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Summary of talk by  
William H. Kolberg  
Associate Manpower Administrator for Policy, Evaluation, and Research  
United States Department of Labor  
at the  
National Agricultural Outlook Conference  
Washington, D.C.

February 19, 1970

"There must be a growing realization that the rural sector cannot be considered a separate compartment isolated from urban areas," said Mr. William H. Kolberg, opening his talk before the National Agricultural Outlook Conference in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Kolberg, Associate Manpower Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, added, "Rural people in the 1970's must be prepared for an economy that is becoming more and more integrated with that of a country as a whole and they must be given services and training accorded urban residents."

Mr. Kolberg proposed basic adjustments in rural vocational and education systems. He said, "Industrial, technical and health services in vocational education are now beginning to receive more emphasis, but large numbers of youth in rural areas never have an opportunity for training in the kinds of occupations which exist in the contemporary industrial and business world in which they will have to seek employment." He also suggested some form of mobility assistance for farm and nonfarm people seeking employment outside their region.

The rural labor market has deteriorated in the past 25 years. Farm production has soared, but manpower needs shrank because of mechanization. Current trends indicate greater use of machines in such labor intensive crops as tobacco, fruits and vegetables. Last year the national unemployment rate averaged 3.5 percent but for agricultural workers the rate was a staggering 6 percent, highest

of any industry. Rural areas have also suffered the decline in the mining industry. Each step along the road has been in the direction of more technical equipment and complex jobs demanding greater skills. Too often rural residents are totally unequipped to do these jobs. These factors have led to a worker surplus and stimulated large-scale movement to urban areas by rural residents.

Mr. Kolberg called for a review of the country's manpower policies. He said "the problem is to determine the needs of the population living in the countryside for education, training, and other forms of human resource development to enable them to share in the economic advance of the country as a whole. "

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USDA 583-70