

that as far as lies within his resources, it is his business to see that the right book reaches the right person even if it involves convincing that person that he wants the book." Three thousand seven hundred books were distributed by the book wagon during 1908. The cost of the specially constructed wagon was one hundred and seventy-five dollars. It was designed to carry several of the traveling library cases in the interior with shelving having a capacity of about three hundred volumes on each side, the doors opening outward. In the course of the journey the cases are delivered, others brought in for exchange, and all of the out-of-the-way farm houses are visited where an invitation is given to the family to inspect and take the wares freely offered. Books are left for two months with the understanding that neighbors may exchange with each other. Thousands of books have been issued through this method during the past five years, the plan proving most successful and in every way worthy of imitation in other states.

## IX

### PARCELS POST AND TRAVELING LIBRARIES.

The usefulness of the state and county systems of traveling libraries would be greatly increased through the establishment of parcels post and the removal of the four pound weight limitation, especially on rural free delivery routes. In distributing libraries to rural stations the ridiculous sight is often presented of the rural mail carrier with ample facilities for carrying one or more boxes driving along the country road closely followed over exactly the same route by the traveling library de-



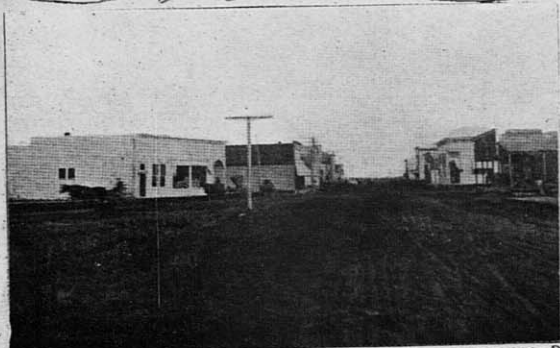
STATION FOR 100 VOLUME LIBRARY



AN IMPROVED ROAD IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN



CORDUROY ROAD IN NORTHERN WIS.



POLK COUNTY STATION



livery wagon. A great saving could be made, particularly in county systems, if the rural carrier could deliver and return the boxes. The work of the state system could be vastly enlarged if the rural mail carrier were allowed to call at depots for boxes sent to outlying stations. The abolishment of stage routes with no substitute for them has worked a hardship in this connection which should be speedily remedied.

## X

### THE FUTURE OF TRAVELING LIBRARIES.

Before the establishment of rural free delivery, there were over 1400 postoffices in Wisconsin. A community that is large enough to have a postoffice should also be provided with a traveling library. The state and the county systems now reach a little over one-half of the former postoffices. There are many places in the state, too small for postoffices, which should be provided with traveling collections. All of the libraries owned by the Commission were in the field during the winter of 1910, save a few that were kept on hand from day to day for exchange purposes. The books in the state system were read a total of 103,665 times during the past 11 months. The number of library stations could be vastly increased were adequate funds provided. Large forest areas which covered Northern Wisconsin a few years ago have been cut down by lumbermen or destroyed by fire. On to these clearings are coming settlers from Germany, Scandinavia, Bohemia, Italy, and Poland intent on building homes. They are industrious and thrifty but most of them are starting with scant means. Their