

Topics

Doing Without

Helter Shelter

The Great Bus Shelter Controversy is a continuing drama, but now the plot has become a bit thick. First, New York City's franchise was taken away from one company and awarded to another in a storm of claims and counterclaims. Now, in the latest development, the Board of Estimate wants to have the 500 existing shelters demolished. It claims to be incensed that the original franchisee, who built the shelters, has refused to sell them to the city.

Apart from sheer waste — if the threat to knock down the shelters is really carried out — no one is sure what would be built in their place, or when. The handsome glass and metal structures not only work well, they look good; they are the best-designed public amenities the city has ever had. The new franchisee's claim that they are so dilapidated that they should be removed seems even stranger than the civic machinations.

Elsewhere, concerned citizens chain themselves to old houses or trees to

stop the bulldozer. In New York, they may have to chain themselves to bus stop shelters.

Cold Comfort

Considerable commotion has developed in Alaska over an eight-page advertisement in this month's *Vogue* magazine on the joys of visiting our northernmost state. Legislators and women's groups have taken particular umbrage at a picture of a bikini-clad maiden on a glacier and a romantically inclined couple in a cabin, accompanied by the caption, "Sultry in the Far North. . . . Ah, there is a reason for the long night."

Alaska's Division of Tourism explains the \$150,000 spread as an effort to show the state as "warm and attractive" instead of "cold and dingy." But one critic, claiming to speak on behalf of all Alaskans, protested that "race, sex or national origin . . . doesn't make any difference to us." If Alaskans really feel that way about sex, it may explain why they aren't attracting more tourists.

Stilled Milk

Time was when a milk strike was regarded as a near-disaster. The lack of milk was thought to imperil children's growing teeth and bones. Anxious parents thronged to stores that could supply milk even at exorbitant prices, and such strikes ended quickly. Now, during the current Teamster strike against metropolitan area milk dealers, some stores are reportedly charging \$1 a quart, exorbitant by any standard. By OPEC's, that's more than \$120 a barrel. Yet there has so far been little evidence of public anxiety.

That may be because even people who like milk are less inclined to regard it as essential, or are worried about cholesterol. Or it may be that people are more inured to strikes. Whatever the reason, unless the strike lasts much longer or provokes violence, the worst thing about it may be the ancient puns it has revived — complaints about the milk squeeze and the predictions of udder chaos. In the face of such provocation, we declare ourselves to be resolutely uncowed.