

## **Editorial —**

### **What's new?**

It's called a "double bind" in the vernacular, a "dilemma" in the Queen's English, and "Catch 22" in the current argot. All of it means that we have a problem not easily solved.

We reprint here an excerpt from an editorial comment written by the founder of this newspaper six years ago. The issues Howard Rock raised then are the same ones we face now:

The energy shortage throughout the United States is certain to affect the everyday lives of Alaska's Native people. This probably will be much more felt in the far northern regions of the huge sprawling state, say, the Arctic Eskimo regions and the Interior Athabascan Indian people. These people, through quite a few years now, have gotten used to using modern oil heat in their homes as well as skidding about through large areas of their surroundings using the handy snowmachine to go after their game for food. This means diesel fuel and gasoline.

We do not know, as yet, how the fuel cutbacks will affect the comparatively new mode of living but we do expect that some shortages will be experienced. Moderate shortages will probably not create serious situations but more than moderate cutbacks could cause some of the more remote villages to revert back to the days of seal or whale oil lamps to heat their homes. This mode of heating the Arctic abodes is still remembered by the older folks in some remote villages, which was very adequate when the sod type igloo was still in use.

If those Native people were to revert back to the use of the old type of heating homes, we also see some serious problems in gearing up for it.

Mr. Rock went on to explore various alternatives. They weren't much better then than they are now. And, although the alternatives haven't improved, the situation has actually worsened. Alaska's rural citizens are even more dependent upon fossil fuel, non-renewable resources than they were then.

Now, we have a situation where Mr. Carter has hidden himself away in the West Virginia mountains, perplexed about a problem his minions announced he would solve a week ago Wednesday. The President dodged that appearance and since then has called upon persons high and low to come there to consult with him, searching for the answer. Senator Stevens met with him Monday. Governor Hammond was summoned back Tuesday.

Mr. Rock ended his 1973 editorial with a question: "How will the energy shortage affect Alaska's villages?" For Alaska, that is probably one of the most important questions it has ever faced, in 1979 as much as in 1973.

We don't know the answer to that question. And we expect neither the President, our Congressional Delegation, Native leaders, or anyone else to come up with any quick answers.

But, we would hope that those meeting with the President keep rural Alaska's interests very much in mind about a problem we all were concerned with some years ago.