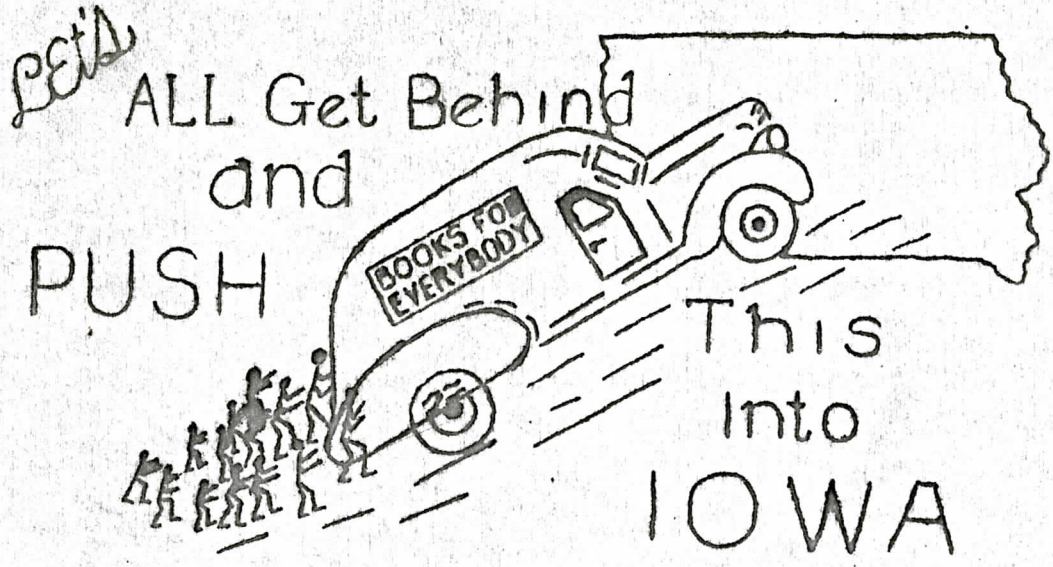


THE CATALYST

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"Now is the time for all good men..." You can finish the quotation, but what we are getting at is that it is time for trustees and librarians to be out Doing Good among their representatives to the next state legislature.

One of the main things we're working for this time is an appropriation that will provide for the establishment of regional library service. And just to be sure that we all have the story straight, let's rehearse a bit.

THE BACKGROUND: Sioux City, 1935. At this time the Iowa Library Association went on record as favoring this plan for equalizing library opportunities in our state.

THE FOREGROUND: 51% of the people of Iowa are without free public library service. That's more than a million people who need books. Nearly all of these are in rural areas.

The regional plan would provide for nine districts of 11 counties each. A library, or book distributing center, would be established in each of these districts. This center would be housed in an existing library or in rented quarters. No large amount of space and no new buildings are required.

The regional library would be administered by a trained librarian under the supervision of the State Traveling Library and the State Library Board. This librarian would also be available as technical advisor to any small libraries desiring such advice.

Books would be purchased from the appropriation and selected through cooperation of the librarians in the region. They would be distributed by means of bookmobiles where possible, or by means of small collections in stores, schools, filling stations and in already existing libraries.

In some of the larger libraries in Iowa there are many valuable and necessary books which are infrequently used. They are books of the sort no one chooses for recreational reading but which are desperately needed for informational use. These important books would receive their fullest use under the regional plan, since it provides a means of distribution to any point in the area.

MEANS OF SUPPORT: Such a plan cannot be put into operation without a reasonable appropriation from the legislature. More and more it is being realized that state aid provides the surest and most equitable basis of support for educational services, of which library service is assuredly one of the most important.