

I added to the size of my farm at different times, but even then I could not see where it was large enough to be a father-son operation. So today, even though the land which I farm was at one time farmed by four separate farmers, my chief concern is not if it is the size for my sons and myself, but if the present trend continues, how long will it be before somebody comes along and wipes me out so that my name will not be on that silo, either. I think irrigation in this area will reverse this trend.

Another thing my neighbors and I discuss is education and its related problems. Until this past winter, I have been part of a common school district. In 1966 there were 119 children on the school census. These children were of ages 1 through 20. If we were to bring that figure up to represent the number of children being reared in our district in 25 years or a generation, we would have to add about 25 percent which would bring it up to 150.

Assuming that it will take the same number of people to maintain the community in the next generation as it does this one, we will be educating 70 people to maintain the community, and the other 80 would have to go some place else for a living. Now they cannot go into the neighboring district because that district has the same problem as we do. They cannot go into the next county because they also have the same problem.

We are paying for the education of these 80 children, but they are going to some other State or county to make use of it. I feel we are causing these young people to have to leave our State because we are not making full use of one of our natural resources, namely, water from the Missouri River.

We also discuss what is happening to our churches. As the farms get fewer and farther between, it is becoming increasingly difficult for rural and small town churches to operate, because of the declining membership.

These people whose churches are being closed can, of course, go to church in some larger city for instance, but according to our district church president what is happening in a good number of cases is they neglect to go to church any place when the local church has to fold up.

I am of the opinion that if our community and our country is to have continued, sound leadership, it has to come from those with deep religious convictions. I will not say that we cannot get that kind of leadership from a metropolitan based church, but according to the results of a survey conducted sometime ago, 40 percent of the full-time workers in our church came from rural or small town churches, whose roots were in the soil, yet a very small percentage of the total church population belonged to these churches.

So, I am saying it would be very fine if our leadership could come from this 40 percent or slightly below it. Irrigation, if it would come soon enough, should surely help save some of our churches.

These are some of the things I discuss with my neighbors. Now I find that some of my neighbors who agree with me on these things, are some that had their land petitioned out of the irrigation district when it was formed. It seems some did not want to become part of an irrigation district at that time because they did not want to change their method of farming. Others felt they were being rushed into it