

FIRST BIENNIAL REPORT
OF THE
NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

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LINCOLN, NOVEMBER 30, 1902

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

To His Excellency, Ezra P. Savage, Governor of Nebraska:

In accordance with the law I have the honor to present herewith the first biennial report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission, covering the two years ending Nov. 30, 1902.

This report covers little more than a year of actual activity, a year which has witnessed the organization of the Commission and an encouraging beginning, but only a beginning, of the abundant work found waiting for it.

This Commission has no evils to correct, no abuses to reform; its work is educational and constructive and its aim, to make Nebraska a better and more attractive state to live in, creates a sound economic reason for its existence. These features show themselves in the spirit of the work done and the spirit with which it is met by the people of the state. To illustrate concretely, not a dollar has been paid to members of the Commission for expenses in attending meetings and almost the entire traveling expenses of the secretary and members of the Commission in visiting other towns have been paid by the communities visited although the law makes distinct provision for paying both these items from state funds.

I heartily commend to your notice the following report by the secretary and active executive officer of the commission, which describes the year's work in detail.

Very truly,

J. I. WYER, JR.,

President Nebraska Public Library Commission.

The Library Movement in Nebraska.

The law creating the Nebraska Public Library Commission went into effect June 28, 1901, and active work was begun the following November. This law was the culmination of a series of efforts that had been made by the friends of libraries and education during the previous six years. The Nebraska library association was organized in 1895. Its membership included a mere handful of people from the libraries of Lincoln and Omaha, with one or two from other places. In this handful of people, however, were two library school graduates, and several other people who had been in touch with the library movement in other states, and were ambitious to have Nebraska wake up to her opportunities. A committee of the Association drafted a library commission bill and secured its introduction in the legislative session of 1897, and again two years later. During this time the newspapers were used to disseminate knowledge of traveling libraries and library commissions. It was seen that some stronger influence than could be exerted by even the considerably augmented Library association must be brought to bear. Through the personal efforts of some of the librarians, the interest of some of the members of the Nebraska federation of women's clubs was enlisted, and these, in turn, brought the matter before their Federation in such an effective way that the fall of 1900 found that organization committed to the undertaking of securing the desired legislation. The Federation and the Library association did not stand alone, but had a goodly support from educators and other citizens, and the legislature of 1901 yielded to the popular demand and passed the library commission law, making Nebraska the twentieth state to establish such a commission. The law is a fitting memorial of the late David Brown, who introduced the bill. The appendix to this report includes a statement of the leading facts concerning the other library commissions.

Putting the Law into Operation.

A meeting of the Commission for the purpose of organization was held on June 27, 1901, with all members present. At a subsequent meeting, Mr. Wyer was elected president, and on September 5, 1901, Miss Edna D. Bullock was elected secretary. The actual work of the office did not begin until November 11, 1901, so that this report covers about twelve months of work. The Commission has held five meetings.

Close study of the law brings out the fact that its *mandatory* features contemplate chiefly the encouragement of the establishment of libraries where none exist, and the improvement of those already established, and the collection and reporting of facts concerning libraries. The *permissive* feature of the law relates to traveling libraries. The Commission *may*, if it seems best, purchase and loan books. Much misapprehension has arisen in the popular mind concerning the functions of a library commission, many people supposing that the circulation of traveling libraries is the only purpose for which such a commission exists. The real purpose of a library commission is that of library extension—the encouragement of the founding of libraries and their intelligent and economical administration. The traveling library, rightly understood and operated, is merely a powerful instrument for the furtherance of the general purposes of a library commission. By loaning people a few good books, and giving them an opportunity to learn, by the concrete example of a traveling library, what a library may mean to a community, the Commission is merely carrying out the injunction of the law to encourage the founding of libraries where none exist. In order to administer their trust more worthily, two members of the Commission at their own expense attended a meeting of the American library association, and consulted with the representatives of other library commissions as to the scope of the work. At the next meeting of the Commission, reports of their investigations were made, and the plans for the work were based on the experience of other states.

Establishment of Libraries.

"To promote and assist by counsel and encouragement the formation of libraries where none exist" is, then, the first duty of this Commission. It is capable of a very liberal interpretation, and wisely so. Through the newspapers, at educational and other gatherings, by the distribution of literature, and a vast amount of correspondence, the attention of people all over Nebraska has been called to the subject of libraries. We have had correspondence with more than 25 places where no libraries exist concerning their establishment and operation. Wherever a library movement is in progress, we have sent the best printed helps that we could procure, and have supplemented this by personal correspondence or interviews. As a result of the sending of circular letters and printed matter among the women's clubs, a number of clubs have been encouraged to take up the matter of starting libraries, in several cases with immediate success, while others are gradually working in that direction. Women's clubs in Osceola, Sutton, Wayne, Madison, Stanton, Wakefield, Bloomfield, Aurora, Sidney, Stromsburg, Milford, Valley, Stella, Elba, Stuart, Wisner and Minden have agitated the matter and there is no doubt of their ultimate success. The inquiries sent into this office from these and other places comprehend the best means of agitating the subject, the library laws of the state, the proper form for an ordinance, the selection and purchase of books, and the general details of library administration. Sometimes the breath of life has been recalled to dead or dying library movements by merely relating what other towns in Nebraska are doing. During the past two years there have been free libraries established at Falls City, Fremont, Louisville, McCook, Stromsburg and Osceola. At Fairbury and Columbus, association libraries have become public libraries during that time, and association libraries have been started or renewed at Sutton, Stanton and Valley.

The greatest obstacle to the establishment of libraries, after the ignorance of their importance and desirability are disposed of, is the inefficient revenue law of Nebraska. The two-mill levy provided for by law for library purposes is worse than inadequate in most towns. With an assessment roll of \$350,000 and a two-mill library levy, a town of 5,000 people cannot support a public library in any way commensurate with the educational necessities of the community. The \$700 will be consumed by the time rent, heat, light, janitor service, and even an untrained and poorly compensated librarian are paid for, leaving nothing for books. A library without a fairly constant supply of new books might almost as well never have been, for it soon ceases to be a force in the community. Poor pay usually means poor work, and it is as true of librarians as of any other people. A trained librarian can enable a community to get more out of 400 volumes than an untrained one could get out of several thousand volumes. There are three graduates of library schools of recognized standing engaged in library work in Nebraska. Several other library workers in the state have had partial courses in the best library schools, or have attended summer library schools, or have received their training through experience in well administered public libraries. Others, without training or experience, but with a desire to learn and the true library spirit, are doing admirable work—but too many places are filled by persons who cannot make a public library take its proper place among the educational forces of the state. We need trained librarians in Nebraska, but we cannot have them until library revenues permit the payment of adequate salaries. Meantime, it is the business of this Commission to assist the librarians and library boards to a better knowledge of modern library methods. The new public library at Falls City sent its librarian to Lincoln to study library management and, with the assistance this Commission, the books were classified, all the necessary records made, the general routine of management outlined, and a catalog begun. We have the best literature on library management for distribution to persons connected with libraries, and many such have testified as to its usefulness to

them. Several libraries have requested the secretary to visit them in order that they may improve their methods, and this feature of the work is being attended to as fast as time permits. The coming biennial period promises a good deal of such travel.

There are public libraries in some of the smaller towns that could not exist if any of their resources were devoted to the payment of librarians. At the beginning of our work, it seemed doubtful if it was wise to encourage the establishment of libraries in such towns. The experience of the year has been that a library can be maintained almost anywhere if the people want it strenuously enough to *establish and maintain* it. Syracuse is a small town but excellent results have come from the determination to have a public library. During the past year, the Women's club and other citizens of that place have contributed money enough to renovate and refit cosy rooms for the public library. This is a practical demonstration of what may be done in towns of less than 1,000 population, if only the library spirit prevails. We have recently published a pamphlet entitled "How to start a public library" for distribution throughout the state.

Nebraska has comparatively few public libraries. We regard it as our business to endeavor to increase their number and efficiency, but our limited means make rapid progress impossible. There are, in the state, according to the most correct information obtainable, twenty-seven free public libraries organized under the general library law. Some of these, it is feared, have so far disregarded the intent of the law that such libraries "shall be forever free to the inhabitants," as to charge a fee for the privilege of borrowing books. It is our policy to call the attention of library boards to the plain language of the statute, and the opinion of the Attorney General, whenever we discover an infringement of the law. The public library, like the public school, would defeat, to a greater or less extent, the purpose of its existence by interposing any barrier between it and the people who need it most. In eighteen towns, where there are no public libraries, there are association, or incorporated libraries, some of which are free, but most of which make the borrowing of books conditional upon the payment of a fee. It shall be our endeavor to encourage the conversion of these association libraries into free public libraries as fast as may be.

There is a tendency towards a system of county libraries. In several counties, the use of rooms in the court house is given to the public library in the county seat on condition that residents of the county may borrow books. We shall strive to direct this tendency along the lines most approved by the experience of other states. The needs of those who live outside of corporate limits will be kept constantly in mind. What legislation is needed to bring about the best system of county libraries is not now evident. Mistakes have been made by some of the older states, the chief of them being to compel the rural schools to divert school money to the purchase of library books, not for the school alone, but for the entire district. As a system of public libraries, this plan is a failure, and it is, in most respects, a drawback to the school, for it prevents the school from having a properly selected school library. A law empowering county commissioners to contribute to the support of any public or other free library in a county, on condition that residents of the county be allowed the privileges of the library, would be a beneficial piece of legislation at this time.

School Libraries.

Next to the establishment and improvement of public libraries, our interest has centered in the school libraries of the state. Much money is spent annually for library books by our school districts—some of it aimlessly and extravagantly. In order to encourage the systematic and economical purchase of the best and most suitable books for school libraries, we published

and distributed to every county superintendent in the state, enough copies of a graded "List of books for school libraries" for all the teachers under his jurisdiction. The secretary traveled over 1,000 miles to visit the union normal institutes of western Nebraska in the interest of more and better school libraries. We have had a considerable correspondence with the school people concerning their school libraries, and it is the custom of many of them to call at this office for suggestions on the subject when they are in the city. The secretary has collected and keeps in our office for inspection, a large number of the best books for school libraries, and new books are studied with a view to including them on future lists. Complete statistics concerning the public school libraries are being collected for a subsequent report. There is nothing in the laws of the state relating to school libraries, but the Superintendent of Public Instruction has ruled that district boards may use school money to maintain libraries for school purposes. Many districts have realized the necessity of books other than text books as part of the regular equipment of the school, and are building up libraries. Some of the town schools have very creditable libraries for the pupils. Pawnee City has a well selected school library of 1,600 volumes. Too many of the school libraries, however, are merely a collection of books to be used as tools in school work by the high schools. We hope to assist in changing the basis of selection so that children may be encouraged to form the reading habit at the very beginning of the school course.

Traveling Libraries.

The most important feature of our work is the traveling library. We have now thirty collections of forty volumes each traveling about the state. They remain three months in a place, and then return to Lincoln for inspection and the taking of statistics before re-shipment. There were preliminary applications on file before any of the books were ready to go out, sufficient to require nearly all the books we had money to buy. The demand is gradually increasing, without any special effort on our part to augment it. We have not been able to push the circulation of these libraries, because the demand has always been greater than the supply. We could have found places for several times the number of libraries. As it is, the thirty libraries have made sixty-six trips including those now out, and have visited forty-four places in thirty counties. In twenty-one of these places reporting, the average number of borrowers is forty-eight. These twenty-one libraries contain 840 volumes, and reached over 1 000 actual borrowers. No other 840 books of a general character, in the state, reach so many borrowers. These 840 volumes were loaned 5,521 times in ten months, although most of them were not in circulation the whole time. This makes an average of 6.5 loans per volume during that time. This is a phenomenal circulation as compared with the circulation of books from the public libraries over the country. In many cases, the books were read aloud in the family circle, so that the number of borrowers is considerably less than the number of readers. As an economical way of getting the best books to the most readers at the least cost, the traveling library has no competitors.

The selection of the books has been most careful, and no book known to us to be inferior or valueless has been sent out. The almost universal satisfaction of the borrowers has justified all the pains taken with the selection. Half of every library is selected for the children, it being our belief that the children of Nebraska are very important people. Half of every library is made up of fiction and stories, but the proportion of borrowers of the miscellaneous books is very much greater than that commonly reported by the average public library. If any judgment can be deduced from these facts, it seems as if Nebraska might some day add to her supremacy regarding illiteracy, a much-more-to-be coveted reputation for not only knowing *how* to read, but knowing *what* to read.

The traveling libraries have been kept chiefly in drug stores, barber

shops, libraries, post offices, school houses and dwellings. The librarians, whether barbers, druggists, teachers or housewives, have almost invariably shown tact and intelligence in their work with the libraries, and correspondence with them, could we include it in this report, would be ample evidence that traveling libraries can perform an important part in the educational development of the state. The rural districts around the towns to which the books were sent were reached to a considerable extent, the librarians having instructions to that effect. Some of the libraries have gone direct to the rural school houses or post offices. Others have helped out small libraries and enabled them to keep up the public interest. The treatment of the books by the borrowers has been, in most cases, quite satisfactory. Books that have been lost or unduly damaged by borrowers, have been replaced by them, and not a single volume is missing from the libraries as a result of the failure of the borrowers to keep their agreement.

Much literature of value, which can be obtained without cost, has been distributed by means of the traveling libraries. Some very valuable state and government documents, including our own agriculture, horticulture, dairy, poultry, charities and corrections, labor and education reports, and various United States reports of a similar nature, have thus been put within reach of the people. Many splendid magazines have been given to us for distribution in a similar way.

Keeping in mind that the traveling libraries are to be used to encourage the establishment and maintenance of public libraries, and having more applications than libraries, we made the general rule to give applicants for first libraries preference over applicants for second libraries, but offered to make any community that would pay for one traveling library a permanent traveling library station for five years. Osceola was the first to take advantage of this offer. After receiving the first traveling library, which they installed in a drug store, the Ladies' literary club of Osceola, finding that 40 books were not enough, collected 65 suitable volumes to circulate with the traveling library. Then they raised money to become a permanent traveling library station, and by that time the community was educated up to the library idea, and the village board passed a library ordinance levying the full two mills for a public library. This is a typical case of the use of a traveling library for encouraging the founding of libraries. Two other libraries have been given by residents of Harvard and Valley, and we are in correspondence with other places where the money to become permanent stations is now being raised.

During the next biennial period, we can use to the advantage of the state, 100 traveling libraries. The additional books to make these will cost \$2,600. The management of the traveling library system will, in the near future, require the services of a competent person in this office. Every book has to be unwrapped, inspected, mended, if necessary, records made of its circulation, and as carefully wrapped and packed again for re-shipment. The correspondence with the librarians require much time, and to obtain the best results, the secretary should have more time to devote to this correspondence, and to pushing the circulation and directing the use of the traveling libraries. A library, whether traveling or stationary, is not a live thing unless there is life put into its administration.

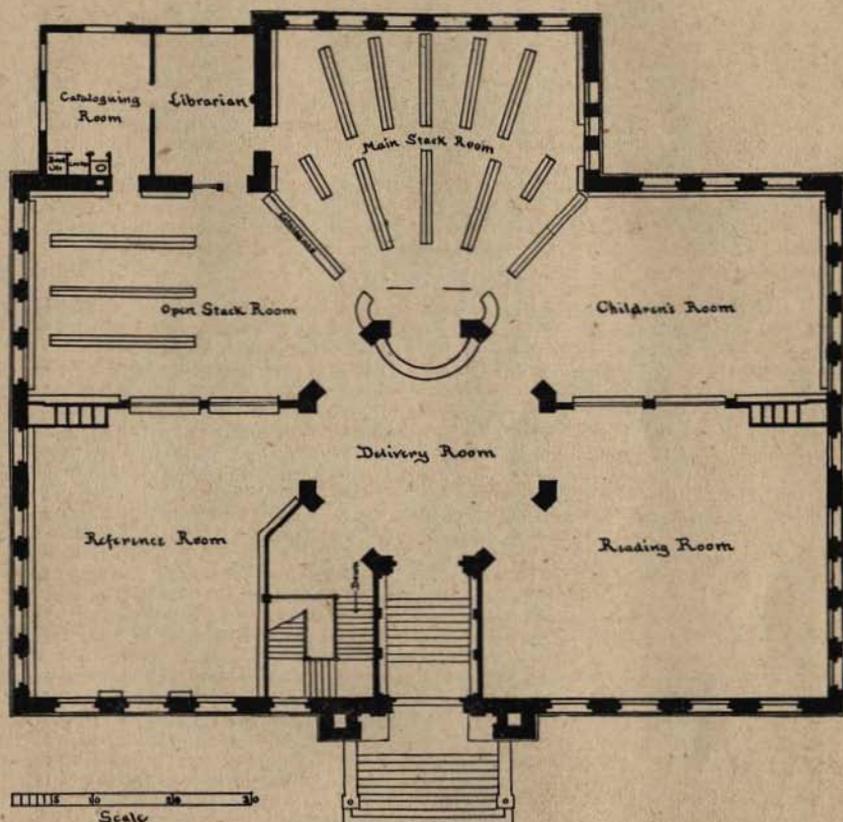
Special Loans.

The Nebraska federation of women's clubs gave this commission its traveling library of over 300 volumes of reference books, valued at over \$300. In return, we agreed, as authorized by law, to loan books to clubs for study purposes. There have been 129 volumes, principally on American and English history and literature, child study, and the fine arts, sent out to clubs and to one school. There are, at present, eighty-three volumes out as special loans. One of the loans is at Keystone, fifteen miles north of Ogalalla, and

another at Bridgeport, Cheyenne county. At the latter place, the applicant wrote that they wished to study English history, and that she had the only English history in town. An ampler appropriation would permit the extension of this work, to the great advantage of the people. By supplementing our resources with available material from the State library, and the University library, we have made it possible for a few people who otherwise might have been without opportunity for study, to educate themselves. When we were without books on subjects called for, we have bought the best within our means. The law contemplates the loaning of books to individuals as well as to clubs and communities. The time should come when any citizen of Nebraska who desires to study any subject of general interest may secure books on that subject from this Commission. If a man in Blaine county wants a flower book so that he may study the wild flowers of the vicinity with the children of the neighborhood, he ought to be able to get it from us, and the particular instance is a real one—we had such a book in Blaine county all last summer. Special loans is one of our most promising fields for effort, but we need more money before we can make it extend very far. The field is capable of indefinite extension. The library extension committee of the Nebraska federation of women's clubs has been of constant assistance in the work of helping especially deserving localities to a knowledge of our system of special loans, as well as being a most efficient aid in the general work of library extension.

Library Buildings.

The subject of library buildings has become an important one in the state. During the last two years, money, aggregating \$200,000 has been given to seven towns in Nebraska for library buildings. This does not include the purchase of sites, which were furnished by citizens of the several towns. The Carnegie library building of the Lincoln city library has been pronounced by librarians everywhere a model building. The most approved feature of this building is its floor plan arrangement with a view to economical administration. It should be a matter of pride to Nebraskans that there is one library building in the state that even the most critical of experienced librarians can recommend as a model building. The influence of such a structure on the library architecture of the state is already noticeable, and makes future blunders by library boards and architects almost inexcusable. While the Lincoln library building cost \$75,000, its plan can be accommodated to much smaller buildings, and the Carnegie buildings at Beatrice and Fremont have been modeled after the Lincoln building. Buildings costing about \$8,000 each have been erected at Falls City and York as the result of bequests. Plattsmouth has a new building, and the Carnegie buildings at South Omaha and Grand Island are about to be erected.



Main Floor

CARNEGIE BUILDING, LINCOLN CITY LIBRARY.

Work of Other Library Commissions.

It will be of interest in reviewing the beginnings of the work in our own state and in planning for its future to consider how the work has started and grown in other states. The rapid spread of the movement for state library commissions is strikingly shown by a glance at the table which forms part of the appendix to this report. Besides the remarkable fact that within twelve years since the creation of the first commission no less than twenty-two states have organized for effective supervision and administration of their library interests, is the noticeable and invariable increase in the appropriations which have been made to carry on this work. The work was begun everywhere as an experiment and with scanty financial provision for its support. It has been fortunate that the constitution of the various commissions has been by law largely ex-officio and in very few cases have partisan considerations determined the membership. This has had the effect of putting the direction of the work into zealous, competent hands. Men and

women really interested in the work; alive to the possibilities for usefulness latent in it and informed or willing to inform themselves as to all that had already been done elsewhere, have been enlisted in this educational work of library extension. In such hands the success of the new enterprise has everywhere approved the work to the people. Its beneficent results have been state-wide and nowhere have legislatures been more ready to testify with increased appropriations to the people's faith in this work, than in the Mississippi valley.

In asking for somewhat larger revenues for the coming biennium this Commission deems it wise and proper to describe some of the lines of work which have been undertaken elsewhere with conspicuous success and which seem to promise the most usefulness for Nebraska.

Field Work.

By this phrase is meant in brief, to improve libraries already established and to encourage the formation of libraries where none exist, and to do this in an active energetic way. Not to wait until called upon, but to make the first advances, discreetly of course, and with tact and patience, which will change an inefficient library or librarian, insensibly perhaps, into a better one; which will stimulate a community to become a permanent traveling library station; which will re-ignite some smouldering spark of sentiment for a public library and warm it into a movement which shall result in a library which may become to that community the center of culture, information and power which a library ought to be. All this and much more, of which space will not permit the mention, is called field work because to do it in the right way our secretary must go right out and make personal work of it. It cannot be best done from an office. The Wisconsin commission spends two-thirds of its money in salaries for vigorous field workers and spends no money for books. Their motto is "Spend your money in educative field work and the books will take care of themselves," and the generous way in which gifts of money for books and buildings has poured into that commission seems to prove the wisdom of their plan.

With our present income, too much of our secretary's time is necessarily frittered away on the clerical and administrative details of routine correspondence and the preparation and management of the traveling library system, all of which could be very well done by cheaper help if we had money to employ it. It is our hope that appropriations for the next two years will allow much more of this important "field work" which is indeed by far the most promising work in which we can engage.

Duplicate Department.

We would like to make the office of the Commission a great central clearing house to which might be sent by individuals all over the state odd numbers, volumes or sets of periodicals or duplicate books of any kind, and from which might be sent out to libraries, complete sets of such journals as are wanted. Some of the other commissions handle many thousands of books in this way every year and save hundreds of dollars to the libraries of their states in preserving and making available much valuable material which otherwise is destroyed or stored in attic or cellar. Complete sets of periodicals form the most entertaining and useful books which a library can own, and our Commission can do no more helpful work than in building up such sets in Nebraska libraries.

State Aid to Libraries.

Perhaps not just now, but at some future time it would be profitable and right for the state of Nebraska to make provisions whereby any library regularly and maintaining a proper standard of efficiency, which raises \$50 or \$100 per year locally and expends it for books approved by the Library commission, might receive a like sum or half as much from the state. Nebraska can well afford to offer inducements to its citizens to read more of the best books.

APPENDIX.

Nebraska Public Library Commission.

Books acquired since November 10, 1901.

By purchase	1200
By gifts	
N. F. W. C.	295
Publishers	240
T. L. stations	120
Other sources	33
	<u>1888</u>

Expenditures for biennial period ending November 30, 1902.

Books	\$1033.27	
Salary	1041.63	
Supplies	510.18	
Travel	21.52	\$4000.00
	<u>2606.60</u>	<u>2606.60</u>
Balance		\$1393.40

Publications.

Circular of information.

State Fair circular.

*Has your town a public library?

List of books for school libraries.

Suggestive list of books for a small library recommended by the state library commissions of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Idaho, Delaware and Nebraska Nebraska edition.

Buying list of recent books, recommended by the same commissions and published by the Wisconsin commission.

Handbook of library organization, compiled by the library commissions of Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Nebraska edition published by courtesy of the Minnesota commission.

How to start a public library.

*Out of print.

These publications will be sent to anyone in Nebraska upon application.

Library Commission Law.

Chapter 49, Sections 13-21, Compiled Statutes of Nebraska, 1901.

SEC. 13. The Governor shall appoint one person for a term of five years who with the State Librarian, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Chancellor and Librarian of the University of Nebraska shall constitute the Nebraska Public Library Commission. The members of said Commission shall serve without pay, but shall be allowed actual expenses when attending meetings of the Commission. Said Commission shall annually elect a chairman from its number and a secretary, who may be chosen outside the membership of the Commission. The secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Commission; and accurate accounts of its financial transactions; shall have charge of its work in organizing new libraries and have all general administrative duties incident to carrying on the work of the Commission. The Secretary shall in addition to a suitable salary, be allowed actual traveling expenses while absent from his office in the service of the Commission, the same to be certified and paid in the same manner as other expenses incurred by the Commission. (1901, chap. 43.)

SEC. 14. As soon as appropriation provided for in this act becomes available, any library, community, local organization, either incorporated or unincorporated, or any body of citizens or tax-payers organized for library purposes shall upon complying with the rules prescribed by this Commission be entitled to the privileges of this act.

SEC. 15. Any books, collections of books or other property of the Commission may be loaned to any library, college, school, University Extension Center, Chautauqua Circle, Liter-

ary Society, Study Club or other association approved by the rules of the Commission under such rules for the safe-keeping, preservation, care, handling and management of the same as may be fixed by said Commission; provided, that the expenses of transportation be paid by borrowers.

SEC. 16. The Commission shall each year obtain from all libraries in the state reports showing the condition, growth, development and manner of conducting said libraries, together with such other facts and statistics regarding the same as may be deemed of public interest by said Commission.

SEC. 17. The Commission shall, when asked, give advice and instruction to all libraries or individuals and to all communities which may propose to establish libraries as to the best means for establishing, organizing and administering such libraries, selecting and cataloging books and other duties of library management. The said Commission shall, so far as possible, promote and assist by counsel and encouragement the formation of libraries where none exist, and the Commission may send at its expense members or officers to aid in organizing new libraries or improving those already established.

SEC. 18. The Commission created by this act shall purchase all books and equipment for use in lending and circulating its traveling libraries as hereinbefore provided, and shall keep a complete record of libraries to which books are sent and of the transactions therewith, and shall make a biennial report to the Governor of the facts of public interest and value in relation to its work.

SEC. 19. Offices for the Commission shall be provided at the library of the University of Nebraska, or in the State Capitol building.

SEC. 20. There is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State Treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of (\$4,000) Four Thousand Dollars to be expended by the Library Commission created by this act for the purchase and equipment of collections of books and otherwise carrying into effect the provisions of this act.

SEC. 21. Said Commission may from time to time as needed draw an order signed by its Secretary and Chairman in favor of any party to whom money is due, stating in said order what the money is to be used for and upon presentation of such order the State Auditor shall draw his warrant upon the State Treasurer for the amount therefor, not exceeding the amount of the appropriation for the purposes of the Commission.

General Library Law.

Public libraries are authorized by a state law. Copies of this law are kept in this office for distribution. In reference to the meaning of the law, the Attorney General writes as follows:

"I have received your letter inquiring whether a public library established by a city under the provisions of Section 1, chapter 49, Compiled Statutes, may require residents to pay a fee as a condition of borrowing books.

Section 6 of the chapter cited is as follows:

"Every library and reading room established under this act, shall be forever free to the use of the inhabitants of the city or town, subject always to such reasonable regulations as the library board may adopt to render said library and reading room of the greatest use to the inhabitants of said city or town, and the board may exclude from the use of the library and reading rooms, any person who shall willfully violate or refuse to comply with rules and regulations established for the government thereof."

The statute declares that such a library "shall be forever free to the use of the inhabitants." In my opinion the word "free" in this statute is used in the sense in which it is used in the constitutional and statutory provisions relating to free schools. The right to free instruction and the right to attend a free school cannot be abridged by regulations requiring pupils to pay fees. The library is maintained by taxation.

I am of the opinion that inhabitants of the city cannot be required to pay a fee as a condition of borrowing books."

Statistics of Nebraska Traveling Libraries.

Traveling libraries have been sent to the following places:

<i>First Congressional District.</i>		Genoa	1
Brock	2	Leigh	2
College View	1	Loretto	1
Douglas	2	Schuyler	2
Murray	1	Stanton	1
Nemaha	1	Wakefield	1
Roca	2	Wisner	1
Syracuse	3	<i>Fourth Congressional District.</i>	
Tecumseh	1	Alexandria	3
Weeping Water	1	Fairmont	1
School dist. 18, Lancaster Co.	2	Friend	2
<i>Second Congressional District.</i>		Geneva	1
*Valley	2	German town	1
<i>Third Congressional District.</i>		*Osceola	3
Cedar Rapids	1	Wymore	1

<i>Fifth Congressional District.</i>		Palisade	1
Blue Hill	2	Phelps and Kearney Co.	1
Culbertson	3	Trenton	1
*Harvard	3	<i>Sixth Congressional District.</i>	
Hayes Center	1	Brewster	1
Indianola	2	Kearney	1
Kenesaw	3	Loup City	1
McCook	1	Ord	1
Mt. Pleasant	1	Purdum	2
Nelson	1	Sargent	1

* Permanent traveling library stations.

Summary.

30 libraries have been to 44 places in 30 counties.
 They have made 67 trips, including those now out.
 21 libraries reporting had over 1000 borrowers.
 840 volumes were loaned 5521 times in 10 months, some of them being in circulation only 3 months.
 3 permanent traveling library stations have been established.

Public Libraries of Nebraska.

A public library is one that is established by ordinance under the state law.

	TOWN	Year Estab- lished	Popula- tion	No. of Volumes	No. of Borrowers
1	Albion	1900	1269	1400	578
2	Beatrice	1893	7875	7134	3000
*3	College View .....	....	865	....	....
4	Columbus	1901	3522	1000	60
5	Crete	1873	2199	3500	....
6	David City	1890	1845	3500	561
7	Fairbury	1900	1340	1400	856
8	Falls City	1901	3022	2400	162
9	Fremont	1901	7241	3000	1450
10	Grand Island	1884	7554	8064	1355
11	Humboldt	1883	1215	4000	180
12	Kearney	1890	5634	3500	912
13	Lincoln	1877	40169	12350	3561
14	Louisville .....	....	738	....	....
15	McCook	1902	2445	1026	434
16	Nebraska City	1896	7380	4500	1014
17	Omaha	1877	102555	57864	14414
18	Osceola	1902	882	65	125
19	Plattsmouth	1886	4964	1734	841
20	Scribner	1900	827	530	210
21	Seward	1885	1970	1460	200
22	Shelton	1898	861	800	450
23	South Omaha	1900	25001	2000	....
†24	Stromsburg	1902	1154	....	....
25	Syracuse	1896	851	691	175
26	Tecumseh	1894	2005	1000	....
27	York	1894	5132	3500	....

*This library was destroyed by fire for the second time in 1902.

†Ordinance passed, but library not yet organized.

Association Libraries and Other Public Libraries Not Supported by Taxation.

	TOWN	NAME OF LIBRARY	Year Estab- lished	No. of Volumes
1	Blair	Public library	1881	1300
2	Broken Bow	Ladies' lib. association	1886	1500
3	Chadron	City library	1888	650
4	Fairbury	Jefferson co. teachers' library	1887	1150
5	Fullerton	Nance co. teachers' library	1902	....
6	Geneva	H. L. Smith library	1895	1187
7	Harvard	People's library	1895	....
8	Hastings	Public library	1887	2562
9	Hebron	Teachers' library	1888	....
10	Holdrege	Public library	1895	700
11	Hyannis	Congregational library	1897	200
12	Kearney	W. C. T. U. hospital library	1881	1000
13	North Platte	R. R. Y. M. C. A. library	1890	2000
14	Omaha	Y. M. C. A. library	....	1200
15	"	Swedish library association lib.	1879	800
16	Pleasanton	Pleasanton library	1901	43
17	Stanton	Stanton library association lib	1886	800
18	Superior	Ladies' library association lib.	....	....
19	Sutton	Sutton library association lib.	1902	300
20	Verdon	Free library	1887	300
21	Wymore	Public library	1899	525

College and Academy Libraries.

	TOWN	NAME OF SCHOOL	Year Estab- lished	No. of Volumes
1	Bellevue	Bellevue college	1884	4250
2	Bethany	Cotner university	....	....
3	Blair	Trinity col. and theol. seminary	1899	1000
4	Chadron	Chadron academy	....	1000
5	CollegeView	Union college	1891	2100
6	Crete	Doane college	1872	8911
7	Franklin	Franklin academy	1882	4020
8	Grand Island	Grand Island college	1893	3300
9	Hastings	Hastings college	1882	4000
10	Lincoln	University of Nebraska	1869	56000
11	Neligh	Gates academy	1881	5000
12	Omaha	Brownell Hall	1863	1550
13	"	Creighton college	....	11943
14	"	Presbyterian theological seminary	1892	5000
15	"	Nebraska school for the deaf	1875	1500
16	Pawnee	Pawnee academy	1893	300
17	Peru	Nebraska state normal school	1878	12000
18	Santee	Santee normal training school	....	1500
19	Uni. Place	Nebraska Wesleyan university	1883	2500
20	Wahoo	Luther academy	1883	2500
21	Wayne	Nebraska normal college	1892	2000
22	Weep'g Water	Weeping Water academy	1894	1300
23	York	York college	....	1200

State Libraries not Already Mentioned.

	Lincoln	Nebraska state library	1867	46000
	"	Nebraska state historical society library	1878	20000

Gifts and Bequests to Nebraska Libraries, 1900-1902.

LIBRARY	FROM	GIFT	FOR
Beatrice	Andrew Carnegie	\$20,000	Building
"	Citizens	Land	Site
"	"	65 books	
Bellevue college		\$225	
Blair, Trinity college		324 books	
Chadron academy		Books	
Columbus	Women's club...	Table & pictures	
Crete, Doane college		\$3500	
"		600 books	
Falls City	Lydia B. Woods.	\$10,000	Bldg & bks
"	J. H. Niles	Land	Site
"	Citizens	\$200	Walks
Franklin academy		\$40	
"		\$50 in books	
Fremont	Andrew Carnegie	\$15,000	Building
"	Towner Smith...	Land	Site
"	Citizens	\$2,000	Books
Geneva, H. L. Smith lib.		292 books	
Grand Island	Andrew Carnegie	\$20,000	Building
"	Citizens	Land	Site
"	"	150 books	
Grand Island college		12 books	
Hastings		Book cases—books	
Kearney		800 books	
Lincoln	Andrew Carnegie	\$77,000	Building
"	Citizens	Land	Site
"	Mrs. F. N. Gibson	200 rare books	
"	Citizens	300 books	
" Uni. of Neb.	Simon Kerl.	2,000 books	
N. Platte, R R Y M C A	Helen Gould.	\$1000	Books
"	Intern'l comm.	\$150	"
Omaha, Brownell hall. .		\$200	
" Y. M. C. A		100 books	
Plattsmouth	T. E. Parmele ..	Bricks	Building
"	Mrs. C. A. " ..	Land	Site
"	Citizens	\$1861.12	Building
Scribner	"	14 books	
Seward	"	420 books	
South Omaha	Andrew Carnegie	\$50,000	Building
"	City	Land	Site
Sutton lib association. .		30 books	
Syracuse	C. & W'n's club. .	\$400	Refitting
Tecumseh		\$150 in books	building
Uni. Place, Wesleyan ..		\$1,270	Books
Verdon free library		15 books	
Weeping Water acad. . .		\$50 in books	
York	Lydia B. Woods .	\$10,000	Bldg & bks

State Library Commissions.

LAW APPROVED	STATE	NAME	Last Annual Appropriation	Traveling Librarians	State Aid
May 28, 1890	Massachusetts	Bd. of free pub. lib. com ..	\$ 4500	No	Yes
Apr. 11, 1891	N. Hampshire	Bd. of library com'r's	500	No	Yes
Apr. 27, 1892	New York	Home Education Dept....	62460	Yes	Yes
June 1, 1893	Connecticut	Public lib. com	6750	No	Yes
Nov. 6, 1894	Vermont	Bd. of lib. com'rs	900	Yes	Yes
Apr. 22, 1895	Wisconsin	Free lib. com	9000	Yes	No
Apr. 22, 1896	Ohio	Bd. of lib. com'rs	7500	Yes	No
Dec. 16, 1897	Georgia	State lib. com	None	No	No
Feb. 23, 1899	Maine	Library com ..	4700	Yes	Yes
Feb. 24, 1899	Indiana	Public lib. com	3000	Yes	No
Mar. 4, 1899	Kansas	Traveling lib. com	4000	Yes	No
Apr. 10, 1899	Colorado	Bd. of lib. com'rs	250	No	No
Apr. 21, 1899	Minnesota	State Pub. lib. com	3500	Yes	No
May 5, 1899	Pennsylvania	Free lib. com	1750	Yes	No
June 1, 1899	Michigan	Bd. of lib. com'rs	5800	Yes	No
Mar. 20, 1900	Iowa	Iowa lib. com	6000	Yes	No
Feb. 28, 1901	Idaho	State Lib. extension and trav. lib. com.....	3000	Yes	No
Mar. 20, 1900	New Jersey	Pub. lib. com	1800	Yes	Yes
Mar. 2, 1901	Washington	State lib. com	1000	Yes	Yes
Mar. 9, 1901	Delaware	State lib. com	500	Yes	Yes
Mar. 27, 1901	Nebraska	Pub. lib. com	2000	Yes	No
Apr. 8, 1902	Maryland	State lib. com	1000	Yes	No
Apr. 8, 1902	Maryland	Free lib. com	1000	No	No

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