THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AGRICULTURE

W. C. LASSETTER

We are happy to welcome the American Society of Agronomy to the South where we have social, economic and agronomic problems. We are highly honored by your presence.

Before starting it might be well to define the area to which we shall refer as the South. For convenience we are letting this area begin with Virginia and West Virginia to the northeast, Kentucky to the North, and extend across all of the states of the southeast and including Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas in the southwest. This forms an area comprised of fourteen states more commonly known as the South.

To understand better some of the social and economic problems of the South you may need to know more about the South itself. It is a country of sharp contrasts. In soils it has the blackest and the whitest. In population the whitest and the blackest. And in each case all gradations in between. In the great Mississippi Delta area we have gathered some of the richest of all soils contributed by the farms of Pennsylvania and Ohio, Montana and the Dakotas, and the great basin in between. You may be interested to know your Northern soils concentrated in our Mississippi Delta grow the whitest and finest of cotton and the sweetest of sugar cane. When we thought our deltas were rich enough we built levies so that the less rich land you are now sending down is being dumped into the Gulf of Mexico.

While these vast delta areas have been busy receiving the best soils the country afforded, scarred hillsides in other parts of the South have been equally as busy giving up the best they had.

Farm lands over certain vast areas in the South lie in large, level or rolling fields in such condition that they can be worked with the most modern of farm machinery. In sharp contrast we have other vast areas where fields are small and slopes so steep that their cultivation is accomplished only with greatest difficulty. In size, farms vary from the proverbial one-horse farm of the old cotton belt, an

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2Editor, The Progressive Farmer, Memphis, Tenn.