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STATE OF MINNESOTA

*Division of
Public Institutions*

BIENNIAL REPORT

FOR THE

Period Ended June 30, 1940

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over that of the preceding year. This is a most encouraging indication that a reading program is really developing among these children to whom the library and reading habit may mean so much.

With contemplated changes in the library room and an increasing budget to provide more books chosen for this special group, we can hope for a constantly improving library situation in this school.

School for the Feeble-Minded. In April 1940 was recorded the highest circulation in this library's history. In two years 38,639 books and magazines have been withdrawn by the children and those adults who can make use of reading material, that of the past year exceeding the preceding by 15%. More books have been taken to the custodial children, with a matron's cooperation in assuming personal responsibility for them there is library service to a group of crippled children, and arrangements have been made so that more working boys and girls may have books. Women who work in the laundry and other departments bring their "libery" sacks of books to be refilled and one of them was heard to remark of an associate, "She's no good if she can't read".

An attractive picture of this library room will illustrate a stimulating article about it which the librarian, Miss Heyerdahl, has written for publication in the September 1940 issue of the *Library Journal*. She has shown much ingenuity in stirring an interest in and desire for reading among her library users, by way of book and reading games, peep-shows and book travel clubs. For these children who will always lead a restricted life, it is truly exciting to place on maps of the world, of the World's Fair, of the United States or of Minnesota, tickets which locate the books they have read about far places. In the spring the children often ask Miss Heyerdahl, "Are we going to travel with books this summer?" Many of them can read with understanding and can describe well what they have read. For the younger children and those of slower comprehension, story hours help to fill their need for books. Decidedly touching is one little boy's request of the librarian for books which "will tell me how to earn an honest living." A girl's concern for a recently discharged boy she expressed in this way—"I don't see how he'll make it out in the world. Anybody that was so dumb he didn't even read library books when he was here can't have very much ambition."

Closer cooperation with the school department continues, and most classes visit the library several times a week for free reading and for project material. Books about sports, animals, transportation, war and airplanes are popular. A number of books too difficult or otherwise unsuitable for this group of readers have been given to other institution libraries where they can be used.

The library for the employees has been moved to an attractive room

on the main floor in the same building, with a doubling of circulation in six months.

At this institution only, there has been no money for new books during the past year.

Colony for Epileptics. Circulation in this library continues to decrease, as in the previous biennium, even with the library open during the summer months. Although a number of quarantined cottages could not come to the library for some time in the spring months of 1940, this does not account except in part for the 19% decline during the past year in the use of this library. The book budget, inadequate before, was cut in half the past year. The small collection in this library, with almost no replacements and so few additions, cannot be expected to supply the needs of those children who can read to advantage. That this group of children do read with eagerness and enthusiasm the supervisor and principal can attest when a box of new books was opened and distributed in their presence. One-half hour of library service per school day is not enough time to provide for the reading needs of these epileptic children. It is to be hoped that more chairs, more books, more scheduled hours in the library's attractive room (of which Dr. McBroom has supplied a good picture) may be provided during the coming biennium.

State Public School. Miss Nordberg, the librarian, provides a constantly changing series of special displays, posters and book lists for the children using this library and the room itself has become the exhibit place for school sports trophies, coins, flowers, bird houses, moths, turtles, baby mice—any and all of the things which growing children are interested in. Names of new flowers are looked up in the dictionary, two little brothers alternate in taking out a handicraft book "until we get everything made", and here, as at Red Wing, Boy Scouts are continually earning their reading and book binding merit badges under the librarian's friendly eye.

In the summer there are many story hours in the library and meetings of the Stamp Club, as well as the Reading Club and the Book Court. In the spring the 7th and 8th grade children are given lessons for five weeks in the use of the library and its reference books, to help them in their own library and as they go on to high school. All but the first grade children come once a week to the library as a part of their school schedule. This is the result of close cooperation between these departments and shows in the continued circulation increase.

This is an excellent elementary school library, perfectly located, well provided with a stimulating variety of books and such special equipment as card catalog, typewriter, correct library desk and chair, and book ends