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FARM REAL ESTATE VALUES

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Elsewhere in this issue appears a table showing, in terms of index numbers, the situation in farm real estate values in the forty-eight states. Taking the average for the years 1912, 1913, and 1914 as a base, that is 100, the index numbers for each state for each year have been computed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. We are presenting in the table only the index numbers for 1920, when farm real estate was highest, and the index numbers for the current year.

In computing the index numbers the Department of Agriculture has used "all farm lands with improvements," for this represents most closely the way farm land is usually bought and sold. Its sources of information consist of the recorded sale prices of farms actually sold, such as in conveyances of title, or an estimated market price as in the census. The state average values are adopted after considering several sets of figures—the averages of the estimates returned by a list of correspondents reporting directly to Washington, the averages of a second list reporting to the agricultural statisticians of the states, and a weighted state average based on a combination of the other sources.

An effort is made to exclude from consideration all lands affected by use or offer for town or suburban lots or other non-agricultural purposes. Again, the reports generally represent the better grades of improved farms located in established farming sections.

Trend Downward

It is not surprising that real estate values generally should be far below the 1920 figures, for those were inflated values. It is a bit disturbing that the decline which began sharply in 1921 has continued. In all the states except four, farm real estate values are lower than in 1926. The decline the last year for the country as a whole averaged five points in the index, or a fall from 124 to 119. Farm real estate values are now about 20 percent above the 1912-14 or pre-war level, or about at the level of 1917.

The Department of Agriculture, in its report, suggests that with the marked decline during the year in the price of several major farm products—the first since the low point of 1921—a none too certain price outlook, and a generally weak farm real estate market, declines in value might have been expected. On the whole, there are plenty of farms for sale, with buyers few and cautious. In a number of areas there are still many foreclosed and other "distress" farms hanging over the market.

Situation in South

It will be noticed in the table that in only one state—Florida—have farm values risen to any extent since 1920, and the explanation for the increase there is simple. The real estate boom in Florida did not begin until after 1920, the index number for that state rising from 155 in 1923 to 223 in 1926, and then falling to 183 in 1927.

Land values throughout the South are higher now than in any other entire geographic division except the Pacific states, and were it not for California this group of states would not have to be excepted. Georgia and Missouri are the only Southern states in which land values are below or near the pre-war level. Land values in the South rose to greater heights in 1920 than those in any other section, hence the fall has been greater. In no other state did the price of farm land soar so high, at least in terms of pre-war prices, as in South Carolina. Consequently, there we find the greatest fall—117 points. The fall in Georgia is 114 points, bringing the present price to an even lower level than in South Carolina. In all the cotton-growing states, except Georgia, South Carolina and Missouri, we find farm real estate values from 26 to 78 percent above the pre-war level. This cannot be said of the corn belt, of the wheat belt, or of the diversified areas in the Northeast. Last year's low-priced cotton produced a sharp decline in the price of Southern farm land, but even so the index figure for the South Atlantic group of states is 137, the East South Central 134, and the West South Central 139. This com-

pare favorably with the Middle Atlantic states at 111, and the East North Central at 103. With a good price for cotton this year the trend may be improved in the South next year. The rapid industrialization of the South has of course given Southern lands a certain speculative value.

In North Carolina

It will be noticed that land values in North Carolina stand at 178, a figure surpassed only by Florida. The explanation must lie partly in the fact that cotton and tobacco have in the main both brought good prices ever since the war, and partly in the general development which has taken place in the state. The construction of a network of good highways, the erection of hundreds of consolidated rural schools, the presence of a score of growing industrial towns, and the favorable publicity which the state has been receiving, have all helped to keep farm lands higher than perhaps their income-producing capacity would justify. The market for farm land is dull in North Carolina. Apparently it is even more dull in other states.—Paul W. Wager.

FARM CO-OPERATION

At Eunice, Louisiana, there is a chamber of commerce which does farm co-operation in its own practical way in an effort to build up dairying, fruit growing, vegetable growing, and hog production. Just now it is endeavoring to formulate plans for the marketing of dairy products in Eunice and the encouragement of the use of better cattle. An inspection of purebred Poland China hogs is to be followed by the securing of more registered sires. In the fall it is planned to ship hogs in carload lots, and the organization of a poultry association promises like shipments of poultry and eggs.

Since January 1, it is said, the Eunice Chamber of Commerce has bought and distributed free 15,000 fig cuttings of the Magnolia variety; has purchased the seed for the planting of fifty acres of beets and carrots and distributed that seed to the farmers with a return to the farmers of \$4,000; has given to each farmer who would agree to purchase three Poland-China gilts one boar of the same breed; has donated soy beans to the farmers; has sponsored a tri-parish fair securing \$3,100 in contributions for the exposition.

Things which have been done and are being done by the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, and by other chambers of commerce, for the farmers are not to be minimized. All of them realize that agriculture is a basic industry in any county. The point is, however, that the Eunice Chamber of Commerce has adopted a direct method and an unusual method in endeavoring to build its county.—Tuscaloosa News.

FINE ARTS FOUNDATION

An innovation in public school activities in North Carolina has been announced for the Richard J. Reynolds High School in Winston-Salem, in the form of a series of special lectures to the student body by outstanding speakers of national, and some of international, reputation. This is expected to be a permanent annual feature in the life of the school.

This series of lectures, probably comprising six each session, is made possible by Mr. H. R. Dwire, Chairman of the Board of City School Commissioners. The idea, which is being worked out under the direction of Supt. Latham and Chairman Dwire, is to bring to Winston-Salem every year, for the specific purpose of addressing the High School, recognized leaders in various realms of activity who will have the ability to deliver inspirational messages that will be long remembered by the students and that will be calculated to aid in a very real way in directing their energies and ambitions along constructive lines.

A similar series has proven a decidedly interesting and profitable feature of the classroom work in the high schools of Pittsburgh, Pa., perhaps the only other city in the country that follows such a plan as that outlined in

COMPETENT DISCIPLESHIP

Very great emphasis has been laid on the importance of competent leadership, but competent discipleship is not less important in developing communities and commonwealths. It is a sorry choice between followers without leaders and leaders without followers.

Nobody better than Napoleon knew the importance of competent discipleship. Said he, "It is not a handful of nobles or rich men that make a nation, but the mass of the people; Let the leader despise all parties, let him see only the mass; He who moves the masses changes the face of the earth; What do I care for the opinion of drawing-rooms and babblers? I recognize only one opinion, that of the peasants."

North Carolina is not suffering for lack of competent leaders. Our greatest danger lies in the lack of competent followers. A civilization cannot be safely lifted unless the levels of life for sweaty toilers can also be lifted.

Once upon a time, jackscrews were put under every building in Chicago and the whole city lifted six feet above the swamp land of its early days. The furnace man in the basement was six feet higher up, but so also was the gentleman in the drawing-room and his wife and daughters in their boudoirs above.—E. C. Branson.

the lecture course being arranged for the Richard J. Reynolds High School.

The first lecture of the Winston-Salem course was delivered by Dr. Edwin Mims, Professor of English Literature in Vanderbilt University. Other features of the course will be lectures by some of the greatest speakers in America, including perhaps one of the leading scientists of the day, a sculptor of international reputation, a preacher who is considered one of the outstanding pulpit orators of the nation, and others.

In the Pittsburgh schools the series of lectures embraces topics bearing upon these three main themes—the Good, the Beautiful, the True. Youth's relation to Goodness, to Beauty, and to Truth is presented in an inspiring way by men and women who can speak eloquently and authoritatively on these vital themes. A similar plan is proposed for the Winston-Salem lecture series.

WHAT CAROLINA NEEDS

First, a new birth of intellectual freedom, a kingdom in which the free thoughts of a free people may be broadcast without fear or favor of the established order. Truth will stand upon its own.

Second, a determination on the part of those who till the soil that the smoke-house will be filled and the time-merchant delayed.

Third, an educated electorate which will say thumbs down on the employment of civil officers, paid by us all, to collect the debts of individuals.

Fourth, a determination on the part of a supposedly free people to see that county government pays as it goes.

Fifth, the wisdom of the ages more generally available through wholehearted support of the public libraries of North Carolina.

Sixth, a realization upon the part of the cotton mill industry that the man who tends the loom has a boy whom he wants to educate and a girl whom he hopes to bring out in the world on a better social parity than the family ever knew. Consequently, a just, decent and proper wage is due. Industry will justify such a wage if vision will grasp such an opportunity.

Seventh, a realization by the State Highway Commission that the roads of North Carolina should be, first, to develop the state and, second, to provide a boulevard for the tourist.

Eighth, a realization by the people of the state that the boys and girls born in whatever section that may open to them the light of day, deserve equal educational advantages with the son of the richest born into the grace of lucre and the shining light of plutocracy.

Ninth, more safeguards around the State Building and Loan Associations. The public must be able to maintain its confidence in these mutually beneficial organizations.

These, are some of the things which Carolina may think upon with profit.—A condensation of a recent editorial in the Warren Record.

NOTES ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

10. SCHOOL COST AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

The constantly increasing cost of public education, paralleling that of living and of government in general, is of concern to legislators and citizens generally. Recently the federal government has been reducing the cost of maintaining its various establishments and activities and correspondingly reducing income taxes and other forms of federal taxation. As yet, however, the relief in the total taxation exacted from the average citizen is slight, as costs of state, county, local, and municipal government have remained the same or even increased, thus offsetting federal reductions. The cost of maintaining public education, the sources from which funds are received for school support, methods of distributing state moneys among local schools and districts so as more nearly to equalize educational opportunities of children and tax burdens of citizens, are matters of paramount importance to legislators and others responsible for enacting or recommending laws governing the support of public education.

It is recognized that the costs of education have increased greatly since 1914, that public-spirited citizens desire to continue to support schools liberally, and that they must be conducted economically. Judgment cannot be passed on the necessity of school expenditures and their increase year by year except in the light of comparison with other factors conditioning the cost, including, of course, the different purchasing power of the dollar in the respective years considered.

Mitigating Factors

Information collected in the United States Bureau of Education comparing annual expenditures in the years 1913, 1918, 1920, 1922, and 1924 with the purchasing power of the dollar in these years indicates that school costs have not increased to the degree many persons thought; nor to the extent that figures showing actual expenditures alone, unmodified by consideration of the decreased purchasing power of the dollar and by the increase in school attendance, would indicate.

For instance, from 1913 to 1924 the total expenditures for public schools in the United States increased from 522 millions of dollars to 1,821 millions, or an increase of 249 percent. But when the reduced purchasing power of the dollar is taken into account, the increase in purchasing power of the total expenditures becomes only 102 percent. When recognition is also given to the fact that the average daily attendance in elementary and secondary schools increased by about 85 percent, the real increase in school costs per pupil is discovered to be about fifty percent.

Why Costs Increased

Important factors responsible for the increase in total annual expenditure on school support in the United States are (1) the decrease in the purchasing power of the dollar; (2) the great increase in school enrollment and attendance and consequent increase in number of teachers and equipment necessitated thereby; (3) the large proportionate increase in attendance in secondary schools, the per capita cost of maintaining which is approximately double that of maintaining elementary schools; (4) the provision of better facilities, particularly those which satisfy the needs of a broader curriculum involving special subjects and teachers; and (5) the need for a large school-building program because of the practical stagnation of building and improvement during the war period. It should be remembered that we expect more of our schools now than in the past and that we expect also better work, better-trained teachers, a far broader training, more consideration to hygienic and sanitary conditions of buildings and grounds, and the like, and that materialization of all of these ideals means vastly increased expenditure of money.—Adapted from a report of U. S. Bureau of Education.

FARM REAL ESTATE VALUES

The States Ranked According to 1927 Index Number

The following table reveals the price of farm real estate in each of the several states, measured in terms of pre-war prices. To make this comparison the average for 1912, 1913 and 1914 is taken as a base, or 100. The table gives the index numbers for 1920, when farm land reached its highest price, and for 1927. The 1927 index number, in itself, reveals how much higher or lower than the pre-war price in the existing price. A comparison of the two columns shows what has happened since 1920. For instance, Maine's index number for 1920 was 142, and for 1927 it is 124. That means that farm land values in Maine were 42 percent higher in 1920 than in the pre-war period, and now they are only 24 percent higher than in the pre-war period.

In no states except Florida and Connecticut has farm real estate advanced since 1920. In the other states it has fallen all the way from five points, in California, to 117 points, in South Carolina. Compared to pre-war prices farm real estate has advanced in 39 states and fallen in 9 states. In only one state—Florida—has it advanced more than in North Carolina.

This table is based on material found in the August issue of Crops and Markets, published by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Paul W. Wager

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Rank	State	Index number 1920	Index number 1927	Rank	State	Index number 1920	Index number 1927
1	Florida	178	183	25	Nebraska	179	119
2	North Carolina	223	178	26	Idaho	172	117
3	California	167	162	27	Wisconsin	161	115
4	Arkansas	222	150	28	Kansas	151	113
5	Minnesota	213	145	29	South Carolina	230	113
6	Alabama	177	145	30	New Hampshire	129	112
7	Texas	174	141	31	Pennsylvania	140	112
8	Connecticut	137	138	32	Delaware	139	111
9	Maryland	189	128	33	Washington	140	111
10	Virginia	198	135	34	West Virginia	154	110
11	Louisiana	200	134	35	New York	133	108
12	Kentucky	200	133	36	New Mexico	144	108
13	Rhode Island	140	131	37	Oregon	130	106
14	Massachusetts	200	130	38	Georgia	218	104
15	Tennessee	200	128	39	North Dakota	145	100
16	New Jersey	166	128	40	Ohio	159	99
17	Oklahoma	167	128	41	Illinois	160	99
18	Utah	154	127	42	Missouri	167	99
19	Michigan	166	126	43	Nevada	135	99
20	Mississippi	218	126	44	South Dakota	181	97
21	Vermont	150	125	45	Wyoming	175	94
22	Maine	142	124	46	Indiana	161	87
23	Arizona	165	123	47	Colorado	141	82
24	Iowa	213	121	48	Montana	126	70