

DOE gas-rationing plan falls short of need

A gasoline-rationing plan, proposed by the U.S. Department of Energy and facing a rigorous examination in Congress, deserves more than the stand-by status it will probably receive.

The DOE proposal, which would begin only in the case of an acute fuel shortage, calls for issuing to individual vehicle owners through local outlets. Quotas would be based on the estimated shortfall of fuel supplies in an upcoming three-month period, with certain emergency-service agencies and trucking and transportation companies receiving their normal requirements.

A "white market" in coupon sales by coupon recipients who don't need their full allocation would be allowed. Demand for coupons by vehicle owners using more gas would probably drive up the white-market value of the coupons and reward persons for fuel conservation.

While the proposal offers a practical beginning toward solving the awesome problem of stabilizing consumption and protecting our fuel supply — a situation that appears irrevocably consigned to ever-thornier difficulties — two aspects of the DOE plan concern us.

First, the Congress and Administration still seem to view rationing as an

emergency-only measure and any legislative alternative to our present wide-open gasoline consumption will probably obtain stand-by status at best. Indeed, the possibility of getting any rationing program through Congress remains highly problematical due to opposition by interest groups including farmers, long-distance commuters and recreational-vehicle owners. (The latter gas-wasting group

ours

should probably be denied any place in a ration plan.)

The chronic nature of the American fuel-supply problem promises an inevitable confrontation between American consumers and dwindling oil reserves and the ever-present threat of political manipulation by producers. Given this future, our country needs to move toward reducing its profligate use of petroleum products now, not when total collapse threatens.

Private remedies — primarily higher prices and sporadic shortages — have hardly dented the national consumption spiral. Instead, oligopolistic oil companies have cashed in on record profits since the Arab embargo of the

early 70s.

Congress could have dropped that oil-price "windfall" into the deficit-ridden public treasury rather than private pockets by approving an oil-import surcharge proposed by President Carter. However, the industry persuaded Congress to kill that bill.

American consumers, with their heads stuck in the sand, appear unwilling to face the fact that the oil crisis is here now. Consequently, private efforts to solve the problem short of catastrophe appears unlikely to spring up spontaneously.

So, disagreeable as it may be, the remaining possibility for an equitable solution appears to lie in a public policy instituting mandatory controls. As near as we can tell, the only development in the last decade — besides the oil embargo — that has helped cut fuel consumption came through the federally imposed 55 mph speed limit.

The second aspect of the DOE proposal about which we have doubts is the absence of any accompanying attempt to create an alternative to the private car.

While the "white-market" sale of extra coupons might work to create

fuel-use savings in the short run, it provides little long-term relief for a dreadful lack of public transportation. The administration's decision to slash the subsidized Amtrak passenger train routes indicates U.S. officials may well be running off in the wrong direction.

The initiation of a rationing program — which we would welcome before rather than after a collapse in supplies — poses an opportunity to raise revenue for expanded public transportation subsidies and incentives for creation of new intra- and inter-city bus and rail systems.

The government could issue low-price coupons allocating only part of the projected supply in each three-month ration period and allow the surplus gasoline to be sold at pumps for cash, only with a steep federal sales tax imposed. That tax would effectively extract the heightened value (profitability) of coupons sold under a "white-market" system, and allow its use for support of public transportation.

Private sales of unneeded coupons could still be permitted, but most of the speculative profit in allocation of fuel would be turned to a long-range, public goal.

yours

Poetry elevates debate

ROTC DISCUSSION

(It's quantum leap upward)

Who, from life, could more desire
Than that his efforts might inspire
Others to achieve yet higher
Peaks than he himself could yet attain.

To elevate a long debate
To heights of poetry, is truly great
Too, too, long, have we, of late
Wallowed in mere dull debate — in vain.

It is indeed a piquant pleasure
To have served in some small measure
As inspiration for such a literary treasure.

Bayard McConnaughey
professor, biology

Petition hits draft plans

OPEN LETTER TO VETERANS

There are several bills in this 96th Congress that deal with the draft and draft "registration." HR 23, S 109 and S 226 are three of these bills thus far introduced. What isn't being made clear to the public is that *veterans, retired personnel and reservists* are also being included as a part of this "draft registration" process.

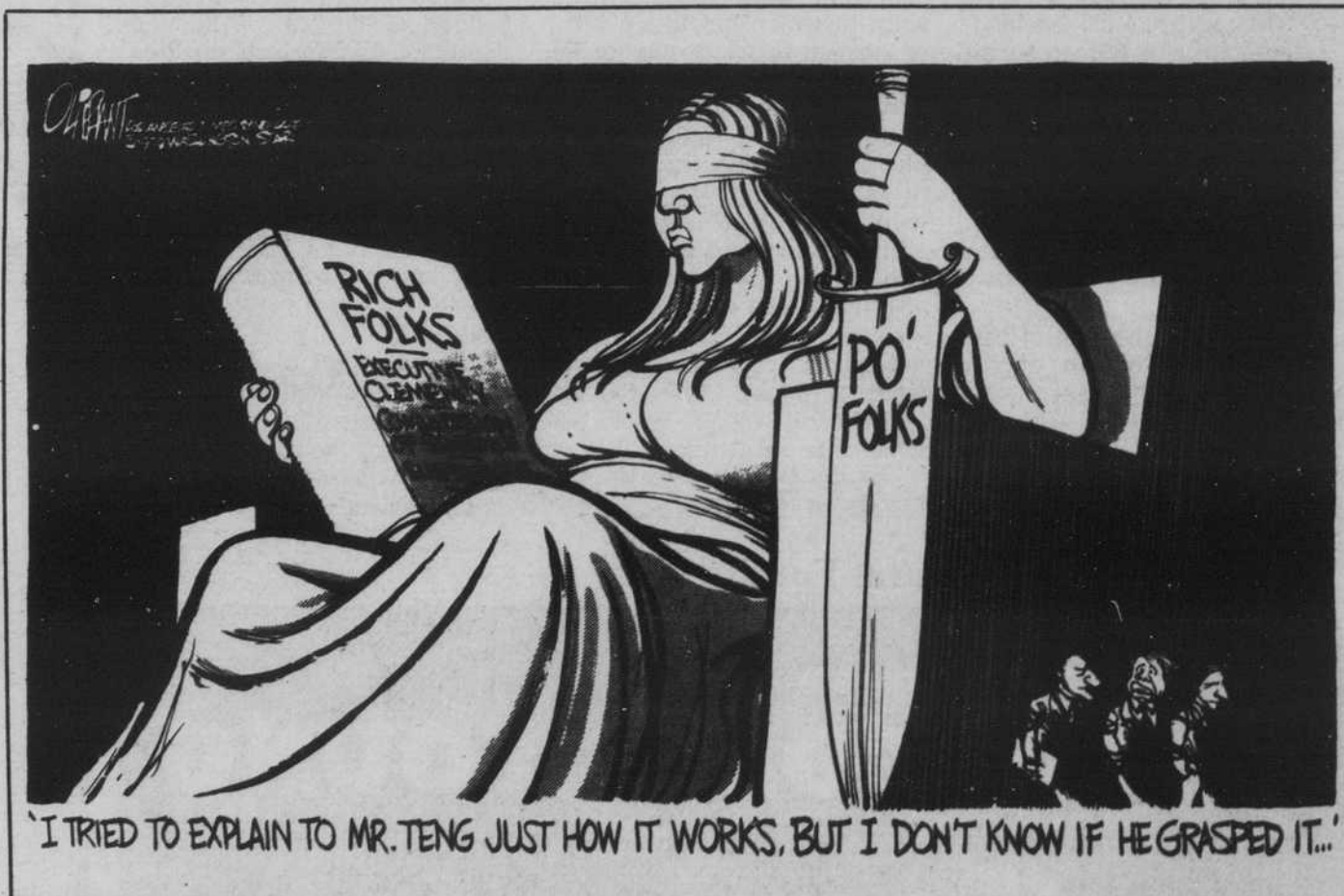
The recommendation is HR 23 and S 226 is that an assessment be made for the possibility of an extended 3 month active duty tour with an additional 3 year reserve obligation above the traditional 6 years already served.

Unless you have a desire to go back in, we recommend that veterans and retired personnel begin now to voice your feelings about this current legislation. Indications are that this will be voted on May 15 if the Armed Services Committee approves.

A petition is circulating around campus for vets and retired personnel to sign that opposes this kind of draft legislation. A petition may not be much, but for now it's the best show in town. We are located in Suite 3, EMU, University of Oregon, if you would like to sign the petition there. Congressman Weaver and Senator Hatfield need your support in defeating this legislation.

Staff and Directors
University Veterans

theirs



'Flaws inherent in design'

Although my workload as a mother and student requires my constant attention, University Vice President and Provost Paul Olum's statements (ODE 2-2-79) prefacing the recommendations to the University Affirmative Action Compliance Committee made me curious enough to request some clarification and offer an opinion.

As a senior in a department in which I have yet to experience a course taught by a woman, I would like to see a continued effort made by the ODE to provide coverage of any improvement in minority recruitment resulting from the approval of the four recommendations by the University Senate. In addition, I would appreciate published information regarding the selection process used to assign members to the search committees.

A University pledge of \$10,000 to "bolster hiring goals" may mean more money supporting an ineffective approach to a solution. Rather than a result of inadequate funding, the race and sex disparities witnessed by the University student body year after year, may be the result of flaws inherent in the design of the recruitment program and its implementation.

Although the student position may be one of limited information, I feel compelled to point out the similarity between Provost Olum's definition of the problem and a current bureaucratic trend to require additional funds to expand programs which on inspection have proved ineffective.

Susan A. Anderson
senior, chemistry

ROTC treated shabbily

Concerning the recent articles written about the ROTC, let me say that I am surprised by the treatment they are receiving. Men who have the courage and fortitude to defend their country seem to be getting scarcer every day.

I feel that those who do exist should not be treated in such a shabby manner, especially by people who do not seem to feel that the defense of their country is important.

Bryan Campbell
junior, math