

provincial government were made some time ago, would the minister mind once again taking the initiative in contacting the provincial government to solicit their interest and support, in this question?

Mr. Robichaud: I will give consideration to that request.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

INQUIRY AS TO LEGISLATION RESPECTING CLAIMS COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. H. A. Thomas (Middlesex West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Can the minister give the house any idea when the Indian claims commission which was promised several years ago will be set up?

Hon. Arthur Laing (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am committed to one section of the Indian population, namely that in the province of British Columbia, to postpone introduction of such a bill pending their having an opportunity to get together to discuss with us the so-called British Columbia land question. I have told them we cannot wait indefinitely. I understand at the present time they are trying to get together a representative organization which can meet with us.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

REQUEST FOR MATERNITY PROTECTION FOR FEMALE WORKERS

On the orders of the day:

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, just before the prorogation of the last session I asked the Minister of Labour, in view of the findings of the women's bureau of the Department of Labour that women workers in Canada lack maternity protection—and I do not refer to the pill—whether the government would take the necessary steps to secure this protection for women workers under federal jurisdiction. The minister was kind enough to say he would take the question as notice. Has he been able to look into this situation?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I should like to give a short progress report to the hon. lady, but that is as far as I can go at this time. There have been discussions with the provinces regarding the

Inquiries of the Ministry

I.L.O. conventions which are involved. I regret that I cannot give more than this very limited progress report at this time.

FISHERIES

MARITIME PROVINCES—REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF SEASON FOLLOWING LATE OPENING

On the orders of the day:

Mr. David MacDonald (Prince): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and relates to the very unusual and serious ice situation in district 7B. I am wondering whether the minister or his department will give consideration to the introduction of a special fall fishing season this year because of the late date on which fishermen will be able to begin in this area this year. This is a question of some urgency, because the fishermen are now wondering whether there will be any season this year during which they can fish.

Hon. H.-J. Robichaud (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, no decision can be made until after the spring season is completed. I realize that the date of the opening, which has now been fixed for May 16, is very late. However, toward the end of the lobster season in the last week of June we will be in a position to reassess the situation and decide what action it would be desirable to take in this regard.

Mr. MacDonald (Prince): I have a supplementary question. Can the minister give us some assurance that it will be possible to open the season next Monday as he suggested a moment ago?

Mr. Robichaud: No, Mr. Speaker, because this depends on the ice conditions.

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Pictou): I have a further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When the minister is making a decision as to whether there should be a fall fishing season in district 7B will he have his officials check all parts of that district before reaching that decision?

Mr. Robichaud: We always do so, Mr. Speaker.

[Later:]

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I have a related question to direct to the Minister of Fisheries. I wonder whether, in light of the very serious situation that is developing on the eastern and southwestern