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## NORTH CAROLINA PHYSICIANS

### NORTH CAROLINA DOCTORS

A physician was called one winter night to attend a woman in a town eight miles away. She was suffering from earache. A wild blizzard was in progress; the wind roared down the valley and the snowdrifts were deep. "Can't she wait until morning?" the doctor asked. "No, you must come at once," was the answer. "Then meet me halfway, for I may not be able to get through alone." "Gosh, doctor! Meet you halfway? I can't even get to my front gate." Needless to say this was not in North Carolina, but somewhere in New England.

#### How Distributed

One of the topics at present in the forefront of public attention is that concerning the distribution of physicians, especially for the rural regions.

North Carolina has nearly 2,300 licensed doctors. This number, however, includes the names of many retired physicians and others not available for general practice, so that we have actually only 1,700 visiting doctors. These would figure out one medical man for every 1,500 people throughout the state.

Where do the doctors locate and why? How old are town physicians as compared with country physicians? Are the country regions adequately cared for? Other questions such as these arise, and at the present time nation-wide attention is being focused on the rural-urban medical and health problem.

#### The Cityward Drift

A few years ago a careful study was made by North Carolina medical authorities which showed that for the seven years 1915-1921, inclusive, one-half of the total number of doctors licensed during that period located in the six most populous counties, namely, Buncombe, Forsyth, Mecklenburg, Guilford, New Hanover, and Wake. The total population of these counties was about one-sixth of the State's population. It is evident that there has been and now is a definite trend cityward for the professions, especially in medicine. Moreover, fewer country boys are preparing to become physicians; the financial cost is too great.

We have just arrived at figures which show that today seven large North Carolina cities constituting about one-tenth of the State's population have one-fourth of all the physicians. Asheville and Charlotte have a total of 240, or one medical man for every 312 people. The remaining two and one-half million North Carolinians have one physician for every 1,217 inhabitants, counting all licensed physicians, active and inactive. Other figures giving further proof of the situation might be given.

Let us take courage. Such figures as these would indicate a far more serious situation than actually exists. Dr. Bonner of the State Board of Medical Examiners reminds us that,

"The shortage in medical service in the rural sections of North Carolina is not so acute today as it was a few years ago. Several factors have contributed to the relief of the situation. The progressiveness of the State has attracted many experienced men from other States. A good many of these, having practiced for years, have learned that a quicker self-supporting practice could be obtained in the rural sections than in the city where competition was keen. Many of these came from boll-weevil infested cotton-raising regions farther south, and, finding themselves in financial straits, were compelled to select a location offering an immediate income. The modern, reliable automobile and our good roads have made it possible for the doctor to live in the larger centers of population, to do at least three or four times the amount of work of former days, and to cover a radius of territory multiplied many times. The superior social and economic conditions offered by the city have undoubtedly been a tremendous factor in attracting physicians cityward."

#### Age Distribution

As to the distribution of physicians according to age, the younger men and those in the prime of life and ability tend to move into the larger towns and cities, while, as might be expected, the older men are more frequently found in the smaller towns. In towns of less

than 500 people one out of every three doctors is over 56 years of age, while in towns and cities exceeding 2,500 population only one man in every five has passed the age of 56.

It is not possible to give satisfactory figures on the number of rural people as compared with the number of urban people for each physician, because our modern facilities of transportation and communication have broken down the old barriers of isolation in the majority of our counties. Many of our town and city doctors call on country patients, or country patients come to town for treatment and advice. While we still have plenty of mud in places, this is not to be compared with snow and frigid weather which hinders the doctor and temporarily isolates the country folks in some of the northern states. Little information is available as to the medical attention received by people located on back-country and mountainous roads. Reluctance to call the doctor and too much reliance on largely worthless patent medicines doubtless have more to do with infrequent medical visits than unwillingness on the doctor's part to endure a little hard travelling. It is reasonable to assume that calls from these regions would have more complete and prompt response by the vigorous young physician than from the older man whose spirit is willing but whose strength is limited. It is obvious that more young men between the ages of 30 and 40 are needed in our rural regions.

#### Why City Is Chosen

Why do recent graduates from medical schools settle in the cities? Because modern medical education is emphasizing diagnosis, which involves elaborate equipment, such as X-ray apparatus, radium, microscopes, laboratories, and clinics, and is developing graduates who depend on these things in their practice and who locate for their work in cities where such aids are at hand. Many of our far-sighted medical authorities regret the present tendencies, and feel that too much of the modern medical course is given to pure science, to the consideration of diseases foreign to our immediate environment and everyday needs. They believe that the function of the medical school should be, first to train men for the general practice of medicine, and then let the exceptional students specialize and go into research work. Suggestions in a similar vein are to be found in Bulletin No. 1485, issued in March, 1926, and published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Who can deny that the young doctor has the right of it in settling where his ambitions for successful service can be aided by laboratories and hospitals, not to mention the social and economic assets promised in the urban environment?

As mentioned before, fewer and fewer country boys are taking medical courses. The cost in time and money has been increasing steadily. In the period 1915-1920, the yearly average cost in the medical schools of the United States increased more than 60 percent, and the expense today is still higher.

#### Some Suggestions

Among the suggestions which are being made for the betterment of the rural health situation are these:

1. Subsidize, if necessary, a competent young doctor. If a single community cannot afford to do this, let two or more neighboring communities combine to this end. Why not, the medical "circuit rider"?

2. Organize hospital centers, community health stations, and laboratories in rural districts. This suggestion, properly carried out, would go far toward a solution of the problem.

3. Revise the system of medical education so that it will be within the reach of more country boys who may have the vision or be given the vision of service as general practitioners of medicine in the rural regions.

In conclusion, the cities and towns have more than their share of the total number of physicians. Far-seeing leaders of the medical profession not only deplore the lack of doctors and hospitals in rural communities but are actually attacking the problem. Let us all, city folks, town folks, village folks, country

### FLATTERING CAROLINA

The May issue of the National Geographic Magazine contains an excellent article, profusely illustrated, on Motor-Coaching through North Carolina. The article is written by Melville Chater, of the Geographic staff, and the photographs are by a special staff photographer. Mr. Chater spent about three months in the state, travelling about two thousand miles, by motor bus largely, in preparing the article. A special feature of the issue is a reprint of the Boyhood of Sir Walter Raleigh, by Sir John E. Millais. Every Tar Heel should have a copy of this issue.

folks, give every bit of encouragement and help possible to the end that the country regions may be an attractive field for good physicians rather than the happy hunting grounds for the patent medicine shark.—L. M. Brooks.

### AUTOS AND EDUCATION

Says The University News Letter: The State Department of Revenue reports that during the year 1925 the people of North Carolina spent \$77,561,400 for new and used automobiles. There were 65,596 new cars sold in North Carolina at an approximate cost of \$64,116,700, and 49,842 used cars at an approximate cost of \$17,444,700. The money we spent on purchasing motor cars amounted to almost as much as the value of the entire tobacco crop of the state for the year 1925. We spent more than three times as much in purchasing motor cars as we spent on public education. We probably spent more on automobile repairs and spare parts than we spent on public education.

It is, of course, no reflection on North Carolina that she spent more than \$71,000,000 on her automobiles in a year. It is, on the other hand, a demonstration that she is using for transportation and travel the most up-to-date vehicle. The point is that, if she can spend so much on automobiles, she can spend more on education.

She can and she should. Her achievement in educational progress in the last fifteen years has been marvelous. But it must be taken merely as her recognition of the value of such spending. It is the finest investment she could make from both a material and an idealistic standpoint. As Dr. E. C. Branson once remarked, no state will ever go "broke" by spending money for education, good roads, and public health. The dividends on these investments always more than justify them.

And it is a patent fact that North Carolina is not spending enough on education. Neither the state nor the cities can be credited with keeping pace in school facilities with the growth of population and the needs of that population. Asheville, for instance, is right now woefully handicapped by lack of school space and the resultant number of part-time classes. The citizen who wants to keep school expenditures and school facilities at a stand-still is trying to throttle progress.—Asheville Citizen.

### FARMER CONTROLLED

It is now generally recognized that improved marketing of the products of the farm and the control and disposition of agricultural surpluses is one of the major problems with which agriculture is faced. The returns to the farming industry are, in no small measure, diminished by ineffective marketing and the returns are often far below what they should be because of the influence which surpluses have upon prices. I believe there is general agreement that something can and should be done to meet this situation.

So far as I can see, there are two general avenues of approach to the solution of the problem. One is through a better adjustment of production to market requirements, by which burdensome surpluses can be at least reduced and oftentimes entirely avoided. The other is through more effective marketing of surpluses when produced.

I, of course, recognize the difficulties of controlling production, but I am also convinced that through organized and well directed efforts much more can be done than we have hitherto done to eliminate these recurring surpluses which prove so detrimental to the farm-

ing industry. Perhaps, though, an equally promising approach to the solution is in the field of marketing. What is especially needed is a more effective control of the movement of agricultural products into consumption. This means that adequate marketing organization, storage and credit facilities must be available with which to carry on systematic distribution and provide for more adequate carrying and disposing of the surplus. This provision for orderly flow of products to market, in my opinion, should be performed primarily by farmer-controlled agencies, and legislative action therefore should aim to create and enlarge such agencies and supplement their efforts.—W. M. Jardine, Secretary of Agriculture.

### MEDIAN AGE LOWER

Much has been said and written lately concerning the tendency of youth to become more criminal. Two research students have just completed tabulations showing the median ages of all offenders tried in the Superior courts of the state during the years ending June 30, 1924, and June 30, 1925. Data for earlier years have not been tabulated, so we have only these two recent years to indicate the trend. We do not know how much the median age of criminals has been reduced within recent years, nor whether the following is an indication of the trend toward more youthful offenders. It is submitted for what it is worth.

The following table shows the median ages of persons indicted in the Superior courts of the state for the fiscal years indicated.

Section	Median ages 1923-24	Median ages 1924-25
State	29.2	28.3
Tidewater, 25 cos.	32.1	30.4
Coastal Plains, 25 cos.	29.1	28.1
Piedmont, 25 cos.	27.7	27.5
Mountains, 25 cos.	30.5	28.6

It will be noticed that the median age of offenders was lower in 1925 than in 1924 for the state and for every geographic division of the state. In the more rural sections, the tidewater and mountain counties, the median age of offenders is higher than in the more urban areas, the piedmont and coastal plains.

### ELECTRICITY ON FARMS

As a result of increased cooperative efforts in fifteen states between farm organizations, agricultural colleges, federal departments, and various national electrical organizations, it is predicted that more than a million farms will be receiving the benefits of electric light and power service by 1930.

The gist of this prediction is that the number of farms enjoying the advan-

tages of electricity will be doubled in the next five years. That this prediction is not exaggerated may be seen by a glimpse of the growth of the electric power business during recent years, say the General Electric Company. There are now 18,000,000 customers of the electric light and power industry in this country, which is a gain of 1,800,000 over 1924.

Among farmers there has been a growth correspondingly large. Transmission lines bringing electricity within reach of the farmer are constantly being erected; newer and more efficient uses are being found for electricity in the great research and engineering organizations, and, most important of all, the farmer himself is being taught by means of the radio, free reading matter, lectures and practical demonstrations in all parts of the country the immense economies which electricity can bring him.

In the past he did not realize that with electricity he could churn, light, thresh, milk, saw wood, cut ensilage and, in fact, perform electrically practically all the difficult and laborious tasks of farm life, and at a tremendous saving over the cost of manual labor.

That the time when every farm of any consequence will be wired to take advantage of cheap electricity is coming is the opinion of scientists and economists the country over.—New York Times.

### A BETTER FUTURITY

There are men who, in the face of all history, of the great changes wrought in men's condition, and of the new principles which are now acting on society, maintain that the future is to be a copy of the past, and probably a faded rather than bright copy. From such I differ. Did I expect nothing better from human nature than I see, I should have no heart for the present effort. I see signs of a better futurity, and especially signs that the large class by whose toil we all live are rising from the dust.—William Ellery Channing.

### BANK GIVES PRIZES

For the third successive year, notes The Manufacturers Record (Baltimore), the First National Bank of Laurel, Mississippi, announces a series of prizes for farmers and farmers' wives for achievements in the production of cotton, corn and chickens. The total this year running to \$700, as compared with \$600 last year and \$500 the year before. These competitions, it is stated, "have resulted not only in increasing yields of crops and of chickens, but also have assisted in adding 1,200 new farmer customers to the bank, increasing the deposits in a few years over \$1,600,000."

### RADIOS ON FARMS JANUARY 1, 1925

The following table, based on the 1925 Farm Census, ranks the states according to the number of farms per radio on farms. The accompanying column gives the number of radios on farms for each state.

Civilization is a product of communication facilities, says Professor Branson. The radio is the newest agency of communication, and seems destined to become one of the most important.

Rhode Island leads with one farm radio to every three farms. Alabama ranks last with one farm radio to every 321 farms. North Carolina ranks forty-fifth with one farm radio to every 208 farms.

U. S. total of radios on farms on January 1, 1925, was 284,053, or one radio to every 22.4 farms.

Department of Rural Social-Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	States	Farms with radios	Number farms per radio	Rank	States	Farms with radios	Number farms per radio
1	Rhode Island	1,246	3	25	Colorado	2,426	24
2	Massachusetts	6,434	5	26	Montana	1,941	24
3	New Jersey	6,256	5	27	Nevada	154	25
4	New York	24,620	7	28	Wyoming	623	25
5	Illinois	27,434	8	29	Washington	2,691	27
6	Connecticut	2,688	9	30	Delaware	342	30
7	Iowa	23,645	9	31	Arizona	302	36
8	New Hampshire	2,366	9	32	Texas	11,732	40
9	California	13,254	10	33	Idaho	805	60
10	Nebraska	12,740	10	34	Virginia	3,715	62
11	Vermont	2,778	10	35	West Virginia	1,741	62
12	Kansas	13,189	12	36	Utah	386	67
13	Pennsylvania	14,933	13	37	Oklahoma	2,707	73
14	Maine	3,493	14	38	Kentucky	2,878	90
15	Missouri	17,592	15	39	New Mexico	286	110
16	Ohio	15,917	15	40	Florida	506	117
17	Minnesota	11,779	16	41	Tennessee	1,970	128
18	North Dakota	4,729	16	42	Arkansas	1,244	178
19	South Dakota	4,366	16	43	Georgia	1,300	191
20	Oregon	3,251	17	44	South Carolina	867	200
21	Maryland	2,779	18	45	North Carolina	1,363	208
22	Michigan	9,028	18	46	Mississippi	928	277
23	Indiana	8,665	23	47	Louisiana	448	295
24	Wisconsin	8,242	23	48	Alabama	739	321