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WASHINGTON, Oct. 6—Orville L. Freeman advocated today a new planning concept "the town-country community," as an alternative to "big city-suburban living."

Without a rural-urban balance, the Secretary of Agriculture warned, the country's big cities will break down from the pressure of people against resources and services.

The "town-country community" is an experimental approach to regional planning outside of the urban centers. It is now being tried in 26 states, with Federal aid. It is intended to serve not only as an alternative to crowded cities, but also as a means to help stabilize migrant population.

Called multicounty planning, it offers centers of jobs, homes and services in areas beyond city limits, coordinated over several counties.

Mr. Freeman, referring to the continuing problem of the movement of the poor and minorities from rural to urban slums, said that multicounty

planning would be one effective way "to stop the rush to the cities at the source, instead of after it has piled up at the dam."

"People must be given a choice," he said. "There must be a viable alternative to the big city."

Mr. Freeman dissented sharply from the idea that spreading cities are the predestined wave of the future "with the countryside being preserved as a kind of huge national park where urbanites rest their nerves before plunging again into the maelstrom of the city."

He rejected what he called "planners' conventional wisdom," which he said accepts "megalopolis," or endlessly expanding urban areas, as inevitable.

"There are some answers to those metropolitan concentrations that seem to defy answers," he said. "We are beginning to develop alternatives, but too slowly."

Federal funds are already being used for multicounty planning for water and sewer systems, hospitals and schools. Loans are being made to com-

munity development organizations for recreational purposes. In some cases, former residents have been attracted back by jobs, homes, and the new facilities.

Georgia, Missouri, Iowa, North Carolina, Mississippi, Texas and Pennsylvania were cited by Mr. Freeman as examples of states where the concept of nonmetropolitan planning was being tried.

"Villages, towns, a smaller city or two, and counties having a commonality of interest are moving forward under joint planning and development programs," he said. In many places the work is still in the initial study stage.

Mr. Freeman listed four factors as necessary for this kind of rural region development. They were as follows:

1. Manufacturing and service jobs in the growth centers.
 2. Housing programs tailored to smaller communities.
 3. A large investment in public services.
 4. Greatly improved public administration and planning.
- The convention was held in the Shoreham Hotel