

The same thing could happen in Kansas. In fact, it probably will because the water the Gates pumps draw out in Colorado will come from the underground pool that serves part of our State as well.

The backers of the big corporation farms say this means more business because they buy their supplies locally * * * just as Gates told Yuma County businessmen that they would.

It was something of a surprise, then, when it was learned that Gates is trying to buy its expensive irrigation equipment outside of Colorado and direct from the manufacturer.

The only thing the Main Street businessmen will see of this business is the big trucks going through town on their way to the Gates farm, loaded down with equipment bought in Chicago or St. Louis.

Now, how about the farmers who are being forced off the land in this big operation? They are told, as you might expect, that the company will try to get them some high-paying jobs in the big city. Or that they can work on the Gates farm.

What they don't realize is that factory-in-the-field operators all over the country pay such low wages that they can attract only migrant workers. The sugar beets, potatoes, and other irrigated crops involved are both seasonal and highly mechanized.

About the only thing Yuma County will see of farm jobs in the Gates operation will be the trucks going through the area loaded with migrant workers on their way to the fields.

And to top it off, when Gates was criticized for the displacement of farm families, a company spokesman replied, "The economists say 40 percent of the people in agriculture are going to have to leave the farms eventually anyway—we're just helping some of them to make that change."

Now, how ridiculous can you get in dealing with farm people who have struggled for 20 years with surpluses and low prices and still hope somehow to stay on the land they work both as a living and a way of life? I'm sure we don't need any big corporations here in Kansas helping us push our farmers off the land.

Soil and water conservation are highly important in our farm areas. Yet we know that corporations are profit-and-loss motivated and they make no bones about it. In view of this, however, is it good national policy to permit them to buy and control large land areas * * * to put them in charge of a national resource that must be handed from generation to generation?

You can always replace a factory building when it is rundown or obsolete. And you can usually get away from polluting a river in an industrial area, as every corporation executive knows, or fill the air with smoke and soot. But the land is too precious to allow it to be exploited.

One needs only to look at history to see how the big lumber companies cut over the forests in the North and the cattle kings over-grazed the Great Plains. This 19th century folly brought the public indignation that set the stage for the sound natural resources policies we have today. Let's don't allow off-farm interests to repeat these mistakes with agriculture in Kansas.

Now some people will ask what's wrong with a little old-fashioned corporation efficiency in agriculture so we can get food prices down a