

Copy
Nebraska Public Library Commission

Lincoln, Dec. 26, 1902.

Mrs. Belle M. Stoutenborough,

Chairman Library extension committee, N.F.W.C.

Dear Mrs. Stoutenborough:-

In order to distribute more widely and thoroughly a knowledge of the work of this Commission, I am sending you copies of our first biennial report for all the clubs in the Federation. This will show what we have done, and something of what we hope to accomplish if a more adequate appropriation is made for the work. On the whole, the showing made is one that the Federation, through whose efforts this Commission came into existence, may feel abundantly satisfied with. From the very first, there has been more to be done than we had means to accomplish. No better evidence that Nebraska was ready for a library commission is needed, than the use people have made of it. There are more libraries in process of crystalizing right now than have been started in Nebraska in the last ten years, and the library workers are, in most cases, members of the women's clubs.

The appropriation of \$4000 has been economically expended. It will lapse on April 1st, 1903, and the balance now on hand is sufficient to carry on the work at our present rate of expenditure until that time. The work of this Commission did not begin until November, 1901, so that the \$4000 covers the expenses of only 17 months. At the same rate of expenditure, it is easy to be seen that it would take \$6000 to cover the next biennium, which will contain 24 months. The Commission is unanimous in believing that we must extend our work somewhat, and will ask the legislature to appropriate \$8000 for the coming biennium.

As matters now stand, the Commission can afford but one employee, who must be the general executive officer, and in addition, her own stenographer, errand boy and general man-of-all-work. The Commission asks for money to give some additional help in this office.

Once the Secretary is relieved of the routine work, she will have more time to extend the influence of this Commission, to disseminate knowledge of the library movement, to print and distribute more literature, and to undertake new lines of work not possible now. This will require more money for travel, printing and postage.

We need more traveling libraries, and the demand for special loans continues to increase. To carry forward this work will take more money. Then besides, the traveling libraries now on hand are beginning to wear out, so poorly are books bound when we get them. We will need money to rebind and replace the books we already have.

In addition to doing more of the things that we are already doing, there are several lines of work that we could profitably undertake. There has not been a minute that could be devoted to farmers' institutes and reading courses. There is a call on our file now for just such work, and there is much that we ought to do for and with, the people on the farms that we cannot now undertake.

We would like to help the small libraries by opening a magazine and book clearing house, but there is not time even to open correspondence on the subject.