NORTHAMPTON, Mass., April 30.—Occasional discussion has been
given to furnishing better library facilities for rural communities. Very
little action has resulted. In spite of our great centers of population
we are still far from being an urban people. A great mass of our
inhabitants live in the country and have all the disadvantages as well
as the strength of that kind of life. They are a large and important
element in the nation.

Since the opening of the century much progress has been made
in the schools of the rural sections. The telephone, radio, motion
picture, automobile and good roads have done much for their improve-
ment. Newspapers and periodicals reach nearly everywhere. But there
is still a wide area and millions of people without access to any libraries.
In spite of all the other facilities books are the principal permanent
repository of knowledge and culture. An individual may make progress
without books, but the people as a whole are dependent on them.
Where there is the most leisure and the least outside diversion the need
for books and the benefits from them are greatest. Provision for rural
libraries would be a public service of the first importance.

CALVIN COOLIDGE