

Rain, Freezing Temperatures, Negro Migration Hindering Cotton Harvest

Negro Farmers See Wisdom of Diversification of Crops.

By GEORGE PERRY

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Dec. 1.—(P. C. N. B.)—Rainfall in large areas of the cotton belt, followed by temperatures below freezing as far south as Atlanta and Birmingham, and a continual migration of the Negro from the South, have developed into serious handicaps to the harvesting of cotton that is rapidly deteriorating in the fields. Especially is the Mississippi River Valley—the damage to grade noticeable. Texas and Oklahoma are reaped in worse shape as the drades than most of the rest of the belt. California alone with an estimated production of 124,000 bales compare to 122,328 last year, is uncertain over future prospects, even though a loss is due on its cotton crops.

In times like this the wisdom of having more than one egg in the basket is forcibly brought home to the colored farmer and to the agriculturalist in general. Negro farmers of Florida under the efficient supervision of the various county agents supervised by A. A. Turner of the F. A. & M. college at Tallahassee have gone in extensively for crop diversification. Oklahoma Negro farmers around Boley have formed Irish potato clubs to encourage the production of a June harvest in potatoes. Alabama and Georgia Negro farmers under Tuskegee and Hampton influence are breaking the one crop system in their states. In North Carolina the poor, white and black, are getting away from the one crop idea and are making money. Aside from the state's principle staples, cotton, rice and corn, the growing food crops such as corn, beans, cabbages, pea vine hay and potatoes is a part of the instruction in vocational agriculture taught in the 89 white and 26 Negro farm life schools conducted in the State Department of Public Instruction.

In Texas hundreds of Negro farmers are finding their way into North and Western states, resulting in the population of Porto Ricans from Cuba and Mexicans from Mexico to take their places. Laredo, Texas, reports that notwithstanding a head tax of \$8 per head and other restrictions which are imposed against Mexican laborers entering the country, an average of 125 Mexicans are crossing the Rio Grande daily.

In Louisiana one Memphis plantation out of five Negro tenements disappear in the past week. Many others report similar occurrences. Much of the cotton thus affected will never be picked, nor will much of the cotton on land abandoned be picked.

The Southern States are gloomily calculating the meager returns from crops that shatter all records and are scaling down the final ginnings totals. The government estimate of 1,000,000 bales, dubious of the possibility of picking such a vast amount because of shortage of labor and low prices of the low grades remains.