

“Shall

A Free

Public Library

Be Established?”

IOWA LIBRARY COMMISSION.

MEMBERS *Ex-Officiis*.

JOHNSON BRIGHAM, *State Librarian, President.*

RICHARD C. BARRETT, *State Superintendent of Public Instruction.*

GEORGE E. MACLEAN, *President of the State University.*

MEMBERS BY APPOINTMENT.

MRS. HARRIET C. TOWNER, Corning.

MISS JESSIE B. WAITE, Burlington.

MRS. LIZZIE S. NORRIS, Grinnell.

HON. W. H. JOHNSTON, Ft. Dodge.

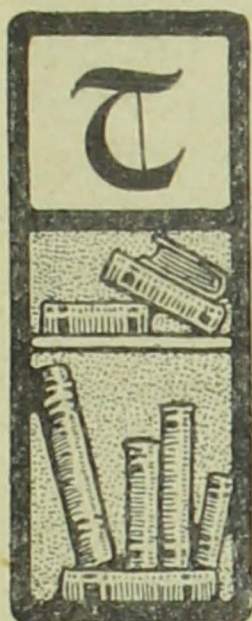
ALICE S. TYLER, *Secretary, Des Moines.*

The Iowa State Library Commission was created by an act of the 28th General Assembly of the State of Iowa, March 20, 1900.

To promote the establishment and efficiency of free public libraries and public school libraries in Iowa is the purpose for which this Commission was created.

Can it serve your community in either of these respects, by co-operating with any local movement in these directions? Do you desire more information on library subjects? Inquiries regarding the organization of libraries, securing a competent librarian, the selection of books, library supplies, classification, cataloging, etc., will be answered promptly, and a personal visit will be made if deemed desirable, without expense to the local library whenever possible.

HOW TO START A FREE LIBRARY.



HERE must first be a "willing mind." A few earnest souls, realizing the need of a library and determined that the people of the community shall have the benefit of free books must plan and work and agitate until the people are aroused to the fact that this opportunity is for them and for their children if they will only grasp it.

Iowa has a good library law. There is no reason why your community should not avail itself of the provisions of that law. The first thing to be done is to arouse public sentiment. A community should realize that a public library is a part of our great educational system and as essential to an enterprising town as the public school; have public meetings and stirring addresses to awaken people.

The provisions for establishing a free public library as given in sections 727-732, title 5, chapter 4 of the Code of Iowa should be read carefully. The citizens should petition the city council to submit the question to a vote of the people at a general or special election.

This petition will in a tangible way show the city council that a large number of citizens really want a free public library. Residents, both men and women, whether taxpayers or not, should sign this as a means of expressing approval of the project.

By a little effort a long list of signatures may be secured, and the presentation of the petition to the council will bring the matter definitely to their attention. Some one of the councilmen should be interested, and be ready to introduce a resolution into the council to submit the question to the voters.

The following sample is a form of resolution recently used in an Iowa town:

“Be it Resolved by the City Council of the City of, Iowa, That at the city election to be held in the city of, on the day of 1901, there shall be submitted to the legal voters of said city the question whether a free public library shall be established in said city as provided in section 727 of title 5 of chapter 4 of the Code of Iowa. Said question shall be printed upon the ballots at said election in the form required by section 1106 of title 6 of chapter 3 of the Code of Iowa, as follows: Shall a free public library be established?”

The resolution having passed the city council the next step is to secure the necessary votes in favor of such establishment. Here is the place for earnest, personal work, for a measure of this sort may easily be lost by

mere indifference. Have a rousing mass meeting and secure prominent local speakers to tell why a public library supported by tax is a good thing and why every voter should support it.

After the electors have voted in favor of the establishment of a library the Code provides that a "Board of library trustees consisting of nine members shall be appointed by the mayor, by and with the approval of the council" and that "the board of trustees shall, before the first day of August in each year, determine and fix the rate to be levied for the ensuing year for the maintenance of such library."

This Board should be composed of high-minded, intelligent men and women, who have the good of the community at heart and are above petty intrigues. While a period of time will elapse before the tax levy is available, there will be the planning of the work and the selection of standard books of recognized merit and the choice of a librarian which should be duly considered. The success of the library as an institution will depend largely on the character and attainments of the librarian who comes in daily contact with the patrons. If possible a librarian of training or experience should be secured, if the funds are sufficient for this. A young woman of good education and pleasing manners and address can usually be found in every community whose tastes would lead her to undertake

this work, and a six weeks' course in the Iowa Summer Library School would be the means of her undertaking the work with intelligence and helpfulness, if it is not possible to have a trained librarian. The Secretary of the Library Commission should be called on in regard to questions of organization, or a regular library organizer could be secured to guide and assist the librarian in inaugurating the work. If the work is properly done at the beginning, it will not have to be done over again when the library is larger.

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY LAW OF IOWA.

Code of 1897 as Amended by the Twenty-Eighth General Assembly.

SECTION 727. *Public Library.*—Cities and towns shall have power to provide for the formation and maintenance of a free public library, open to the use of all the inhabitants, under proper regulations, and may purchase land and erect buildings, or hire buildings or rooms suitable for that purpose, and provide for the compensation of the necessary employes; may receive, hold or dispose of any and all gifts, donations, devises and bequests that may be made to them for the purpose of establishing, increasing or improving any such library; and the council may apply the profits, proceeds, interest and rents accruing therefrom in such manner as will best promote the prosperity and utility of such library; but no money can be appropriated for such purpose until the electors of such city or town shall, at

a general or special election have voted for the establishment of such library.

SEC. 728. *Library Trustees.*—In any city or town in which a free public library has been established, there shall be a board of library trustees, consisting of nine members, to be appointed by the mayor, by and with the approval of the council. Of said trustees first appointed, one-third shall hold office for two, one-third for four, and one-third for six years, from the first day of July following their appointment; and, at their first meeting, shall cast lots for their respective terms, reporting the result of such lot to the council. Biennially thereafter, before the first day of July, the Mayor shall appoint, by and with the approval of the council, three trustees to succeed the trustees retiring on the following first day of July, each of whom shall hold office for six years from such first day of July, and until his successor is appointed and qualified. Vacancies occurring in the board shall be filled by appointment by the mayor, such appointees to fill out the unexpired term for which the appointment is made. *Bona fide* citizens and residents of the city or town, male or female, over the age of twenty-one years, are alone eligible to membership. The removal of any trustee permanently from the city shall render his office as a trustee vacant. Members of said board shall receive no compensation for their services.

SEC. 729. *Powers.*—Said board of library trustees shall have and exercise the following powers: To meet and organize by the election of one of their number as president of the board, and by the election of a secretary and such other officers as the board may deem necessary; to have charge, control and supervision of the public library, its appurtenances and fixtures, and rooms containing the same,

directing and controlling all the affairs of such library; to employ a librarian, such assistants and employes as may be necessary for the proper management of said library, and fix their compensation; but, prior to such employment, the compensation of such librarian, assistants and employes shall be fixed for the term of employment by a majority of the members of said board voting in favor thereof; to remove such librarian, assistants or employes by a vote of two-thirds of such board for misdemeanor, incompetency or inattention to the duties of such employment; to select and make purchases of books, pamphlets, magazines, periodicals, papers, maps, journals, furniture, fixtures, stationery and supplies for such library; to authorize the use of such libraries by non-residents of such cities and towns and to fix charges therefor; to make and adopt, amend, modify or repeal by-laws, rules and regulations, not inconsistent with law, for the care, use, government and management of such library and the business of said board, fixing and enforcing penalties for the violation thereof; and to have exclusive control of the expenditures of all taxes levied for library purposes as provided by law, and of all other moneys belonging to the library fund. Said board shall keep a record of its proceedings.

SEC. 730. *Library Fund.*—All moneys received and set apart for the maintenance of such library shall be deposited in the treasury of such city or town to the credit of the library fund, and shall be kept by the treasurer separate and apart from all other moneys, and paid out upon the orders of the board of trustees, signed by its president and secretary.

SEC. 731. *Report.*—Said board of trustees shall each year make to the council a report for the year ending December 31st, a state-

ment of the condition of the library, the number of books added thereto, the number circulated, the number not returned or lost, the amount of fines collected, and the amount of money expended in the maintenance thereof during such year, together with such further information as it may deem important.

SEC. 732. *Library Tax.*—The board of trustees shall before the first day of August in each year, determine and fix the amount or rate, not exceeding one mill on the dollar in cities of the first class having a population of twenty-five thousand or over, and not exceeding two mills on the dollar in all other cities and in towns, of the taxable valuation of such city or town, to be levied, collected and appropriated for the ensuing year for the maintenance of such library; and in cities and towns, also the amount or rate, not exceeding three mills on the dollar of the taxable valuation of such city, to be levied, collected and appropriated for the purchase of real estate and the erection of a building or buildings thereon for a public library, or for the payment of interest on any indebtedness incurred for that purpose, and for the creation of a sinking fund for the extinguishment of such indebtedness; and shall cause the same to be certified to the city council, which shall levy such tax or so much thereof as it may deem necessary to promote library interests for each of said purposes so determined and fixed, and certify the percent thereof to the county auditor, with the other taxes for said year.

SEC. 953. *Library Tax for Cities under Special Charter.*—The board of library trustees, before the first day of August in each year, shall determine and fix the amount or rate, not exceeding one mill on the dollar, in any one year, of the taxable valuation of such city [cities under special charters], to be

levied, collected and appropriated for the ensuing year for the maintenance of such library, and shall cause the same to be certified to the council, which shall levy the tax with the other taxes for such year.

**An Act to Create a Library Commission
and Promote the Establishment and
Efficiency of Free Public Libraries
and Public School Libraries in
the State of Iowa, and to
Appropriate Money
Therefor.**

Be it Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa.—

SECTION 1. *State Library Commission—Term—Chairman.*—The governor shall appoint four persons, at least two of whom shall be women, who, with the state librarian and superintendent of public instruction and president of the State university, shall constitute a State Library Commission. The first members appointed by the governor shall be appointed for terms of two, three, four and five years from the first day of July, 1900, and all subsequent appointments shall be for terms of five years, except appointments to fill vacancies. The Commission shall annually elect a chairman.

SEC. 2. *Duties — Biennial Report.* — The Commission shall give advice and counsel to all free libraries and to all public school libraries in the state, and to all communities which may propose to establish them, as to the best means of establishing and administering such libraries, the selection of books, cataloging, and other details of library management. The Commission may also send its members to aid

in organizing new libraries or in improving those already established, and coöperate with the trustees of the State Library in the development of the traveling library system. The Commission shall make a biennial report to the governor, 1,000 copies of which shall be published as other official reports are published.

SEC. 3. *Reports from Libraries.*—The Commission shall each year obtain from all free public libraries and all public school libraries reports showing the condition, growth, development and manner of conducting said libraries, and shall obtain reports from other libraries in the state at their discretion, and shall furnish annually to the secretary of state such information for publication in the Iowa Official Register as may be deemed of public interest.

SEC. 4. *Secretary—Office.*—Said Commission shall employ a secretary not of its own number, who shall serve at the will of the Commission, and for such compensation and under such conditions as it shall determine. It shall be the duty of said secretary to keep a record of the proceedings of the Commission; to keep accurate accounts of its financial transactions, and to act under the direction of the Commission in organizing new libraries and improving those already established, and in general to perform such other duties as may be assigned him by the Commission. In addition to his salary he shall be allowed his necessary 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. Said Commission shall have its office at the office of the state librarian.

SEC. 5. *Appropriation—How Drawn.*—No member of the Commission shall ever receive any compensation for services as a member,

out the traveling expenses of members in attending meetings of the Commission or in visiting or establishing libraries, and other incidental and necessary expenses connected with the work of the Commission, shall be paid, including compensation and expenses of the secretary mentioned in section 4 of this act, provided that the whole amount of said expenses, including secretary's salary, shall not exceed the sum of two thousand dollars in any one year. All bills incurred by the Commission or by its members under this law shall be certified by the chairman and secretary of the Commission to the state auditor, who shall issue warrants therefor upon the state treasury, and there is hereby annually appropriated from any funds in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of two thousand dollars to carry into effect the provisions of this act.

Approved March 20, 1900.