

Closure of mine costs 63 jobs at Jordan River

The number of operating mines in B.C. has been reduced from 29 to 28 this week with the announcement Wednesday of the indefinite closure of Jordan River Mines Ltd's copper operation at Jordan River.

The mine is owned by Dison International Ltd. and its president, Sidney Fowlds of West Vancouver, said Wednesday he is not optimistic it will reopen.

Fowlds said the closure was the result of "insufficient operating capital" caused by his company's inability to borrow funds either in Canada or elsewhere.

The closure, after almost two years of operation, has resulted in the laying off of 63 mine workers.

Officials of the United Steelworkers of America are in Victoria today to meet with Labor Minister William King, Fowlds said, "to see if they can work something out." Those officials could not be reached for comment.

Fowlds said that the new B.C. Mineral Royalties Act (Bill 31), proclaimed in September, was the principal reason his company could not raise the necessary capital.

"And let me tell you," the disheartened mining company president said, "there will be quite a few more small outfits folding in a while. There won't be anything but a few big ones operating pretty soon."

Fowlds said that Picheney Development, a subsidiary of a French firm, is holding \$2 million of his firm's debentures and that he had notified its head office in New York. He added he expected Picheney would sell off the assets if something cannot be worked out in the next few days.

"You certainly can't blame Picheney," Fowlds added. "They've poured about \$5 million into that mine with very little return and have been more than willing to help."

Fowlds said production in the less than two years of operation has totalled about

600,000 tons of ore — about one quarter of the proven reserves. He expected there would be at least two more years of good production left if the mine were to reopen.

The mine is an underground operation that once employed as many as 125 workers. It is somewhat unusual in the area in that the milling equipment is also underground.

Dison has four years left in a contract to provide concentrate to Sumitomo Corp. of Japan. Fowlds said that termination of the contract could only be done under a force majeure clause but that "it would be the last step," in the closedown.

Fowlds said late additions

to Bill 31, which provided some relief in royalty payments for new mines, were insufficient to help his company.

The claim for the ore was first staked in 1915. However, production wasn't begun until 1963 and was halted shortly thereafter by serious flooding problems.

The operation started up under Dison and Picheney late in 1972 after solving environmental problems. Good copper prices through 1973 and part of 1974 appeared to be getting the mine firmly established but world copper prices have fallen in the past six months from about \$1.50 a pound to less than 60 cents.

Couple sought

Saanich police are investigating an abduction complaint from a 15-year-old Victoria girl and would like to speak to a couple who picked her up after the incident.

The couple picked her up hitchhiking southbound on Pat Bay Highway, north of Island View Road, about 5:45 p.m. and dropped her off at the Mayfair Bowling Lanes at Douglas and Tolmie.

Street licence will cost \$700

A proposed city licence fee may chop down Allan Poelzer's sidewalk totem trade and the Indian carver is on the warpath for Mayor Peter Pollen.

In a closed caucus meeting Tuesday, city council decided to raise the cost of a proposed hawker's license from \$200 to \$700. The amendment will receive first reading at next week's council meeting.

It is the highest fee for vendors or merchants in the pro-

for mayor next fall and "kick his autowreckers (Peter Pollen Ford) back to the Kingsway."

Poelzer's wife, Gloria, said the \$700 fee "would cut deep into our business."

She added: "It seems they're going to do everything possible to get us off the street."

Ald. William Tindall, chairman of the city's commerce, industry, and tourist committee, admitted the \$700 fee