

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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## The Alarming Increase of Tenancy in the South.

THE alarming increase of tenancy in the United States may well arrest the attention of all men interested in the future of the country. And if the situation is alarming in the Nation at large, it is far more serious in our own Southern States. Every decade sees a marked increase in the number of men farming the lands of others, a marked decrease in the number of those who own their own homes.

Gloomy indeed are the forebodings to which these figures give rise. Is agriculture to become like manufacturing—an industry in which the profits go to a few great capitalists for whom the rest of the people are only hirelings? Is the country home, the fountain head of our National strength and character, to decay under the subtle blight of tenancy? Is the development of great estates cultivated by landless laborers—is this condition to prove the ruin of America as it ruined ancient Italy, as it has made Irish history a long nightmare, as it has crushed the lives of millions in Russia, and as it has all but destroyed hope in the hearts of Mexico's toiling masses?

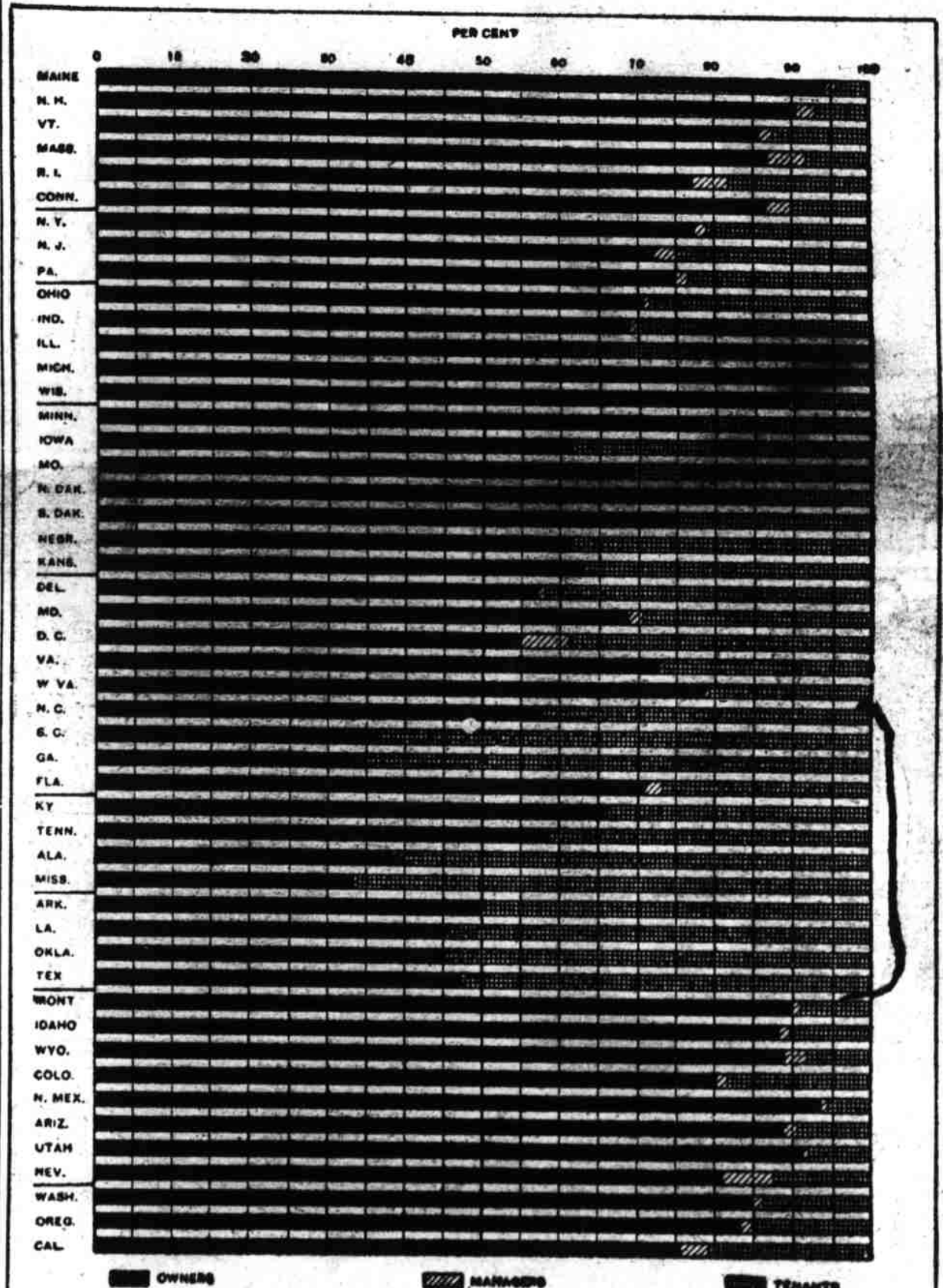
Perhaps there is no room for pessimism. Perhaps we shall yet find a remedy. But certainly no man with both eyes open can fail to think seriously as he examines the official census figures as issued by the United States Government and set forth in the diagrams and tables given herewith. The official 1910 census volume on "Agriculture" has not yet been issued, but from preliminary State bulletins in our hands we have prepared the following significant table for this issue of The Progressive Farmer. This table shows the percentage of farmers who were tenants in 1880, 1890, 1900, and 1910 in each State indicated. Notice the steady increase, decade by decade, of the proportion of homeless farmers in every State in the South with the exception of Virginia and Florida. In these two States conditions have been improved by the coming of Northern and Western farmers; whereas this effect of immigration in Texas has been more than offset by the breaking of the ranches into farms and smaller tenant farms.

PERCENTAGE OF FARMERS WHO WERE TENANTS.

	1880	1890	1900	1910
United States	25.6	28.4	35.3	37.0
Virginia	29.5	26.9	30.7	28.5
North Carolina	33.5	34.1	41.4	42.3
South Carolina	50.3	55.3	61.1	63.0
Georgia	44.9	53.6	59.9	65.6
Florida	30.9	23.6	26.5	26.7
Alabama	46.8	48.6	57.7	60.2
Mississippi	43.8	52.8	62.4	66.1
Tennessee	34.5	30.8	40.6	41.1
Arkansas	30.9	32.1	45.4	50.0
Louisiana	35.2	44.4	58.0	55.3
Texas	37.6	4.19	49.7	52.6

In North Carolina 42 farmers in each 100 are now tenants as compared with 33 in each 100 in 1880; in South Carolina 63 in each 100 are now tenants as compared 50 in each 100 in 1880; in Georgia 65 now as compared with 44 then; in Alabama 60 as compared with 46 then; in Mississippi 66 as compared with 43 then; in Tennessee 41 as compared with 34 then; in Arkansas 50 now as compared with 30 then; in Louisiana 55 as compared with 35 then; in Texas 52 now as compared with 37 then.

Such a situation calls indeed for the most serious attention we can give it.



PROPORTION OF HOME-OWNING FARMERS IN EACH AMERICAN STATE: (1910 CENSUS.)

The black line indicates the proportion of farmers in each State who own the farms they till; the checked lines indicate the proportion of tenants. (An intermediate designation indicates the number of managers.) Notice how, when one reaches our Southern States in this diagram, the checked line of tenancy increases. When we come to consider not only the present plight of these States with regard to tenancy, but its startling increase since 1880 as shown by the table, the situation becomes even more serious.

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