

# Americans Close Remac

Remac, B.C. — Reeves-MacDonald Mines, Ltd., a Spokane-based corporation, has announced the closure of its lead-zinc operations here. No prior notice was given to the union. Many miners only learned they were out of work when their wives informed them they had heard it on the radio.

The Pend O'Reille Mines and Metal Company, which holds a sixty percent controlling interest in the operation claims that explorations for new ore have been costly and unsuccessful. The miners have a different story. They say there is new ore that looks "good" and point to the surrounding mountains where they claim there is no shortage. The new ore they speak of comes from a shaft recently driven to the edge of a neighbouring property, the Redbird claim, owned by Heckla Mining. Heckla, which is also an American company will neither sell nor develop this claim although the miners feel it is rich. "The only way to tell about the new ore" a miner said, "would be through a public Assay but I don't think they'd do that."

From now until October 1 the ore trucks will continue to roll south to the Kellogg

Smelting Refinery plant in Idaho. Pend O'Reille Mines has an interest in the plant which receives about 200 tons per day from the Remac operation. Of the 700 tons gouged from the earth each day an estimated 500 tons goes into the Pend O'Reille River.

The layoff date coincides with the implementation of demands placed on the company by Pollution Control Board regulations. To keep in step with the regulations, they would have to spend \$200,000 in order to continue operating.

Caught in the squeeze resulting from this company's opportunism are more than a hundred workers and their families. "Why can't the Government do something. The town is finished," one man said. "Redbird should be forced to sell or they should go to work on it," another man added.

The workers direct their bitterness at the Steelworkers Union as well as the mining companies. When asked about the safety program one man said "What safety program?" Another said "Safety, you look for yourself." Who, do they blame? Most say "both".

"The union said they couldn't go too hard in the negotiations," a miner told the

Arrow, because they had a copy of the shareholders report and they didn't figure the company had the money." Other complaints concerned pensions ("there is no pension plan"); wages that are lower than those at Cominco and

considerably lower than wages at Celgar; inadequate welfare and vacation plans; and job security.

The people are uncertain about the future. "It costs too much to move each time," a woman worried. Where will

they go? "Hope, maybe," one man said. "North," said Jim Bondesen, who claims he wouldn't bother trying for a job in the nearby Cominco operation. "I'm not too particularly fond on Cominco," he said.

