

Let them eat cheese....

A state fund to help pick up some of the pieces left by the sudden and drastic federal services cutback in Alaska was voted down last week by the state House of Representatives whose main argument with the fund was that the governor — not they — would manage it.

The federal shortfall fund totalled \$20 million and was intended to plug the leaks poked in the social service programs net by the new Reaganomics.

As we see it, Reaganomics means the rich get richer, the Pentagon gets missiles, the middle class gets taxes and the poor get cheese.

No one really knows what the final tally will be on the effects of the cutbacks in Alaska but it is certain to be far more than \$20 million in lost revenues.

So, in an effort to take care of some of the needs created by the cutbacks — needs including food, housing, energy assistance, and schooling in the Bush — some far-sighted legislators proposed the federal shortfall fund. And, for a while, it looked like reason would prevail and the bill would pass.

But last week the Legislature changed its collective mind and barely defeated the bill on a reconsideration vote. The reason most frequently given for the change of heart was that the Legislators didn't want the governor to have the power in allocating the shortfall money. They felt this was their duty.

Unfortunately, there is a logistical problem with all this.

As we said, no one really knows yet what the final cutbacks will be and in what area they will occur. And the final tally isn't expected to be known for some time — long after the Legislature is expected to adjourn and go home until next January. Unless a special session is held and our state house has never been known to like those.

By next January, many of the expected hardships will be falling upon the shoulders of the needy with the clout to allocate the shortfall money as needed.

There is but the Legislature apparently doesn't feel that the governor is qualified to do so. They want that power.

This battle of wills has been going on between the legislative and executive branches of government for some time. And we have sympathized with the Legislature on most occasions but in this case, we feel it necessary to depart.

It is clear that unless something is done soon, very soon, no money will be allocated, no programs will be bolstered, and not one bloody thing will be done to help the many people who will suffer because of the federal cutbacks. And, in the words of Martin Ivan of the Association of Village Council Presidents, "there will be great hardship."

The feds have stalled. Many branches of state government have stalled. And now the Legislature is bickering over a piece of power politics.

It is becoming painfully obvious that many of the people who run this state really don't give a damn about the needy people of the state. Only about their little fiefdoms.

And when the weather gets cold and the food becomes scarce and the heating oil runs out, that kind of non-caring government is bridging on being criminally negligent.