

Ten Years.
Chronicles of the Book Truck.
1924 - 1934.

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"We are having a Book Truck built to carry books to the farmers," said Miss Mulheron. "How would you like to be the one to run it?"

"Oh! I should adore it." I exclaimed.

That was my introduction in January 1924 to our present Rural Book Truck service. However the

Books to farmers.
Bookwagon idea was not new to me as summer service, largely to children, had been undertaken several years before. Besides, a half dozen years earlier I had listened with the greatest interest to tales of one of my co-workers in Iowa who had gone East to Hagerstown "to run a book-wagon." Ever since then such service had vied in glamour with tales from the land of romance. To have sudden and unexpected entrance to a book wagon, to be invited to enter and play a leading role, was like a fairy tale come true.

Three

Two months were to elapse before the miniature library was ready for the road. Two months in which to prepare our prospective patrons for our coming. It chanced that a Farmers' Institute was ^{held} at Gresham during January. The truck, with its library equipment far from completed but able to travel, was borrowed from the carpenter and presented as exhibit '2' at the Institute by Miss Mulhern, who told ~~the~~ the assembled farmers of the new service soon to be inaugurated. Both curiosity and interest were displayed by the listeners and many crowded around to inspect this strange innovation - a library on wheels. I had the unhappy reaction that the car itself aroused more interest than the prospect of reading the books it would bring to their doors. My presentiment was justified when we took stock of results for a very small percentage of the visitors registered their names as desiring the service and at least half of those who did, lived outside the county. However, the idea was new, descending upon them from a clear sky as it were, and time to adjust themselves to its possibilities was necessary.

During the next few weeks informal talks were given at as many rural Parent-Teacher and Grange meetings as possible. Students at the Union High School in Gresham were asked to help by spreading the news in their own and to neighboring families. Every where cards were distributed asking people to sign their names and return to the library if they cared to have the book.

Truck come to their homes. Again the response was discouragingly small with a high percentage sent in from Clackamas Co. - due to union school districts. Nor was newspaper publicity lacking. Both Portland and Gresham papers carried pictures of the truck and accounts of the new service it was to bring. It seemed that no preliminary preparation was omitted, yet still our list of would be patrons was pitifully brief.

March 25th 1924 arrived - the momentous day on which we first took to the highways and byways with our wares. The initial trip was East on Baseline Road from the 12 mile corner. Assuming that our publicity efforts must have failed to reach people I resolved to call upon every household on the road. Accordingly we came to a halt in front of the first house. I approached the door and knocked in some trepidation not quite certain how to present my invitation. I was greeted by a friendly smile from a lady who knew all about my new venture. She thought it a nice idea for any one who wanted books. As for herself she never read anything but the paper. She left book reading to her 10 year old son who stopped at the Gresham library every few days for a fresh supply.

At the next house a young home maker scarcely waited for me to finish my story for she wanted a book and she wanted it badly. It was a book on budgeting her household's income. Fortunately "Expending the Family income" was on the shelf. That book is unfortunately named.

Time after time it has elicited the comment. "Spending the income." I don't need anyone to tell me how to spend it. I'd like to know how not to spend it." But not so this lady who found in it just what she needed.

Encouraged by this cordial reception and successful transaction I approached the next house with more confidence. After a long interval my knock was answered by an ancient Japanese woman. I told her my story of books to be had at the gate. She shook her head looking as blank as though I had been reciting a Greek poem to her. I tried again. Her eye kindled, she pounced upon the word 'books' repeating it over and over with a funny twist on the o. "Come. I show." said she. A little dazed I followed her to the barn where she swung open a heavy door. Triumphant she pointed in. "Box! box!" she cried. "You want box?" I looked within and beheld pile upon pile of berry boxes and crates. I suppose after much effort and the one familiar sounding word she must have reasoned I wanted to buy a truck load of berry boxes. I recognized my limitations in conversing in Japanese, accepted defeat and withdrew without further argument.

During that first day I called upon half a hundred or more families. Less than a dozen borrowed books. However, many were interested in the idea of having books to read especially in the winter. Toward the end of March, spring work on the farm is usually demanding attention urgently. In the farm districts I now find our

patronage markedly influenced by season, weather and crops. The cauliflower growers do not start reading much until after the crop is harvested in late autumn. The berry growers launch an hegira to the fields to trim vines with the first touch of spring time and want little reading matter until trimming is completed. After a few weeks of reading they drop us again with the ripening of the first berries. Sunshine and mild weather reduce our popularity alarmingly, but a steady rain all day or a howling East wind and we return with empty shelves.

For two months I peddled our wares up and down the country roads returning every two weeks to the same people and then pushing on a few miles farther into the unexplored territory nearby. Many and varied were the receptions accorded me. If people wanted books, all well and good, they came for them, but those who did not want them felt some excuse should be offered. The two most popular ones were first, the possession of books of their own which they had not time to read, and second, such poor eye sight that reading was an impossibility. — I really thought some days that an itinerant oculist might do a good business.

That we were offering this service free of charge was to many beyond comprehension. Even now people ask how much we charge and are astonished by my reply. Just recently a new borrower "from the old country" offered

to pay for the books he had selected. When told there was no charge he smiled and exclaimed, "Ah, this is a good country! I am glad I came."

Those first weeks I was more likely to find people like 'Uncle Jimmy' who asked "How do you sell your books?" Told they were loaned not sold he asked "What do you charge?" After a careful explanation of how we functioned, he demanded impatiently "Well what does it cost?" Another simple explanation elicited the cautious reply, "Well, - maybe I'll get one next time you go by." - But he didn't.

A man, prominent in a certain community, we thought would surely want books, but he almost slammed the door in our faces so abrupt was his refusal. Years later we learned he had warned all of his neighbors against us, saying such an innovation was sure to increase the farmers' taxes. Happily, not many of his neighbors heeded him. In fact one of them who recognized us from the picture she had seen in the paper rushed out into the road to meet us joyously announcing that the coming of the book truck was "the greatest thing that had ever happened in the county." I am glad to say that, though the mis-trusting gentleman has never had dealings with us, four of his children, three in homes of their own, are steady customers of the library. Since writing this he asked for us to call

By the end of May we had four routes comfortably filled with readers, many of whom were sorry to have us discontinue the service for the summer, though they

admitted that Summer time was too busy a season on the farm for much reading. The first of September found us on the road again. Readily picking up our spring customers, we had a good start for the Winter season. Two more months of house to house visiting secured enough readers to keep us busy on the road four days a week, eight routes in all. Before long news of our service spread from borrowers to less fortunate friends. Then came requests that we stop at this house and go down that road and come over to some other district. They have been coming ever since from every where! From Hood River on the East to the Tualatin Valley on the West, and Concord Station on the South. One woman offered to take books if we would come to Tygh Valley! So far the Columbia has been an effective barrier on the North, though people from two of its islands come to the mainland to meet us.

At first our efforts and time were directed toward the farming districts attempting to reach first those who had asked for the service and then to arouse the interest of as many of their neighbors as possible. At the end of the first year we had 383 families using the truck. In the next two years the number increased to 458. Buckley Rd. had been made the boundary west of which the truck was not to stop, as the two Branch Libraries, Lenta and Montavilla might be expected to attract people from that distance. However we were constantly urged to come for someone here or there in the forbidden land. "But" protested a lady on Powell Valley, "I'm just four houses from Buckley and it is

two miles to Lents!." So the rule was broken and we called at her gate. Once broken there has been no mending it. A fiery old gentleman moved to 91st St. with a bunch of vacation books one summer. We had to go after them of course. He rounded up all of his new neighbors to reinforce his appeal for books. He was stone deaf and I could not shout loud enough to make my arguments heard -- so we returned to 91st St two weeks later. A Parent-Teacher Assoc. president heard of the old gentleman's triumph and staged one of her own. Armed with a list of P.T.A. members who wanted books she invited us to come to the Binnsmead district. We have been going regularly ever since. By 1930 the suburban patronage brought our count of families to 515.

Once a patron always a patron is by no means true of book truck patrons. We are constantly losing readers from one cause or another. 'Moving away' is the chief source of our loss. Recently a family leased a farm in Marion Co. we were told and in the next breath asked if there was a book truck there. I think the lady would have broken the lease rather than forfeit the books had the decision been hers. Sometimes a move works out to our benefit. The first time some one said "We consider buying property on a certain road, will you come to us there; for I don't want to buy it if you don't," I was quite amused. By now such an attitude is an every day affair. When possible, we follow our readers from one location to another telling them ahead of time when to expect us. If it is on a road new to us, we depend on them to extend an invitation to the

neighbors to come for books also. With such help on new roads and invitations from regular borrowers to new families in their neighborhoods, we have so far gained more families than we have lost each year.

Sometimes dropping out of an apathetic community entirely, we return a few years later to find a thriving business awaiting us. Such is the story of Latourell. For two years we visited this village of a half dozen families all of whom wanted books. Then some moved away and some lost interest and only one was left. At that point the Latourell call was dropped - 1926. Four years later a fragile little grandmother met us on the Highway and carried home a bag full of books. Every trip she walked the mile up to meet ~~to meet~~ us carrying that bag of books. Then the new postmistress joined her and carried another bag full. Eventually we learned they were passing the books around to their neighbors and decided we had better take a look at Latourell again. We found five families in the village and another on the island who wanted books, so the Latourell stop was reinstated and has been continued for three years with eight families ^{taking books} reading the past season.

Bridal Veil is another uncertain quantity, though it has been on our route the entire time. When the mill runs, business is good for us; when the mill shuts down it is bad. The type of people employed also effects our records. When we first went there, ~~the~~ most of the employees

were Finnish, few of whom read. Five years ago a group of Swedish workmen appeared. They spoke but could not read English. The entire Swedish collection was borrowed from North Portland for them. Great was their delight. By the time ^{the Swedish coll.} ~~that~~ was exhausted most of them were mastering English and now are reading it steadily. The past year the men are shifting again and more native born are in evidence with the result that we have had more readers than ever before - 35 families. But I have learned from past experience that this thriving condition may vanish between one trip and the next so that I find a large stack of books at the company store and but few borrowers wanting any more.

The village of Fairview has been an uncertain and unsatisfactory responsibility. We tried to care for it with a half hour community stop. Three faithful borrowers came regularly and a couple of undependable ones now and then besides two or three High School students who remembered to come if they saw the truck. After talking at a grange meeting in Powell Valley one day, a lady told me of her daughter who lived in Fairview. She was fond of reading so wouldn't we look for her. We did. Finding she had a small child and so was unable to come to the community stop, we decided to abandon it and try short runs down various Fairview streets. Each street was an adventure, especially in wet weather, for the ruts and holes were fearful and wonderful. By varying the type of service in this way we have been able to increase the response to a dozen families in the busy

season. But not all of our patrons are satisfied with us.

Just this year a lady complained that Fairview paid much more in taxes than Troutdale, but Troutdale got a real library and a librarian while "Fairview only gets the Bookwagon."

In contrast to the Fairview lady is the Sauvier Island lady who circulated a petition along a 14 mile drive enlisting would be readers for us. "Uncle John" was responsible for our introduction on the island. He visited his folks up on Skyline Blvd where he heard about us. ~~The news~~ ^{the news} He promptly spread to his neighbors. Shortly thereafter he made another visit to Skyline to meet us and asked that we come across to the island for six families. We crowded the trip in at the end of an already long day. The six families were all right but the roads were terrible and the ferry was always at the other side, or worse, had just started across when we arrived at the slip. When faced with the prospect of 14 more rough miles to travel and eight or ten more families to serve it was just too much. So Sauvier Island was cheerfully promoted to the Stations class. After three and a half years of "only the Bookwagon", some of our friends were not so happy at achieving a Station as the Fairview lady might have expected.

For a couple of years we attempted to supplement the Corbett High School library. We made an hour stop at the school house while the rooms were dismissed one at a time for books. Business was lively to say the least. We had more reference and supplementary reading requests than we

could fill, for the teachers cooperated splendidly. The students were more than glad to load up with story books too, for themselves and their families. In this way we made contact with a number of families not in reach of our other routes. However, I was not sorry when a regular assistant was assigned to the school for I could not but feel that the service I rendered was inadequate. Furthermore, next to Crown Point, Corbett is the county's worst point for East wind. To stand for an hour in a 60 mile gale requiring two stout boys to open the door, with the thermometer any where from freezing downwards and expecting the next gust will surely upset the truck is not conducive to a calm search for the correct book to fill a given need. Dropping the school in 1926 made it possible to penetrate further into the surrounding foothills where we found many of the families we had reached through the school.

Another puzzle has been Parkrose. The station was languishing at the time the truck service was started so a half hour stop of the truck once a week was undertaken. All possible publicity was given the new service. I walked miles calling at houses and inviting people to come down to the business center, where we stood, for books. Very few cared enough to walk the short distance for them, not ^{over} more than a half dozen adults ~~over~~. An equal number of High School children used to drift in at intervals, usually just as it was time for us to leave. It seemed like a futile waste of time when I still had unexplored country roads beckoning. After

two years' effort, Parkrose was returned to the Stations in 1926.

We had not been stopping long at Parkrose when an alert aggressive young woman called in the Branch Officer to see why Roseway could not have books. We agreed to stop there also; she agreed to tell the community about us. On our initial visit there were a couple dozen people awaiting us. Much excitement prevailed. All were eager to come in at once - but there was not space. The aforementioned lady entered first - by right of her initiative no doubt - and with a friend settled down on the comfortable rear seat (this was in the days of the first truck). There they remained during the entire stop. The rest of the people waited at the door for a chance to enter. This was the procedure every time. When the rainy season began there were murmurings and protests on the outside and our patronage began to dwindle. One morning just as we were ready to start from the library the brake on a large truck jacked behind us gave way permitting the truck to strike us in a vital spot - the gas tank. With gas dripping furiously there was no travel that day to Roseway or any other point. That disaster sounded the death knell of Roseway. It took three months to round up all of the books that were due that fatal day. From then on not more than a half dozen people ever came for books, ~~so~~ Roseway was dropped with Parkrose in 1926. and we went further afield for new readers.

In September 1931, ^{they were} handed back from the Stations to truck service. By now Parkrose had a full time High School and Station Librarian. She was given the truck one afternoon

a week to circle through the village and serve as many residents as would come. In no time at all there were more readers than could be reached in a half day so the territory was divided and bi-weekly routes established with many, instead of a few stops so that readers might meet the truck with little effort. By November, news of Parkrose's good fortune had reached Roseway and requests came in through the High School students for the "book truck" to include their families also. To do this a morning run was added. More and yet more patrons came. This year the district requires two entire days with a half hour or more overtime during the busy season. It has furnished 250 ^{families of} readers and had the heaviest circulations of any route. Obviously, convenience is the open sesame to Roseway - Parkrose.

A half mile back from Skyline Blvd. on Munson Hill a group of families has established "Pioneer Settlement".

One lady used to come two miles down the road to meet us carrying back and forth a large bag of books for the

From "Pioneer Settlement."

small community to use. The past year we extended our route up to the Settlement road. At this crossing marked by desolation and burnt tree stumps the six families or their deputies meet us. They do the most consistently constructive reading of any community we serve. They have no time for stories,

asking always for books on farming, travel, science, especially astronomy, and current event, geographical or nature magazines. I always look forward each trip to this little group of people to whom books mean something more than a passing thrill. They are people who need escape from depression worries more than many of their neighbors. That they choose their escape by broadening

broadening their interests and increasing their knowledge instead of forgetting themselves in trivial stories arouses

my admiration. Needless to say they are thankful for the truck service and very appreciative of any special attention in bringing on request material they need.

Books help when business is dull.

From the first day on the road the children have created a problem. Parents who may or may not want a book are anxious that the children have some. Re-

ferred to the school collection for the children's reading. I at first met with overwhelming dissatisfaction. The child had read all the books; the books were too hard or too easy; the boy wanted mechanical books and could find only fairy tales; and often the lament has been that the teacher would not let the child bring home books or else permitted them

"Where's the little horse book?"
(Francine Pat)

to be taken for only one night. To please these discontented parents
 & or children, we finally included a shelf of children's books.

The demand promptly exceeded the supply. With no effort at all
 the truck service could easily have become exclusively juvenile.

About this time the School Department
 arranged to exchange the school collec-
 tions oftener and send out supplemen-
 tary groups of books whenever the teach-
 er reported a need for them. Children's
 books were then eliminated from the
 truck except the picture books and easy
 stories for under school age children.
 Their eager interest is unsuppressed,

nor are they slow in declaring their
 preferences. To limit this small collec-
 tion to the children for whom it is ^{intended}

Sidney tramps a block
 through mud holes to get
 "Porridge Poetry" and a
 baby book for her mother.

has been impossible. Starting to school and getting a book from the
 truck have nothing to do with each other in the child's mind, so
 mother continues to get a little book to avoid tears or tantrums after
 school. One mother insists on taking a primer every time for a 5th
 grade boy! We discourage this as much as possible referring again
 to the school collection. All too often we learn that the teacher
 refuses to let the small children take home books. The past year
 the question was raised on account of a 3rd grade child. After
 two communications from the School Department asking her to
 issue the books to the children, the teacher loaned this child
 books from her personal library on the grounds that years ago

some child had lost a book hence she would never again allow the library books to be taken home. There is also the problem, still unsolved, of parents who consider their children grown up by the time they attain the 6th grade and insist on having adult books for them, preferably popular fiction stories.

September 1930 was a red letter month for then we christened the new truck. The interior rearranged and slightly larger, it immediately proved the wisdom of the alteration in the increased ease of handling a larger group of people at a time. With it we make better travelling time on level roads than we did with the old truck but when it comes to climbing hills the old Dodge wins. In spite of assurances that the roof would be weather proof it has always leaked and with age the leaks grow worse so that a small shower sends us scurrying to rescue magazines and what not from the quickly forming pools. It has run the gamut of minor complaints and major operations that trucks are heir to. In cold weather it is the coldest thing on the road and in hot weather it is the hottest. But in spite of griefs we are fond of it.

This story would be incomplete without a word about roads. For us the highways are largely a means to get elsewhere. Most of our work lies on side roads. Here we encounter every thing from the merest trail with rocks for two wheel tracks to quite respectable gravel roads. In ten years we have watched the evolution of several from trail to road, and a most satisfactory evolution it is when accomplished. The process however is far from pleasant. Roads so narrow we were afraid to turn out to pass any one for fear of sticking in the mud - how many times we did! - are now a joy to drive on. Short roads, built at

a land company's expense to aid in selling tracts, promptly
 wore into huge holes with here and there a tree stump pro-
 truding. Gradually the county is taking over these roads and
 improving them, but unfortunately not yet all of them.
 Skyline Blvd. is now emerging from a trail into something
 resembling its appellation. Road crews have made it all
 but impassable for several years past. Many times they
 had to lend a helping hand to get us through a fresh
 fill. It will be several years more before one can travel it
 with comfort. In the meantime one marvels to find all the vertebrae
 intact after traversing it. To travel such roads day after day
 is utterly exhausting. They shorten the life of the truck as well
 as ^{perhaps} the librarian's ^{perhaps}.

Often the weather joins forces with the roads to bring
 us to grief. With the spring thaws, frost coming out of the ground
 will heave up the hardest gravel road making a splendid pitfall
 to catch and hold the unwary truck wheel. Such deep ruts
 will form that ~~our~~ axels will drag the surface of the road.

If fortune smiles we get through; if she frowns the wheels
 begin to spin and we begin to look for help. To turn around
 on these narrow soft roads has been almost an impossibility.
 Early in our career we learned the advisability of backing out
 instead of trying to turn. It saved time for us and amused
 the onlookers who thought it very eccentric. A high wind
 bringing a blizzard from the Northeast on top of an ice storm is
 the last word in misfortune. I can face any one of them with
 equanimity but the three together — well I don't enjoy them.

The first few years I frankly feared the storms and would sacrifice several days runs to avoid them. Having grown accustomed to them, it takes a pretty large snow drift or mountain of ice to halt our progress. We make every effort to reach people or send books to them while snowbound, for that is when they most need them. Our first trip through after the drifts have been cut is often an occasion for rejoicing. To families shut in for a time our coming promises not only fresh books but also first hand news of the storm, road conditions, and the neighbors. Year by year we meet with fewer blockades. Consolidation of rural schools is at least partially responsible for this. The county must keep the roads open for the school busses, which means that the main roads are passable at the earliest possible moment after the storm abates. So that, unless we are actually caught by the blizzard when on the road, we are pretty apt to complete most of the routes.

Arranging our schedules to suit our own convenience, we naturally often arrived at times inconvenient for our patrons. For nine years we trained them to leave the books in their post boxes for us when away. A deaf gentleman who could not hear the horn honked, always left his there as did several other people who live some distance from the road. A message would be left

a good idea.

with the books if some thing in particular was wanted. Otherwise the selection was left to our discretion. In this way the exchange could be made on time and the borrower was free to attend to other affairs. Our regular post box patrons we seldom see but

Books are wrapped in bad weather.

two or three times a season. This last year the post master ordered us out of his boxes so we had to undo all our years of careful training. Many and varied have been the substitutes invented. One of the best is a small wooden box with a swinging cover. The box is hung on a hook in the mail box post. A tight covered tin can is quite satisfactory especially in wet weather. On fair days a basket or pile of books on the gate post or by the door mutely asks for an exchange. One lady hung a note for us on a road side bush asking us to look for her books on the porch which was concealed from the road.

Considering the number of our patrons it is remarkable how seldom we are forgotten and our books fall overboard. Usually it is some emergency which drives the book exchange out of mind. There are not a half dozen chronic offenders.

Especially good on rainy days

It has been of interest to watch reading tastes, sometimes surprising, sometimes discouraging. In the early years when most of our patrons came one by one there was a splendid opportunity to suggest and persuade them to read desirable books. ^{It} ~~was~~ ^{books} was distinctly the minority of our patrons who then had definite in mind that they wished to read. Some asked for practical books of help in their daily occupations; some confessed a liking for history or books about people who had done worthwhile things, but most of them had a more or less vague idea that they wanted a story - any kind of a good story. Good stories were suggested, often they happened to be true ones and they were read with interest. Those days of easy influence passed with the growth of patronage. When serving a group of people they ask each other for recommendations. The one who has particularly enjoyed some book announces ~~that~~ fact to the crowd and that is the book they all want - and eventually get. I find that at community gatherings discussion of books, informally, is quite in order. People miles apart ask for books they have heard about at such gatherings. Now and then a good book is given this impetus but all too often it is a popular thriller.

Travel, biography and history were our non-fiction favorites at first. We started out hopefully with a large collection of books about farming, but few of the farmers who had grown up on the soil would condescend to consult a book on agriculture, the general attitude being that they knew more from experience than the authors did from experiment. As we acquired people who were new on the land there developed a steady demand for books on agriculture and flower gardening. Here the difficulty arose that

most of these books are either Eastern or English publications, which the would be user found dealt with conditions rather different from his own and he seemingly lacked ingenuity to adapt the information to the need. For instance people will often take Dryden's poultry book because "he lives here and knows what I'm up against" in preference to a new book by an Easterner. But in general when seeking scientific help people are insistent that books be recent and based on new theories. Especially so are the fruit growers. Of course Government and State Experiment Station publications are of the greatest help in filling such demands.

In addition to the usual farm products we have followed all manner of specialized and hobby farming ventures; chickens from the prolific white leghorn to the aristocratic Australorps as well as turkeys wild ducks and pheasants and as a by-product the decoration of Easter eggs with water color sketches; like a magician we have produced a book to match each succeeding fashion in rabbits, from just rabbits destined for the pot to the ultra fashionable Angora wooler and have passed judgement on the fine yarn and beautiful garments made from its wool; milch goats and goats ~~and goats~~ for hair have passed in review; experimental fur farming and trapping, every thing from a mole to a fox, what to do with the animal alive and how to treat its hide when dead; canary birds, bees and flowers - the list is almost endless. What ever the subject our books and interest are solicited.

One day old!
Valued as milch or
hair I can not say.

The next marked development has come during the last three years which have brought an astonishing increase in requests for psychology, philosophy, religion and economics. This interest is not universal but the number of people reading such books is gratifying.

Ultra fashionable angora woolers.

Furthermore the interest is continuous not casual or desultory.

✓ Our collection is weak in technical and scientific material. We do not have an overwhelming demand for such books, though it seemed this winter that every tenth man wanted to find a gold mine by the most approved method in print; but a good many readers have been disappointed by the smallness and out of dateness of our supply. If available there is no doubt that the use of such material would increase greatly.

1922-23 was our banner year for circulation. With over 900 families on our borrowing list we issued 54,331 books and magazines in the nine months ^{from} September to June. In January we recorded our all time high daily circulation of 409. Three months later the ruling of four books on a card brought our soaring ambitions to earth. Second and third cards were taken out by many families but we note a constraint in borrowing lavishly. Of course

Tommy the Turk protests.

there are exceptions. I had arbitrarily limited fiction to nine in a family. When the four book notice was posted one lady read it thoughtfully, asked for applications for all of her daughters and now blithely borrows sixteen fiction at a time! This tenth year we record our first yearly loss in circulation. A loss of 6,915 in spite of more than a thousand families served, a hundred more than last year. This loss is due to three causes, the four book ruling, the curtailment of free request service and the dearth of new books. I feel that from the stand point of improving records each year, the first ten years have been the easiest, with a large unexplored field to draw upon for new readers, a novel and appealing idea to exploit and a large collection of unread books to offer. The next ten years will be more difficult work for the unexplored district is shrinking, the novelty is rapidly becoming an established fact and many readers of light fiction have very nearly exhausted the supply of popular stories. Patience and enthusiasm are going to be more necessary than ever before to persuade these people to try to read something they do not exactly want nor care for. The same will be true of others who read but a single type of book, all science, all travel etc. Unless new titles are available they will soon exhaust the present supply and then what? It will require a providential inspiration to suggest something different that they will read, something that will hold their interest and restrain them from drifting away from

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us. May good fortune smile on the next ten years
that they shall be better than the first ten in spite
of handicaps.

Respectfully submitted.

Norma Lee Peck.