

Lincoln, Sept. 1903.

To the librarians of our traveling libraries:-

The busy, out-of-doors season is drawing to a close, and we approach the time of year when schools and libraries resume the business of helping to make Nebraska a better place to live in. The year opens most auspiciously for the traveling libraries. Our libraries are nearly all in the hands of public spirited and deeply interested librarians. We count it a singular good fortune to have had so many helpful people to assist us, and embrace this opportunity to express our appreciation.

This coming year we hope to have the traveling libraries count double for the intellectual advancement of the communities to which they go. We rely upon your co-operation in gaining the interest of the teachers, editors, ministers, parents and children of your community. Help them to use the library, and to appreciate the desirability of the establishment of a public library wherever a community is able to support one. We take especial pride in our selections of books for children. Will you not see that every child in your community has a chance to use the books, so that our young people may learn to carry on their education by means of books? Since three fourths of all who enter our primary schools drop out at or before the age of twelve, let us reach out for the little people, that they may learn to help themselves when their brief school days are over.

The result of inquiries sent you in the spring was gratifying. Satisfaction with the rules governing the circulation of the libraries was practically unanimous. A few expressed a desire for a greater proportion of fiction and children's books, but the general opinion was in favor of the present basis of selection. The proportion of fiction allowed by modern library standards is one fifth, so that we cannot very well add to our liberal allowance of one half without incurring criticism.

Since approval of the rules was so general, we must ask you to follow them exactly. We have now 57 libraries, and our records of their goings, comings and condition must all be kept exactly. The following points are called especially to your attention:-

- 1 Name and address of the shipper must be on the box when you return it.
- 2 Reports, keys, and drayage charges must be sent in when the library comes back.
- 3 Books must have covers on them when in circulation.
- 4 Books must be examined to see whether borrowers have used them well every time they are returned, and careless treatment must be properly dealt with at the time. It is just as important that people should learn to respect public property as that they should read good books. The traveling libraries must be managed in such a way as to impress upon the minds of all borrowers a deep sense of responsibility in the care of what belongs to all the people. The tendency to regard public property as appropriate material for waste and plunder must never be encouraged by the traveling libraries. No more valuable moral lesson can be taught to the rising generation than that of proper reparation for carelessness or wrong doing. In the moral as well as in the physical universe, deviation from laws or failure to fulfill agreements are promptly punished. The traveling library must not operate to create in anybody's mind the idea that unreasonable use is an offense without a penalty. What that penalty may be is largely left to your judgment. If a fine is the best way to give the particular borrower the correct idea of his offense, do not hesitate to impose it. Feel at liberty to consult this office on such matters. We regard this feature of our work as especially important.



- 5 Books must be packed according to general instructions.
- 6 Greater care must be exercised to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. Confer with this office at once upon the outbreak of any very serious contagion. Take no chances, but be liberal with the use of disinfectants. Formaldehyde gas does not hurt the books if properly used. Any physician will tell you how to use it.
- 7 Libraries must be returned promptly unless an extension of time has been asked for and granted--and the report blank must accompany the books.
- 8 Our time is valuable, so we try to be businesslike. You can help us by following instructions.

Many of you are busy people and you find that the work of librarian takes much of your time. If the library is kept in a store or postoffice, you can easily limit the hours when you will loan or receive books to two or three a day, or certain hours on certain days, keeping the books locked in the box the rest of the time. A bright boy or girl of sufficient age to appreciate the books can always be found to help you. The best hour in the day for people in your immediate vicinity is probably just after school is out for the day, but probably a morning or early afternoon hour will have to be selected for borrowers from a distance. If you have time to make more liberal arrangements, so much the better.

We have a system of special loans for study purposes. If anyone in your community wants books for study, refer him to us. We have a limited fund which can be used to buy books for special loans as they are needed.

Sincerely,

Edna D. Bullock, Sec'y.