TRAVELING LIBRARIES IN WISCONSIN

I

HOW TO SECURE A TRAVELING LIBRARY.

Traveling libraries are small collections of books which are sent by the state from one community to another. They are maintained by the state and circulate from the offices of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission in the Capitol.

The libraries are made up of the best popular books of fiction, history, travel, biography, sociology, literature, useful arts, fine arts and science. A number of children's books are included. There are three sizes of these English collections. The 30 volume libraries are sent to the isolated hamlets in the northern part of the state. The 55 volume libraries are sent to the regular stations of average size. The libraries are kept for six months and are then returned to the Commission in exchange for another box. The only expense connected with securing these libraries is the payment of the freight on the box upon receipt and return.

The 100 volume libraries, which are kept for six months, are rented for $12 a year to the smaller public libraries having inadequate book funds.

German, Yiddish, Danish, Norwegian and Polish traveling libraries, containing 35 volumes each, are loaned to
public libraries for a rental fee of $7 a year, the boxes being returned to the Commission at intervals of six months.

Small groups of Bohemian, Danish, French, German, Norwegian, Polish and Swedish books are sent oftentimes with the English traveling libraries to settlements of foreigners.

The Commission also has special collections of young folks' books which it loans without charge to small public libraries.

It also has a number of study libraries, a list of which is given on page 14, which it loans for the payment of freight or express charges to women's clubs and other organizations.

The libraries are shipped in stout, hinged chests—not bookcases—with the necessary supplies for keeping records of circulation. When a library has been read at a station, it is returned to the Commission to be checked up, record of circulation taken, necessary repairs made and binding done, another library being sent to the station in its place.

To secure a traveling library for a farming community or village, a library association, which shall include at least ten citizens, should first be organized. Application must be made on a blank furnished by the Commission. A librarian must be chosen. The books of the traveling library must be loaned without charge to any person in the community who will agree to handle books carefully and to pay all fines and damages. An agreement is sent with the library which each borrower is required to sign before drawing his first book.

The library should be kept in the most centrally located
THE HOME OF THE PIONEER

DELIVERING LIBRARY IN MARINETTE COUNTY

LIBRARY MARINETTE COUNTY

A CHIPPEWA INDIAN CAMP
and most easily accessible place that can be found. It may be placed in a store, post-office, creamery, or private residence. The library should not be located in the schoolhouse if any other place can be secured, for the reason that the schoolhouse is closed evenings and during long vacation periods and adults do not usually patronize libraries when so located.

Further information will be furnished by addressing the Traveling Library Department, Wisconsin Free Library Commission, Madison, Wisconsin.

II

THE CUSTODIAN OF THE TRAVELING LIBRARY.

The success or failure of the traveling library in any community depends almost wholly upon the one in charge. The librarian in the small hamlet has the advantage over the librarian in the larger town in knowing the community and in thus being able to fit the right book to the right person. The Commission finds great differences in the number of times books are circulated in communities of similar size. A library will be returned with a circulation in one community, for example, of ninety-one issues. This library will be sent to a community of similar size and conditions and will be returned with a circulation of four hundred and seventy-five issues. Investigation will prove that in the first instance the library has not been advertised in the community, many persons not knowing of its existence; whereas in the second case, the librarian has used every means to make the library known and to have it used by citizens. As someone has said, “Many a good woman has kept a traveling library