

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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What Home Demonstration Club Members And Other Rural Women Expect Of The Library*

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Mr. Chairman, and Friends—for friends are what you are.

If you are here in the interest of a greater Library Service for all people, especially Rural and small town families, you are here in the interest of something needed. 75% of the people of our state gamble with nature everyday, putting back in the soil the first of every year what they made the year before. They depend on God's Program of Nature to give sunshine and rain that they might harvest another crop in the fall. Many of these people are isolated from the outside world—no radio, no daily paper or telephone or mode of travel. These are our dirt farmers.

I have lived my life very near the soil. My paternal grand parents were farmers. My father was a farmer. My mother was one of our early school teachers. I married a farmer and a rural mail carrier. As a farmer's wife I feel I am in a position to know the farmer's program. There are ups and downs and joys received from green acres. As wife of a rural mail carrier, helping him when going was hard and mail heavy, I haven't forgotten the anxious look on the faces that met us at the mail boxes. I can see my husband now as he would go deep down in his old mail bag to find mail sent in bundles such as advertisements or circulars that he might not send them away empty handed. The question uppermost in the minds of Home Demonstration Club women and small town families and friends is what can be expected of a greater Library Service? A county Library or several small counties coming together to form a Regional Library which would better serve their people or have a Library on wheels, giving to our rural and small towns service equal with our cities and larger towns.

If you were to see a doctor stop in front of a rural home your first thought would be that someone in the family is sick. If an ambulance were seen parked there you would think of a hospital trip for a member of the family. If you see a Bookmobile parked in front of the home with a mother and three children with her to exchange books, you would say "That is a

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beginning of things hoped for." The children exchange their colorful bedtime stories for new ones. The mother anxiously gets books to assist her in rearing the family written by professors, doctors, and men of Science. Next the farmer comes to the Bookmobile to seek advice from books on how to handle a Dairy Barn. He finds no books with this information, but the Librarian promises to bring him one on her next trip.

Is that expecting too much? With that word Expect—let me combine Hope, for I love those people and may expect too much for them.

I have heard former Commissioner of Agriculture, Kerr Scott. He has encouraged us at State and County meetings to cultivate our education, to study our Democracy, to know more about our Government, to study our candidates from time to time and to vote intelligently. Some day we would like to see in the Senate and House of Representatives men and women from our rural and small town families who really know the rural family's needs.

What could mean more to our youth today than having our teachers and Librarians working together? Librarians could serve as guides in selecting books just for the asking. A teacher could receive 15 or 20 books carried her by Librarians for her use and the pupils on the subject to be studied paving the way for a better understanding of the big subject.

Youth must learn to use a Library through teachers and Librarians to be able to use a greater Library service.

Our reading in our schools has been criticized somewhat. Coming from our youth, they say "Gracious knows what our teachers will give us to do if they go to another summer school at East Carolina Teachers Col-

lege." As for reading, they read their math to work their examples correctly; history, we read to retain until test or examination for that dead stuff. Their books they read during the year, they read and make book reports. If they don't master them they are forming the habit of reading. They are becoming reading conscious. I quote the late Dr. Townsend, the man that brought about his death by falling from a pear tree on Saturday before the last Mother's Day that he was privileged to live, "Parents, give your Youth good reading material, fill their spare time with clean wholesome recreation, for so goes our Youth of today, so goes our Nation of tomorrow."

What can we expect of a greater Library Service from our branch library? It means the circulation of books carried from one end of our county to the other, keeping books in reach of our people at all times.

Now friends, what can we expect or hope from such a service—or greater Library Service? First, our people may become reading conscious; Second our parents may become conscious of our home being our children's first institution. Our libraries are our rural people's universities.

Last to read is to grow, and from our readers we may expect our future leaders.
