

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF ALABAMA:  
A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES OF  
THE STATE OF ALABAMA AS  
RELATED TO ITS WAR ACTIVITIES**

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**HASTINGS H. HART**

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C. H. 38.

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**AS RELATED TO ITS WAR ACTIVITIES**

**MADE AT THE REQUEST OF**  
**GOVERNOR CHARLES HENDERSON**



By  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Foreword:</b>	
War Work and Social Work.....	5
Handicap of State Institutions.....	5
The State Debt.....	6
True and Assessed Valuation.....	7
The Convict System.....	8
Education .....	9
To the People of Alabama.....	10
Remedies for Financial Stringency.....	12
Willingness of the People.....	14
<b>Alabama's Wark Work.....</b>	<b>16</b>
The State Council of Defense.....	16
The Woman's Division of the Council of Defense.....	19
The State War Historian.....	21
Alabama's Good Start.....	21
Deficient Support of State Institutions.....	22
Two Notable Hospitals for Insane.....	25
Care of the Confederate Veterans.....	29
Reformatories for Boys and Girls.....	29-30
Reform School for Negroes.....	31
Public Health and Sanitation.....	32
Public Education.....	34
The Public School System.....	37
<b>The Convict System of Alabama:</b>	
Classes of Convicts.....	43
Mortality of Convicts.....	46
Length of Prison Sentences.....	48
Personal Earnings of Prisoners.....	50
A Moral Hazard.....	51
Advantages and Disadvantages of Turpentine Camps.....	52
The State Cotton Mill.....	53
Farming as a Convict Industry.....	56
Work on Public Roads.....	57
Prisoners a Profitable Asset.....	60
Reformatory Measures Lacking.....	60
A Voice from the Grave.....	61
The Board of Inspectors of Convicts.....	62
The Parole System.....	67
A Prison Program.....	69
<b>State Board of Public Welfare:</b>	
Child Caring Institutions and Agencies.....	71
The Child Welfare Survey by the National Child Labor Committee.....	77

	<i>Page</i>
The Labor Problem in Alabama.....	80
Social Work of Corporations:	
The Tennessee Coal and Iron Company.....	81
The West Point Manufacturing Company.....	86

## RECOMMENDATIONS

	<i>Page</i>
1. Increased Assessments, in Compliance with the State Revenue Code, to Provide Adequate State Income.....	13
2. Increased Appropriations:	
For Current Expenses of Charitable and Correctional Institu- tions .....	23-31
For State Educational Institutions.....	36
For Public Schools.....	41
For State Board of Health.....	32
For Compensation of State Employees.....	
3. A State Social Welfare Program and a State Board of Public Wel- fare .....	11
4. Adoption of Child Welfare Measures Recommended in the Recent Child Welfare Survey.....	77
5. A Drive for \$25,000 for Alabama Children's Aid Society.....	10
6. A New Prison Program.....	67
7. Colonies for Feeble-Minded and Epileptics.....	10
8. Additional Provision for Juvenile Delinquents:	
Equipment for the Girls' Training School.....	10
Cottages for the State Industrial School.....	10
A Training School for Negro Girls Similar to the Reform School for Negro Boys.....	10
9. Modern Equipment and Extinguishment of Fire Risk at the Ala- bama Bryce Hospital.....	10



## SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF ALABAMA

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### FOREWORD

*Hon. Charles Henderson,  
Governor of Alabama.*

DEAR SIR:—In accordance with your invitation of June 21, 1918, I have made as careful and thorough a study as the limited time at my disposal would permit of the social agencies and institutions of the State of Alabama, with special reference to the increase of the efficiency of the State in meeting the problems of the future, especially those which have been created by the European war.

This report brings to view the following points:

1. The war work of the State is closely and necessarily involved with its social work. We must improve public health to furnish healthy soldiers and sailors; improve educational methods to furnish intelligent soldiers and capable workers; adequate insane asylums, tuberculosis sanitariums and hospitals to care for infirm soldiers; well organized orphan asylums, child welfare societies and juvenile courts to care for the children of soldiers; reformatory prison methods to increase the supply of efficient workers which has been diminished by the war; general improvement of social work and social institutions to meet the new social conditions, moral, educational, industrial and political, which are being created by the war.

2. Most of the social agencies maintained or promoted by the State are rightly organized and doing good work. Some essential agencies are lacking, e. g., provision for feeble-minded children, epileptics, and delinquent negro girls.

3. All of the State social agencies except the State Board of Inspectors of Convicts are hampered and restricted by lack of sufficient appropriations and delay in payment, so that their efficiency is impaired and their development is impeded, and in some cases faithful servants of the State as well as its unfortunate wards suffer serious hardship.

## THE STATE DEBT

4. These financial lacks are ascribed to the State bonded debt, as refunded in 1880, of.....	\$9,057,000
The constitutional temporary loan.....	300,000
Outstanding warrants .....	1,589,000
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$10,946,000</b>

and the limitation of State ad valorem taxes to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  mills, under which they produce only about \$4,000,000 per year.

5. With our experience in the European war has come a new social vision, and the people think in hundreds of thousands, where they used to think in tens of thousands; therefore now is the time to remedy these unfortunate conditions.

6. The State debt is not a serious load upon the resources of Alabama.

(a) In 1880 the true value of the taxable property of the State, as estimated by the United States Bureau of the Census was \$428,000,000 or \$339 per capita. In 1918 it is doubtless \$3,000,000,000 or \$1,250 per capita.

(b) In 1880 the State debt amounted to \$7.37 per capita, which was 2.2 per cent of the value of all taxable property; in 1918 it is \$4.56 per capita, which is only four-tenths of one per cent, or one-fifth as much in proportion to the State's wealth as the debt of 1880.

(c) The national debt is now approximately sixteen billions, or \$160 per inhabitant (12 per cent of the estimated wealth of the Nation); so that each inhabitant of Alabama owes 30 times as much on account of the National Government as he owes on account of Alabama.

(d) Nine states have a larger state debt per capita than Alabama, ranging from \$6.60 per inhabitant in Tennessee to \$23.50 in Massachusetts. The combined State, county, city and school bonded indebtedness of Alabama is much below that of other progressive states. The average for the United States in 1913 was \$39.38 per inhabitant, while for Alabama it was \$19.32.

## ALABAMA'S ABILITY

7. Alabama is abundantly able to pay her way.

(a) Taxation in the State is not excessive. The U. S. Census Bureau, in 1915, reported the "governmental costs" of the states as averaging \$5.03 per capita, ranging from \$12.17 in California to \$1.87 in South Carolina. Alabama stood thirty-seventh at \$3.29.

(b) The assessed valuation is much below the limit provided by law. The Revenue Code, Section 9, provides that property shall be assessed at "60 per cent of its fair and reasonable cash value;" but it will be seen from the following statement that this provision has been generally ignored.

## TRUE AND ASSESSED VALUATION

	Estimated True Value of all Taxable Property By U. S. Census Bureau	Same per Inhabitant	Assessed Value of All Taxable Property	Assessed Valuat'n Whatper Cent of True Value
1880 .....	\$ 428,000,000	\$ 339	\$122,867,000	28%
1890 .....	622,800,000	411	258,980,000	42
1900 .....	774,700,000	424	420,000,000	54
1910 .....	1,825,000,000	854	420,000,000	23
1912 .....	2,127,000,000	912	658,807,000	31
1918 .....	*3,000,000,000	1,250	670,178,000	22

\*My estimate, based on the increase from 1900 to 1912.

It will be seen that the present assessed valuation is only 22 per cent, instead of 60 per cent of the true valuation.

(c) The ability of Alabama has been demonstrated by its payment of United States taxes as follows:

1914 .....	\$ 463,000
1916 .....	608,000
1917 .....	1,304,000
1918 .....	19,132,000
1919 (estimated) .....	30,000,000

The total internal revenue taxes in the United States during the past year amounted to \$3,694,000,000, of which Alabama paid one-half of one per cent. The government