, is first class supplementary material for a physical geography lesson on the ocean. "Hans Brinker" is fine supplementary material for the study of Halland. These are but instances. These books contain a vast amount of such material. If teachers can be taught to keep a lookout for such material and to make a practical use of it, great gain to the boys and girls, as well as to the teachers will be the result.

As an exercise in the use of a school library, I suggest that a topic -- say England, or Norway, or Japan, or apple trees, or the ocean be assigned the teachers to search the 46 volumes in our \$25 library for supplementary material, and to report what they find there, and also in the traveling library at the Junior normal.

The \$25 collection sent to the Junior normal schools this year is not presented as ideal, but is planned for general utility and comprehensiveness. The accompanying classification shows something of the purpose each was intended to serve. Every school should have a good dictionary, an atlas, and an encyclopaedia.

The printed "List of books for school libraries" should be in the hands of all teachers. They should be required to read the introduction carefully, and to write an order for books according to directions there given. A number of teachers have sent orders to me under the impression that the Library commission sells books. A careful reading of the introduction to any book or pamphlet, is necessary to its proper comprehension, and anyone who succeeds in impressing this upon the minds of teachers will render Nebraska a great service. Any teacher may write to me for help in the selection of books, or for a special loan of books for study, or for a traveling library. Our books and our time belong to the people of Nebraska.

Edna D. Bullock, Sec'y.