

A Governor's Wife in Politics---for Books

Mrs. Cochran Lobbied for Her Rural Plan, Now Seeks U. S. Aid

BY W. H. LAWRENCE.

Books for rural Nebraskans.

That's the goal of Mrs. R. L. Cochran's crusade as the wife of Nebraska's governor.

With the aid of her husband, Mrs. Cochran maneuvered through the legislature two bills authorizing establishment of county and regional libraries and last week was in the east attempting to obtain federal aid.

Her plan is to put books—good reading—in the hands of Nebraska farmers and their children, who do not have access to city libraries. She wants a collection of volumes that can be sent all over the state.

She Knows.

Before her marriage, Mrs. Cochran was a county school superintendent and teacher. She knows what is needed in the farm country. And she knows that books are not the least of these needs.

The bills, which will become laws on August 23, were sponsored by Senator R. C. Regan, democrat of Columbus, and Representative E. M. Von Seggern, democrat of West Point.

They permit county boards, when the proposition previously has been approved by the voters, to establish county or regional libraries and to levy a property tax of one full mill to support them. A library can be established by one county, or several counties can join together to form a regional library.

Board.

Full-time librarians will be employed. Their qualifications must be approved by a board of library examiners, composed of the executive secretary of the Nebraska public library commission, and the Omaha and Lincoln city librarians.

One bill also resurrected the state library commission, which was abolished in 1933. It is composed of five persons appointed by the governor. This commission will direct the entire county-regional library system. It may employ an executive secretary at a salary of not more than two thousand dollars.

Mrs. Cochran, herself, bore the brunt of pushing the bills through the legislature.

Flinging precedent to the winds in a manner similar to that of the nation's first lady,



Mrs. R. L. Cochran.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, she lobbied vigorously to win legislative approval, appearing before committees to talk cold, hard figures with tax-conscious legislators.

Breakfasts.

Several times, the fate of the bills hung in the balance. Mrs. Cochran would summon a number of legislators to breakfast at the governor's mansion and by noon, the measure once again would be headed towards approval.

Governor Cochran recommended and the legislature approved an expenditure of 25 thousand dollars during the next biennium for the commission.

Mrs. Cochran thinks that isn't enough money.

So she's taken her battle to Washington. She's gone to New York to enlist the help of the Carnegie Foundation. She is enthusiastic over the chances of receiving federal aid.

On her return from Washington, she will start immediately to organize library works projects. They told her in Washington there was some possibility of federal work relief funds being provided for small library buildings.