

Indian Fuel Shortage—

There are No Major Crises: BIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — (AIPA) — “There are no major fuel crises facing the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the Indian people, and none are anticipated unless the fuel shortage becomes more critical or the winter becomes more severe,” said Edward Nelson, engineering advisor to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

At all levels, the BIA has set up a system for coping with the emergency problems that might arise during this winter and is working closely with the Federal Energy Office on the matter of fuel allocations, said Nelson.

However, very little has yet been done on analyzing the secondary and long range consequences of the energy crisis.

What will happen to Indian farmers and ranchers who may be driven out of business because of the tremendous increase in the cost of fuel?

According to Nelson, Billings Area Director James Canan and Aberdeen Area Director Wyman Babby, the major problems faced by the BIA and Indian tribes are related not to the availability of fuel but its cost.

The BIA presently is receiving an allocation of 80 per cent of their fuel consumption in 1972,

but Nelson said the BIA was “able to live with” that amount at this time.

The increased cost of fuel for the BIA will be taken care of in the upcoming fiscal year budget, according to Nelson.

In the BIA areas, the increased cost of heating fuel particularly to Indians receiving welfare or general assistance is being handled by working with state governments to raise welfare payments and general assistance payments.

The many Alaska Native villages are having problems with the availability of fuel, but the problem there is more a matter of transporting the fuel rather than a fuel shortage. The BIA's Juneau Area has a two-year stockpile of fuel for emergency situations, said Nelson.