

A STUDY OF CONDITIONS, 1911

is supposed to be read, and also a person does not care to throw away his card when it is only half used up.

Classification of Books.

Another unfortunate condition in our district is the lack of uniformity in the classification of our books. One library has a classification of its own, another has the old government classification, and some have the new system, the Dewey-Decimal & Cutter classification. The old government classification was very erroneous, for in it more than half the fiction was placed in General Literature class and other fiction was called Voyage and Travel. I think the government is more to blame in this matter than the libraries. The government demands an annual report of all the books in each library. This report has to be a detailed one showing a classified list of all the books in the library, of all the new books placed in the library, and of all the books in circulation during the year. Such a report is all right and would be very useful in comparing the work of the different libraries if the classification was the same in all the libraries. But as it is now no comparison can be made. What one reports to the government as fiction another reports as description or as travel, etc.

The government has changed the form of its book report at different times in the last few years, without giving any notice to the libraries of what kind of a report would have to be filled out at the end of the year. For that reason it is almost impossible for the secretary and librarian to fill out the report at all accurately, and I am pretty sure that many of the reports are only guess work.

I know the government has difficulties here and are endeavoring to overcome them. I believe they advocate the use of the Dewey-Decimal & Cutter system, and even pay the expenses of an expert librarian to recatalogue the books in any library that wishes to have that system installed. This is a great encouragement.