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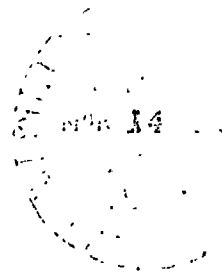
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ABSTRACT

The results of analyses of college-bound versus non-college-bound rural youth on tests and personal data available on the IBM cards in the Office of High School Testing at the University of Illinois are presented in this report on the second part of a 3-part study on the educational needs of rural youth. The data on IBM cards for 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 high schools in 8 widely separated Illinois counties--Carroll, Mercer, Marshall, Moultrie, Calhoun, Franklin, Alexander, and Pulaski--were analyzed. The analysis was limited to test scores on abstract reasoning, verbal reasoning, the total of these 2, natural science reading, social science reading, writing, and functional and conventional errors in writing. There were statistically significant differences in the means of scores on all tests between those who planned to go to college and those who did not plan to go. The differences favored those who planned to attend college. An implication which arose from the findings was that the high schools are providing training in preparation for college and that action should be taken to provide job training for the non-college-bound students; for the 1962-63 sample of 2,326 juniors and seniors, 60% did not plan to go to college. The 3rd part of the study will include occupational data, personality tests, and other information on about 3,000 juniors and seniors in all schools in these 8 counties. (FF)

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# DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC CAPABILITY BETWEEN RURAL YOUTH PLANNING AND NOT PLANNING TO GO TO COLLEGE

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DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC CAPABILITY BETWEEN RURAL YOUTH  
PLANNING AND NOT PLANNING TO GO TO COLLEGE

David E. Lindstrom<sup>1/</sup>

Young people who go to college in general make better scholastic records in high school than those who do not, for it is largely on the basis of scholastic achievement that they are admitted to college. The final decision to go or not to go to college usually rests largely with the boy or girl, though not always.

It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in intelligence and other measures of intellectual capability between young people who plan to go to college and those who do not.<sup>2/</sup> If this assumption is true, it has serious implications for those who are responsible for providing opportunities for advanced education and training for youth who do not plan to go to college. This report covers the second part of a three-part study on the educational needs of rural youth.<sup>3/</sup> The third part will include occupational data, personality tests, and other information on about 3,000 juniors and seniors in all schools in these eight counties. These data are now (1964) being coded.

The Sample

The data for this part of the study were taken from IBM cards in the Office of High School Testing of the College of Education of the University of Illinois. (See footnote 2, page 1.) Cards were selected for 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 high schools in the eight counties in which the third phase of the study is being made. The proportion of juniors to seniors approximated 40 to 60 percent except for farm boys not planning to go to college; in this category 46 percent were juniors and 54 percent were seniors. The percentages in various age groups were also fairly uniform, the highest being in the 16-year-old class, where the range was 50 percent for non-farm youth who did not plan to attend college to 62.4 percent for non-farm youth who did plan to attend. Percentages were lowest for the 18-year age group, in which almost three times as many did not plan to go to college as were planning to go.

The purpose of this report is to present results of analyses of college-bound versus non-college-bound rural youth on academic tests and on such environmental data as were available on the cards. A more detailed analysis by county and school is yet to be made.

- 1/ Professor of Rural Sociology, Department of Agricultural Economics and Sociology, University of Illinois College of Agriculture. Hazel H. Chambers, research assistant, gave valuable assistance in tabulating and getting tests made on scores.
- 2/ Data were analyzed from IBM cards on file in the Office of High School Testing, University of Illinois, with special permission of Dr. Thomas Hastings, director, for 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 high schools in eight widely separated Illinois counties--Carroll, Mercer, Marshall, Hamilton, Calhoun, Franklin, Alexander, and Pulaski. The study was limited to test scores on abstract reasoning, verbal reasoning, the total of these two, social science reading, natural science reading, writing, conventional errors in writing, functional errors in writing, and certain personal data.
- 3/ See D. E. Lindstrom, Educational and Vocational Needs of Rural Youth: A Pilot Study, Illinois Agricultural Economics, Vol. 4, No. 2, July 1964, p. 11-17, for a preliminary report on the first part.

### Plans for College

Analysis of data from the 2,326 high school students show that 60 percent did not plan to go to college: 53 percent of 1,196 boys and 66 percent of 1,130 girls (Table 1). Probably only about a third of the others actually enrolled in college.<sup>1/</sup> It is to be noted that fewer girls than boys planned to go to college. The highest category not planning to go was farm girls (69.4 percent).

The fact that approximately 60 percent of the rural youth who were juniors and seniors in these 24 high schools (which were probably representative of rural high schools in the state) did not plan to go to college presents a serious problem to parents, educators, and policy-makers, especially since most of these young people must find jobs outside the community in which they live. Most of them seemed to have made one major decision--whether or not to go to college. They probably reached this decision on their own, with the benefit of counseling in certain cases.

It seems clear from the data on significant differences shown below that the test scores are good predictions of whether or not the young people will succeed in college, and this conclusion implies that the training given in these high schools is primarily in preparation for college. There is nothing to indicate that it is meeting the need of preparing those who will not attend college for holding jobs.

### Preparation for a Job and Preferred Place to Live

As data from the Sullivan study showed, few rural youth who were not planning to go to college felt prepared to hold jobs. Ninety percent of these boys and 81 percent of the girls felt that they needed more preparation and training.<sup>2/</sup> The same study showed that most rural youth wanted to live in the country or a small town: 76 percent of the boys and 75 percent of the girls planning to go to college and 72 percent of the boys and 83 percent of the girls not planning to go wanted to live in the rural area.

It is important to know what are the differences between the various categories of rural youth--farm males, non-farm males, farm females, and non-farm females. It is assumed that there are differences. If this assumption is true, further study is needed to determine the kind of post-high-school education that should be provided for them.

### Results From Tests of Competence

Reasoning ability and intelligence. Statistically significant differences in means of scores on abstract reasoning, verbal reasoning, and the total of these two (intelligence) were found in all categories between those choosing to go to college and those not choosing to go (Table 2). The mean scores were significantly lower for those who did not plan to go to college than for those who did.

<sup>1/</sup> Data from a national study showed that only 36 percent of rural farm youth planned to attend college and only 33 percent actually enrolled. See U. S. Bureau of Census, Educational Status, College Plans, and Occupational Status of Farm and Non-Farm Youth, October 1959, U. S. Bureau of Census Series Census ERS (P-27) No. 30.

<sup>2/</sup> See D. E. Lindstrom, op. cit.

The means scores in verbal reasoning were significantly higher for non-farm females than for non-farm males in the category of those not planning to go to college (Table 3). Mean scores on abstract and verbal reasoning (intelligence) also were significantly higher for farm females who planned to go to college than for farm males in the same category.

Natural and social science. All rural youth--farm males, farm females, non-farm males, and non-farm females--who planned to go to college made significantly higher scores in natural science and social science reading than those who did not plan to go (Table 2). Farm males in the college-bound group made significantly higher scores in natural science reading than non-farm males in this category. (The natural environment in which farm boys work may have been a cause for this difference.)

There were also other statistically significant differences: in social science, (1) farm males planning to go to college had higher scores than non-farm males in the same category; (2) farm females not planning to go to college rated higher than farm males in this category; and (3) all non-farm females had significantly higher ratings than all non-farm males (Table 3).

Writing. Farm and non-farm males and females who planned to go to college had significantly higher scores on writing tests than those who did not plan to go (Table 2). Also, females in all categories had significantly higher writing scores than all categories of males. This, seemingly, is the expected pattern. Of interest, however, was the fact that farm males planning to go to college had higher scores in writing than non-farm males in the college category (Table 3). This finding and the difference favoring farm males over non-farm males in natural and social science reading may have been influenced by the fact that 72.3 percent of the fathers of non-farm males in the sample who planned to go to college were in occupations below the managerial class (Table 4).

Errors in writing. Rural youth who planned to go to college had significantly higher scores in conventional and functional errors in writing than those who did not plan to go (Table 3). Differences were also found in specific categories. Both farm males and non-farm males made more conventional and functional errors in writing than farm females and non-farm females; this was true both for those planning to go to college and for those not planning to go (Table 3). There were no statistically significant differences in other categories--farm versus non-farm--with respect to writing errors.

#### Factors Related to Differences

The differences between the test scores of rural youth who planned to go to college and those who did not doubtless resulted from certain personal and environmental factors.<sup>1/</sup> The only such factors available for this study were the father's occupation and the occupation the student hoped to enter, his favorite subjects in school, and his extracurricular activities.<sup>2/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> See Lee G. Burchinal et al., Career Choices of Rural Youth in a Changing Society, Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota, 1962, for data on factors affecting occupational choice.

<sup>2/</sup> More complete data on these and other factors will be included in the third phase of the study.

### Father's Occupation and Occupation Student Hoped to Enter

It is generally felt that the occupation held by the father influences the occupational choice of his children. Data in Table 4 indicate that, among non-farm youth, a higher percentage (86.0%) of those whose fathers were in the professional, semi-professional, technical, and managerial occupations planned to go to college than of those whose fathers were in other occupational groups (72.2%). No such difference was noted among farm youth, since most of the fathers were farmers.<sup>1/</sup>

Even greater differences in percentages existed with respect to occupations the students hoped to enter (Table 5). Over half (55.3%) of the farm males planning to go to college hoped to enter the professions; over half (56.6%) of farm boys not planning to go to college expected to farm. Even higher percentages of non-farm males (80.1%) and of both farm (85.7%) and non-farm females (79.9%) who planned to go to college hoped to enter professional, technical, and managerial occupations. Only 11.5 percent of the non-farm males not planning to go to college wanted to go into sales and service; but 33.8 percent of them hoped to go into the skilled and semi-skilled occupations. Almost 72 percent of the farm females and 70 percent of the non-farm females not planning on college hoped to find clerical and sales (including homemaking) positions.

The occupations these youth hoped to be in 20 years hence were similar to their present choices (Table 6). Fifty-six percent of the farm males and 84 percent of the non-farm males planning to attend college hoped to go into professional, technical, and managerial occupations; this field was chosen by 58 percent of the farm females and 55.5 percent of the non-farm females in the same category. Among those not planning to go to college, about the same percentage of farm males (47%) but only 6 percent of the non-farm males hoped to be farming; 30 percent of the non-farm males hoped to be in skilled or semi-skilled occupations, but only 10 percent in sales and services. Among females not planning on college, 78 percent hoped to be in sales and services or in homemaking 20 years hence.

There appear to be some guidelines for educators in the data revealed by this study with reference to young people not planning on college. It has already been stated that few of these youth felt prepared to take jobs. The implication is that some form of post-high-school education or training should be made available to them. The type is indicated by the fact that most of the rural youth not planning to attend college hoped to enter clerical, sales, agriculture-related, skilled, and semi-skilled occupations. Opportunities to farm are decidedly limited.<sup>2/</sup> Some form of occupational guidance and training must therefore be provided for those who want to farm but for whom there will be no opportunity to farm.

<sup>1/</sup> Some differences would doubtless show up if the data could have been broken down by scale of farm operation or tenure status, but such division was not possible with the data that were used.

<sup>2/</sup> Burchinal, op. cit., Figure 1, p. 5, shows that there is likely to be a 17 percent decrease in farmers and farm workers between 1970 and 1970. An Illinois study estimated a decrease of about 15 percent in the state compared with 17 percent in the nation from 1955 to 1965. Wm. P. McClure et al., Vocational and Technical Education in Illinois, Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, University of Illinois, 1960, Chart II, p. 13.



### Favorite School Subjects and Extracurricular Activities

With regard to favorite subjects and their relation to college plans, over half (56.1%) of the farm males not planning to go to college indicated manual work as their favorite subject (Table 7), but less than a third (28.7%) of the farm males planning on college indicated this choice.

Among non-farm youth not planning to go to college, 49 percent of the males and 43 percent of the females preferred subjects in business. The implication here is that, if those not planning to go to college are to get additional training in the subjects of greatest interest to the majority, post-high-school training should emphasize manual skills for most farm boys and business skills for most non-farm youth.

As for other subjects, English, mathematics, foreign language, and music were favored by more females than males, especially those females who plan to go to college. Mathematics was preferred by more youth planning to go to college than not planning to go. Academic subjects in general were of interest to the college-bound; but less than 30 percent of all categories of non-college-bound said they favored one or another of the sciences; and less than 17 percent of all liked one subject or another in the area of the liberal arts. This would indicate a need for offering such subjects in any program of education for post-high-school youth, although their major preferences were in other subjects.

So far as extracurricular activities were concerned, athletics ranked highest for all youth, ranging from a high of 66.5 percent for farm females planning to go to college to a low of 33 percent for non-farm males in the college-bound category (Table 8).

Of significance, however, were the percentages listing agriculture as an extracurricular activity, which ranged from a high of 31 percent of the farm males to a low of 5 percent of the farm females not planning to go to college. Over a fourth (26.5%) of the farm males planning to attend college and, likewise, over a fourth of the non-farm males (27.2%) not planning to attend listed agriculture as an extracurricular activity. In view of the declining number of farms, one may wonder why so many non-farm males indicated such an interest. It appears that there may be some relation between choice of farming as an occupation and choice of agriculture as an extracurricular activity.

### Summary and Implications

The fact that 60 percent of 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 high schools in eight Illinois counties in 1962-63 did not plan to go to college raises the serious question, for educators as well as parents, of whether there are significant differences in capability between those who plan to go to college and those who do not. To determine whether such differences exist, statistical analyses were made by using the mean scores of tests on abstract reasoning, verbal reasoning, the total of these two (intelligence), natural science reading, social science reading, writing, and functional and conventional errors in writing.

The hypothesis that such differences do exist was supported by results of tests to determine significant differences. There were statistically significant differences in the mean of scores on all tests between those who planned

to go to college and those who did not plan to go. The differences favored those who planned to attend college. The results were similar for all categories: farm males, farm females, non-farm males, and non-farm females. One important point is that the most significant differences<sup>1/</sup> in means of scores on these tests were related to whether these rural youth did or did not plan to go to college.

There are many factors that may help to produce these differences. One factor on which data were available for this study was that 27.7 percent of the fathers of non-farm males who planned to go to college were in professional, technical, and managerial occupations compared with only 14 percent of fathers of non-farm males who did not plan to go to college.

Another factor was that over 55 percent of the farm males and over 70 percent of all others planning to go to college (male and female) desired occupations in the professions; but only 9 percent of the farm males and less than 23 percent of all others not planning to go to college hoped to go into the professions. Even fewer in the group not planning to go to college hoped to be in the professions 20 years hence.

A third related factor was that 56.1 percent of the farm males who did not plan to go to college indicated manual work as their favorite subject in school as contrasted with only 28.7 percent of the farm youth who planned to go. Of the non-farm youth not planning to go to college, 49 percent of the males and 43 percent of the females reported business as their favorite subject. So far as extracurricular activities were concerned, agriculture ranked next to athletics, being listed by 27 percent of the farm males who planned to go to college and by 27 percent of the non-farm males who did not plan to go.

The fact that the most significant differences<sup>1/</sup> in means scores were related to whether or not rural youth planned to go to college has serious implications for parents and educators as well as for other citizens of the state. More than one in five rural youth who do not plan on college must find jobs and homes outside the communities in which they live, and many are not prepared to make such adjustments. An important finding in the Sullivan study<sup>2/</sup> was that 90 percent of the boys and 80 percent of the girls felt the need for additional training or education. Very little such training now appears to be available. The implication is that action should be taken to provide it.

A second implication arises from the finding that the majority (60 percent) of rural youth do not plan to go to college. It is that a different kind of training or education should be made available to these boys and girls than is now being offered in their high schools, much of which is pointed toward preparation for college. Although the most rapidly expanding occupations require the most advanced education and training (professional and technical), 90 percent of the jobs, according to the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, are

<sup>1/</sup> Difference statistically significant at the .001 level, using the "t" test.

<sup>2/</sup> D. E. Lindstrom, op. cit. A number of other studies report similar results. See, for example, literature cited in E. J. Moore et al., Economic Factors Influencing Educational Attainments and Aspirations of Farm Youth, Agr. Econ. Report No. 51, ERS Resource Development Economics Division, USDA, April 1964.

to be found in the clerical, sales, crafts, service, and skilled and semi-skilled occupations. The U. S. Office of Manpower Training states: "To be prepared for a complex and varied world of work, mostly in urban areas, post-high-school education and training of rural youth must be oriented toward present and future labor markets." But, equally important, it must be oriented to living in urban and suburban areas; therefore it must be a combination of vocational, technical, life adjustment training, and training to work in groups and with other people.

Table 1.--Percentages of 2,326 juniors and seniors in 2<sup>1/2</sup> rural high schools in eight Illinois counties<sup>1/</sup> who planned or did not plan to go to college, 1962-63.

Category	Planning to go to college	Not planning to go to college
All youth (N = 2,326)	40.4	59.6
Males (N = 1,190)	46.7	53.3
Females (N = 1,130)	33.7	66.3
Farm males (N = 310)	42.6	57.4
Non-farm males (N = 886)	48.2	51.8
Farm females (N = 297)	30.6	69.4
Non-farm females (N = 833)	34.8	65.2

<sup>1/</sup> Carroll, Mercer, Marshall, Moultrie, Calhoun, Franklin, Alexander, and Pulaski.

Table 2.--Statistically significant differences, by college plans, in means of scores in various tests given to 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 rural high schools in eight Illinois counties<sup>1/</sup>, 1962-63.

Type of test and residence of student	A <sup>2/</sup>	B <sup>3/</sup>	"t" value			
<b>Abstract reasoning</b>						
Farm males	35.6	30.7	4.69*			
Non-farm males	35.9	30.7	5.50*			
Farm females	37.1	30.3	4.44*			
Non-farm females	35.7	30.0	7.10*			
<b>Verbal reasoning</b>						
Farm males	29.1	21.6	6.61*			
Non-farm males	27.6	21.2	10.15*			
Farm females	31.2	22.7	7.77*			
Non-farm females	29.1	21.9	10.97*			
<b>Total: abstract and verbal reasoning</b>						
Farm males	64.3	52.3	6.62*			
Non-farm males	63.5	51.9	10.81*			
Farm females	68.4	55.0	6.88*			
Non-farm females	64.9	52.9	10.06*			
<b>Natural science reading</b>						
Farm males	32.6	23.9	3.32*			
Non-farm males	30.5	23.7	12.01*			
Farm females	31.9	25.4	7.03*			
Non-farm females	30.4	24.3	11.57*			
<b>Social science reading</b>						
Farm males	33.4	26.4	7.82*			
Non-farm males	31.1	26.0	10.59*			
Farm females	34.3	27.6	5.71*			
Non-farm females	33.0	28.9	10.99*			
<b>Writing</b>						
Farm males	47.1	40.2	7.95*			
Non-farm males	45.7	39.6	9.65*			
Farm females	51.0	44.5	5.59*			
Non-farm females	50.7	44.2	9.24*			
<b>Errors in writing</b>						
	"t" value		"t" value			
	Conventional	Functional	A	B		
	A	B	A	B		
Farm males	15.0	19.4	5.74*	6.6	9.0	5.46*
Non-farm males	16.0	19.3	8.25*	6.8	9.2	8.91*
Farm females	11.6	16.3	7.22*	4.7	7.4	6.47*
Non-farm females	12.6	16.2	9.93*	5.4	7.6	8.19*

\* Difference statistically significant at the .001 level, using the "t" test of significant difference.

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote 1, Table 1.

<sup>2/</sup> A = Means of scores of those planning to go to college.

<sup>3/</sup> B = Means of scores of those not planning to go to college.



Table 4.--Occupation of fathers of 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 rural high schools in eight Illinois counties<sup>1/</sup> who planned and did not plan to go to college, 1962-63, in percentage of total, by plans to attend college.

Category	Planning to go to college		Not planning to go to college	
	Farm males	Non-farm males	Farm males	Non-farm males
Professional, technical, and managerial	2.3	27.7	0	14.0
Clerical and sales and service	.8	19.6	0	15.4
Agriculture	96.1	.2	100.0	.2
Skilled and semi-skilled	.8	47.0	0	62.1
Other	.8	5.4	0	8.2

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote 1, Table 1.

Table 5.--Occupations 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 rural high schools in eight Illinois counties<sup>1/</sup> hoped to enter, 1962-63, in percentage of total.

Occupation	Planning to go to college				Not planning to go to college			
	Farm		Non-farm		Farm		Non-farm	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professional, technical, and managerial	55.3	85.7	80.1	79.9	16.9	25.7	27.6	26.0
Clerical, sales and service, agriculture, and homemaking	37.8	14.3	10.0	19.0	56.6	71.9	18.6	70.1
Skilled and semi-skilled	3.8	0	5.9	0	18.0	.5	33.8	.6
Unskilled*	3.1	0	3.9	1.0	8.5	1.9	19.9	3.3

\* Including "don't know" and "no answer."

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote 1, Table 1.

Table 6.--Occupations 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 rural high schools in eight Illinois counties<sup>1/</sup>, 1962-63, hoped to enter in twenty years, in percentage of total.

Occupation	Planning to go to college				Not planning to go to college			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm
Professional, technical, and managerial	56.0	83.8	58.2	55.5	22.5	38.7	20.5	19.5
Clerical, sales and service, agriculture, and homemaking	31.8	6.3	41.8	42.9	51.0	15.7	78.0	77.5
Skilled and semi-skilled	6.0	4.2	0	0	18.0	29.6	.5	0
Unskilled and other*	6.1	5.7	0	2.1	8.5	16.0	1.0	3.0

\* Includes armed services.

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote 1, Table 1.

Table 7.--Favorite subjects of 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 rural high schools in eight Illinois counties<sup>1/</sup>, 1962-63, in percentage of total.

Favorit. subject	Planning to go to college				Not planning to go to college			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm
Physical, biological, and social sciences	30.4	17.6	44.7	26.2	17.4	18.9	29.4	18.6
English, mathematics, foreign language, and music	37.9	55.0	39.1	47.6	17.4	23.4	26.4	25.2
Business	3.0	15.4	3.8	18.2	7.3	48.5	12.0	42.9
Manual work	28.7	11.0	11.5	5.9	56.1	7.5	27.5	10.7
Physical education	0	1.1	.5	2.4	1.7	1.0	1.5	1.7

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote 1, Table 1. Some percentages total less than 100 percent as "don't know" is not included.

Table 8.--Extracurricular activities of 2,326 juniors and seniors in 24 rural high schools in eight Illinois counties<sup>1/</sup>, 1962-63, in percentage of total.

Activity	Planning to go to college				Not planning to go to college			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm	Farm	Non-farm
Student council	1.5	1.1	.9	3.5	--	1.0	.9	.6
Industrial arts	--	--	1.2	--	1.1	--	2.6	--
Athletics	52.3	33.0	62.5	34.1	55.1	34.0	56.9	40.7
Library-language	1.5	9.9	10.3	14.1	1.7	8.7	4.1	12.0
Speech-drama	1.5	4.4	.9	2.8	--	2.0	1.3	2.8
Yearbook and paper	2.3	8.8	1.9	8.6	.7	5.3	1.3	3.5
Community	1.5	3.3	2.8	6.2	3.4	3.4	7.6	2.2
Agriculture	26.5	15.4	4.9	13.1	30.9	27.2	4.6	19.5
Science	1.5	--	1.9	--	.6	1.0	2.0	--
Music	9.1	24.2	7.3	14.8	3.4	14.1	4.1	8.1
No answer or none	2.3	--	5.4	2.8	3.4	3.4	14.6	10.7

<sup>1/</sup> See footnote 1, Table 1.