

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Robichaud: That was not the same.

Mr. Howard: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the minister what were the results of the court hearing in Vancouver with respect to the Stellako river?

Mr. Robichaud: I heard this morning that the hearing which was supposed to take place on Friday had been postponed a second time at the request of the Attorney General of British Columbia.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**REPORTED INTENTION TO CLOSE OFFICES
IN WESTERN CANADA**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke): My question is directed to the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker. Would he verify reports that some 40 Unemployment Insurance Commission offices are to be closed this summer in the four western provinces?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): I cannot give the exact number, Mr. Speaker, but several offices are being closed later this year. I am glad the question has been asked because it will be recalled that until a very few months ago the work of the National Employment Service was carried on by the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Since a division of responsibility and a reallocation of work has taken place, it is not unreasonable to assume that a number of U.I.C. offices might be closed.

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Pictou): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister verify whether in a large number of offices in the Atlantic area claims will be required to be filed by mail rather than people being allowed to file them in the offices where assistance, if necessary, would be available to them?

Mr. Nicholson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, This part of the work has been going on now for the past several months very successfully. It will continue.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Labour is supplementary to the one asked a few moments ago by the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke. Has the minister or his department given any consideration to hearing the opinions, briefs or comments of the communities involved as to the need for the services of unemployment insurance offices during the summer months in those cities and

towns where it is intended to withdraw such offices?

Mr. Nicholson: Actually, Mr. Speaker, the Unemployment Insurance Commission is an independent body which is given certain responsibilities by statute. The minister is its spokesman in parliament. The commission, which is an autonomous body, has been considering the matter raised by the hon. member for the past several months and has taken soundings across the country. It has made some decisions. I am sure if there are special circumstances in any particular community, the commission would be willing to reconsider its decision on the fact, in the light of those circumstances.

Mr. Olson: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Inasmuch as the Minister of Labour is the minister responsible to parliament for the Unemployment Insurance Commission would he not ask the commission to take into consideration the feelings and opinions of the people involved in those communities where the offices are to be closed?

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago letters went out over my signature to members of parliament for ridings affected by this decision of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. I have received few if any suggestions with respect to changes, but I am quite sure that the representations of any hon. member who may have received such a letter will be considered by the commission.

LABOUR CONDITIONS**REFUSAL OF B.C. LONGSHOREMEN TO WORK
ON VICTORIA DAY**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Barry Mather (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Labour. I understood the minister to say last week that he would look into the situation with respect to ten officials of the longshoremen's union in Vancouver and New Westminster who were sentenced to jail terms following their refusal to order their members back to work. Has the minister had time to look into that situation and, if so, can he say something about it?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to correct a statement by a fellow member, but the premise of the hon. member's question is wrong. The learned judge who heard the application directed payment of fines with the alternative of a jail term in each case. My information is that the