Outline of Talk on "Plant Libraries and How to Encourage them"

April 7, 1921

"The problem of this century is the education of the worker"

William Davidson

If this is true, the librarian must do his part; and there is no better strategic position than that of a plant librarian.

It presents a number of problems: 1) Catch the worker, who is unbroken to books; who is apt to be suspicious that in installing a plant library the management is trying to put over something on him; who is awkward in the presence of the librarian.

2) Take the management along with you. Generally doubtful of the experiment. Doesn't believe the worker is interested in books.

3) Remember that all factories are different. What succeeds in one place will not necessarily succeed in another. Call attention to three different types: a) the purely industrial town, made up of the factory workers and what caters to their needs. Use Endicott Johnson as type, - catching the workers by administering to social needs and supplying conveniences, like a place for the girls to shampoo their hair. Johnson's idea that the workers are afraid of the stacks. b) Entirely different problem in skilled and semi-skilled factories, particularly those in cities. Gilbrath's experience in introducing books in Providence. Converting the management first; telling the workers by bulletins that they could get questions answered. They did not believe that books contained any-
thing that they knew. Set up a job - asking a common question, like, how to tie a knot. Supposed that all their knowledge is by rule of thumb, passed on from mouth to mouth. Surprised at the information on knots that is given them. Emphasize the value of using pictures. Tell Ranke's story of his Italian plumber.

library's experience called me up in the night. Ranke's Greek and his baby. Answers and questions lead into books. Experience of librarian at Waltham, Mass. Comes to a point where the library is recognized as essential to the worker as rest room or restaurant.

Tell story of National Cash Register library. Quote Sears-Roebuck's letter. Also report from Yale & Towne.

Three classes: The foreigner - great chance here for public service. First help him to read. Practice at Grand Rapids - books they use there. Letter from the Austrian who wrote he got his education at Gary and finally, through the library's help, got a $3000 position. Experience at Hecla and Calumet mines, helping the women and non-English speaking men. Plea for allowing the foreign book and periodical for these people.

Cultural cravings: Quote story from Sears-Roebuck's letter. Using fairy tales. Quote the labor leader of Paterson who described the books in the factory of the future as an example of these cultural cravings. Librarians have a chance here to make the worker's dream come true, and to contribute to this most essential of present needs - the education of the worker.