

# WASHINGTON VIEW:

## RECREATION ESSENTIAL TO MORALE

Washington energy officials predict enough fuel and oil for golf courses for the coming months. Recreation is essential for morale, is their thinking

by WILLIAM LOOMIS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Unless severe new disruptions in oil supplies coming from the rest of the world occur in the next month or two, Federal officials offer this assurance to golf course superintendents and club managers: Your needs for fuel to power tractors, trucks, lawn mowers and other equipment will be met. In addition, chances are good that there will also be fuel to keep outdoor swimming pools and clubhouses heated in cold climates.

The fact is, these officials admit privately, that the average American has been far more cooperative conserving fuel during the winter months than anticipated, and reserves have actually increased above a year ago in many parts of the country. Slower driving speeds also have greatly improved the outlook for gasoline supplies this coming summer.

But suppose this improving outlook proves false—the Arabs plunge the United States into a more serious shortage of oil and gas—what then? Here is a brief look at Federal thinking in Washington.

“Every effort will be made to keep businesses operating that rely on fuel. This is especially true of recreation facilities, because they are so important to people’s morale,” says a top fuel official.

This means that to the greatest extent possible, regardless of how serious the squeeze, the jobs created by golf courses will be protected. As a result, fuel will most likely be made available to clubs and public courses as long as their needs are clearly explained.

Consider this word to the wise club manager from top Federal planners, “Tell them to keep accurate records of just how much fuel they will need. We don’t want to hear about it now, but if a crunch comes, the fellow with the

best-kept records will have a leg up in getting the fuel he needs.”

Actually, the Government at this time says it has no specific plan for dealing with recreational facilities this summer, assuming rationing won’t be necessary, and it isn’t likely this will come to pass.

If there is rationing, it is likely to hit the individual golfer first, giving him less gasoline to drive back and forth to the course or his family to the club. But that doesn’t mean they won’t get there as often, pinching club operation. If ration tickets are given out to drivers allowing them only so much gasoline a month, they can be hoarded and spent on a big driving binge or used more judiciously.

For the golfer and his family staying home, this simply means better spacing out of the use of family cars. For resorts that rely on business from afar, it would still be possible for the family to save up its coupons and strike out on a long trip this summer, although it may pinch the use of family cars when they return home.

The outlook for air travel to and from vacation areas also is brighter. Business may be off at resorts, but people who fly there will not be cut off entirely. In fact, most airlines and travel agents believe air travel will be healthy during the summer tourist season, with the only problem being that people will have to plan further ahead rather than take off spontaneously. The cutbacks in air flights, into the hundreds every day, will simply make it more important to make reservations in advance, not cancel trips altogether because of a lack of fuel.

Looking further ahead, the picture gets brighter, according to Government officials. Although there will be some fuel pinch for a year or so, at most, new refinery capacity in the

United States will be coming along in the next few years. However, the day when truck motors could be left running idly when they could be shut off, lawn mowers running unnecessarily or at too great a speed, showers overheated or swimming pools carelessly attended may well be over.

“I’d like to make this point to your readers,” said one fuel expert. “Tell them to use caution, think a little more about conservation, keep a closer check on how employees are using fuel burning equipment, and they should be able to operate with few worries about running out of supplies.” □

