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## Job picture getting brighter here

Citizen news services

The unemployment rate in the central Interior has dropped to 10 per cent from 10.3, Statistics Canada

reported today.

This puts the area which includes Prince George, only one-tenth of one per cent behind the Vancouver-Lower Mainland area, the best place in the province

For the province as a whole, the jobless rate declined 0.2 per cent to 11.4 per cent.

The highest rate in the province, 12.6 per cent,

The highest rate in the province, 12.6 per cent, stretches across the Columbia-Shuswap-Central Kootenay area into the Okanagan.

The province still lags behind the national jobless

The province still lags behind the national jobless rate which, once adjusted for seasonal variations, stands at 8.6 per cent. That's down from 8.8 per cent

in August and the lowest rate since January 1982, when it was 8.5 per cent.

Across Canada — except in B.C. — Statistics Canada's help-wanted index suggests the demand for workers is continuing to increase to record levels.

The index, based on space devoted to help-wanted ads in major daily newspapers in 1981 being equal to 100 rose to a record high 133 in September, the fifth consecutive month the index has hit a record high.

The index rose in all regions of the country except

British Columbia, where it declined to 49 from 53.

The amount B.C. lags behind the rest of the country is also indicated by individual city rates. The unadjusted rate in Toronto is 4.8 per cent, 5.2 per cent in Ottawa-Hull, 5.3 per cent in Oshawa, 5.8 in Hamilton and 6.3 in Regina. St. John's, Nfld., usually

the unemployment capital of Canada, is just threetenths of a per cent worse off than Victoria. Halifax's rate is 8.6.

Ontario continued to account for the lion's share of new jobs with 40,000; Nova Scotia posted a gain of 5,000 and Saskatchewan 8,000.

There was little or no change in employment in the remaining provinces.

The jobless rate decreased by 0.7 to 17.5 per cent in Newfoundland, by 0.2 to 11.5 in Nova Scotia, 0.4 to 10.1 in Quebec, 0.9 to 6.8 in Saskatchewan, and 0.2 to 0.7 in About.

9.7 in Alberta.

The rate increased by 0.6 to 13.8 per cent in Prince Edward Island, 0.3 to 12.9 in New Brunswick, and 0.2 to 7.6 in Manitoba

to 7.6 in Manitoba.

The rate was unchanged at 5.8 in Ontario.

The unemployment rate also declined by one point to 12.8 per cent among those aged 15 to 24 years, with most of the decrease being for young women.

with most of the decrease being for young women.

The jobless rate for those aged 25 years and over was little changed at 7.5 per cent.

The latest figures also show that among the workage population, those 15 years and over, the proportion of those employed was 60.5 per cent, the highest level ever.

During the last year employment has grown by 3.3 per cent to 12.123 million. Full-time employment was up by 3.8 per cent or 388,000 while part-time employment was dayin clightly.

ment was down slightly.

Among students aged 15 to 24 years the jobless rate in September was 12.4 per cent, down from 12.9 per cent a year earlier.

#### RESPONSE TO BACK-TO-WORK LEGISLATION

## Full postal walkout launched

#### Wood tax rebate promised

by KEN BERNSOHN Staff reporter

Staff reporter
The provincial government decided today how to avoid double taxing B.C. lumber producers through a rebate on the current export tax on lumber.

The province raised its timber cutting fees Oct. 1, saying the price hike would replace an export tax on lumber going to the U.S. — but the tax is still in effect.

The Citizen has learned the

The Citizen has learned the government has decided money collected for the current 15-percent export tax on lumber will be put into an interest bearing account. When the U.S. — whose complaints about B.C.'s low timber charges sparked the tax — approves B.C.'s new, higher fees, the export tax will be rebated.

Mills have complained they faced both a 15-per-cent tax on all shipments to the U.S., plus a raise in timber charges from about \$2 per cubic metre to as high as \$18 — in effect, double taxation.

The rebate will be calculated effective Nov. 1 to avoid letting mills use wood harvested at old, lower stumpage rates, and still escape the tax on finished

Unlike the original export tax, the raise in timber fees, called stumpage, changes the cost of all products, whether bound for Bremen, Germany, or Brandon, Man.

The question of how the rebate would work has affected the demand for lumber. Prices for much of the lumber from this area have dropped about \$20 per thousand board feet. Vancouver lumber brokers say demand has been down as buyers waited to see who would pay extra charges (the buyer or seller), if there would be a rebate, and who would get the money if there was one.

### Queen arrives in B.C. today

VICTORIA (CP) — The Queen and Prince Philip are scheduled to arrive here from London today to begin a 15-day visit to Canada that includes private meetings with Commonwealth leaders attending a conference in Vancouver.

Her plane is expected to touch down at 3 p.m.



Citizen photo by Lisa Murdoch

**Shoe**A female hooded rat at a city pet shop knows what to do when disturbed by visitors. She hides in a chi-

na shoe, taking her new offspring along with her. The mother rat had her litter about a week ago.

#### CLACUES WITH IDAN

#### U.S. CLASHES WITH IRAN

### Gulf action defended

by Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger said today
that U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf
acted correctly when they knocked
out three Iranian boats after being
fired on

"Our men are not required to be hit before they respond," Weinberger told an international conference sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency. No Americans were injured or

No Americans were injured or killed in the fighting Thursday night, said the Pentagon.

According to the Pentagon, the fighting began when four Iranian gunboats opened fire without warning on a U.S. observation helicopter that Weinberger said was "on

normal patrol" in the northern

The confrontation ended when the army attack helicopter strafed and disabled three of the Iranian boats, sinking one.

The U.S. navy rescued six Iranian crew members from the gulf's waters, but two of them later died. One of the survivors suffered serious injuries, said Weinberger.

The Pentagon initially said three boats were sunk, but Weinberger said that at daylight it was discovered two were dead in the water, but still afloat.

"The visual sighting last night,

to the extent that it could be done, indicated that three had been sunk. ... said Weinberger.

"This morning we found the two. .totally disabled and took them in

And we'll be examining them fairly closely."

The confrontation marked the

first time Iranian military forces had opened fire on a U.S. ship or aircraft.

On Sept. 21, an American heli-

On Sept. 21, an American helicopter gunship disabled the minelayer Iran Ajr that later was scuttled by U.S. authorities. However, that vessel was attacked after it was detected laying mines and it never fired at U.S. aircraft.

Weinberger denied assertions by Iran that U.S. forces had fired first in the latest incident, but acknowledged the United States could not

rove that.
In a separate incident, Weinberg-

er said another U.S. military helicopter flying in the southern gulf Thursday reported gunshots being fired from an Iranian oil rig.

He said it was unclear whether the Iranians were firing at the Americans and the helicopter left the area without returning fire.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon denied today an Iranian claim that its forces had shot down an American helicopter and damaged a navy ship.

"We have no warships damaged and we have no helicopters missing," said Lt.-Cmdr. Chris Baumann, a Pentagon spokesman.

Thursday's fighting left the Reagan administration bracing itself for new demands by Congress that it invoke the War Powers Act, a law that would allow Congress to decide whether the U.S. military presence in the gulf should be reduced.

"I think the president is making a very, very bad mistake by not bringing this thing up," Representative Les Aspin (D-Wis), a member of the House of Representatives armed services committee.

tives armed services committee.
"He would clearly get the vote in both houses of Congress to keep the forces there," Aspin said in a

television interview.

Weinberger said the administration still sees no need to invoke the

act.
"At the moment, we don't be-

"At the moment, we don't believe the facts of the situation, the incidents, bring into play the War Powers Act," he said.

### Spencer's trial gets under way

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)

— Opening arguments were expected to be heard today in the murder trial of former professional hockey player Brian (Spinner) Spencer, who is accused of kidnapping and killing a West Palm Beach man in 1982.

A panel of seven men and five women was seated Thursday. Two alternates will be chosen when the trial resumes this afternoon, and opening arguments were expected to follow.

Spencer, 38, faces the death penalty if convicted of first-degree murder in the shooting death of Michael James Dalfo.

The former left winger from Fort St. James, B.C., played in 550 National Hockey League games, scoring 80 goals and 143 assists in his pro career with the Toronto Maple Leafs, New York Islanders, Buffalo Sabres and Pittsburgh Penguins.

## ...and in tomorrow's Citizen...

An agreement which gives Alcan the ability to generate more hydroelectric power will also have an effect on the level of the Nechako River. Citizen reporter Bev Christensen looks at implications in the Saturday Forum.

Also planned:

Prince George's competitive aquatic scene is given a close examination.

by Canadian Press Mail sorters and counter

clerks began a full national postal strike today as Parliament started to debate legislation to end 10 days of rotating strikes.

Jean-Claude Parrot, head of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, condemned the legislation as repugnant and undemocratic.

He wouldn't say at a news conference whether he'll obey the bill if it becomes law as expected by

early next week.

Parrot spent two months in jail for refusing to obey a similar law passed in 1978.

As debate opened in the Commons, the Conservative government urged MPs to pass the bill through all stages in one day.

The two opposition parties refused, saying no national emergency exists and the bill should be studied carefully before it's passed.

Labor Minister Pierre Cadieux said Canada Post and the 23,000-member union have the capacity to hurt the country more than themselves if the dispute is allowed to drag on.

"The government must fight for the public interest. We feel obliged to act with force," he said.

Parrot said all union locals had been ordered off the job in protest.

The strike, confined previously to rotating walkouts, spread rapidly after the bill was introduced Thursday.

Shoving, shouting and scuffling with police were common as the strike grew and Canada Post responded by sending waves of strike-breakers across picket lines.

Some injuries were reported and arrests occurred at numerous postal facilities.

The order to make the strike a

The order to make the strike a full national walkout was given by union headquarters early today.

"This government is using the brute force of the law to achieve what it cannot do by negotiations," Parrot said.

"This law is designed to impose terms which will permit the privatization of postal services and the replacement of decent paying jobs with cheap labor. The law is repugnant to anyone who believes in collective bargaining."

### Scuffle erupts at post office

A scuffle occurred on the Canadian Union of Postal Workers' picket line outside Postal Station A on Fifth Avenue early today when management attempted to move some mail into the building.

Four management people and six union members were involved in the incident which occurred shortly before 2 a.m.

According to CUPW member Brenda von Niessen, who was called in to photograph the scuffle, the RCMP were summoned to the building and two men, Doug Tedford and Ray Matthews were forcibly removed from the room in which the mail boxes are located.

No one was injured during the incident which occurred when the picketers had been called to the rear of the building to speak to a member of Canada Post's management.

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While there they were advised mail bags were being moved into the building through the front door.

No one from Canada Post was available today to comment on the incident

