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3 Nov. 1905.

Periodicals for reference work in small libraries

Nothing can equal the bound volumes of the standard magazines for usefulness in reference work in small libraries. The smaller the library, the more useful the periodicals; provided the library also contains Poole's and other periodical indexes which render the contents of the magazines available. A library of 1000 volumes, 300 of which are the volumes of the 10 best reference periodicals for the last 15 years, bound and accompanied by the necessary indexes may be made to mean much more to a town than a large collection of fiction with a few histories and an encyclopaedia.

To buy these volumes already bound would cost at least \$600—but they would be worth all they cost. The indexes necessary would cost from \$17 to \$22 down to the end of 1904. No Nebraska library, however small, need be without its bound magazines for reference if librarians and trustees make a diligent canvas for the numbers necessary to make the volumes. Many a Nebraska attic contains quantities of periodicals that would be brought to light by a persistent call from the libraries. All too many magazines are used for kindling because the libraries have not asked for them.

This Commission is desirous of helping the libraries collect these sets—and to begin without delay. The sets most useful in the small library are the Outlook, Harper's magazine, World's work or Review of reviews, Bookman, Scientific American and the World of today. The last 10 or 15 years of these alone would go far towards making a good working reference collection. If to these could be added volumes of the Atlantic, Century, Scribner's magazine, McClure's, Forum, North American review, Critic, Current literature, Popular science monthly, and even Munsey and the Cosmopolitan, a splendid basis for reference work will have been established.

Libraries should habitually collect the standard reference periodicals from those who do not care for them longer. Such as are not needed to fill out the library set may be sent to the Commission by freight at our expense. Lists of missing numbers and volumes desired by libraries should be sent to the Commission from time to time, and magazines sent to libraries will be forwarded at their expense. Our magazine clearing house work is just beginning, and it is intended to be a help to all Nebraska libraries. The libraries can thus help themselves and each other.

It is not essential that magazines be bound in order to be useful, though it is much better that they be bound, as use unfits unbound numbers for subsequent binding. There are good temporary binders to be had for little money, and a durable permanent library binding can be put on the average sized magazine for 50 to 75 cents a volume. The indexes to magazines are as follows:— Poole's abridgement 1800–1899, \$12; the same 1900–1904 \$8; Reader's guide 1900–1904 \$15. A library needs the first mentioned and one of the other two, with a current subscription for the monthly cumulative issues of the index chosen, subscription costing \$3 a year.

No library should longer delay the accumulation of a working collection of periodicals. Get all the magazines you can; keep on getting them, and send the Commission those you do not need. Correspondence with reference to this subject will be welcomed by the Commission.

Respectfully,

Edna D. Bullock, Sec'y.