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FOREWORD

A "selected list of references" on "Farm Tenancy in the United States, 1918-1936," was recently published by the United States Department of Agriculture.¹ That list comprised 1070 items. In justification of the present addition to so stupendous a total, two considerations may be pointed to. First, by the enactment of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act late last July, the Congress embarked the federal government on a long-term program directed to the alleviation of that congeries of problems which the term "farm tenancy" connotes. Second, much of the literature of farm tenancy has represented the practice of social diagnostics, not therapeutics. Indeed, most of the remedies prescribed for the sufferers have been designed for self-administration. But the experience of the depression years has brought an awareness that there is a third party in interest to the agricultural landlord-tenant relationship: the state. The resulting interest in the possibilities for governmental action in this field constitutes merely the belated facing of a responsibility which has been assumed by government in almost every nation of the world. Yet the fact that our abundant land resources and at least intermittently prosperous agriculture have enabled us so long to defer action has rendered more difficult the question of what lines of governmental action are now appropriate and feasible. The articles comprising this symposium represent a consideration of some of the experiments which are being tried or have been projected, with special emphasis upon their legal and administrative aspects.

As the illuminating *Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy* convincingly demonstrated, the plight of the farm tenant cannot be dissociated from the difficulties which confront those above and below him on the agricultural ladder. Nor, for that matter, can a consideration of the tenancy be isolated logically from the problem of agricultural prices and crop surpluses. Yet limitations of space have dictated the restriction of the symposium's scope to a consideration of issues specifically related to the tenant and sharecropper, with the exception of one article devoted to the status of agricultural labor. For the same reason it has been found impossible to treat such developments as the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the Delta Cooperative Farm, which, although of undeniable significance, represent attacks upon the problem along other than governmental lines.

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¹ Bureau of Agri. Econ., *Farm Tenancy in the United States, 1918-1936*, U. S. DEPT. AGR., AGR. ECON. BIBL. No. 70 (June, 1937).