

I think this is a significant political, economical, and sociological question that is raised by this trend. One rubber company, according to testimony at Omaha, has already acquired 80,000 acres of land in Colorado. They are also irrigating in Texas and have lowered the water table from 60 feet to 450 feet. One of the things we want to know is how it affects the adjoining farmer when one farmer permanently reduces the water table.

Our subcommittee believes that these questions are of great significance. But it is just as important that we investigate what is happening when giant corporations control food production.

Mr. ROHDE. Speaking in behalf of the Wisconsin Farmers Union, we therefore appreciate the concern which you, Senator, and members of the subcommittee have demonstrated by holding this series of hearings on corporate farming. We are also appreciative of the opportunity to testify in our own State, as we said earlier, where the Farmers Union has been spearheading a campaign to obtain legislation preventing further encroachment of family farming by nonagricultural corporations.

In his appearance at the Omaha hearing, Tony DeChant, our organization's national president, effectively spelled out the adverse effects of corporate farming on rural America. He made the following five points which I believe merit repetition here today:

No. 1, the corporate farm interferes with the market system that exists for farm commodities;

No. 2, the corporation farm cheats us on our taxes, by operating frequently on tax writeoffs from profits in other fields and by practices at the farm level that cut local and State taxes;

No. 3, corporation farms result in a decline of population in our rural areas, a depleting of community resources and small towns, contributing to the problems of already crowded cities and further diminishing the welfare of rural America by diminishing its political influence;

No. 4, there is evidence that the corporation farm with its impersonal pressures on management for quick profits cannot be trusted with our basic natural resources, soil and water;

No. 5, there is urgency in the matter. It is already very late.

Late last year, Wisconsin Farmers Union launched its campaign to get support in the State for our fight to preserve the family farm and to stop further inroads by corporate agriculture. We circulated a statement of support, hoping to obtain signatures of farmers, businessmen, factory workers and professional people who are disturbed by the movement of nonfarm firms into agriculture.

The results have been impressive. In the few months that we circulated the statement we obtained over 8,000 signatures. The statement which was endorsed read as follows:

We, the undersigned, support Farmers Union in its determined efforts to preserve the family farm system in America and are in favor of the enactment of laws prohibiting the establishment of corporate farms by nonfarm interests in competition with family farmers.

Over 1,200 such signatures were obtained from businessmen, factory workers and professional people expressing their concern and support.

After the announcement that the subcommittee would hold hearings