



Gratia A. Countryman and Family Papers.

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There are mighty social forces at work today.

None of us know what will happen from week to week.

We feel that we are living on a volcano that may erupt at any time. Changes are all about us, and may

become more revolutionary than we dream. We cannot tell.

(lecture this week - "Is America going fascist?")

Another one - "To Communism the next step."

But there are some things that do not change, and

that have not changed in our march down the centuries.

Human nature and the needs of human beings have not changed, nor has the value of books and the value of an education changed. It is with these unchangeable

things and their relation to each other that we

librarians deal. Other values are changing; material

possessions are uncertain, the distribution of wealth

is fluctuating. Every business and profession is

undergoing strain and stress. But the fundamental needs

of men and women for opportunities of growth and develop-

ment are unchanged. A tremendous responsibility rests

upon all of the educational forces to supply the oppor-

tunities for men and women to fit themselves for the new

conditions in which they must live.

You and I know that ignorance has always been a menace to civilization. The world progresses by ideas,

*Craddock
May - 1936*

*with
changes
in Social
May 14-36*

by thinking, and we are going to work out a new world society, not with arms, but with brains. Arms and war set us back, but the use of our brains carries us forward. In the past people have been afraid of thinking. All through the centuries they have been afraid of great minds that ventured out upon new ideas,-- Sophocles, Jesus Christ, Galileo. But we no longer burn men at the stake because they have proclaimed the truth. This scientific age has brought about a desire to know truth and to share truth. As we look into the future pregnant with possibilities, we know that men and women must learn to think and to read and to study if they are going to be prepared for the possibilities that are just ahead. We pick up book after book with prophecies of a new world within our reach if men dare to grasp it. Science and technology have prepared the setting for the most majestic civilization that the world has ever seen. Will men be able to fit themselves into it, will they be equal to forming new political relationships, new economics, new social conditions to match the new inventions and discoveries of the scientific world? The fundamental need is for us to be prepared for participation in this changed and changing world. *There*

are those who do not encourage the common man to think. But he is thinking and must be furnished with true facts.

The present difficulty is that changes all over the world are coming so rapidly that the common people haven't had time to keep up with them. They are perplexed and bewildered. Take for instance, the problem of government. Popular government is facing a trial, with many countries turning to dictators; because progress can move no faster than ^{the} mass intelligence which makes public opinion.. Take our international problems; there might be a tidal wave of peace and understanding if it were not for uninformed public opinion, which lets the "unseen assassins" preach great armies and navies. And as to our social troubles, I would like to quote from Dean Ford of the University of Minnesota who said in a recent address that "our present civilization will accept the newest in science without question but the most timid suggestion of social and political readjustments is rejected. Chicago opens the gates of the Century of Progress by a beam from Arcturus through the magic of a photo-electric cell. At the same time her schools are poverty stricken through municipal mismanagement and corruption. Our President's voice ^{is} heard through the radio by a whole nation ~~a few evenings ago~~, a marvelous thing that; but he is besieged by hungry office seekers wholly untrained and unfit for the government's business." ^{we hear} (King George's services - in our living rooms. + the Speech of Edward VIII. from Acropolis wonder, but

the nation plan to jump as soon as the school like barbarians

So great are the contrasts between scientific advances and our social ^{and governmental} weaknesses. Think of the crime records in Minneapolis. We aren't moving at an even tempo. We are living in the dark ages ^{in our social life while we are} in the most enlightened scientific period of the world. What about our mounting crime records, our industrial conditions, our sweat shops and child labor? What about our methods of enforcing law, our racial antipathies and injustices, our conscienceless race for wealth? Science is furnishing us with untold conveniences and satisfactions of life. But after all, it is humanity and not science that determines our civilization,-- men, not machines. We have yet to learn the art of living together. The inter-dependence and ~~the~~

^{right} social relations of men and not the gifts of science will set the course of the new social order which we ~~with other~~ ^{not our physical comforts, but our goodwill toward} institutions ~~are trying to direct. It will be directed~~ ^{men with stop the future. And this must be} ~~directed~~ by men who read and think and try to find the right way.

Yes; the fundamental need of society in this rebuilding process of today is for men and women who read ^{toward social rightness} and study and think. You are here today because you believe that there is something ^{to} ~~you may learn here at~~ ~~this Northwest School~~. You are not satisfied to go on in the same old way when you might learn new ways. We have been hearing a great deal about Adult Education,

that we who are grown up can go on learning and studying as well as the young people in school. Your attendance here shows that you believe in Adult Education for yourselves. There is a great movement going on- an organized growing movement of great significance. Because out of the social body itself must come the reconstruction of society: from the common people must come the leaders of tomorrow. *From all such as us who believe in education and clear thinking.*

Now perhaps I will come more directly to the point toward which I have been heading. The University of Minnesota is just now beginning to build a new building for the new Adult Education Department. The schools over the state, especially in the cities, are opening night schools, and classes for adults. But more than all other institutions, the library is the principal agency for the spread of education among adults through books, those priceless tools, books. I wish I could stop and try to make clear what a collection of books means in any community, because books can teach, they can cheer, they can inspire; they take you out into the active world and its problems, they make you look into your own selves, and up into the starlit universe. We all need books, we are none of us too old to learn, or to develop our powers of thinking. I believe that books and libraries

University of Minnesota

are as necessary to us adults as schools are for children. *and should be as universally accessible*

Never before have libraries been so much used by the common man seeking information or by the unemployed men seeking both information and entertainment and escape. The demand has been without parallel in the history of libraries, amounting in some cities to an increase of 50%. As I have watched the throngs of men and women in our *Y.M.C.A.* reading rooms, or seen them carrying home armful of books for themselves and their families, I have wondered what they would have done without the help of books. Hundreds of young people come in and out of our doors for books to read, who would otherwise be tramping the country or filling the saloons. I have thought too that they are not only filling up leisure time, but getting the habit of reading and thinking which will help them, whether they realize it or not, to adjust themselves to new situations. This opportunity is beyond price.

Professor Beard points out that this economic crisis differs from all others in that it has *Compelled* ~~led~~ men and women to do serious thinking and that has *led to* ~~meant~~ serious reading.

Mr. Fosdick suggests that this crisis may mark a revival *like that in medieval times* of learning, and if the kind of reading which is going on in libraries today is an indication, then the revival of learning is already on its way.

Our big metropolitan dailies have been expressing a new interest in what is going on in libraries and it is very encouraging in the face of the deep cuts which have been made in library budgets. The Los Angeles Times recently remarked, "It would appear from the increased and practical use of libraries in these difficult times that the public library may no longer be deemed a luxury, but a public utility." The Richmond Times Despatch says, "Few of us realize how important the public libraries have become. It is one of the great boons to modern civilization that books have been made accessible to the masses of the people." Librarians who are on the firing line, hearing daily the most tragic stories of wrecked hopes, and attempting to find the right book to help the particular personal need, know that sociologists are right when they say that reading keeps many people sane.

Public men and statesmen are also commenting on the increasing value of the library. Stuart Chase has declared that no group of workers in the whole community life of America is more strategically located or can do more valiant service in promoting constructive leisure than librarians. Mr. Newton Baker expresses himself emphatically, "In times like these the services of a public library are simply indispensable, if we are not

to start a relentless march backward toward barbarism."

But now let us turn to another phase of library development. Granted that libraries are just as useful as we librarians and the trained minds of the country think think they are, granted that the value of reading and the benefit of books are indispensable to this growing movement for Adult Education, when why confine them to the cities and larger towns? There is not anything which can be said of their value to the city dweller but must apply equally well to citizens in the country. The times are just as difficult for the farmer and perhaps more so. He feels the same need of enlightenment on world problems and domestic affairs. He feels the same discouragement and unrest. He also has leisure time. Whatever libraries can contribute to the enrichment of adult life in the cities, to the education of children and the fruitful use of leisure time, that much and more should they contribute to those who dwell in rural and especially in isolated rural districts.

In a recent survey of libraries in the United States the Secretary of the American Library Association reports that forty millions of people in the United States are without access to libraries. Many of these are in the South, many in the mountain states, but many in the country districts of the prosperous Northern states. It is a rather discouraging showing, and something needs to

be done about it. The national Association is asking for a library bureau in Washington in the Bureau of Education to look after the development of libraries as well as schools. Sometime we will ask for direct aid to establish libraries. Why not? The government gives aid to highways, 50 -50 with the state appropriation; it gives aid to colleges for vocational courses and agricultural courses. Now it is giving direct aid to old age pensions. It could as well be a policy of the government to give direct help to schools and libraries as to give millions for armies and navies and billions for other projects.

Two or three years ago, we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Mr. Edison's discovery of the electric lamp bulb. It was a marvelous discovery and we enjoy it throughout the country;- but everywhere? Oh no: Still I pass on country roads the farmhouses lighted with kerosene lamps and candles; millions are still without: but we are pushing along toward rural electrification. We see in fortunate school districts fine consolidated schools, but not in many sections in the country. One authority states that eleven million children, or nearly half of the public school enrollment, are still going to school in one and two room buildings, handicapped by

poor teachers, poor buildings, no books, and a pathetically short period to get what training they can. These children need just as much opportunity of schooling and books as do the city children. The changes all over the country will come about through leaders who know the rural districts, people like yourselves who appreciate ^{educational advantages} and ~~take advantage of opportunities~~ ^{and crave them for all the proper} ~~tunities (and privately, I do believe that the women will take the larger share of leadership).~~

But to look at our own state, just how do we appear in the picture and have we reason to consider further library expansion in Minnesota? Let me quote a letter typical of many which the city librarian gets, from Northern Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana, letters which tell of the book hunger in many villages and farming districts. This one happens to come from Northern Minnesota: "Would you please tell me whether we could get some discarded books from your library. We live forty miles from the nearest library and so we are unable to secure books. My brother is an invalid and would appreciate some."

Minnesota has been most fortunate in having a State Library Commission with an unusually fine Director, ^{and}

Miss Clara Baldwin. The Commission has developed library consciousness throughout the State. It has helped towns-people to establish local libraries and has carried on a system of carefully chosen travelling libraries. Little villages can borrow these; farming communities and rural schools can borrow them, study clubs can borrow package libraries on the subject they are studying, and individuals can borrow for their personal reading. I wish I could

But
herald this service throughout the State. It is one of ~~good as it is, it cannot possibly~~ the most economical and practical methods of reaching ~~cover the demands from the~~ scattered communities. -I know of nothing more interesting ~~within the state, nor take the place~~ than the daily mail that comes into the Commission office. ~~of a local library. We are sure~~ It tells the story of Minnesota book needs;- here is one ~~that Minnesota book needs must~~ from a country school P.T.A., here from a rural school ~~be cared for more adequately.~~ teacher, and here from a club: "We are a rural club of

22 members, and our families. We are interested in getting one of your travelling libraries." Here is another that would pull the books right off the shelves. It is from a far Northern point: "I understand we could get discarded books from you quite reasonably. North of here is a rich country 60 or more miles across. There are a few families scattered thru there, who have no chance at school or reading matter. One family 35 miles from the railroad has three girls starving for

reading matter and all the school they get is from their mother. Could you make it possible for these girls to get books?"

Leave to C.B.?
The State Library Commission has been in operation for 35 years. It has helped to establish local libraries, until they now number about 127. But I have some interesting figures which are rather astonishing. The ^{in Minnesota} total population/served by public libraries is 1,530,562, but those not served number 1,033,391. And this number of over 1,000,000 people is practically all rural population without library service except that given through the small travelling library (all honor to it) and the rural school libraries. In other words, appalling as it sounds to say that forty million people in the United States are not served with libraries, that is only 35% of the whole population, and our percentage of 40% is

worse. In this region where we are now 80% have no library facilities

Here We naturally turn to a consideration of the most interesting library development of recent years, the County Library movement, with its still further development into a Regional Library. Our ^{Minnesota} law allows counties to tax themselves for a county library; it allows a town library to make a contract with the county, or with adjoining counties, or with school districts. It

is a co-operative method to cover more territory with an organized service. We can define it best perhaps by saying that it is a public library for a county, under one administrative head. It works like a city library with its system of branches, school libraries, and delivery system. The branches in the county would be in each little village or cross-roads center, in each rural school, and often with direct service ^{to families}. It succeeds in furnishing service in proportion as it has sufficient funds.

(Tell about the start of Hennepin County System.)

~~Here in your own region, Mrs. Halgrim of Thief River Falls, has found a way to serve 36 schools in Pennington County by pooling the money that the schools spend for books into one big collection which can be kept circulating, so that each school has instead of its own little collection, the use in turn of the whole joint collection. She has persuaded her County Commissioners to appropriate \$625.00 for county service. If times are good Pennington will blossom into a full county system. Now it would be possible under the law for Red Lake County to join Pennington and make an even better joint proposition. Would it not be possible to develop Crookston~~

10/14

Ramsey County is also developed.
County service goes out from
Owatonna, from Stillwater and
various other towns with an
appropriation from the County
Commissioners.

~~The plans of County service have
been developing this winter~~

The Minnesota Law firm direct
at state aid to School libraries,
and as the County law allows
Schools to make contracts with
a town library board, here is a
chance to begin a County
library.

Ness Halgren

School contracts exist in
Stearns County and in Clay
County with the Moorhead library.
and Becker County through Detroit Lakes.

as the center of a good county system for Polk County? There are already 249 outside borrowers. It just depends upon how badly the people of Polk County want it, after they know that such a plan could be worked out. I believe that people should be informed and then that leadership should come from the people. The County superintendents, the school P.T.A.'s, the Farmers' organization might combine in their efforts to establish such a county system. You will find the librarians more anxious than any one else to give an enlarged service.

And now I will close with my own dream. Books are such necessary tools to education and self-development, that I look forward to the time when they will flow easily from the big libraries to the smaller ones, and into the country through county or regional libraries, so that any one needing a book can get it freely from anywhere in the State or perhaps adjoining states. It cannot be done now because each locality pays for its own local service. But suppose that part of the support came from the State, and that in turn the federal government assisted the State, then this wider use of books from the larger collections could be accomplished, for the expense would be distributed. Some time it may come. We plan

today with the far look ahead. It is the spirit of the library profession. Not to such people as you do we need to prove the vitality, the power, the gospel of books, or the need which every community has for them.

But through you the gospel of books for all must be preached, ~~where~~ the chance to learn and to read will not be confined to the favored few, but will be universally furnished to all.

Colorado
Lit. Assoc. 11-17-33

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FT. Collins

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Arms & war set us back, but the use of our brains carry us forward
In the past people have been afraid of thinking.

All through the centuries they have been afraid of great minds that ventured out upon new ideas,--

Sophocles, Jesus Christ, Galileo. But we no longer burn men at the stake because they have proclaimed the truth. This scientific age has brought about a desire to know truth and to share truth. As we look into the future pregnant with possibilities, we know that men and women must learn to think and to read and to study if they are going to be prepared for the possibilities that are just ahead. We pick up book after book with prophecies of a new world within our reach if men dare to grasp it. Science and technology have prepared the setting for the most majestic civilization that the world has ever seen. Will men be able to fit themselves into it, will they be equal to forming new political relationships, new economics, new social conditions to match the new inventions and discoveries of the scientific world? The fundamental need is for us to be prepared

for participation in this changed and changing world.

The present difficulty is that changes all over the world are coming so rapidly that the common people haven't had time to keep up with them. They are perplexed and bewildered. Take for instance, the problem of government. Popular government is facing a trial, with many countries turning to dictators, because progress can move no faster than mass intelligence which makes public opinion. Take our international problems; there might be a tidal wave of peace and understanding if it were not for uninformed public opinion, which lets the "unseen assassins" ^{press} preach armies and navies. And as to our social troubles, I would like to quote from Dean Ford of the University of Minnesota who said/ ^{in a recent address} that "our present civilization will accept the newest in science without question but the most timid suggestion of social and political readjustments is rejected. Chicago opens the gates of the Century of Progress by a beam from Arcturus through the magic of a photo-electric cell. At the same time her schools are poverty stricken through municipal mismanagement and corruption. Our President's voice was heard through the radio by a

whole nation a few evenings ago, a marvelous thing that; but he is besieged by hungry office seekers wholly untrained and unfit for the government's business."

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We aren't moving at an even tempo. We are living in the dark ages in the most enlightened scientific period of the world. What about our mounting crime records, our industrial conditions, our sweat shops and child labor? What about our methods of enforcing law, our racial antipathies and injustices, our conscienceless race for wealth? Science is furnishing us with untold conveniences and satisfactions of life. But after all, it is humanity and not science that determines our civilization,-- men, not machines. We have yet to learn the art of living together. The interdependence and social relations of men and not the gifts of science will set the course of the new social order which we with other institutions are trying to direct. It will be directed by men who read and think and ~~know~~ *try to find the right way.*

Yes, the fundamental need of society in this rebuilding process of today is for men and women who read and study and think. This is the objective, as I

think of it, of a great movement, an organized, growing movement which we call Adult Education.

We cannot look at the social needs today and not realize the deep significance of the movement. Out of the social body must come the reconstruction of

society; from the common people must come the leaders of tomorrow.

And this is the point toward which I am heading.

Libraries are a basic agency in this movement. In the process of education and re-education, re-adjustment, and vocational preparation, books, those priceless tools, books, together with those who intelligently collect and administer them, will have a large and important part, whether we serve independently or as the working partner of other agencies. We cannot be librarians, as I conceive of the responsibilities of librarianship, without helping this movement to the limit of our resources and personal influence.

As I have watched the throngs of men and women in our reading rooms, I have thought not so much of the leisure time which they were trying to fill as of the habits of reading and thinking which were fitting

*You are
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them, whether they realized it or not, to adjust themselves to new situations. This opportunity to read and study is beyond price, and this opportunity together with constant personal guidance is what we contribute. It is an absolutely indispensable service which no other agency but libraries can contribute. Books and an understanding librarian who can fit the books to the level of understanding of the individual patron is the finest possible school.

I want to emphasize over and over again the importance of the librarian in this particular task. Most people who want to learn, and this applies equally to most college people as well as to poorly educated ones, do not know what books to choose. We have estimated in our Library that eighty or ninety per cent. of the people who come to us do not know what they want. They need help in looking up information; they need help in choosing something to read just for pleasure; they must have help in planning a reading course. All of us have been doing more or less of this type of work always, but as the greater need has developed, so we must intensify our work along this line.

In our own Library, we now have three readers' advisers where we had one, and they are so busy working out reading courses that they are far behind the requests. Every other special department is co-operating and doing much of this special advisory work. In our hospital service we are watching the needs of patients who are able to study, and every Wednesday just before the truck makes the hospital deliveries I see our eight hospital assistants through the stacks hunting up references and consulting with special departments, so that bedridden people may use their unwelcome leisure to some purpose. In our fifty or so business house libraries, we encourage every group of employees who express any desire to form a study group and as far as possible see that they get the right books. Under the new plan of Federal relief work, we hope to push this work in factories and business houses much farther.

A week or so ago I visited our city workhouse to arrange for a small library and plenty of magazines. There were four hundred or five hundred men locked in their cells at five o'clock who might just as well be having some kind of adult education classes at night instead of the deadly monotony of a long evening in a locked cell. We think we may have

the benefit of some teachers under the Federal Relief Plan for Adult Education. Our University Extension classes have entered the State Prison and recently an art teacher told me that her classes in prison were the most intelligent and interesting of any that she had. Our prison has an excellent library and an intelligent prison librarian under the supervision of a trained librarian of our State Board of Control. There seems to be no end to our opportunities in and out of our libraries, and opportunity makes responsibility.

We all know that the increased demand upon our resources is beyond parallel in the history of libraries. Professor Beard points out that this economic crisis differs from all others in that it has led men and women to serious thinking and so to serious reading. Professor Fosdick suggests that this crisis may mark a revival of learning. We may easily believe that this revival of learning is already on its way. We are not seeking to promote Adult Education without response. There is a new eagerness for knowledge. Our own library has had an influx of 45,000 new borrowers,-- 45,000 people who had never used the Library. How many more there are who use our reading

rooms without being registered we do not know, but the reading rooms are crowded. Mr. Milam, Secretary of the American Library Association, estimates that between four and five million new readers have used libraries during the depression.

But now let us turn to another phase of our library problem and of Adult Education. Mr. Milam also reports that forty millions of people in the United States are without access to libraries. Some of these are in my state; some are in yours. There is not anything which can be said of the value of free libraries to the city dweller that does not apply equally well to citizens in rural districts. Books are just as indispensable; The times are just as hard for the farmer and probably more so. He needs just as much enlightenment on world problems and domestic affairs. He feels the same discouragement and unrest. He has leisure time and fewer opportunities for inexpensive recreation. Whatever libraries can contribute to the enrichment of life in cities, to the education of children and especially adults, and to the use of leisure time, that much and more could they contribute to those in isolated places.

Here is a recent letter from Northern Minnesota and it is typical of many others which come from Dakota and Montana and probably typical of many which you have received: "Would you please tell me whether we may receive discarded books from your library. We live forty miles from the nearest library and so we are unable to secure books. My brother is an invalid just now and would appreciate some." Can any one doubt the pleasure which even worn out copies would bring to thousands of families like this?

Of course it is true that improvement of rural life is one of the major problems before the country; the rural school is one of the weakest spots in the educational world and the rural school library which might be made a community library is one of the most vital of rural life problems. How can a child be equipped for citizenship, for community life, for the use of leisure time, who has not had any books to read or who has not learned to read with understanding? We believe with all the enthusiasm we have that the equalization of opportunity for library service is the largest problem before us, and must be solved. That forty million who have no access to libraries,

whether in city or country, are the very people whom we need to reach in our Adult Education program. It is our responsibility and will remain our responsibility, especially in our own states, until we can know that each little child in a rural school can tuck a good book under his arm as he goes home from school, until we know that in every village and country district the family can gather around the fire with their books as we ourselves love to do.

We are sure that some states are under way, that others are getting under way, and that it can be done if we keep at it long enough and diligently enough. It may mean that we must get new library legislation or that we work what machinery we already have.

The most successful solutions have been made through State Library Commissions. These have developed library consciousness throughout the state. They have stimulated townspeople to establish local libraries and have helped them to organize and to select their books; they have usually had a system of carefully chosen traveling libraries. Little villages can borrow these; farming communities and rural schools can borrow them, study clubs can borrow package libraries on the subject they are studying,

and individuals can borrow for their personal reading. This makes extension classes and study groups possible.

We have had for thirty-three years such a Commission in Minnesota, and I know of nothing more interesting than the daily mail of this office from rural clubs, from P. T. A. groups, from stranded families miles from railroads. You and I can scarcely know what it means to live in that sort of isolation. But if our imagination is good, we can guess what a godsend it would be to us to receive a package of books for the long winters in the wilds of Minnesota or Colorado. We are inclined to believe that the traveling library, selected and administered by trained people, will continue for many years as the most economical and practical method of reaching the small and scattered communities. It is a flexible method, and can adapt itself to any project of University Extension, or Farmers' Institutes, or small study groups.

The Minnesota Library Commission later grew into a Division of the State Department of Education. With us, the combination has been a happy marriage.

It has not changed in any particular the function or activities of the Library group; it has about the same independence that it had before, but it has added to its task the supervision of the school libraries. The Library Division prepares the elementary and high school lists from which schools must buy if they are to have the State Library Aid for schools. It is interesting, I think, that the rules of the Board expressly state that the State Library Aid cannot be used for text-books or supplementary readers, the object being to form libraries for children to enjoy. Our law also provides that School Boards may enter into contract with Public Library Boards to make the school library a branch of the public library, a plan which we have worked out, as extensively as funds would allow, between the Minneapolis Library and the public schools.

But as I did not mean to side-track on the subject of school libraries, we will return to our problem of books for rural people. The most interesting library development of recent years is the County Library movement. This is an effort to do better and more intensive work for rural communities than can be done by the Traveling Library

plan. As its name suggests, it covers the county or several counties, and is supported by them.

It is successful and effective to just the degree that it has money to function with, and its possibilities are very great.

At the risk of overworking the personal pronoun, I would like to outline the work in our County. The County Commissioners have made a contract with the Minneapolis Library, as the administrative agency of the County, and have levied a mill tax to carry the expense of carrying on a county library system. The Minneapolis Library is open to County residents; they may have a card and draw books directly or they may send in requests through the County branch. The best part of our County system is the live and enthusiastic librarian who directs it. She knows every one in the County; every teacher and child waits with anticipation for her visits. It would not be the success that it is if she were not so competent and so friendly.

The system has developed in just the same way that a city system develops. It is a public library with a central collection and a system of branches,

stations, school libraries, and a delivery system. All of the expenses, both for the Central headquarters and each of the branches is paid from the County Library Fund. There are now branch libraries in the 21 villages and consolidated schools, each with a pleasant reading room, a well selected collection of books and an experienced local librarian. Some are open every day and some but two or three days a week. There are 14 stations in crossroads stores, town halls, or even private homes. Besides these there are collections in the 89 rural schools of the County. The book truck containing 500 books on inside shelving visits every point once a month, rain or shine, good roads or muddy, changing the books in the schools, carrying new books to branches and bringing back those no longer needed. On the way about the truck stops at private homes: 285 families have regular monthly service. For fear some one will be missed we have a parcel post service. We believe we are reaching in one way or another every rural group and nearly all rural families. We feel sure that the County is getting just as complete a service outside of Minneapolis as within.

Now these country folk are prepared for adult education. Their taste, when they have access to books, is just as broad and varied as that of city people. They want books on cars and farm machinery and insecticides, but they also are interested in history and government. Numbers of groups of young mothers organized last winter for child study; another organized to study peace questions. Rural P. T. A.'s and rural churches use books for their social programs. The County Agent, County Superintendent of Schools, and our County Library Director keep closely in touch with each other for all County activities. One librarian reports that many people in her neighborhood have followed up the reading courses in the Reading with a Purpose Series. This last spring the County Librarian had a talk with the senior classes in the County high schools, and as a result, reading courses were worked out for a number of young people and the necessary books for these courses placed in their community branch.

On the whole, Minnesota has been fairly well prepared to take on the Federal Relief Work plan for Adult Education. It is already under way in

Minneapolis and is pushing farther and farther out into the rural sections. One of the best planned projects is in the County including the Iron Range section. And so I come back to re-iterate that we have a responsibility to our state in relation to the opportunities which it offers to all, not a part, of its citizens. In this crisis when the Federal Government is seeing the necessity of educating its adult citizens and is taking steps through the state organizations to encourage such education, surely every state should welcome the chance to organize for such service.

Perhaps we ourselves need a new vision as we face into larger and far reaching movements. I believe that it will take something more than brains or books to reconstruct our social relations. They must be rebuilt on the recognition of our personal interdependence. Civilization cannot be built on selfishness and greed. The one increasing purpose that runs through all efforts to build a new civilization is goodwill among men, a co-ordination of individual interests for the good of the whole.

James Truslow Adams, in his Epic of America, says that our contribution "lies not in the field of science or religion or literature or art, but in the creation of what he calls the American dream-- a vision of a society in which the lot of the common man will be made easier and his life enriched and ennobled." The objective of our work is to bring to men through the agency of books a stimulus to their mental and spiritual energies and to enrich the content of their lives.

We have just now an unparalleled opportunity to inspire men and women. People need a new vision of life. These times have found them sadly enough without inner resources. They have counted their happiness by the abundance of things which they possessed and now they are indeed impoverished. It is one of our great privileges to help them to find some of the essential meanings of life and to put them into contact with the finer things that will strengthen their moral fibre.

You can afford to spend and be spent for what Mr. Adams calls "the American dream."

I notice that my subject reads "Retrospect and

Prospects." I haven't indulged in much retrospect. I am more interested as I believe you are in prospects. Dr. Coffman of the University of Minnesota in his report to the Regents last fall said that every depression has been followed by a great educational awakening, and he proved it by illustrations. As this depression has been greater than any other, can we not hope for a greater awakening than ever? We stand, as I believe, facing a new dawn. Each of us will do without disheartenment all that we can to prepare men for it. Who else could do our work if we didn't? The only reason for looking backward is to help us to look forward more intelligently. We plan today with the far look ahead. It is the spirit of our profession.

It is always dangerous to ask an enthusiast to speak on a favorite topic. The judgment of an enthusiast may be warped. But on the other hand, proper appreciation can only come from an enthusiast - Mr. Librarian spent a good deal of time talking about methods and books and buildings and publicity, instead of the great object for which we exist. We sometimes ~~think~~ listen to fumblees and think our task is a difficult one, It may be a difficult one, but in spite of fumblees who do not make up 1% of our patrons, it is not a thankless one. We have only to look at the quiet contented readers at our reading tables to realize that it is one of the happiest jobs in the world.

One of the very happiest, because reading is one of the happiest occupations in the world and it is our professional duty to create a love for it as an appreciation of books.

Before I go about my own particular
topic, I want to say a little more about
our particular profession and the wonderful
tools which we use. Sometimes I am
sure we don't see the woods for the
trees - and we forget the great human
service our librarians may be doing and are
doing in the details of doing it. I
often have to remind myself of the
glorious possibilities of a profession
which brings light and inspiration and
knowledge and joy and cheer and health
and God into human lives through
books.

If you should go into St Paul's
Cathedral in London, you would
go up to the whispering gallery - that
famous gallery where you may whisper
at one spot and be heard clear
across that great gallery at another
spot. I think that the word of
books is much like this whispering
gallery. voices from far away or

long ago can be heard at our
fireplaces. Some one speaks his
thoughts and his life experience quietly
through the silent pages of a book
and his voice carries through this
whispering gallery of a world to any
listener who is waiting for his
message. And it is our blessed
privilege to bring the message
to the possible listener. These
book voices that can ring or amuse
or teach or inspire - we book lovers
have listeners to them. We know
how we settle down and yield our
whole selves up to a book and
become unconscious to everything but
the subtle influence of ~~the book~~ it.
We know how a book may influence us
more than any person because we
let it be more intimately close to us.
And to say things which we would not
listen to from any person.

Hugh Walpole after describing his
own library as the most delightful

①
Much of Conservation ^{of natural resources}. The Public
Health Services are prolonging life
and protecting health. Of late
years we are taking preventive
measures against the appalling amount
of illiteracy. In spite of the 5 million
illiterates in spite of the figures
issued by the American Library Assn
that 50 million people or 46%
of our population are still without
library service, we who are in
the action field believe that by the
whole hearted friendly co-operation
of all the educational forces, we
shall make great inroads on these
appalling figures.

The improvement of rural life
is one of the problems before our
Country. It is of paramount importance
in that Agriculture State. In the
educational world the rural school
is the weakest spot. A dozen books
have been written on the remedies

⑧
One authority states that eleven
million children or nearly half of
the public school enrollment are
still going to school in one and two
room buildings, handicapped with
poor teachers, poor buildings, no
books and a pathetically short period
to get what training they can.
We will agree that good teachers are
the first need, but next to that has
always been the library problem.
In fact it is one of the most vital
of rural life problems both for the
school and the community. We
know that there are no better building
blocks than books, to be fitted as
carefully to each separate need
as the builder fits his stones.

How can a child be equipped
for citizenship, for community life,
for the use of his leisure time
who has not had any books, or learned
to read with understanding. The love

and ⁹habit of reading is the chief
thing a school can give a child
and it cannot give the habit
without some kind of a school library.
Generation after generation in
some localities has been growing up
without learning to use books because
they have none. But to us librarians
who know that books are a first necessity,
it seems but a matter of justice that
these country children should participate
in all of the opportunities of the city child
to become intelligent citizens. — There is
something very dear to the American
heart — and that is equality of opportunity.
These sturdy wholesome American
children whether in town or country
are natural hero worshippers, they
need the fine stories of heroes, they
need the beauty of poetry and the
call of nature. These country children
sometimes lead drab colorless lives.
but no child is common. David Phillips

the green & sculptor carve from
 perfectly ~~even~~ shapeless colorless
 marble the beautiful human figure
 that is still today our model of
 Perfection.

A good many methods of solving the
 rural school library problem have
 been tried. New York established
 the old district libraries 50 years
 ago with great enthusiasm, but
 they failed completely, because to
 quote Mr Dewey, there was no
 supervision and the books were
 soon scattered.

Our present state aid libraries are
 also failing because there is no supervision
 in the selection and care of the books
 and no exchange when the children
 have read them through.

It is the County library system which
 is solving the problem. Because
 the County is a small unit, and
 because a County library system gives the
 close supervision, the trained
 experience and the well known

(11)
Zealousness of the modern librarian

At the beginning of this year all
but 8 states (outside of New England)
had enacted laws permitting the
establishment of county libraries.
And many County systems have been in
active operation for some years. It
seems to provide the solution for
rural districts.

I think I can commend to North
Dakota, the law which we are
working under in Minnesota, which
permits a tax levy up to a maximum
of one mill.

As I must like to tell you how
my own County began its work.
And here again you will have to
bear with an enthusiast, for all
of my professional life I have been
eager to get back to the people
who are living in more or less
isolation, traveling libraries,
village libraries, state aid for school
libraries have been a vital

(17)
Part of my interest - and I am
convinced that the movement for
County Library System is the best
method we have tried to carry books
to people who are not in reach of a
Public Library.

Hennepin County Library has 103
Schools, those in villages are served
by the County Branch Library of that
village. Some are in consolidated
Schools and have a well equipped
County Library Branch and 82 are
in one or two room ungraded
Schools. In every one of these
ungraded Schools are collections
of well chosen and well kept
books in orderly bookcases. Each of
these Schools is visited once a month
to make exchanges. The work
of the Hennepin County Library
System differs in no essential

(13) Respect from the work of any city-
library for the public schools. The
purpose of each is alike and the
methods very similar.

And this is how it began with
Hempden County.

Next -

There is no reason ~~more~~ why the
school library in each better school
district should not be also the
Community-Library. There could
rarely be a more convenient
place for the village library than
the village school. The children
~~more~~ are the best purveyors
for the families who would not
otherwise use the books. It is
amazing to us who librarians and
who value books so sincerely to find
that in many homes of well-to-do
people in the country there are no

(14)
books and very few magazines.
Now the school life and the home
life of children should not be
separated. The trained County
librarian going from school to school
and from family to family with the
book truck (for our book truck drives
right up to the back door of our
farmers homes) comes to understand
the home life as well as the
school life of them children. She
knows the mother so well as
the teacher and is able to administer
to the child needs much better
from knowing his home back-
ground. She can keep through
the ministry of books and her
own sympathetic attitude to
introduce magazines and personally
owned books to the farm center
library. She can connect books
with daily living and make

15
The child realize that books
are not simply a part of
school life and the preparation
of lessons, but companions at home.

Oh, it is worth our while to build
up the environment of these children
who have more in the back of their
heads than in dreams.

Listening to a commonplace
100% pure boy, reviewing Scottish
Chip, he said that the finest
thing in the book was when
Lady Marion laid down her life
for her husband's honor. Of course
he added, a wife should be willing
to sacrifice for her husband, but
just the same, I think it was the
finest thing one could think of, except
a mother saving her child. And
that boy doesn't look like an idealist,
but all children are, and their

(16)
dreams can be quickened through
books better than any other way.
And so our County book truck visits
them summer and winter, at home
and at school bringing them the
world's best thoughts, stories of heroes
of chivalry, of adventure, of accomplishments.
We all need such a stimulus.
And the County Library, with its system
of constant exchange, its
frequent visits, its central supervision
gives the book opportunity to all
who dwell away from book centers.
Our great men have largely come
from farms & villages. I believe they
always will. Who knows when the
artist & poet and scientific worker
now are - probably in some of
them too! I hope Dakota may plan some
way to find them -

The library of today is a great social force. Never have libraries been so much used by the common man seeking information or by the unemployed man seeking both information and entertainment and escape. Increased service at every point is the experience of all librarians. The demand is without parallel in the history of libraries, amounting in some cities to a 50% increase.

Professor Beard has pointed out that this economic crisis differs from others in that it has led men and women to serious thinking. And this leads to serious reading.

Mr. Fosdick suggests that this crisis may mark a revival of learning. If the kind of reading which is going on in libraries today is an indication, then the revival of learning is already on its way.

Not only do scholars like Mr. Fosdick and Professor Beard stress this new eagerness for knowledge as indicated in the demand upon libraries, but our big metropolitan dailies have been expressing a new interest in what is going on in libraries. The Los Angeles Times recently remarked, "It would appear from the increased and practical use of libraries in these difficult times that the public library may no longer be deemed a luxury, but a public utility."

From the Richmond Times-Dispatch we quote, "Few of us realize how important the public libraries have become. It is one of the great boons to modern civilization that books have been made available to the masses of the people."

(I might comment - masses of urban people.)

Librarians who are on the firing line, hearing tragic tales and attempting to find the right book to fit the particular personal need, know that sociologists are right when they say that reading keeps many people sane. Mr. Frank J. Bruno, Professor of Sociology at Washington University, St. Louis, writes, "I have been very much interested in recent reports as to the phenomenal increase in the use of libraries due to unemployment. This is a fact of significant social import. The rapid increase in suicides is startling, but the reason that there are not more actual riots at present may well be due to such influences as public libraries in maintaining the morale of the unemployed."

increased Public men and statesmen are also commenting on the value of the library. Stuart Chase recently declared that no group of workers in the whole community life of America is more strategically located or can do more valiant service in promoting constructive leisure than librarians.

Mr. Newton Baker has expressed himself most emphatically as follows: "In times like these the services of a public library are simply indispensable if we are not to start a relentless march backward toward barbarism. Not only is the library a place of comfort and relaxation to weary and depressed people but it is the mine of knowledge necessary for the use of the citizen who is going to take an intelligent part in the discussion and determination of public affairs. If the libraries of the country were closed tomorrow the average intelligence of the citizens would recede to a point which I cannot predict."

These and thousands of other statements about the value of reading and the benefit of free books indicate the growing place of free libraries in the educational scheme of today. But not anything which can be said of their value to the city dweller but would apply equally well to the citizens in rural districts. *Books are just as indispensable* The times are just as difficult for the farmer and probably more so. He needs just as much enlightenment on world problems and domestic affairs. He feels the same discouragement and unrest. He has leisure time and fewer opportunities for inexpensive recreation; and after all, the problem for both city and country may boil down to the fruitful use

of leisure. If Mr. Baker is correct in saying that "if the libraries of the country were closed tomorrow the average intelligence of the citizen would recede" what would he say of the general situation in ^{these} rural districts where there have never been opportunities for reading? Whatever libraries can contribute to the enrichment of life in cities, to the education of children and especially adults, and to the use of leisure time, that much and more ^{they} should ~~it~~ contribute to those in isolated places.

Let me quote a letter typical of many which the city librarian receives. This one comes from Northern Minnesota and many others come from Dakota and Montana: "Would you please tell me whether we may receive discarded books from the library. We live forty miles from the nearest library and so we are unable to secure books. My brother is an invalid just now and would appreciate some." Can any one doubt the pleasure which even worn out copies would bring to thousands of families like this.

At present the weakest spot in American library growth is this undeveloped field in the rural districts. We are not blind to it. We believe with all the enthusiasm we have that the equalization of opportunity for library service is the largest problem before us, and must be solved.

It is not a new problem of today but ^{the problem} it has been much intensified by the Adult Education movement.

~~Indeed, it would be difficult for any educational project to succeed without access to books.~~ ^{It is not wholly unsolved.} The most ^{Indices} successful solution of the problem has been made through the State Library Commissions existing in most states of the Union. The State Library Commission has developed a library consciousness over as wide ~~an~~ area ~~as possible~~. It has stimulated townspeople to establish local libraries and helped them to organize and select their books, and inspired them to the greatest usefulness possible. Probably many of Mr. Carnegie's little library buildings would be dead losses, if these State agencies had not been in existence to turn the loss to gain. But their great contribution to the rural districts was and is the Travelling Library. ^A Little villages too small to support a local library can borrow a travelling library. Farming communities can borrow them, and so can rural schools. Study clubs can borrow package libraries on the subject they are studying, and individuals can borrow for their personal reading. This makes extension classes and study groups possible. New groups are constantly added.

Here are some recent requests to our Minnesota Library Division which illustrate concretely the various

groups which write for books:

"Dear Sirs: I represent the ____ P. T. A., a country school P. T. A. We wish to know if we could get a travelling library and what it would cost us."

Another from a school teacher:

"I am teaching in a rural school where there is almost no library. Will you please tell me what I can get from you."

Here is one from a club:

"We are a rural club of 22 members and our families and we are interested in getting one of your travelling libraries."

This particular method of getting books to small groups is about the only way one could provide them. Books are carefully selected by expert librarians and can be used over and over again in different communities. Here is a letter to pull books right off their shelves. It came in October from a far northern point:

"I understand we could get discarded books from you quite reasonably. North of here is a rich country 60 or more miles across. There are a few families scattered thru there who have no chance at school or reading matter. One family 35 miles from

the railroad has three girls starving for reading matter and all the school they get is from their mother. Could you make it possible for these girls to get books?"

You and I can scarcely know what it means to live in that sort of isolation, but we can imagine the new world that came to that family in that box of books.

And so we might quote from the correspondence of this winter to illustrate what this method of library extension is doing for rural schools, for adult education, and for the joy and recreation of country residents. Reaching far out beyond any place that extension work is likely to go, serving many groups who are not prepared for any formal courses, these carefully selected groups of books travel about the state to any one who applies for them.

We are inclined to believe that the travelling library system conducted by expert and sympathetic librarians will continue for many years to be the most economical and practical method of reaching rural schools and communities, especially here in the Northwest. It is a flexible method and can adapt itself to any project carried on by the University Extension or the Agricultural Department or Farmers' Institutes or Federated Clubs.

We come now to the most interesting library development of recent years, the County Library movement. It is an effort to do better and more intensive work in rural communities than can be done by the Travelling library. As its name suggests, it covers the county as its field and is supported by the county. It is successful to just the degree that it has money to function with, but its possibilities are very great. We can define it best perhaps by saying that it is a public library for a county. It works like a city library with a central collection and its system of branches, stations, school libraries, and delivery system. If it is adequately supported, it gives just as good service to this large unit as a city library does to the city.

The laws allowing the establishment of county libraries vary somewhat in the different states, but the plan is functioning to some extent in 35 states. It is most fully developed in California where a large number of counties have fully developed independent systems. In such cities as Portland, Oregon, and Cincinnati, Ohio, the city library is supported by both city and county taxes and becomes thereby a county library, serving both urban and rural groups.

In this State, which is similar to numbers of other states, the law allows county libraries to be established in one of two different ways. The County Board can levy a tax and establish an independent county library system, or the Board can make a contract with a strong town or city library as the administrative agency and levy a tax to carry the expense of distributing book service through the county.

In Hennepin County, the Commissioners have made a contract with the Minneapolis Library and have levied a mill tax to support a county system. The Minneapolis Library opens its resources to county residents. They may have a Library card and draw books directly or they may send in requests through a county branch.

The system has been developed in just the same way that our city system has been developed. There is now a branch library in every one of 21 villages or consolidated schools. Each of these occupies a pleasant reading room, has a well selected collection of books, and is directed by an experienced local librarian. Some of these branches are open every day, some of them but two or three days a week. There are also 14 stations in cross-road stores, town halls, or even in private homes. Besides these, we have placed collections in everyone of the 89 rural school

buildings. So we carry on a system of branches, stations, and school libraries. Then, too, we have a delivery system. The book truck, containing 500 books on inside shelving, visits every point at least once a month, rain or shine, changing the books in the school building, carrying out new books to the branches, bringing in those no longer wanted or those that need binding. On the way, about to the 124 distribution points, the truck stops at private houses to serve rural families too far from a regular branch; 285 families have regular service. We believe we are reaching, in one way or another, every rural group and nearly all rural families in this county and perhaps the fringes of the bordering counties. A large central collection has been built up; teachers come in regularly every Saturday to choose additional books for special projects, from the central collection.

For fear some one will be missed or some one will fail to get a book on time for some entertainment or speech, we have a parcel post service. Any one may telephone in from his home or from a school or branch, and the book wanted will be mailed. We are sure that the people of this county are getting just as complete a service outside of Minneapolis as within. More and more people are reading and studying. The circulation

has grown from 92,000 in 1922 to 511,000 in 1932, and the end is not yet.

Now the country folk in this county are prepared for adult education. Their tastes in reading are just as broad and just as varied as city people's, when they have access to books. It is most interesting to see these tastes express themselves, as gradually they learn the resources which the library furnishes. They can borrow books ^{on how} to repair their cars and farm machinery or build their barns. They get books on insecticides and spraying, on soils, on raising goats and rabbits. But at the same time these farmers more than the villagers are interested in history, and government. Numbers of groups of young mothers meet to study child psychology and care of children. One group has organized to study peace questions; in another village is a local garden club. Rural P. T. A.'s and rural churches use the books for their social programs. One librarian reports that many people in her neighborhood have followed up the reading courses in the Reading with a Purpose series.

Before the depression dropped like a wet blanket upon us, the county library plan was rapidly growing through the country. In the South, eleven counties were being

used as demonstration centers. In Iowa one county was used as a demonstration experiment for one year. We wish you could listen, as we did, to the report of one mother who was in charge of a neighborhood station. She recounted the effect it had on different families, the pleasure to men, women, and children. It was a transformation of interests. They hoped it was a permanent addition to their lives, but the County Commissioners would not take over its support and so this wonderful response to books gave way to a quite heart-breaking disappointment. Nothing that I have ever heard so convinced me of the enrichment which books can give to life, especially to a poor and struggling rural community, as the tale of this librarian of a withdrawn county library.

We can only regret that more county libraries were not established before this crisis. It will be difficult for some time to induce county officials to tax themselves for library purposes,- a subject which they cannot understand and with which they often have no sympathy.

But it seems to me that libraries are the first thing to be considered by this group. Before rural schools can function there must be books; preceding all efforts with study groups or extension classes, there must be books. Books are essential and the wider their distribution

the more rapid will be self-education and the response to efforts at adult education. Not to such people as you, do we need to prove the vitality, the power, the gospel of books.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM OF THE
ADULT EDUCATION CONVENTIONS
Minneapolis, Minnesota
February 27 - March 2, 1933

FIRST SESSION

PLACE: Citizens Aid Building, Lecture Room
ADULT EDUCATION, CIVIL SERVICE AND GOVERNMENT
Dr. L. J. O'Rourke, Director, Personnel Research, U. S. Civil
Service Commission, Washington, D.C.
UNEMPLOYMENT AND MORALE
James Edward Rogers, Director, National Recreation Association, New York City
Discussion led by A. W. Castle, Director, Extension, Harrisburg, Pa.

Monday
February 27
2:00 p.m.

Dinner Meeting

PLACE: Moorish Room, West Hotel
Greetings: Mary L. Guyton, President, Department of Adult
Education, National Education Association
Carroll R. Reed, Superintendent of Schools, Minneapolis
Dr. Joseph Rosier, President, National Education Association
Ray Fife, President, American Vocational Association
H. B. Gough, President, Minnesota Council for Adult Education
ADDRESS: THE ORGANIZED UNEMPLOYED, INCORPORATED
Dr. George Mecklenburg
Entertainment: Russian Choir, a Capella; Russian dancers; balalaika orchestra

Monday
February 27
5:30 p.m.

SECOND SESSION
Symposium

PLACE: Church of the Redeemer
ENRICHMENT OF AMERICAN RURAL LIFE
Superintendent Carroll R. Reed, Minneapolis
Superintendent Arthur Lampe, St. Louis County, Duluth
Professor W. H. Stacey, Iowa Extension Service, Iowa University
Director Richard H. Price, Extension Department, University of Minnesota
Mrs. Hugh Bradford, President, National Congress of Parent-Teacher Associations
Gratia Countrymen, Librarian, Minneapolis
J. E. Rogers, National Recreation Association, New York City
Oscar M. Sullivan, president, National Rehabilitation Association

Tuesday
February 28
2:00 p.m.

Visitation

A program of visitation of Minneapolis evening school classes for
adults is being planned by Katherine M. Kohler, Extension Director,
Minneapolis.

Tuesday
February 28
7:30 p.m.

THIRD SESSION

PLACE: Citizens Aid Building, Lecture Room
Discussion based on observation of Minneapolis evening classes
Led by Walter A. Anderson, Assistant in Curriculum
Construction, Minneapolis
AN EXPERIMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION TRAINING FOR THE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE
NEW YORK CITY CONTINUATION SCHOOLS
Caroline Whipple, Supervisor of Adult Education, Albany, New York

Wednesday
March 1
2:00 p.m.

FOURTH SESSION

PLACE: Citizens Aid Building, Lecture Room
ADULT EDUCATION UNDER PUBLIC AUSPICES
Lewis A. Alderman, Specialist in Adult Education, United
States Bureau of Education, Washington, D.C.
Discussion led by Marguerite Burnett, Adult Education Director,
Wilmington, Delaware

Thursday
March 2
2:00 p.m.

(Important business to be discussed and suggestions offered for the annual meeting
at Chicago, July, 1933.)

CONFERENCE: State & County Supervisors of Rural Schools.
of the Midwestern States.

Better Supervision of Rural Schools:
Contributions of County Libraries.

Des Moines

June 14, 1929

America has been wasteful of all of her resources: both natural resources and human life and health, and we may add, of human brains and abilities. We are talking much of conservation of natural resources. Public Health Services are prolonging life and protecting health. And of late years, we are taking preventive measures against the appalling amount of illiteracy. Both schools and libraries are thoroughly awake to the need of better school opportunities in the hitherto neglected spots, and of free access to good books.

School authorities are studying methods of teaching, school equipment and buildings, text-books and teacher training. Library authorities have made constant and intensive study of children's literature, the fitness of individual titles to individual children, to the methods of stimulating interest in reading, and to the best way of conducting libraries for the benefit of the readers.

In spite of the five million illiterates, in spite of the figures issued by the American Library Association that fifty million people, or 46% of our population, are still without library service, and that more

than 50% of those within reach of libraries do not use them, we who are in the active field believe that by our co-operation, our whole-hearted, friendly, co-operation, we shall make great inroads on these discouraging figures.

The improvement of rural life is one of the major problems before our country. In the educational world, the rural school is the weakest spot. One authority states that eleven million children, or nearly half of the public school enrollment, are still going to school in one and two room buildings, handicapped with poor teachers, poor buildings, no books, and a pathetically short period to get what training they can. I believe I will have your support in the statement that next to supplying trained teachers, the greatest problem in the rural school is the library problem. In fact it is one of the most vital of rural life problems. How can a child be equipped for citizenship, for community life, for the use of leisure time, who has not had any books, or learned to read with any understanding? The love and habit of reading is the chief thing a school can give a child, and it cannot give the habit without some kind of a school library. Generation after generation in some localities has been growing up without learning

to use books because they had none, and it is this stone wall, "What was good enough for me is good enough for my children," together with the ingrained habit of penuriousness that opposes the district school library. But to us, teachers and librarians, the school library in every district school is a first necessity; the right of these country children to participate in all of the opportunities to become intelligent citizens, is a matter of justice. We cannot expect the best of teachers to be able to prepare class work or to stimulate the mental life of her pupils without books. We all grant that.

The problem which has long been recognized has been how to get the books and how to supervise and care for them. Local school trustees have been and still are very loth to provide money for books, even with the encouragement of outside aid. In sixteen states financial aid has been offered in varying amounts, and in twelve states statutory provision is made for county grants to rural schools. These funds are conditioned upon certain funds being appropriated locally, and upon the selection of books from approved lists. So far as it has gone, a certain amount has been accomplished, but

experience has taught us that in the states where most aid has been given, school libraries have not developed any very useful proportions. The books have not been selected with much regard to the children's needs and they have not been taken care of. The old district school libraries, established with such enthusiasm in New York fifty or so years ago failed completely because, to quote Mr. Dewey, they were too widely dissipated and because there was no supervision. The present state aid libraries are failing too because there is no supervision to select or take care of them, or to exchange them often enough to hold the children's interest. A library is not a collection of books; it is a collection of books selected for definite reasons and administered by some one who knows what is inside of them and what service each one can do for the age and needs of each child. And that is the job of a trained person who appreciates the part that books must play in education.

The problem of the rural school library is not settled when the state or county provides a small annual grant and the trustees or parents provide another small sum; it is not settled when a little bookcase with a few books, even well selected ones, is set up in the school room. When Mr. Carnegie gave a sum of money

for a library building, he required a continuous minimum amount for maintenance and care. So the regularity and continuous support of the school library with adequate supervision must be secured. It is quite apparent to all of us who visit these little schools that a great deal of money has been wasted in the experiment which was so well-intentioned. To quote from Miss Edith Lathrop in the "Normal Instructor" of December, 1928, "Efficient library service for rural schools will never become universal until such service is compulsory, tax-supported, and adequately supervised."

After a somewhat circuitous route, I have arrived at this problem of supervision of the rural school library, and perhaps I may part company with some of you, not on the principle involved, but on the method. Will you not consider with me the fitness of the county library system to furnish the supervision, the trained experience, and well-known zealousness of the modern librarian, to co-operate with you in the development of the rural school library. It is a rapidly growing movement. At the beginning of this year all but eight states (outside of New England) had enacted laws

permitting the establishment of county libraries, and bills are pending in some of these. In the states that have laws, there are many active county campaigns going on and many county systems have been in full operation with good tax appropriations for some years. Last year appropriations were made in 12 counties in 11 different states. *Begin* *# "The County Library"* It seems to provide the solution of the library problem for rural districts. Just as a large city library provides a system of branches and stations and school collections, so a county system establishes village libraries, rural school libraries, and service to individual homes, and furnishes trained supervision by a trained librarian. Mr. Selke, in his book, recognizes the county as the unit of supervision, saying that the administration of the school libraries is an important part of the County Superintendent's office, who shall charge collections of books to each teacher, who shall return them to the main office at the end of the school year. Perhaps Mr. Selke had not experienced the working of a fully developed county library system, but he describes the essential features of supervision and the care and selection of books by an authorized official at a central office.

The County Library system does this very thing, and in addition serves the community needs and the scattered homes throughout the district.) The money that supports the district schools and the county system of libraries comes from the same pocket. It is in a strategic position to convert the parents to the need of books in the school room. It serves the children all summer long when the schools are closed, through the home service.

100
(With a good county library system, it would be a duplication of effort and an economic waste to provide another system of school library supervision with a separate school library collection of books.)

There is no reason why the school library in each little district school should not be also the community library; (there could rarely be a more convenient place for the village library than the village school.) The children, (moreover,) are the best purveyors for the families who would not otherwise use the books. Moreover, the school life of children cannot and should not be separated from the home life. The county librarian going from school to school and from family to family, comes to understand the home life as well as the school life and is able to administer

to the child book needs much better from knowing his home background. She can help through the ministry of books and her own sympathetic attitude to introduce magazines and personally owned books to the farm center table. She can connect books with daily living and make the child realize that books are not simply a part of school work and the 300 preparation of lessons, but companions at home. Just before school closed this spring, I took a trip with our County Director around the school libraries to talk with the teachers. ~~an~~At every place teachers and children came out with armloads of books to exchange for other armloads. Teachers said again and again that their teaching had become ^{very} ~~so~~ much more interesting and valuable and that their curriculum had been much enriched.

In our County, there are 103 schools. Those in villages are served by the County branch in that village. Some are in consolidated schools and have a well equipped county library branch, and 82 are in one ⁴⁰⁰ or two room ungraded schools. In every one of these ungraded schools are collections of well chosen and well-kept books in orderly bookcases. Each of these

schools is visited once a month, at least seven or eight times a year, (except a few which are on bad roads in out-of-the-way districts which cannot be visited in bad weather.) When the County book truck starts out twice each week, it is loaded with boxes going to the County branches in the villages, to the County deposit stations in ⁵⁰⁰ 14 crossroads stores, and carries in addition about 500 selected books for the schools and for the homes along the way. Altogether, the book truck visits each month twenty branches, 14 deposit stations, 80 schools, and 265 separate families. At each school the Director talks over the selection of books, recommending what seems to be the best for that particular school. If the teacher needs special material a note is made and the books are sent the next day by parcel post. Saturdays are the busy days in the Central County Library, for many teachers come in to choose what they want from the general County collection.

Besides the books which are loaned from the County collection, each school may have its own permanent collection from the State Aid funds. (Our County Superintendent tells us that the great difficulty has been that the rural school boards are always short of

money, and being mainly farmers who have few or no books in their own homes, they see no reason for adding a book fund to the school expenses. However, since the working out of the County Library system quite a number of boards have changed their minds and are appropriating the amount necessary to get the State Aid fund.) In the case of the district schools, this money has been used chiefly to buy reference tools and supplementary material for school room use. At the present time there is an average of 100 - 500 county books in each of the district schools, coming and going according to seasonal needs, in addition to the remnants of their old libraries and the permanent collection which is gradually being built up. It is all ⁷⁰⁰ very flexible; the County Library Director working as closely with the teachers as a School Superintendent would do. (Just this week, our County Superintendent, who has guarded rather jealously the State Aid fund, said to us that she was going to advise all the school boards to turn over their State Aid funds to the County fund so that all of the books would go through the County Library office, so perfectly sold has she become to the County Library supervision. She told us that her only grievance was that the book truck could not

visit the 80 or 90 schools oftener than once a month, and could not stay long enough for the Director to give the teachers and children longer talks on book appreciation. We hope that sometime we may be able to do more along the line of story telling and book appreciation.

But so far, we have been considering the rural school.) There are also village high schools and consolidated country high schools. In each of these, with two exceptions, we have built up a combination school and community library-- usually housed in the school building. Through a contract arrangement, the school board turns over the State Aid fund and its own corresponding fund to the county library fund. The teachers make out lists of books which they want to have in the school library and, (whether all of these books are on the State list or not,) they are purchased for the County school library. In addition they borrow from the County collection or the Minneapolis Library whatever they need for special times or occasions. We have yet to hear from any of the principals that they did not have much more to gain than to lose through the County administration of their high school libraries.

The school librarians are paid jointly by the school board and County Library because they serve both school and community. As county librarians they attend the County Library institutes and get the enthusiasm and broader viewpoints of the public librarians. They are helped by the County Director to work out details and to catalog their material.

⁹⁰⁰ If the librarian has not had the opportunity of training, (which sometimes happens,) she is brought in to the Minneapolis Library and given such training as will help her particular work.

It is ^{usually an advantage} (always a fortunate thing) when the County system is connected with a big city library as it is in many counties. In ^{Hennepin County} (Minneapolis,) the County Commissioners levy a one mill tax, as a County library fund. This fund, through a contract with the Minneapolis Library Board is placed under the administration of the City Librarian. The Minneapolis Library loans books to all residents of the County. It furnishes space for the County office and book collection. The County teachers who come in and out of the building every Saturday may borrow from the city ^{from} collection as well as the County collection. A County

teacher may borrow lantern slides, photographs, maps, stereographs, and what not. She may borrow ¹⁰⁰⁰ plays and arrange the scheme of costuming in the Art Room; she may borrow music for a school entertainment. The County Director constantly re-enforces her collection by temporary loans from the city collection. It can hardly be conceived that in any other way could these rural schools in Hennepin County have the variety and wealth of material which they are now getting. All because there is a County Library administration of all the library work in the County working ^{and} with a fine spirit of co-operation with the school people.

(There are yet many things to be worked out: funds are not sufficient; there are not enough books; there are not enough trained librarians; there are not enough people at the headquarters, but all in all, the country schools are surely getting more books and better personal assistance and more trained service through this County plan which serves the whole County, than they could get /through any other form of administration.)

10-16-1929.

*Given in
the morning
before the
celebration*

Lights' Golden Jubilee will be celebrated next Monday. On that day, Mr. Edison will be the recipient of nation wide tribute for his invention of the incandescent lamp.

Out along the main travelled roads run the live wires carrying light to country homes and in many houses along the way the incandescent light and other electric equipment bring comforts to the thrifty farmer who has profited by this invention of the Great Wizard.

But back from the highways, along the cross-roads and more remote farms, the farmer is still burning a kerosene or possibly a gasoline lamp.

P As we look at the splendid consolidated schools in well-to-do country districts, and watch the school buses, loading up the children to deliver them back to their homes, we almost feel that Lights' Jubilee might be celebrated in the fine country schools where the incandescent lamp of knowledge is lighting the path of these country children.

But let us tramp on further, and find, in any county, even near the largest cities, how

many poor one-room ungraded schools we will find. One authority states that eleven million children or nearly half of the public school enrollment is still going to school in one and two room buildings handicapped with poor teachers, poor buildings, no books, and a pathetically short period to get what training they can. *and it is in the South or in poor locations, I can find these conditions within 20 miles of Minneapolis.*

In many places, and in many particulars, rural life has been made much more attractive than formerly. Good roads and automobiles help out the social life. The boys and girls can get into town for movies and dances and young company. Farmers clubs and Boys and Girls clubs have awakened healthy competition. The radio and rural mails connect with the political world and outside events. Even the World Series may be followed in the country store where the men, at least, eagerly listen in *to the radio* excited groups. So that I've felt almost like a rude and discourteous person when I had to draw away a country clerk from the radio to sell me a loaf of bread.

Yes, it is not lonely in some places. But drive out further and see the families where no

newspapers or magazines are ever received in the rural mail, where the children have little background, short schooling, and lots of hard work with little leisure.

Sometimes, and under some conditions, country life seems the most attractive life in the world, but in many instances, it is the most desolate. The improvement of rural life, the solving of rural problems and the bettering of rural homes is one of the major problems of the Country.

In the educational world, the rural school is the weakest spot. And the greatest problem in the rural school is the rural library. Indeed, the library problem is one of the most vital of rural life problems. How can a child be equipped for citizenship, for community life, for the ^{best} use of leisure time, how can he see out beyond his own limited horizon, how can he get spiritual vision if he has not had any books, nor any person about him who loves books. How can he continue to grow, if his school has not planted in him a love of reading. Then the father and the mother, ^{two} are they going to vegetate with their

gardens, and live dumb lives with their dumb beasts, without any of the outlook and outreach that comes to a man through books.

Maybe, I'm exaggerating this blessed thing - a book. *but you librarians will not think so, these are the questions we are pondering over,*

Last week I was in North Dakota in a rural Teachers Institute. I was greatly interested in *this meeting and in the type of teachers there* them, and in the splendid speakers they had.

One talked most enthusiastically about the necessity of health measures in the school. Another gave a most helpful talk on supervised play.

I was stirred to enthusiasm on both subjects, *and felt how important they were in the County School Curriculum* but when I found that most of those rural *to supplement them & other subjects, or to give mental & moral health* schools had no books, that the district school boards felt no particular call to furnish books, my enthusiasm for books I trust matched the enthusiasm of the other speakers.

The rural library & especially the rural ^{some library is} _{carrying a copy} Before I speak definitely on my particular *of rural library in Minnesota* topic, I want to say something about our particular

profession and the marvellous tools which we use - these winged messengers of life - the great books of the world which we handle every

day. We have one of the happiest jobs in the world, because reading is one of the happiest occupations in the world, and it is our professional duty to create a love for it. Sometimes I am sure we don't see the woods for the trees - and we forget the great human service we are doing, in the details of doing it. I often have to remind myself of the glorious possibilities of a profession which brings light and inspiration and knowledge and joy and cheer and health and God into human lives through books.

I want to take a letter about our tools, before we
If you should go into St. Paul's Cathedral *apply them.*
in London, you would go up to the whispering gallery, that famous gallery where you may whisper at one spot and be heard clear across that great gallery at another spot. I think that the world of books is much like this whispering gallery, voices from far away and long ago can be heard at our fireplaces. Some one speaks his thoughts and his life experiences, or his discoveries quietly through the silent pages of a book, and his voice carries through the whispering gallery of a world to any listener

who is waiting for his message, and it is our blessed privilege to bring the message to the possible listener. These book voices that can sing or amuse, or teach or inspire, - we book lovers have listened to them. We know how we settle down in mental solitude and yield our whole selves up to a book and become unconscious to everything but the subtle influence of it. We know how a book may influence us, more than any person, ^{can} because we let it be more intimately close to us, and to say things to us which we would not listen to from any person.

Hugh Walpole after describing his own library as the most delightful library, the best arranged, happiest looking, heart-warming library in the world, says that he came into it one day and felt a sense of something jarring. As he looked over the familiar titles, to his horror, he found Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre standing out of its place beside Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. Now, he said, books know their places, and Jane Austen had to protest

against Jane Eyre as a neighbor when she remembered what unkind things Charlotte used to say about her. So much does Hugh Walpole love his books, that each one has a speaking personality for him, a voice whose whispers he hears.

Someway, I too feel about books ^{as I know that you do} that I can never grow old in spirit as long as youth and progress and enthusiasm lie glistening on the pages of books - not at least as long as I have eyesight to read, and then I hope I may have reserves of thought laid up in my mind to take the place of reading.

There is nothing save the air we breathe that we have so sacred and clear a right to as the immortal truths that have been garnered up in books.

*And shall not the country dwellers
+ his children be given his rights - some if*
I ran across a little poem the other day *he*
which I want to share with you. *has done*
may you
recognize them
as his rights

Perhaps you know it

BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!

Books! Books! Books!
And we thank Thee, God,
For the gift of them;
For the glorious reach
And the lift of them;
For the gleam in them;
For the dream in them;

For the things they teach
And the souls they reach!
For the maze of them,
And the blaze of them,
For the ways they open to us,
And the rays that they shoot through us!

Books! Books! Books!
And we thank Thee, God,
For the light in them;
And the might in them;
For the urge in them,
And the surge in them;
For the souls they wake,
And the paths they break;
For the gong in them
And the song in them;
For the throngs of folks they bring to us,
And the songs of hope they sing to us!

Books! Books! Books!
And we thank Thee, God,
For the deep in them;
For the rhythmic swing
And the sweep of them;
For the croon in them
And the boon in them;
For the prayers they pray
And the doubts they slay;
For the DO in them
And the true in them;
For the blue skies that they show us,
And the new stars that they strew us.

Wm. L. Stidger

(From THE CHINA BOOKMAN)

May I not again repeat that we have the happiest job in the world when we who are ourselves inspired by books, have the privilege of preaching the gospel of books.

And so We cannot contemplate the unreached places without the desire to carry the benefit of books far and wide, and here is this rural problem right at our very doors.

Some of us have been connected with the Travelling Library, *plan* and State Aid to Schools, *and such like for many years* and have watched the needs in the country schools, and in the farming communities, and we believe that the County library system is the best plan yet tried to reach the people.

What is the County Library System?

It differs in no essential respect from a city public library system with its main library and branches and school stations. *It* It is a public library system for the entire county. It is supported by a county tax as are other county departments.

It may be managed by a County library

board appointed by the County Commissioners or by a contract with some strong public library which ^{can} manages the County fund, and ^{is prepared to} can give efficient county service.

It is a particularly good plan because the county is a small unit, is usually a well organized unit, and is a convenient unit for taxation. Moreover, there are other county officers like the County farm agent, the County superintendent, ^{of schools} the County nurse or welfare worker who will work in close co-operation.

Moreover, a county library system as distinguished from a state system gives opportunity for close supervision and personal acquaintance with patrons, and the trained experience and well known zealousness of the modern librarian.

At the beginning of this year all but eight states (outside of New England) had enacted laws permitting the establishment of county libraries, and many county systems have been in active co-operation for many years. ^{and have} ^{proven their adaptability to the purpose}

Our Minnesota ^{County} Library law is not perfect, but it is workable. Our County Commissioners

are empowered to levy a tax not to exceed one mill, and to establish with such a fund a county library system. *in any County where there is no public library but* Or they may contract with any city or town library for county service on whatever terms can be agreed upon. *in Minn. State Com. on Lib.*

There are as yet only eleven Counties in Minnesota under way. Several of them are doing splendid work and others are starting on a small scale, and will gradually work up a county interest. The appropriations vary from \$200. a year to \$28,000. in Hennepin County. *I would like to use my own County as an example of how the plan may work to* tell you how we started in Hennepin County even before we had our present law.

For many years all around the outside edges of Minneapolis *the* ~~were~~ suburbs without library facilities, *and the* whose residents were always wanting to draw books from our city library. It was very hard to refuse them, but where should we draw the line. *The Library Board drew it at the city limits where the line was drawn* The city was encouraging trade with county residents, all roads through the County led to Minneapolis, why shouldn't the educational roads lead in that direction.

Finally, in 1915, before the present law

was passed, the Library Board allowed every resident of the county to draw books on an equal footing with city residents, and I remember with what enthusiasm we drove through the county tacking up placards. ^{announcing the fact} Hennepin County contains 565 square miles, the most distant point is about 40 miles. Only nearby residents took advantage of the privilege of drawing books on a borrowers card, and very few of these were children. Then with the help of a small sum from the County Commissioners to pay clerical help, we started loaning groups of books to the Country schools and to a few villages ^{libraries} that had led a precarious existence. Reference work was done for the rural teachers and packages of books went out to them by rural post.

This service ^{grew + grew and} in due time created an appetite for books in our county neighbors, ^{created} a habit of expecting frequent exchanges of titles, and a dependence upon the new facilities. We were glad that we had been able to awaken interest in books to such an extent, but it was a great drain on our resources. In the meantime, the present ^{State}

law permitting a one mill tax for a county library system had been passed. So after nearly seven years of almost free service, the Minneapolis Library had to tell the County leaders that the expense was becoming too great, *for the Public Library to bear* and suggested that they apply to the County Commissioners to levy a tax.

We withdrew from any effort, *to obtain the tax* feeling that the request to the Commissioners should be a spontaneous act from the people *living in the County whose property was to be taxed & who were the beneficiaries*. The County Superintendent who was an energetic and politically minded woman was the prime mover. *She realized what we had done for the Rural Schools* She got club women, district school boards and well known county residents down to a meeting, and the Commissioners realizing that the County residents themselves were sponsoring the move, levied a mill tax in 1922, and have continued to do so every year since.

immediately
Then the Commissioners made a contract with the Minneapolis Library Board that they should continue to loan their own books ~~when necessary~~, to County residents, that they should house the

county work in the Library Building, and that the city librarian should be the County librarian in charge of the county library fund.

And so the work was under way. The first thing that was done was to organize the village libraries, catalog them, hire librarians and maintain a real service. Some books, especially good reference tools were added as part of a permanent collection, and the permanent shelves have constantly grown. But other books were loaned as long time loans from a special county collection which has gradually become a large and valuable collection. All expenses of these villages were paid from the county library fund. At first, the village library board functioned, and their advice was used for the sake of local goodwill. But as the years have gone by, and the village library has functioned better and better, the library boards have gradually ceased to exist. In one town the people took up a subscription, and built a really fine^e little library building, and there are indications that other villages are thinking of doing the same.

factor in

The most important of any library is the librarian, and the director of a County Library must be not only a good librarian, but a peppy, enthusiastic person who can carry cheer and goodwill along with her. Our County Director has a most infectious enthusiasm, and is greeted with smiles everywhere she goes. She remembers from time to time the small family matters. She knows all the shut-ins and the unusual reading tastes. Invitations are refused or shopping postponed if it comes at the time when the book truck is scheduled.

Speaking of the book truck, we are now using our 3d truck. Roads in the country - take it the year round, are pretty hard on trucks. Our first two trucks were made with outside shelves, the sides letting down to form a shelf. But the cold days in winter and the rainy days in summer made it very difficult for patrons to stand outside and select their books. The present truck has inside shelves, well lighted, so that patrons can step inside and select books

in comfort. The director travels on scheduled routes, so that teachers, librarians, and families en route know when she is coming. Twice every week the truck is packed with boxes for schools and village libraries along particular routes, and the shelves filled with books of every description. Every place is visited once a month.

At present we have 20 regular branches with paid librarians, and 14 stations at smaller neighborhood centers where the books are placed in country stores or small banks or even private homes or institutions. Then we have school collections at 82 elementary schools.

As in any public library, the work divides into school work and adult work. And the adult work is certainly interesting as seen from a book truck. Our truck stops at about 265 families who live too far from a village library. The truck drives up to the back door and honks, and the expectant members of the family come hurrying out. Perhaps they carry

a dishpan full of books to exchange, or carry an apronful. Grandfather comes out to jolly up the librarian, father talks politics, or what he heard over the radio. Mother tells about her preserving, or ailments of the family, or whatever. The Librarian sizes up their book needs, suggests some new subject, recommends books for all and departs leaving some new ideas to simmer. Once when a patron didn't appear she went in and finding her sick, made a mustard plaster and called in a neighbor. This work from house to house results in some of the finest adult education stunts that could be imagined. Of course, most of the adult service is through regular channels of branches and stations, and we are always interested in one store keeper who immediately upon the arrival of a supply of books from the truck calls up his customers - Mrs. S. "Giants of the Earth" is here, shall I send it out with your grocery order, and so around his list.

In a recent visit to the schools of the

County, I couldn't help but compare the books of the present collections of neat, orderly, well used, but well-kept books with the dirty, out-of-date, and often ill chosen books huddled in disorder on a back shelf or closet which we found in these same schools when we began our County service. There is no comparison between the children's attitude toward this constantly renewed, clean, school library, and the disgraceful remnants which used to serve as one.

When the truck draws up at the front door of the school, especially if it be a small school, it is a most gratifying sight to see teachers and pupils come out with enthusiasm to exchange their books. This is the opportunity for guidance by a trained library director. She has already chosen the books carefully when she filled the truck with reference to the schools to be visited that day. Then as each school begins to choose its month's supply from the shelves, she judiciously recommends this or that for the particular needs of that group of children. So well has she learned the characteristics of each school

and the type of the teacher that she knows just what will please them.

Usually she carries away with her a list of titles which the school will need before the next trip, and these are sent out by parcel post on her return. Every Saturday many teachers from the rural schools visit the County headquarters going over the shelves for particular material. They are also at liberty to borrow from the city library music and lantern slides, pictures of all sorts, -costumes for a play, birds, trees, flowers for nature work,^{and}/photographs, maps - all of this wealth of material which is just as free to the Country school teacher as to the city teacher. Perhaps nothing that the County system does is so important as is the interest and inspiration given to the teaching staff, through its connection with a city library.

There is no reason why the school library in each little district school should not be also the community library. There could rarely be a more convenient place for the village library

than the village school. The children are the best purveyors for the families who would not otherwise use the books. Moreover, the school life of children cannot and should not be separated from the home life. The County Librarian going from school to school, and from family to family comes to understand the home life as well as the school life, and is able to administer to the child's book needs much better from knowing his home background. She can help to introduce magazines and personally owned books to the farm center table. She can connect books with daily living and make the child realize that books are not simply a part of school work and the preparation of lessons, but companions at home. She serves these children all summer long, when schools are closed, through the home service.

The County Superintendent of Schools is completely sold on the plan of county libraries. Her only grievance being that the book truck cannot visit the 80 or 90 schools oftener than once a month, and that the Director cannot stay

long enough to give the teachers and children talks on book appreciation.

And so I have given you a brief resume of our Minnesota County library, as I was asked to do. I am an enthusiastic believer in the plan for reaching people on farms or very small communities. I have not heard a single person in our county complain of the tax which brings them so much returns.

I realize that Iowa and North and South Dakota have not yet put the plan into operation, as have your neighbors Wisconsin and Minnesota, but I hope that our success and our experiences may stimulate you to further effort in securing a county law.

*I wish I might have heard the report
of your Committee yesterday and
knew how you plan to go to work*

Dec. 1928

County Library Administration
of County School Libraries

Every one who has had personal
experience with a County
Library System is thoroughly
convinced of its value. I am
~~the~~ the Commercial Menace, in
completely over on the idea -
County library ^{system} are the most
promising of all extension ~~system~~
methods and the coming thing in
library ~~work~~ growth.

I am equally convinced that the
County Library System should
administer the School Libraries in
the County Schools. Otherwise ~~the~~
the County Library would be for Community
use only, ~~at least~~ and there must be a separate County
System for rural + village schools.

~~Please allow me to speak~~
~~from our personal experience~~

or no supervision at all
With your permission I will speak
of our own experience;
This fall I took one of the monthly

trips to a group of Country schools
in our County. Some of them were
the room ungraded schools on
out-of-the-way muddy roads, but
some were modern well arranged
schools with new and well equipped
buildings. At every place, teachers
and children came out with much
enthusiasm to pick out their
books from the book truck which
Carried several hundred books
which exchanged the books which the
schools had just had for other titles.
A change of the books was
were exchanged for others.
In every building whether large or

~~Small were collections of well~~
~~chosen and well kept books.~~
In charge of the book truck
was a trained librarian, who
constantly suggested and helped both
teachers & pupils to choose the right
things for their grades.

In every building whether large
or small were collections of well-kept
and well chosen books. I could
not but compare the looks of these
present collections with the dirty-
out-of-date and often unchosen books
huddled in disorder on a back shelf
which were found in these same
schools buildings a few years ago —
when we first began our county library system.
There simply was no comparison and
the children's attitude toward this constantly
renewed clean collection of books in the
schools was completely changed from their former
careless disinterested regard for the
old remnants which served as a library.
The teachers took the view that

teaching has been simplified
and ~~subjects~~ ^{Subjects} made much more
interesting & valuable to them as
well as to their pupils. One
as soon I heard the County
Director say to a teacher who
wanted some books not on the
truck, that she would make
it to her immediately upon her
return. Often the teacher
would reply that she would be in on
Saturday to get special books from
the general County collection.
As there is a contract between the
County and the Mpls. Public Library,
this County Collection may draw
upon anything from the Mpls.
Library shelves. Every Saturday
dozen of County teachers are in
& out of the County room getting
special material. They may
borrow not only the County & City

library books, but she may borrow -
~~programs with lantern slides and~~
music for school entertainments,
she may borrow stereographs,
post cards + reflectoscopes; or
~~photographs~~ she may borrow plays and
arrange the scheme of costuming
she may borrow maps, or clippings
or anything else that the city-library
circulates. All because there is
a County library Administration.

It can hardly be conceived that
in any other way could these rural
schools have the variety and wealth
of material which they are now getting.
Just before preparing this informal
paper I called up the County
Superintendent of Schools, who happens
to be a woman, and asked her
what arguments she could give ~~up~~

Against the County Library
Administration of the rural School
libraries. She was breathless
for a moment, thinking maybe
that there was a plan afoot to
to change the system. Then
she launched forth on the
advantages, and finally said that
she couldn't express herself
sufficiently strongly on the value
of the County library plan. Her
only grievance was that the book
truck could not visit the 80 or 90
schools more than once a month
and could not stay long enough for
the director to give the teachers
& children longer talks on book appreciation.

But she went on to speak earnestly
of the enrichment of the curriculum
in the rural schools, of the many
~~additional~~ opportunities of helpfulness

put into the hands & minds of the
teachers through the good library collections,
and of the stimulus and the widened
horizons which they brought to the children.

But her great argument for the
County library administration was one
which we who have worked with
it are well aware of. Rural
School Boards are always short of
money and, being mainly farmers who
have few or no books in their own
homes, they see no reason for ~~at~~
adding a book fund to the school
expense, not even the small
amount necessary to get the State
aid fund. Even if they did ~~for~~

~~from this~~ appropriate the amount
necessary to get the additional state
aid, the sum total must buy but
a few books each year ~~which are~~
~~sent through a circulating library~~
~~for the schools, which would soon~~

become Candidates for the
Judging with ~~no fee + no~~
nothing to pay for the Judging, ~~at~~
~~no fee + no~~ ~~at no~~

Our Superintendent tells us however
that since the working out of the
County System

~~Our Sept letter was that~~

~~Now~~, giving a number of School
Boards ^{have become} ~~are~~ convinced that the
Children do need books and are
paying ~~the~~ ^{the amount necessary} ~~for~~ ^{in order}
to get the State aid fund. ~~They~~
have an arrangement with the Super
~~that~~ In the case of the district schools
this money ~~shall~~ ^{is} used to buy
books for reference tools and ^{duplicate} ~~reference~~
supplementary material for school room
use. While the County supplies the circulating
books.

It is amazing, that in many homes of
well-to-do people in the County, there
are no books, no magazines and sometimes
no newspaper. The County books in the
school ^{library} ~~room~~ which are taken home
week after week, have not only made
all the difference in the world
to the children of such a home
but have brought sweetness & light
to father & mother, who now often
borrow on their own account.
Home reading has been developed & encouraged
by the County library in the school

we have been considering
But so far, the rural school;
There are also village high
schools and consolidated country
high schools. In ~~all~~ ^{each} of these
with two exceptions, we have built
a combination
of school & community library,
usually ^{housed} in the same building. Through
a contract arrangement, ~~in this~~
^{the school board} ~~the~~ turns over the state aid
fund & their ^{its} own corresponding fund
to the county ^{library} fund. ^{the teacher} They make out
the list of books which they want
to have in the school library. These books are
and whether all of these books are
on the state list or not, they are
^{purchased for the county school library.} ~~but they get~~
In addition they borrow from the
county collection or the mpls library
whenever they need for special times
or occasions. ~~As they have the benefit of~~
we have yet to hear from any

of the principles that they did not
have much more to gain than
to lose through the County administration
of these ^{High School} libraries. The librarians are
paid jointly by the ^{School Board + County Library}, because they ^{serve both} ~~serve~~ ^{School + community}
~~the~~ As County librarians they attend to
the County library institutes and put
the enthusiasm + broader viewpoint
of the public librarians. They are
helped ^{by the County Librarian} to work out details, & to
catalog their material. If the
librarian has not had the opportunity
of training which sometimes happens,
she is brought on to the Mpls. library
and given such training as will
help her in her particular work.

The whole plan ^{of County librarians} is ~~to~~ flexible;
books are not allowed to stand
unused in one place when
they might be useful in some other.
Books from the schools & from
the village librarians can be

Interchange of Service they are belong
to the County Collection and can
be placed where most needed.

~~There~~ There are yet many
things to be worked out: funds
are not sufficient, there are not enough
trained librarians, there
are not enough people at the
headquarters. But all in all
the County Schools are surely &
getting more books, and better
personnel assistance, and more
trained service through this
County plan which serves the
whole County, than through any
other form of administration.

There is perhaps no phase of library work which is engaging the attention of the library world as that which brings reading opportunities to rural communities. This has been taking firm hold in the shape of County Library Service, because the County is a most convenient unit.

It is the writer's personal judgment from observation and from active administration of one county system that the plan works out more effectively if the county officials make a contract with some town or city library within the county which shall administer the county library fund. Such a town library is usually administered by trained librarians and is usually willing to open its own resources to county residents to supplement the county fund.

The amount of the maintenance fund determines the amount of service which can be rendered and should be sufficient to give every one in the county a fairly adequate service. How much this will be depends upon the size of the county and the density of the population. To be concrete may I use our own County of Hennepin, Minnesota, as an illustration. The State law allows a maximum tax of one mill which amounts in Hennepin County to nearly \$28,000.00 for a population of 53,000, or about 50¢ per capita. The tax is not laid on any municipality which prefers to levy its own library tax/ for the maintenance of its own local library. This exempts the City of Minneapolis and one other village which still continues to levy its own local library tax. The remainder of the county is taxed and receives county library service.

When the system first started every village except one voluntarily turned their libraries over to be operated as a part of the county system. There are now in operation 21 county branch libraries, each with a library assistant in charge, ¹⁴16 stations in small centers, and ⁸⁹85 rural school collections. Each of these places is visited at least once a month with a book truck carrying a trained librarian. On the route, the

1932
figures

book truck stops at farmers' homes and delivers books directly to the families. It is this library on wheels with a librarian in charge, coming into contact with the people, teachers, pupils, village librarians, that ties up the whole plan. It gives a splendid school service, changing the collections frequently, fitting the books to the types of children, and/a ^{it gives} fine opportunity for Adult Education through the homes.

The Minneapolis Library furnishes space for headquarters, and houses the general county collection. The county fund is kept wholly separate from the city library fund, but it is administered, according to contract with the County Commissioners, by the Minneapolis librarian.

As in every growing work, there are many things that cannot be done, for lack of funds. But on the whole our fund of 50¢ per capita, together with the co-operation of a large library, is working out a very valuable rural service. In ¹⁹³²~~1930~~ the circulation was ^{511,723}~~395,483~~ books, ^{or}~~over seven books a year~~ per capita. Our experience leads us to hope that the plan may be very generally adopted.

A book wagon for every county

W. C. C. O.

4-29-26-

Radio City Miss
Berry in Miss
Cathryn's

absence

America believes in education. The very nature of a democratic government, where everyone has a vote seems to demand that people should be educated. So our public tax-supported-schools are one of our most strongly entrenched institutions for which we spend most freely and in which we have the greatest pride.

But education doesn't stop with school days; there are too many new discoveries, too many social movements, too many world events to keep up with, and one cannot keep up with this modern world without books and magazines. One cannot even keep up with his neighbors or with his own job without books.

So another institution almost as well entrenched as the public school has become part of our American system of education. The public library is the institution which furnishes the opportunity for men and women to keep on improving and developing. It is the continuation school for adults. Through it, they can study every subject which has entered the human mind. Books furnish a chance to learn and to keep on learning, and the public library furnishes through its free distribution of books what is so dear to every American---Equality of opportunity.

The public library is so pliable an institution that it bends to every growing need of the community, an institution so susceptible to the social needs, so eager to render all possible service that it is the one educational institution that reaches all classes and ages and degrees with a chance to learn, from youth to old age.

In every large city, the library carries opportunity to all quarters by means of branch libraries, by collections of books placed in schools, in hospitals, in factories, and other centers. The mechanic can get books on his trade, the business man on salesmanship and advertising, the artist designs for stained glass or the plan of a building, the mother books on child training, and the foreigner books in his mother tongue or helps for his new Americanism.

~~Many~~ small towns also have libraries and as far as possible furnish the same facilities for education as the city library.

R But not all of our American citizens live in cities and towns. If books are so important a means of keeping up with the world, why shouldn't it be just as important that the village dwellers and farmers' homes be supplied with the same free opportunities to get books? It is only just that the many families living in more or less isolation should participate in all the opportunities to become intelligent citizens. It is evident that they cannot establish libraries of their own. The district school library is not satisfactory, for the children literally read the few books to death and there is no central supply to draw from or to make exchanges.

The best solution has been found in the County Library *plan*. ~~system~~. The County is a natural unit both for taxing purposes and for administration. The County library is simply an extension of the city library organization to the larger unit

of the County. The County taxes itself to support the County Library just as the city does to support the city library. The city library has branches and stations throughout the city with trucks to deliver the books. The County system has a central collection of books housed in some central location, with branches in the villages and stations, at the country stores or community centers, and in the district ^{Schools} ~~stores~~, with a book-wagon making frequent trips to the stations and calling at the homes along the route. The plan is so simple and so small in cost for the results to be gained, that it is commending itself to many ~~places~~ ^{Counties}.

California established a State system of County libraries in 1911, and is very proud of the way it is working. Indiana has a good county law, so also have Montana, Minnesota and other states.

Let us see how it is working, for example, in Hennepin County, Minnesota. In the first place, according to the provisions of the law, the County Commissioners levy a ~~one-mill~~ tax on all of the County outside of Minneapolis to maintain library service all over the County. Then according to the county law, they annually make a contract with the Minneapolis Public Library so that the Minneapolis library houses the County Collection of books, and allows the County residents to borrow any of the books in the Minneapolis library free of charge.

The County Library consists of the books bought annually for the central exchange collection, and the books which are bought to remain permanently in the County branches. A director is in charge who buys the books, loans them and exchanges ^{them,} who visits the branches, trains the librarians, and generally supervises the whole system. There are 565 square miles in this particular county, and there are 19 branch libraries in the villages, 13 deposit stations in small communities and country stores, and about 80 district school libraries. The books are exchanged with an auto truck commonly called a bookwagon, which stops at all the rural schools and visits about 170 homes which are far removed from any distributing point. This bookwagon is fitted up with shelves on the outside, something like an old fashioned peddler's cart. These shelves hold 200-300 books; and in the inside can be carried the boxes of books which are going to the regular branches. At each stop, the children in the schools, or the farmer and his wife at their front door, come out and pick out what they want just as conveniently as the city patron goes to the shelves of a branch library. *

The County roads are divided up into eight main roads radiating from Minneapolis. Trips are taken twice each week with the bookwagon going out on one of these roads each trip, so that the entire county is covered once a month.

Do they like the service--these County patrons?

Well, on one stormy day when the bookwagon was due, the librarian was called by a lady who said that she had been invited out that day, but she wanted to be sure that she wouldn't miss the "library visit", before she accepted.

If we could only flash a picture before your eyes, of a country school group gathered like bees around the bookwagon, with their eager little ^{eyes} ~~faces~~ running over the attractive book titles, no one could doubt that the County service was an efficient method. But the evidence would be just as conclusive, if one could see at a farmer's home, the group of friend farmer and his sunbonneted wife, and the old enfeebled grandfather and mother, and the hired help, gathering around this friendly wagon of books with the cheerful librarian helping them to select just what she knows will please each one.

* / Here a Farmer's Institute is going to have a program with some entertaining features. They get a little play from the County Library which they can act. They want to debate on the proposed farming legislation, they borrow all the arguments from the County Library. The County nurse is trying desperately to put over an important idea on the care of children, she gets the County Library to co-operate and soon books on the subject are available for the mothers. The Women's Club is attempting an ambitions club program, and ^{the members} are a little desperate for material to write their papers, but they apply to the County librarian

May be cut -

and soon their worried minds are set at rest and well prepared papers are made possible.

But the libraries in the small villages, even though they are not so spectacular are doing the real County Library work. These villages could not support a library of any value, for old books must be rebound, and new books must be constantly supplied; school children must have material for debates and for themes, and the small village library could not meet the requirements. But as a branch of the County system, the librarian can send to the central library for a fresh exchange of books, she can get special books for special occasions. She can get advice and help from the County library director, and the service in a little county branch can be nearly as good as in a city library, especially if the County Library has a contract with a city or town library.

Farming is more than a business, it is a life, and the farmer and ^{his} family, like his city cousins, wants books for amusement and recreation as well as books on his job. We *all know that book - - to sit down in a comfortable chair with a fascinating book* *Run*
*"There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away"*

Life in the open country must hold forth equivalent opportunities for education, social, and moral welfare, for joy and content, if the young people are going to be kept on the farm. And the County Library is going to contribute to this end, even if it is not a panacea for all the difficulties.

Do you live in the country, has your county organized a County system? *Does a good wide awake County Librarian visit you in* ~~If you live in Minnesota or in some state~~ *a travelling book wagon - which really is another name for a travelling university* ~~which has a good state law, you can pursue the County Commissioners until they take notice.~~ ¶ A wholesale house of today would not succeed without traveling salesmen. If you believe in books and education for adults as well as children, why not be a traveling salesman, why not organize a campaign in your county to inform the people what advantages could come to them through a county library system? ~~(And how little it costs to give them and their families as good library advantages as city people have.~~ If you realize that the Rural Life movement is one of the most important of present day movements, then you will campaign for your County library. If you realize that the County library supplies stimulus and interest and furnishes the necessary tools to all the other County organizations; that it makes possible the programs of community clubs, study clubs, agricultural clubs, and furnishes relaxation and entertainment in remote and isolated homes, you will feel that any labor spent in establishing a County library will bring lasting benefit to many human beings.

Someday the book wagon will be as regular a visitor in all Counties as the rural mail carrier

* Even more conveniently, for whether the roads are bad
or whether it is cold or raining, in sunshine or storm
the book wagon ^{if possible} arrives at the appointed time, and the
~~neighbors from the crossroads can meet at the~~
~~neighbors from the crossroads can meet at the~~
The neighbors from the crossroads can ~~meet at the~~
come up to their neighbor to meet the book wagon. If they ~~can~~ want
some ~~road~~ ~~but catch the book wagon~~. If they ~~can~~ want
Some particular book which is not on the wagon shelves
the librarian makes a note and sends it by parcel post
or brings it on her next trip.

*7 As the book wagon makes its trips from school to
school and from home to home, it seems to symbolize the
very spirit of modern education, "books on wheels going out into
the highways inviting everyone to make the most of himself ~~by~~
~~the help of~~

COUNTY LIBRARIES

[P.T.A. 0/18-32] mpt.
5-18-32
Final
Form

No one ever saw a real modern librarian who was not enthusiastic about her work. She believes in reading as the most effective and, as a matter of fact, the invariable method of getting an education. Who ever saw a school or a college that did not depend upon the book to get its teaching across? This enthusiastic librarian knows that the habit of reading is the most important habit of life if education is to become widespread. She believes in books, not only because they are informative and arouse interest in the facts of life, but because they are winged messengers of truth and beauty and righteousness. They open the eyes of the soul. Believing and feeling this most deeply, she knows that no movement, no type of education can go on without books; without books organized into collections and used under some form of administrative guidance which we call a library.

With the modern library movement came the unquenchable desire to make books available to everybody, and there is no greater record of accomplishment in the country than the penetration into all fields, of the library idea, nor one that has still ahead of it the possibilities of greater growth. Attention was turned many years ago toward the need of books in the rural districts. The old district school libraries established with such enthusiasm fifty or so years ago failed completely because to quote Mr. Dewey, there was no supervision. The present state aid to school libraries is only a partial success because there is no plan for the selection and care of the books, or for their constant exchange. The plan of traveling libraries began, I believe, also in New York about 1892 or 1893, to solve the rural problem, and the idea of a State Library Commission shortly followed. Now State Library Commissions are active in many states, guiding the establishment and administration of town and village libraries, and furnishing traveling libraries to many communities. Nothing can take the place of an active state agency in promoting the whole scheme of library extension. These state agencies have been

most active also in the initial work of securing laws and promoting this last and most promising method of library extension,- the county library.

Just the very name,- the County Library, suggests a solution of the whole rural library problem. It suggests the possibility of co-operation with schools, with farmers' institutes, with women's clubs, with county agents, and ^{with} county nurses; and all of these possibilities have been more than realized in those counties in which the county library has been established.

Most of the states (I believe all but eight outside of New England) now have laws permitting the establishment of county libraries and the levying of county taxes to support them. Pennsylvania has adopted state aid for county libraries this past year; California has a very complete system of county libraries and here and there all over the country, individual counties are being organized, until there are upwards of counties getting more or less complete service. Through the Julius Rosenwald Fund county library demonstrations have been carried on in eleven counties in the South and the county library plan is probably the one that can best provide the service of books to the Southern people. The Council of the American Library Association has been so committed to a belief in county libraries that it approved the principle of federal aid to the county library plan. It has not been brought before Congress and naturally the recommendation will be postponed for more favorable times. However, the need for federal and state aid should be emphasized by all organizations for the sake of the many counties which could not attempt an adequate library plan unaided.

In Hawaii there is universal library service; four county library systems are supported by territorial appropriation and books are available to the remotest corners. As for that great country which we could well emulate in many particulars (Big Bill Thompson to the contrary notwithstanding), Great Britain, which began later than the United States, now has practically universal

county library service. We heard this spring, from the President of the British Library Association, that the state aid to these libraries had not only not been diminished but in some instances had been increased, so great was their belief in libraries and in the county system of administration.

In the opinion and experience of those who have worked out a county library plan, this plan is the only one which provides an adequate rural library service and which enables country people to have a real public library. It is the only hope of an adult education program in the country districts, and the only way to enable country voters to read wisely on the enormous social, economic, and national problems that are to be solved.

As to the practical working of a county library plan, it does not differ in any essential respect from a city library with its numerous branches. The county library is only a central unit with branch libraries scattered around a wider area than the city units. Its operation with a head director and local librarians, its traveling book truck carrying exchanges of books at regular intervals is similar in every way to the administration of a city library.

If I may speak personally of the Hennepin County system which I know best, I would like to recommend the tie-up with the Minneapolis Public Library as an advantageous way of administering the county system. Our law requires that in counties where there is a well organized public library, a contract with that library shall be made by the County Commissioners, placing the library tax fund in the hands of the Library Board for administration. The public librarian then becomes the county librarian, and directs not only the expenditure of the county library fund but opens the city library for the free use of county residents. In this county we have fourteen stations, twenty-one branches, and eighty-nine rural schools, every one of which 124 points is visited once a month by the book truck. There are in the County many families who live some distance from a county branch, and they also have a right to participate in the County Library privileges, so the truck drives up regularly to their doors and exchanges their books for new titles. (Two hundred seventy families are served.)

A trip on our book truck would demonstrate better than hours of talk what the county library does for the rural people. In the course of a trip it stops at a school house, with teacher and pupils trooping out to pick the titles they will want for the next month; then at a farmhouse where the farmer wants books on soil fertility or the culture of strawberries, and the farmer's wife needs a few good stories, and a book on poultry; on to the next neighbor's where a young mother belongs to a class in nutrition and has sent ahead to the county librarian for the books her class needs. Then on to another neighbor who comes in with her hoe and a basketful of books, explaining that she doesn't want the neighbors to see how many books she reads, but that she just has to have a lot; that she really has to read while she hoes. Then here is a German family and farther on a French lady. Then the truck stops at a village branch and brings out a big box of new books for them and the director talks over with the librarian her problems of cataloging or her school problems, or the arrangement of her furniture,- numerous little details in which the trained director can advise and encourage and awaken interest.

And so the wise county library director goes through the county coming into close and often confidential relationship with the county people, the rural teacher, the consolidated high school teachers, hearing the gossip, carrying a cheerful word, reporting cases to the county nurse or the social worker, being the sympathetic visitor whom they all look forward to seeing. She herself learns much of human nature and knows better, year by year, how to make her service count.

The public library is a very pliable institution, bending to every growing need of community life, susceptible to all social needs, eager to render all possible service through that wonderful tool, the printed page. But in no phase is it more pliable, more susceptible to community life, or individual needs, than in the rural districts through the county library. The improvement of rural life is one of the major problems before the country.

Light's Golden Jubilee was celebrated a few years ago. At that time Mr. Edison was the recipient of nation-wide tribute for his invention of the incandescent lamp. Out along the main travelled roads run the live wires carrying light to country homes and in many houses along the way the incandescent light and other electric equipment bring comforts to the thrifty farmer who has profited by this invention of the Great Wizard.

But back from the highways, along the cross-roads and more remote farms, the farmer is still burning a kerosene or possibly a gasoline lamp. As we look at the splendid consolidated schools in well-to-do country districts, and watch the school buses, loading up the children to deliver them back to their homes, we almost feel that Light's Jubilee might be celebrated in the fine country schools where the incandescent lamp of knowledge is lighting the path of these country children.

But let us tramp on further, and find in any county, even near the largest cities, how many poor one-room ungraded schools we will find. One authority states that eleven million children or nearly half of the public school enrollment is still going to school in one and two room buildings, handicapped with poor teachers, poor buildings, no books, and a pathetically short period to get what training they can.

In many places, and in many particulars, rural life has been made much more attractive than formerly. Good roads and automobiles help out the social life. The boys and girls can get into town for movies and dances and young company. Farmers' clubs and boys' and girls' clubs have awakened healthy competition. The radio and rural mails connect with the political world and outside events. Even the World Series may be followed in the country store where the men, at least, eagerly listen in excited groups. So that I've felt almost like a rude and discourteous person when I had to draw away a country clerk from the radio to sell me a loaf of bread.

Yes, it is not lonely in some places. But drive out farther and see the families where no newspapers or magazines are ever received in the rural mail,

where the children have little background, short schooling, and lots of hard work, with little leisure.

Sometimes, and under some conditions, country life seems the most attractive life in the world, but in many instances it is the most desolate. The improvement of rural life, the solving of rural problems, and the bettering of rural homes is one of the major problems of the country.

In the educational world, the rural school is the weakest spot. And the greatest problem in the rural school is the rural library. Indeed, the library problem is one of the most vital of rural life problems. How can a child be equipped for citizenship, for community life, for the use of leisure time; how can he see out beyond his own limited horizon; how can he get spiritual vision if he has not had any books, nor any person about him who loves books? How can he continue to grow, if his school has not planted in him a love of reading? Then the father and the mother, are they going to vegetate with their gardens, and live dumb lives with their dumb beasts, without any of the outlook and outreach that comes to a man through books?

Even if there is state aid for the school library, local school trustees have been loth to provide money for books. If they do, there are not many, not enough to furnish supplementary reading, and recreational reading for a year. But here comes the county book truck with a fresh supply every month. Teachers may send in to the county collection for special titles; they can come in to the county librarian and carry away what they need. The county library has solved the district school library problem; has enriched the curriculum and made teaching much more interesting and valuable.

But I think I am ^{an} carrying coals to Newcastle to argue the merits of the county library plan to this group. Your National Congress has already passed this resolution:

"We recognize the right of children and parents alike to books and library service and re-affirm our endorsement of the county library for rural districts."

With the endorsement of the National Congress, just what are you doing to promote the growth and establishment of county libraries? Your help in many places is sorely needed. This is perhaps not the year in which to start new projects that require taxation, but it is very possible now to interest key men and women through your organization, so that public opinion may be ready to make the demand when better times arrive.

The library world has a large program, no less a one than bringing the opportunity of books within the reach of every man, woman, and child. We cannot put the program across without the understanding help of just such groups as the Parent-Teacher Association. Community education, the whole community, home education as well as school education, self education as well as classroom education, parent education as well as child education, rural opportunity as fine as urban opportunity, this is the library aim and it is your aim. Shall we keep on with our close co-operation until we see our goal in sight?

SUMMARY ON THE COUNTY BOOK TRUCK

Presented at A. L. A. in June, 1931

and revamped for publication.

learned from
Mr. Horn just ~~referred to~~ Mr.
Merrill that there are about
225 Counties which appropriate
~~the~~ annually the sum of \$1000⁰⁰ or more.
Of these there are between 50 and
60 which employ the best truck.
The question of a best truck has probably
not been settled
on the ground of its being wise or
unwise, but on the matter of
expense.

It has been every where a popular
experiment which no one ^{so far as we know} has given
up after trying ~~it~~ ~~at the County~~
It is a spectacular experiment; it
is excellent publicity; it advertises
County Service along every road it
passes ~~through the whole of~~
County ^{territory} ~~extension~~ has an appealing
attraction to which the best
truck. It has an appealing to every farmer
who feels ^{that} he is getting direct return for his money.

It may be that the reasons ~~from~~
~~by California County~~
of roads and weather from
the California County ~~litigation~~ as reasons
against using the back truck are
quite sufficient. But speaking for
Minnesota ^{in winter} Mr. Leon Leary ~~the~~ drift-
I know that Compels us to carry skids
to dig ourselves out
and in spring the fall deep mud ~~along~~ ^{on the}
impend roads along which the truck picks
a precarious way. If there are no
other reasons against the back truck
method of work during these roads and
weather then I believe that there are
no good reasons except expense against
the proposed ~~personal~~ method. And
from our point of view necessary method
of reaching the Conservation Bureau
Amber with Trained Service

A SUMMARY

A summary of the value of the book truck has been made many times. The literature on the book truck is already quite extensive. Much of it has been published as local publicity material to speed the cause of county libraries. Whether it is a Cornell Extension Bulletin or a Wilson Bulletin, or a periodical like American Farming or the story of the book truck of Dayton, or Charlestown, the account has always recorded a popular experiment, which no one ever gives up after trying it

out.

It is spectacular, it is excellent publicity. It is a most effective County Service

There are 724 County

Libraries which have an appropriation exceeding \$1000⁰⁰. Only 50 or 60

of them have Trucks.

County papers are somewhat conservative, a little suspicious, their account being patronized it is almost necessary to go

directly to them. Rural people are a sound public thinking

~~A SUMMARY~~

A county book truck, as has been brought out, is for two purposes. The one for transportation and the other as a travelling librarian.

it seems to me to be
necessary
 As a means of transportation it is an absolute essential. It carries out new books to branches; it brings back those no longer needed or that require binding. It is necessary because many of the ~~necessary~~ stops at small cross-roads stores and rural schools cannot be reached except by auto, and the county book truck is the natural method of delivery.

But, in our experience, the truck has a far more important function provided it carries not only books but a trained librarian. On its route it can be not only a delivery truck but a small peripatetic library on wheels. It can establish itself as a small public library in the school yard or at a farmer's back door, and for the time being, it can be not a book truck, but a well chosen small library. But it must be granted that such service must be carried out by a librarian who knows her school group and her individual families. Such a truck service, of course, has its limitations. Most trucks will carry only a small collection of a few hundred books. But with a trained librarian in charge, the special requests or particular needs of a school teacher or an individual, or

even of the county branch can be talked over and the needed material can be sent out on the rural mail delivery.

I had occasion recently to go out on our book truck to observe the service. The book truck travels on scheduled routes and scheduled time. *It stops much for snow drifts* The County Director *now* knew just what schools she would visit that day; just *also* what type of children and/just what type of teachers. She had prepared the collection of juveniles on the truck to meet the day's demands. She knew just what families she would call upon and what their reading tastes were and the composition of their families, and she prepared for them.

Our first stop was at ^a school. The children had been doing honor reading during the year, and the teacher proudly showed the County Librarian the honor reading list which really was extraordinary. The teacher and the librarian had co-operated to advantage.

The next stop was at a greenhouse. The family took, as usual, a dozen or 20 volumes of fiction, but quite a number of books on plant propagation, and grafting.

The next stop found the woman of the house gone, but she had left a note saying, "Would you please leave me 8 or 9 books that you think we haven't read."

Mrs. Madigan, next, lived in a poor, unpainted house, but she came bringing out a paper bag full of books neatly packed, and proved to be a most intelligent farm woman. She wanted the librarian to choose books for her High School daughter, her two grade school children, her little boy, and the parents.

The next call was upon a woman laid up with rheumatism for two years. Sometimes the librarian goes in and has a chat with her. This time the maid came out because she wasn't well enough for a chat. ^A Often the neighbors ~~gathered~~ gathered from all around at the honk of the horn and had a neighborly chat over the books, and gave all the newest gossip to their friend, the librarian. One farm woman returned a lot of books on child training which a class of 18 neighbors had been using during the winter, their aggregate families being 40 children under six years of age.

And so it went all day long. Calls at country stores checking up the books and leaving a new supply; stopping at school houses, the children running out with armloads of books, and their teachers with them, to choose the next supply; pulling up at farmers' houses, chatting with the family, sympathizing with their affairs, hearing about their plans for raising chinchilla rabbits or some other new and hopeful venture. The County Librarian is a part of all this community life.

(fmr)

Now, *I course* ~~I can~~ believe that the book truck *could* ~~can~~ be supplanted by parcel post or express service as a means of transportation, but I do believe that it loses all of its value as a library station for rural

dwellers if it is not accompanied by a trained librarian.

Not a young assistant, not a chauffeur - but an experienced
Likewise, ~~I believe that~~ a trained librarian making frequent trips throughout the county loses much of her possible helpfulness if she hasn't a collection of books with her. *in her own car*
for immediate service

The book truck like the rural mail, telephone, and radio, is helping in the solution of rural life. Problems of country living fall under four heads:

- 1st House conveniences, such as power, water, sanitation.
- 2nd Rural beauty, the yard and shrubbery, flowers, the roadways, and general setting.
- 3rd Transportation, the road to market, the roads to neighbors.
- 4th The best use of leisure time. Recreations, reading, and the type of literature obtainable; art and music, rural drama, neighborhood clubs.

All country people are confronted by these problems whether they are conscious of it or not. Sometimes one family settling in a rural community stimulates and helps

toward the solution of these problems. It is the task
of the thoughtful librarian to find out the rural
leaders, to co-operate with their efforts, to help all
rural organizations, to aid any spontaneous rural
activity ^{of this local problem}. If the librarian in a
city is influential with her people, so likewise is the
county librarian influential among the rural population
with her library on wheels.

*Rural people
need to be helped to sound thinking
on Public questions. (Think your
legislatures) No one ^{can keep} better than
the farmer librarian establishing
herself with a small public
library on wheels ~~at a farmer's door~~ with
for ¹⁰ Current topics + up to date matters
~~can keep the people~~ ^{start as}
The County Board in the farmer's back
yard ~~at~~
are telling*

We have just learned from Miss Merrill that there are about 225 counties which appropriate annually the sum of \$1,000.00 or over. Of these there are between fifth and sixty which employ the book truck. The question of a book truck has probably not been settled on the ground of its being wise or unwise, but on the matter of expense.

It has been everywhere a popular experiment which no one as far as we know has given up after trying. It is a spectacular experiment; it is excellent publicity; it advertises county service along every road it travels. It has an appeal to every farmer who feels that he is getting direct returns for his money.

It may be that the reasons of roads and weather given by the California County librarian as reasons against using the book truck are quite sufficient. But speaking for Minnesota, in winter we have heavy drifts of snow which compel us to carry shovels to dig ourselves out, and in spring and fall deep mud on the unpaved roads along which the truck picks a precarious way. If there are no other reasons against the book truck method of book delivery than roads and weather then we believe that there are no good reasons except expense against this popular and personal method, and, from our point of view, necessary method of reaching the conservative rural dweller with trained service.

A county book truck, as has been brought out, is for two purposes. The one for transportation and the other as a travelling librarian.

As a means of transportation it seems to me to be an absolute necessity. It carries out new books to branches; it brings back those no longer needed or that require binding. It is necessary because many of the stops at small cross-roads stores and rural schools cannot be reached except by auto, and the county book truck is the natural method of delivery.

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Such a truck service, of course, has its limitations. Most trucks will carry only a small collection of a few hundred books. But with a trained librarian in charge, the special requests or particular needs of a school teacher or an individual, or even of the county branch can be talked over and the needed material can be sent out on the rural mail delivery.

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The County nurse goes out with her auto and appliances. The County Agent goes out personally; the County Library Director must do likewise.

Now, of course the book truck could be supplanted by parcel post or express service as a means of transportation, but I do believe that it loses all of its value as a library station for rural dwellers if it is not accompanied by a trained librarian, not a young assistant, not a chauffeur, but an experienced, understanding librarian. Likewise, a trained librarian making frequent trips throughout the county in her own car loses much of her possible helpfulness if she hasn't a collection of books with her for immediate service.

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All country people are confronted by these problems whether they are conscious of it or not. Sometimes one family settling in a rural community stimulates and helps toward the solution of these problems. It is the task of the thoughtful librarian to distribute books on these problems and to see that they reach the right people; to find out the rural leaders, to co-operate with their efforts, to help all rural organizations, to aid any spontaneous rural activity. If the librarian in a city is influential with her people, so likewise is the county librarian influential among the rural population with her library on wheels. Rural people need to be helped to sound thinking on public questions. (Think of our legislatures.) No one can help better than the trained librarian establishing herself with a small public library on wheels with books on current topics and up-to-date matters at the country stores and in the farmers' back yards.