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OUR PRISON INMATES

FEWER PRISONERS

The United States Department of Commerce has recently issued a Census of Prisoners as of January 1, 1923, with comparative data for January 1, 1910. The table which appears elsewhere ranks the states according to inmates in prison on January 1, 1923, per 100,000 inhabitants. The second column shows the percent increase or decrease in the prison inmate ratio from 1910 to 1923.

North Dakota makes the best showing of all the states with only 50.6 inmates in all prisons per 100,000 inhabitants on January 1, 1923. Nevada with 270 prison inmates per 100,000 inhabitants makes the worst showing and ranks last.

North Carolina with a prison inmate rate of only 65.1 ranks sixth. In other words only five states reported fewer persons in all prisons per 100,000 inhabitants on January 1, 1923, the date on which the census was taken. This splendid rank is rather surprising to most of us in view of certain local conditions, especially our propensity for moonshining and homicides, and our fairly large negro ratio.

However, as one might reasonably suspect, our prison inmate ratio is on the increase as shown in the accompanying table. The prison rate decreased during the thirteen-year period in thirty-seven states, and increased in only eleven states, North Carolina being one of the eleven showing an increase.

The prison population of the United States reported on the census-taking date numbered 109,619, or 99.7 per 100,000 population. The rate in 1910 was 121.2 per 100,000 inhabitants. The thirteen-year decrease was 17.7 percent.

It is estimated on the basis of records for the first six months of 1923 that a total of 357,493 persons were committed to prison in the United States during that year, or 325.1 persons per 100,000 inhabitants. Which means that in a county like Mecklenburg or Forsyth if three hundred people were committed to prison during a year the rate would be representative of the United States.

In respect to commitments to prison during the year 1923 North Carolina makes an excellent showing. Our commitment rate was 102.2 per 100,000 inhabitants, against the United States average of 325.1. On a population basis only one state sent fewer persons to prison in 1923.

Only Fraction of Offenders

Statistics on sentenced prisoners, while they show in a way relative conditions by states, are not an adequate index of felonies or misdemeanors. Of the prisoners arrested, only a small part are indicted and convicted. Of those convicted a large number get off with suspended sentences, while a still larger number get off with payment of fines. Thus the limited number who are committed to prison represent only a small fraction of the full number of offenders. The amount of crime in a state is only one of the factors which combine to determine the number of offenders who are sentenced and imprisoned. The local machinery and policies of law enforcement, which largely influence the number of prisoners, differ widely in various areas. The suspended sentence and the probation are being applied to an ever increasing ratio of convicted offenders. In some states probations and suspended sentences are more often applied than in others.

Offenses

The three outstanding offenses for which prisoners were committed in 1923 were drunkenness, disorderly conduct, and violating the liquor laws. Prisoners committed for drunkenness decreased nearly fifty percent from 1910 to 1923, while commitments for violating the liquor laws increased 326 percent.

There were also large increases in commitments to prison for violating the federal drug laws, traffic laws, city ordinances, for homicides, rape, burglary, and forgery.

However, there was a large decrease in total commitments to prison, from 479,787 in 1910 to 357,493 in 1923. The rate decrease per 100,000 inhabitants was 37.7 percent. The decrease in commitments to prison was due not so much to decrease in crime and convictions as to changes in the disposition made of

convicted cases. As has already been stated, the increasing tendency to employ the suspended sentence is a great factor. Also the growing tendency to employ fines instead of imposing prison sentences is a cause. Another important factor is the juvenile court and the largely increased number of juvenile reformatories to which juvenile offenders are now sent, who formerly were sent to prison.

By Age Groups

Most of the prisoners in the United States belong to the younger age groups. Except for the large number of reformatories the number of youthful prisoners would be much larger. Nearly two-thirds of all prisoners in the United States are between 18 and 34 years of age. More than one-third of all prison inmates fall within the 25 to 34 years age group. In ratio to population there are more commitments for the 21 to 24 years age group, while the 18 to 21 years age group also makes a bad showing. The decrease in the prison ratio below 18 years of age is due not to fewer offenders but to the largely increased number of juvenile courts and juvenile reformatories.

It seems that the negro finds it very easy to land in prison. On a population basis nearly three times as many negroes are in prison as whites. Eight-tenths of one percent of all negroes in the United States were in prison in 1923. The low rank of several southern states in the accompanying table may be attributed largely to their large negro population ratios. The high standing of North Carolina, which has a large negro population, may be due to a superior type of negro in our state.

But even so, we can't understand why North Carolina has so few prison inmates. Are courts in North Carolina too lenient? Are our judges applying fines and suspended sentences more often than judges in other states? What effect have the recently instituted juvenile courts and additions to juvenile reformatories had on keeping the prison population down? If crime is as prevalent in North Carolina as press reports lead one to believe, then our offenders fail to get prison sentences. If our courts are applying a fair proportion of time sentences, then North Carolinians are more law-abiding than citizens of most states.

We don't claim to know the answer, but we should like to point out that on a population basis more stills were destroyed in North Carolina last year than in any other state in the Union. Counting stills and distilleries nearly twice as many were captured last year as there were prisoners in all prisons of every sort in the state.—S. H. H., Jr.

LOCAL MARKET PROBLEM

At the regular meeting of the North Carolina Club, Monday night, a paper dealing with the local market problem was presented by C. G. Grady, of Johnston county. The speaker first pointed out the importance of the local market problem, due to the fact that it affects practically everybody in the state, town and country. He made it clear that the rapid progress which North Carolina is making is being made in spite of unsound marketing facilities and arrangements. Progress in wealth accumulation is not state-wide. Relatively only a small percent of our population has accumulated much wealth. Our progress has been mainly along industrial lines. But the majority of our people are farmers. The farmers, the majority, can improve their status by establishing better local marketing arrangements whereby they can obtain a more reasonable profit for their labor. By doing this the present partition or dividing line which tends to separate the rural and urban people will gradually be erased.

Mr. Grady went on to say that it is a deplorable fact that North Carolina farmers do not produce enough food to supply our 2,760,000 inhabitants, our work animals, and our small number of consumptive livestock. Every year close to a quarter of a billion dollars is being sent to other states for imported food supplies. And yet North Carolina has

OUR FEDERAL TAX

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1925, North Carolina paid into the federal treasury taxes amounting to \$166,962,875. Only four states paid more, namely, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Illinois. North Carolina's high rank is due to her tobacco industry, Michigan's rank to her automobile industry, and so on. The ultimate consumer pays the tax, not wholly the state in which it is collected. North Carolina is just as responsible for her contribution as is any other state.

North Carolina pays almost as much to support the federal government as all the rest of the South combined. North Carolina paid 43 percent of the federal taxes paid by the entire South for the last fiscal year. Our nearest competitor, Virginia, trails us by nearly one hundred and twenty million dollars. Our federal tax for the year 1925 would run our state government for eleven years!

an abundance of fertile soil on which the greatest variety of plants grow naturally.

Lack Livestock

The lack of livestock of the food and feed variety in North Carolina was pointed out. Only about one-fifth of the value of farm wealth produced each year is produced by livestock and livestock products. The eastern half of our state, especially, is one of the most poorly developed livestock regions in America. It seems that, with the exception of mules and horses, our livestock units decrease while our population increases. On nearly one-third of our 283,500 farms there are no consumptive livestock of any description. The farmers do not provide themselves with meat, milk, butter, and eggs. What they want is money. In an attempt to satisfy this desire they raise cash crops. Yet money seems to be one of the things they do not have. The cause of this is in a large measure our crude and antiquated system of marketing, and excessive production costs.

Cotton and Tobacco

Cotton, our greatest crop, needs to be marketed more orderly throughout the year, as there is demand for it. Co-operative cotton marketing associations have sprung up in every state in the South. The cotton farmers are organizing into separate state associations which they hope later to combine into one selling organization. The purpose is for the farmers to own the selling machinery, so that they can dispose of their crop as it is needed, and receive for it exactly what it brings in a fair market, minus the actual cost of selling.

The marketing of tobacco is as unbusinesslike as that of cotton. Our present system, or rather non-system, is just about as unbusinesslike and wasteful as could possibly be imagined. The farmer gets up early in the morning, races to market, dumps the entire product of a year's toil, often unguarded, in a pile on a warehouse floor to be auctioned off to speculators who often make more profits in a few seconds than the farmer makes out of his year's labor. Associations for the marketing of tobacco, just as for cotton, are needed. Our Tri-State Association is experiencing rough sailing, but it is hoped that it will weather the storm and develop finally into a truly cooperative association. The tobacco association is simply a marketing method by which all member-farmers combine into one organization to dispose of their product in an orderly manner, to eliminate speculation, waste, and unnecessary middlemen, to market their tobacco through their own hired agents direct to the manufacturer and to receive the price he pays, minus the actual cost of marketing. The marketing of other products is equally as poorly cared for as cotton and tobacco. Farmers will fail to accumulate their fair share of wealth as long as they fail to market their products in an orderly and businesslike way.

It was pointed out that many groups of farmers over the state have recently been experimenting with group marketing of poultry, livestock, etc., with satisfactory results. The car lot marketing plan will help our farmers to get better prices for their surplus products.

The farmers, through state and community organization, can market poultry, cattle, potatoes, watermelons, and vegetables of all kinds in car lot shipments. This will enable the producer to make more profits and also to produce on a larger scale.

Curb Markets

Curb markets, if properly managed, will also help to solve the local market problem. The plan works somewhat as follows: The farmers, on certain days, bring their fresh vegetables, eggs, and poultry to town and sell them directly to the housewife from the curb. In this way the producers, by eliminating the middlemen, make more money, and at the same time the consumers get better and fresher vegetables at lower prices. There is usually a committee composed of a producer, a consumer, and the home or extension agent appointed to pass on all problems that come up in connection with the market.

Another plan of marketing local produce is through municipal markets. The plan is simple and is worked here and there with great success, especially in the larger towns. The producers organize, buy or rent a place, and sell their produce directly to the consumer. Each man has a stall or booth where his produce is put on sale. This plan is working successfully in some of the larger cities, and there is no reason why it could not be used with profitable results in all the larger towns of North Carolina.

Roadside Markets

With the completion of our hard-surfaced roads still another plan for marketing produce can be worked out. It must be carried on in the vicinities of the cities and larger towns. It is called roadside markets, and is worked on somewhat the same plan as the curb markets. Small stands are built on the roadside by farmers having vegetables, eggs, poultry, etc., for sale. The housewife drives out from her home in the course of her daily spin and purchases her supply of vegetables, poultry, eggs, and so on, directly from the farm.

FOODLESS FARMS

During recent years the constant cry has been to diversify, meaning to grow food and feed on every farm in addition to the usual money-crop or crops. Diversification has been preached until many of us have begun to thoroughly dislike the word. From information assembled recently by E. J. Bodman, Vice-President of the Union Trust Company, Little Rock, Arkansas, Chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the Arkansas Bankers' Association, and a leader in the banker-farmer movement

of twenty years' standing, it would seem that there is still a pressing necessity for awakening thousands upon thousands of farmers in the South to the imperative need of mixed farming as a fixed policy.

Mr. Bodman's investigation of so-called foodless farms, covering the states of Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina, ten states in all, developed the following astonishing information:

Thirty-seven percent of all or 945,333 farms were found to be without a dairy cow.

Forty-six percent of all or 1,172,726 farms made no butter.

Thirty-three percent of all or 950,980 farms did not raise a chicken.

Twenty percent of all or 500,411 farms produced no eggs.

Twenty-three percent of all or 597,247 farms had no garden.

Fifty-six percent of all or 1,438,544 farms did not raise a pig.

Fifty-eight percent of all or 1,481,297 farms raised no sweet potatoes.

Seventy-nine percent of all or 2,005,393 farms raised no Irish potatoes.

Twelve percent of all or 299,827 farms raised no corn.

Eighty-six percent of all or 2,185,506 farms raised no oats.

Fifty-four percent of all or 1,382,918 farms raised no hay or forage.

Seventy-six percent of all or 1,942,445 farms grew no cane for syrup.

Ninety-five percent of all or 2,415,966 farms had no pure-bred animals.

Can your farm be classified as a foodless farm? If so, why not, make your plans to get out of this class in 1926?—G. A. Cardwell.

WHAT PRICE CRIME?

Shameful to state, one out of every 300 persons in the United States is put into jail or prison every year.

That percentage doesn't include the people who are assessed fines or those who are placed on probation instead of being jailed or fined.

Of the half-million people sent to penal and correctional institutions in the United States in 1910, 91½ percent were sent to jails and workhouses. Half of them were committed to jail for the non-payment of fines.

We have an enormous investment in the 10,000 jails, lock-ups and police stations in the country. The prisons use 135,000 acres of land worth \$30,000,000 and machinery and tools worth \$4,000,000. Occupying these lands and buildings are 75,000 men.

Yet our prisons don't pay!

Americans are the most murderous people in the civilized world. We had, in 1921, 8.5 homicides per 100,000 people. And, as far as we can judge from statistics, the rate has been steadily increasing during the last two decades. The newer crimes, such as automobile stealing, are growing by leaps and bounds.

Crimes cost an enormous amount of money. In 1922 it was estimated that criminals cost the taxpayers of the United States three billions of dollars.—Prof. J. L. Gillin, Univ. of Wisconsin.

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN PRISONS Per 100,000 Population January 1, 1923

In the following table, based on Census of Prisoners for 1923, issued by the U. S. Department of Commerce, the states are ranked according to the number of inmates in prison on January 1, 1923, per 100,000 population. The data cover state and federal prisoners, and county and municipal penal institutions, as jails and workhouses. The second column shows the rate increase or decrease for each state for 1923 over the year 1910. Thirty-seven states had a smaller ratio of population in prison on January 1, 1923, than on January 1, 1910.

North Dakota with only 50.6 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants makes the best showing. Nevada with 270.0 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants comes last. Only five states have a better record than North Carolina, whose prisoners numbered 65.1 per 100,000 inhabitants. However, we were one of the eleven states whose prison inmate ratio on January 1 increased over 1910.

Department of Rural Social-Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	States	Prisoners present Jan. 1, per 100,000 pop.	Percent increase or decrease over 1910	Rank	States	Prisoners present Jan. 1, per 100,000 pop.	Percent increase or decrease over 1910
1	North Dakota	50.6	-20.4	25	Oklahoma	91.3	-9.3
2	New Hampshire	54.6	-53.7	26	Illinois	91.4	+2.9
3	Utah	55.8	-47.1	27	Ohio	92.9	+10.5
4	South Dakota	57.7	+20.7	28	Washington	95.4	-34.1
5	Wisconsin	59.5	-17.1	29	Kansas	96.7	+6.4
6	North Carolina	65.1	-1.1	30	Indiana	97.0	-8.7
7	Maine	65.9	-33.0	31	New York	98.7	-28.0
8	Montana	67.2	-73.8	32	Mississippi	101.0	-20.5
9	Nebraska	70.2	+27.6	33	Kentucky	101.1	-15.2
10	Oregon	70.6	-23.8	34	Vermont	101.3	-8.7
11	New Mexico	70.7	-43.3	35	Virginia	103.4	-34.2
12	South Carolina	72.3	-35.2	36	Louisiana	105.3	-27.3
13	Idaho	72.5	-17.7	37	Arizona	112.8	-64.3
14	New Jersey	77.5	-34.5	38	Michigan	120.0	+30.3
15	Massachusetts	78.3	-60.7	39	Colorado	120.4	-21.8
16	Connecticut	79.0	-42.0	40	Maryland	124.6	-24.8
17	Iowa	79.1	+29.9	41	West Virginia	128.2	+6.1
18	Missouri	79.3	-25.9	42	California	136.2	-22.1
19	Texas	79.4	-26.8	43	Delaware	138.6	-3.3
20	Pennsylvania	82.7	-22.5	44	Alabama	148.0	-14.2
21	Tennessee	83.3	-31.1	45	Florida	153.7	-37.0
22	Arkansas	86.0	+3.6	46	Wyoming	171.0	-13.0
23	Rhode Island	87.7	-34.7	47	Georgia	188.4	-1.6
24	Minnesota	89.0	+14.5	48	Nevada	270.0	-23.5