

Therefore, 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 farm land holdings and make it available to farm families who want to live on the land.

Senator NELSON. We will hear from our next witness, Mr. Edwin Smith, president of the North Dakota Farmers Union, from Jamestown, N. Dak.

Mr. Smith, the committee welcomes you here this morning.

STATEMENT OF EDWIN W. SMITH, PRESIDENT, NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION, JAMESTOWN, N. DAK.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am Ed Smith, chairman of the board of the National Farmers Union, and president of its North Dakota division. The North Dakota Division of the National Farmers Union as an autonomous State union with a present membership of some 38,600 members. The North Dakota Farmers Union is proud of its history of successful opposition to corporation farming.

I will not pursue reading my statement here, I only want to summarize it to make it shorter and perhaps easier to digest.

In 1932 the North Dakota Farmers Union was concerned that corporations would bring in big machinery and farm the land with hired labor; to prevent this from happening, Farmers Union members circulated petitions and initiated an anticorporation farming law. This law was on the ballot at the primary election in June in 1932 and we passed the anticorporation farming law in North Dakota and this is why I am here today, to give you a bit of history, to show you what has happened. It did, however, give the corporations 10 years to divest themselves of any farmland that they owned at the time the law was passed. It also gave a 10-year period for corporations to get rid of any land that they acquired after passage of the law. So we have had a history in North Dakota of tremendous struggle to keep the corporations from moving in.

In response to a move by the Greater North Dakota Association, which is the Chamber of Commerce in North Dakota, to repeal the law, we had a march on the capitol with 5,000 farmers in 1941 when the anticorporation bill came up for repeal, and it was defeated in the House. On January 2, 1943, the North Dakota Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Anti-Corporation Farming Act and stated there could be no exception for colleges, hospitals, or religious groups. The requirement that corporations divest themselves of agricultural land was a real break for operating farmers and we feel that this was a step whereby many farmers in North Dakota had an opportunity to buy land that was controlled by outside interests.