

Senator NELSON. This is a family-owned operation?

Mr. BERTSCH. These may be. These probably are family-owned operations. The point I'm making here, Mr. Chairman, is that as the investment in these very large family-owned and family-operated farms and ranches becomes greater and greater, their transferability from one generation to another becomes more and more hazardous, more and more difficult, and I think I see the time when the only party, the only agent who's able to take over this ranch or this cash grain farm is the corporate agent; because I have difficulty visualizing a young man about to enter the farming business, raising \$200,000 worth of capital to do it. And I have difficulty visualizing that young man having acquired the managerial experience or managerial competency to manage that large of an investment even if he could raise the capital. So I see as the only alternative here, the only outcome here, the outcome of the substantial investments, the substantial management jobs moving to the only agent I see who's likely to be in a position to take advantage of them; and that's corporate management.

I do feel that this trend toward bigness poses a real threat to the family farm.

Why is it that we cling to the moderate-size family farm system when so many forces seem to be pushing us in the other direction?

We do so partly because the family farm is a symbol of agrarianism and many of us still harbor Jefferson's belief that:

Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds.

Agrarianism, I fear, is a term of derision in some quarters these days; but, as for me, I'm a bit proud of being labeled among those Jeffersonian agrarians who are still around.

We also favor the family farm because we believe that the family farm system is the best system so far as consumers are concerned.

Food is a bargain in America today. But if the time should ever come when a handful of men in walnut-paneled offices in Denver, Chicago, Atlanta, and New York could set the price of farm products at any level they chose and hold to that level because they were the prime source of supply, consumers would be at their mercy.

We favor the family farm because it is good for smalltown America.

Rural communities to survive and flourish need to be surrounded by the maximum number of farm families that it is economically feasible to keep on the land. Only in this way can rural communities build the tax base needed to support decent schools, hospitals, roads, and water systems. Family farms place the maximum number of people on the land.

Rural communities to survive and flourish need to have the capacity to absorb people that widely differ in their skills and managerial abilities. Only in this way can they serve all people. Family farms come in a wide range of sizes and stages of development.

We favor the family farm, too, because it is good for urban America.

Studies of the troubles that affect urban centers show that the influx into the cities of rural people, unskilled, unable to find employment, unable to cope with city life, has been a major factor in creating unrest, overcrowding, and general discontent.