

FARM TENANCY IN 1920

TENANCY, GAINS AND LOSSES

We are carrying in this issue of the News Letter a table ranking the counties of North Carolina from low to high in farm tenantry, and opposite the column showing the percent of all farmers who are tenants is a column showing whether tenants are a decreasing or an increasing ratio of all farmers.

Scotland Leads

Scotland county holds first place in tenancy in North Carolina with 79.6 percent, or nearly four-fifths, of all her farmers tenants, or four out of every five farms in the county cultivated by tenants.

A Tenant State

Every decade finds not only more tenants in North Carolina but a larger percent of all the farms cultivated by tenants. Twenty years ago 93,008 farms, or 41.4 percent of all farms, were cultivated by tenants.

Where Mainly

The farm tenants of North Carolina are to be found mainly in the Coastal Plains counties and in those counties of the Piedmont belt on the north that cultivate tobacco, and on the south that cultivate cotton.

It can be laid down as a law that in proportion as a county produces cotton or tobacco in the same proportion is she a tenant area.

bacco production and ranks high in cotton cultivation. The Coastal Plains counties rank in tenancy in proportion as they are producers of the cash crops, cotton and tobacco, and as you move west and east from this area tenancy decreases.

Ideal Tenant Crops

Cotton and tobacco are ideal tenant crops because they can be produced by unskilled labor. These two crops are admirably suited to the farm labor in this belt.

The Eastern Half Increases

If a state or county desires to increase the ratio of farmers who own the land they cultivate, if a state or county desires to stabilize its population and reap economic and social values to be derived therefrom, it had better not cultivate cash crops exclusively.

Only five counties in the western half of the state have a higher farm tenancy ratio than ten years ago. Two of these, Rockingham and Forsyth, are tobacco counties, and one, Iredell, is a cotton county.

Social Consequences

No farm tenant population has ever accumulated a large per capita wealth. Especially is this true of cotton and tobacco tenant farmers.

More than 300,000 of our farm tenants move every year. They have no abiding interest in any community because they have no stake in the land.

HUMANISM

To look with wide and sympathetic vision over all human affairs, near and remote, recent and ancient; to enter freely and sympathetically into all worthy kinds of human experience, directly through participation and observation, and indirectly through conversation and lecture and wide reading;

ing new fields. This spells disaster to schools, school attendance, school consolidation, church membership, attendance and support. It spells disaster to good roads development, public health sanitation, law and order, community organizations and enterprises for progress and prosperity, welfare and well-being.

Tenancy And Illiteracy

Tenancy and illiteracy go hand in hand. The states of the Union bulk up in illiteracy as they are grounded in tenancy. So largely with the counties of this state.

A Church Problem

The churches may not consider it so, but farm tenancy is a church problem. A very small percent of farm tenants ever join any church and a very small percent are to be found attending churches.

Remedies

North Carolina and the South are drifting into farm tenancy. Every decade marks a decrease in the ratio of farmers who own the land they till.

There are three things that if put into practice would render immediate aid. First, a progressive land tax suited to our needs would make it possible for tenants to get a chance to buy farms.

A second remedy lies in the farmers' providing their own credit machinery through cooperative credit unions. This state has the best credit-union law in the nation, but farmers are making very little use of it.

save the enormously high interest rates they now pay, they could accumulate wealth and in time buy farms as they have done in Denmark, where now 90 percent of the farmers own their land.

The last, surest, and best method is to produce all the food and feed crops needed for consumption in the South and then produce the two best cash crops on the face of the earth, cotton and tobacco, of which we have a monopoly, and bank the wealth secured from the sale of these crops.

Our leading tenant counties should begin to look for some sensible solutions to the tenancy problem. If the practice of 60 years continues, eastern North Carolina will be a land of a few landlords and many tenants.

CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

Concerning California schools, Mr. Branson writes: I indiscreetly ventured into blowing a big horn for the Old North State, at the luncheon hour in the summer school cafeteria yesterday—our ten millions voted locally by eighty-odd towns for public school buildings, the \$1,600,000 in Guilford, the \$900,000 for a high school building in Winston-Salem, and so on.

Fine, said my neighbor, a country high school principal in Santa Barbara county; sounds like California; fifteen millions voted for high school buildings alone in this state since January 1. We believe in high schools in California. I have only 34 pupils in my high school, but my country district gives me two buildings worth \$50,000 and five teachers with \$14,000 a year for salaries and running expenses.

Here are high school boys and girls housed in the country at about \$1,500 each, and taught at a cost of around \$400 a year per pupil. And they are

doing something like this for high school instruction all over the state, I am told. The million dollar high school building in Fresno is soon to be opened with a grand fete. I hope to be present to judge the high school fervor of these California people.

Ontario Schools

Here in this little town of Ontario with 7,500 inhabitants, the high school and junior college property is valued at \$600,000. The campus is 105 acres, in citrus fruits 30 acres, and in deciduous fruits 55 acres. They spent \$21,000 getting this last experimental plot ready for orchard farming.

The Tax Rate

And they have 1,200 pupils with 128 graduates. Raleigh is three times as big as Ontario, but I am guessing that it does not have half as many high school pupils or half as many graduates yearly. And these people work these wonders on a city tax rate of \$2.43 on the hundred of taxable property.

Sight-Seeing

It's hot in the direct sun, but cool in the shade, while at night we crawl under double blankets. A good sea breeze after eleven o'clock every day. We spend tomorrow in Los Angeles 31 miles away, at the University of Southern California, where I am marked up to speak on The Social Problems of the South Atlantic States.

FARM TENANCY IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1920 Percents Increase or Decrease, 1910-1920

Counties ranked from low to high according to the percent of farms operated by tenants. The ten-year gain or loss is shown opposite this percent. Based on Press Summaries of the 1920 Census. State rate of tenancy 43.5 percent. Total increase in farms 16,038. Total increase in farm tenants 11,182.

Table with 5 columns: Rank, County, Percent tenants, Percent ten-year gain or loss, Rank, County, Percent tenants, Percent ten-year gain or loss. Lists 100 counties and their tenancy statistics.

Note: (1) Avery was formed in 1911 out of Watauga, Caldwell, and Mitchell, and does not appear in the 1910 Census. In the area occupied by these four counties tenancy decreased 5.7 percent between 1910 and 1920.