

be theoretically true, because the same amount of land we have now would still be combined in the hundred thousand farms, but it would be also, of course, very undesirable to have this kind of operation.

Suppose for a moment that our agricultural industry was made up of a hundred thousand corporate superfarms. There would be about 600 million acres of land in crops, pasture, and rangeland. This would mean that the corporation farms would average 6,000 acres apiece. This would leave four farms per township, just four farms per township, only four farms where there are now in my State of Minnesota and in many parts of Wisconsin as many as 50 to 75 farm families per township. Suppose you are down to four farms per township, what kind of economic base does this leave for the community? What does this do to the Main Street, to the banks, to the farm supply firms, the handlers of farm products and the farm cooperatives, all of which would be bypassed? What would happen to the community services and the institutions, the schools, the churches, the REA systems and even the tax base?

This need not happen because action can still be taken to prevent this happening, but it will take the mobilization of all the people who are a part of the rural community.

A final observation we wish to make in regard to absorbing of farmland by corporate investors, once the land is permitted to get into corporate hands it is going to be difficult to reverse the process and restore family ownership. A corporation is a "legal person" which may have a hundred year life or a perpetual life. In family farming there is a turnover in ownership, once in a lifetime. On the average there is a change of ownership at least once in each generation, either from the members of a family to a relative or from one private owner to another. But, since a corporation never dies, the land tends to remain in the corporate hands even though some of the stockholders may change from time to time. And I think this is a key point because how are the family farmers going to have access to land once that has gotten into corporate hands? Land which is swallowed up by the corporations is likely to be gone for good as far as family-type operators are concerned.

The remedy, therefore, must be to try to prevent by whatever means possible the transfer of lands from families to corporations. This might be approached by State laws to prevent corporation farm ownership or by Federal income and credit programs to enable family farms to continue on the land.

Preventive action, to assure the continuance of family farms, is better and less costly than a crash program at some time in the future to break up the corporation farmland holdings and make it available to farm families who want to live on the land.

We appreciate the opportunity of being here, and having the privilege of making this statement and, of course, at the conclusion of the statement of our colleague, Ed Smith, we would be most happy to enter into any discussion or questions that you might have.

Senator NELSON. Thank you very much for a very fine statement, Mr. Christianson.

(The complete prepared statement submitted by Mr. Christianson follows:)