

TEN POINTS OF EMPHASIS IN THE GEOGRAPHY OF ILLINOIS

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Problem: The economic importance of the state is far greater than its area would suggest. Of only average size, it is third in population and third in value of annual output of goods among the states (1933). The output is almost equal to the total of the three Pacific states and more than all six New England states combined. Why?

1. The state occupies a bridge between two of the world's greatest inland waterways, and has the lowest portage joining them. It has (1) 1,000 miles of navigable water and (2) access to the ocean via either of the two routes.

2. Its wealth and its transit position help to give the state high rank in transport facilities by land, water, and air. It ranks second in railway mileage in proportion to area, as well as in total mileage. In proportion to area and population it exceeds Germany or France. It ranks high in mileage of hard road with 10,600 miles of concrete; its roads are used by 1.6 million cars. Deep waterways projects via Mississippi and via St. Lawrence promise much greater use of the waterways. Chicago is the leading center for U. S. air line transport.

3. Topographically it is (1) level and (2) low. Third flattest state, and it averages only 600 feet, with small relief. This is important to (1) agriculture, (2) transport, (3) climate, (4) drainage.

4. The climate is favorable for people and agriculture—especially for corn. Note influence of (1) relief, (2) continental interior location, (3) latitude, (4) cyclonic storm track. Within the state variations of climate are dependent upon latitude; the southern part is warmer and wetter. A difference of 50 days exists in the average growing season from north to south in the state.

5. Soil is by far the most important resource. It is exceptionally fertile in north and center, due to (1) youth, (2) rich parent stock, (3) favorable climate. Soil in the southern part is less fertile.

6. Illinois is rich in coal, clay, sand and gravel and limestone, with modest quantities of petroleum, lead, and fluorspar. Coal underlies $\frac{2}{3}$ of the state, accounts for over $\frac{4}{5}$ of the total mine and quarry products, and in production usually ranks third among all states. The reserves are some larger than those of Great Britain. Though of non-coking grade, the coal is fundamental to the industrial and commercial activities. A declining petroleum production is now equivalent to over a million tons of coal a year, the water power to less than one-half million tons of coal.

7. Illinois is one of the leading agricultural states. In total agricultural output it ranks third; in proportion of the state cultivated it is second. A favorable climate, level surface, and fertile soil supply a remarkable combination.

Corn dominates the farm economy covering over $\frac{2}{5}$ of the acreage and over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the value of all the crops. Oats occupy 20 per cent, hay 15 per cent and wheat, 11 per cent (1929). These support vast numbers of swine and cattle. Dairying, confined chiefly to the north, constitutes $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cash income of all the state agricultural activities.

8. Illinois ranks third among the states in manufacturing with a net value almost twice as much as that of Canada. Manufacturing employs over twice the number of people and yields over three times the returns of agriculture.

Easy access to a great variety of raw materials and power resources as well as to great markets favored this development. The agricultural setting shows its influence in the importance of slaughtering and meat packing, farm implements and milling.

The concentration of manufacturing in the northeast, especially in the Chicago area is notable. That city accounts for about 60 per cent of the total for the state.

9. Chicago is among the four or five largest cities of the world and second only to New York in the New World. Its rapid growth has been remarkable. A century ago it was a village of about 20 houses. Almost one-half of the population of the state is in the city and it has more people than such whole states as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa or Kentucky.

Its location at the end of Lake Michigan has been all important as well as its general location in a highly productive section of the United States. It is primarily industrial but commercial interests are well developed. It is the world's greatest grain, live stock, produce and lumber market as well as the leading railway and air line center.

10. Last, but not least, the presence of an intelligent, energetic population capable of exploiting the resources and improving the environment to fit man's need. Contrast the status of the region with the same environmental lay-out, but an Indian population. The possibilities for further improvement are enormous, especially in our agricultural and mining methods.