

Even if the Congress authorized a massive program of Federal matching funds to assist States and local communities to construct new airports, our existing airport congestion would grow to crisis proportions before the first new airport could be put into operation. The delays that are necessarily entailed in the planning, financing, and construction of new airports will cover a period of 5 to 10 years. It takes that long to put a major new airport into operation. Thus, no matter how massive a program of airport development is undertaken, it will not alleviate the immediate congestion problems confronting the American public in trying to travel from one destination to another.

There is severe congestion existing today, in the air, on the runways, in the terminals, and in the ground approaches to the airports. Other ways must be sought to alleviate this congestion at and around our Nation's airports. These solutions entail better utilization of existing airport facilities and impinge to some extent upon the virtually unlimited access which all segments of aviation have at airports today.

This congestion, despite the extensive scare publicity it has received, is prevalent at only a few of the Nation's airports. It exists at the large hub airports which number only 22 out of the 525 which serve the airlines and at some of the medium hubs. But congestion is severest at the airports serving the largest metropolitan areas, such as New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

The congestion in the terminals and on the ground approaches to the airports is caused predominantly by the airlines and their passengers. Congestion in the air around airports and on the runways is caused by a combination of general aviation aircraft flying into and out of major hub airports and the peak-hour scheduling practices of the airlines. This congestion can be isolated further to certain periods of time during the day. It is not prevalent around the clock on a 24-hour-a-day basis. Much of today's congestion at the major hub airports can and should be eliminated by a more effective utilization of existing airport facilities.

General aviation

The general aviation segment of the aviation community has been criticized extensively and unfairly during the past year. Newspaper articles and editorials which have appeared decrying airport congestion have laid the blame in large part on general aviation. General aviation has been treated as the black sheep of the aviation community without regard to its importance in air transportation or to the rights of general aviation users to utilize the airways and airports equitably with commercial aviation.

It is true that severe congestion exists at major hub airports, due in part to the increasing use which small, general aviation aircraft make of them. But this is an isolated problem for which specific solutions must be sought. Any broad, nationwide attempts to restrict or constrain general aviation movements would be unfair and unreasonable and go far beyond the measures necessary to cope with the problems caused by general aviation aircraft at the major hub airports.

Better utilization must be achieved at these major hub airports. This will entail restrictions and constraints upon the hitherto unlimited access which general aviation aircraft have had to these airports. At those airports where general aviation aircraft contribute substantially to the congestion in the airways around the airport and on the