Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry
under the Public Inquiries Act
in British Columbia
1943-1980

A CHECKLIST

by
Judith Antonik Bennett

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
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PREFACE

This Checklist is a continuation of Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry under the “Public Inquiries Act” in British Columbia, 1872-1942, by Marjorie C. Holmes. The numbering of the entries in the present volume, therefore, follows consecutively the numbering of the original volume. The form of entry for each of the commissions has been established from the Order-in-Council or, when this does not provide a formal name, from the report itself.

The checklist includes commissions appointed under the Public Inquiries Act and special inquiries for which specific legislation was enacted. It excludes inquiries held under the Departmental Inquiries Act. For definitions of terms and for historical background on the formation and use of royal commissions and commissions of inquiry the reader is referred to the introduction to the Holmes volume.

Accompanying evidence, proceedings, and exhibits for the commissions and inquiries are generally held by the Provincial Archives; no attempt has been made to list such material in this volume.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Patricia (Mazurchyk) Moss, who aided in the preliminary compilation of this checklist, and of John MacEachern, who edited the draft.

JUDITH ANTONIK BENNETT
Legislative Library
Victoria, British Columbia
1943

134. RURAL ELECTRIFICATION COMMITTEE

Appointed under the Public Utilities Act by Order-in-Council no. 560, April 19, 1943, reporting to the Premier and Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Committee Members: W.A. Carrothers (Chairman), J.C. MacDonald, E. Davis.

Reports

Progress report of the Rural Electrification Committee as of January 24th, 1944. 1944. 82p., map. King's Printer. Tabled: February 9, 1944.

The Committee was appointed to "survey and report upon the extent and condition of electrical services in the Province, with particular reference to the serving of rural areas." (O-in-C). Studies to date indicated that supplying electricity to farms not yet served could not be made self-sustaining as a separate enterprise and would have to develop as an extension from more densely settled areas.


A major reorganization of the central station industry was recommended so that service could feasibly be extended to rural areas and so that rates and services in towns, villages and areas already served could be improved. Costs would otherwise be prohibitive.

Related Report

Report of the Rural Electrification Committee on survey of electrical service in British Columbia with particular reference to service in rural communities as of 1942. December 31, 1943. [vii], 100p. [King's Printer?]

At the Committee's request the extent and condition of electrical service in British Columbia was surveyed by the staff of the Water Rights Branch of the Department of Lands and of the Public Utilities Commission.

1943

135. INQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF MOUNT VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 961, July 8, 1943.

Commissioner: John Owen Wilson.

Report


An inquiry was called "into the administration of Mount View High School, Saanich, and in particular into the methods of discipline and alleged excessive
corporal punishment administered by the Principal or by any other teacher.” (O-in-C). Commissioner Wilson found the corporal punishment administered was excessive and recommended that the Principal be relieved of his position. He regretted this decision as general conditions beyond the Principal’s control were also factors contributing to the incident.

1943
136. FOREST INQUIRY
Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1781, December 31, 1943.
Commissioner: Gordon McG. Sloan.

Report

An inquiry was requested into all aspects of the Province’s forest resources, including administrative policy and legislation. The Commission concluded that a planned forest policy based on the principle of sustained yield production was needed. This resulted in passage of the Forest Act (S.B.C. 1948, c. 128).

Related Reports
Argument of counsel to the Commission. 1945. 95p. Not printed for distribution.

Upon request from the Commission Counsel, C.D. Orchard, Deputy Minister of Forests and Chief Forester, submitted his personal opinions relating to forest administration in British Columbia.

1944
137. ESTATE OF SAMUEL HOLMER
Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 147, February 8, 1944.
Commissioner: Horace C.S. Collett.

Report
Report not located; not tabled.

The Commissioner was to report on the value of certain property belonging to the Estate of Samuel Holmer, deceased, in accordance with Section 16 of the Succession Duty Act.
1944

138. ROYAL COMMISSION ON SOCIETIES WHICH PAY A DEATH BENEFIT DERIVED IN WHOLE OR IN PART FROM ASSESSMENT

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1685, November 4, 1944.

Report


The Commission was instructed to inquire into "Life Insurance Clubs". It was recommended that these societies should come under the Insurance Act or the Societies Act and irregularities should be corrected within four years.

1944

139. ROYAL COMMISSION APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE ASSOCIATIONS OPERATING IN THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1686, November 4, 1944.
Commissioner: J.A. Grimmett.

Report


The Commission recommended that the associations should be allowed to continue under strict government supervision, as long as they were non-profit.

1944

140. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO EDUCATIONAL FINANCE

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1833, November 27, 1944.
Commissioner: Maxwell A. Cameron.

Reports


The Commission was appointed "to inquire into the existing distribution of powers and responsibilities between the Provincial Government and the school districts and to appraise the present fiscal position of the school districts . . . ."
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(O-in-C). It recommended that the administration of education through local school boards be retained; that the Province implement a grant system requiring equal tax rates on all property; and that adequate school districts be created in areas where none currently existed.


1945

141. CHIROPODY ACT INQUIRY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 937, June 1, 1945.

Commissioner: A.M. Harper.

Report


The Commission inquired into the provisions of the Chiropody Act to ascertain whether or not the qualifications, examination and admission of chiropodists under the Act were reasonable, especially with regard to discharged members of the Armed Forces who, while in the Armed Forces or as part of their post-war training, had taken up the study and practice of chiropody. The Commission recommended that the current high standards for admission to the profession be maintained, and that former Armed Forces personnel not be given special status.

1946

142. PROVINCIAL-MUNICIPAL RELATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2421, February 16, 1946.

Commissioner: H. Carl Goldenberg.

Report


The Commission inquired into “the performance of municipal functions within the Province and the relations between the municipalities and the Province . . .” (O-in-C). The powers, functions and responsibilities of the various classes of municipalities, and the services provided within municipalities by the Province were examined. Also reviewed were municipal expenditures, revenues, debts and the current assessment and property tax systems. To ensure the adequacy of municipal revenues in future, the Commission recommended alterations in municipal assessment and taxation policies, including the introduction of a municipal business tax and an increase in the Provincial Government’s contribution to municipalities.
1946

143. DYKING, DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION COMMISSION

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1002, May 10, 1946.

Commissioner: Frederick Moore Clement.

Report


Contents.—Pt. I. Irrigation Districts.—Pt. II. Dyking and Drainage Districts.

The Commission inquired into irrigation and dyking districts, especially to determine how much they each could pay annually in respect to their “indebtedness” to the Province.

1947

144. COMMISSION ON SCHOOL TAXATION

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1582, August 9, 1947.

Commissioners: H. Alan Maclean (Chairman), B.C. Bracewell, J.T. Clark, R.R.F. Sewell, R.C. Grant, J.A. Stewart.

Report


The Commission was appointed to inquire into the general incidence of taxation under the Public Schools Act and all matters relevant to the present system of cost-sharing.

1947

145. ROYAL COMMISSION ON DOUKHOBOR AFFAIRS

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1836, September 12, 1947.

Commissioner: Harry J. Sullivan.

Report


The Commissioner was appointed to inquire into the cause of disturbances in the Doukhobor settlements. He recommended that his investigation be discontinued and urged the “application of sufficient force and restrictions upon all Doukhobor citizens to restore law and order before resumption of [the] inquiry.” (p.2). Sullivan concluded “the only real and permanent solution to the Doukhobor problem lies in education and assimilation . . .” (p. 7). No final report was issued.
1949

146. WORKMEN’S COMPENSATION BOARD INQUIRY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2009, September 17, 1949.

Commissioner: Gordon McG. Sloan.

Report


The Commissioner was appointed to investigate the Workmen’s Compensation Act and its administration by the Workmen’s Compensation Board.

1951

147. INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION INQUIRY BOARD

Appointed under special act of the Legislature: An Act authorizing an Inquiry into the “Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act” and its Administration, assented to April 18, 1951 (S.B.C. 1951, c. 39). Section 8 of the Act gave the Board the same powers as commissioners under the Public Inquiries Act. The Minister of Labour was responsible.

Board Members: Arthur J.R. Ash (Chairman), Allan J. McDonell, B.M. MacIntyre, J.D. McRae, Arthur J. Turner.

Reports


The Commission recommended that staff shortages at the Conciliation Branch of the Department of Labour should be eliminated as soon as possible by filling existing vacancies.


The Board was appointed to inquire into and investigate the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and its administration and to survey legislation in effect in other provinces, states and countries with respect to industrial disputes. Amendments to the Act were recommended.

1951

148. HOSPITAL INSURANCE INQUIRY BOARD

Appointed under special act of the Legislature: An Act authorizing an Inquiry into the “Hospital Insurance Act” and its Administration, assented to April 18, 1951 (S.B.C. 1951, c. 36). Section 8 of the Act gave the Board the same powers as
commissioners under the Public Inquiries Act. The Minister of Health and Welfare was responsible. The Board was appointed by Order-in-Council no. 898, April 25, 1952.

Board Members: Sydney John Smith (Chairman), Donald Cameron Brown, Walter Hendricks, Arvid Waldemar Lundell, Daniel John Proudfoot, Robert Cecil Steele, Herbert John Welch, Harold Edward Winch.

Reports


Immediate changes in present policy were recommended to remove injustices which were “necessarily resulting in public antagonism to the British Columbia Hospital Insurance Service.” (p.1).


The Board was appointed “to inquire into, investigate, survey, and furnish advice with regard to the Hospital Insurance Service and all matters pertaining to hospital operation in the Province . . . .” (p.5) and to propose amendments to the Hospital Insurance Act. The Board recommended continuation of the British Columbia Hospital Insurance Service, with some changes.

1951


Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 848, April 19, 1951.

Commissioner: H.S. Wood.

Report


An inquiry was ordered to determine the truth of newspaper stories regarding Mrs. Donald Ritchie’s loss of her unborn child by being unable to gain admission to hospital. The Commissioner ruled that, although it would have been desirable to place Mrs. Ritchie in hospital for her health’s sake, her admission would not have saved the child.

1951

150. RE DANIEL LeROY SANGER

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2487, October 23, 1951.

Commissioner: Herbert Howard Shandley.
Daniel LeRoy Sanger died in Oakalla Prison of natural causes. An inquiry was conducted into the circumstances surrounding his incarceration to determine if adequate care was given to the prisoner before his death. No evidence of wrongdoing was found.

1952

151. LIQUOR INQUIRY COMMISSION
Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2254, September 12, 1952.
Commissioners: H.H. Stevens (Chairman), Dean Cecil Swanson, George Home.

Report

The Commission was appointed “to inquire into . . . the relevant facts relating to the distribution, sale, and consumption of spirituous, vinous and malt liquors within the Province, with the view to determining the manner and means most acceptable to the people of the Province . . .” (p.2).

1953

152. INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LANDSLIDES AT WHATSHAN
Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2062, September 4, 1953.
Commissioner: J.V. Clyne.

Report

The Commission was appointed to “inquire into all circumstances surrounding two successive slides on August 11 and August 16, 1953, which destroyed a portion of a hydro-electric generating plant built by the British Columbia Power Commission near Needles, B.C., known as the Whatshan Development.” (p.1). The British Columbia Power Commission and its Chief Engineer were found to be negligent for failing to take precautions against a danger they knew or should have known existed.
1954

153. ROYAL COMMISSION ON MILK

Commissioner: J.V. Clyne.

Reports

The Public Utilities Act was amended to make distributors pay to producers prices fixed by the Milk Board.


The Commission was appointed "to ascertain whether primary producers supplying milk to the Vancouver area were receiving from distributors the price for such milk as set by the Milk Board under the provisions of the Public Utilities Act and if they were not receiving such price, the reason for the violation of the Board order." (p. 1, Interim report).

1954

154. DOUKHOBOR LANDS ALLOTMENT INQUIRY ACT

Appointed under special act of the Legislature: Doukhobor Lands Allotment Inquiry Act (S.B.C. 1953, Second Session, c. 3). Section 4 gave the Commissioner all the powers of a commissioner under the Public Inquiries Act. The Commissioner was appointed by Order-in-Council no. 2028, September 8, 1954.
Commissioner: Arthur E. Lord.

Reports

The Act established an inquiry into the disposition of Doukhobor lands and the feasibility of selling the lands to the present Doukhobor occupants and other qualified Doukhobor purchasers. By 1965 this objective had been accomplished.
1955

155. FOREST INQUIRY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 35, January 7, 1955.

Commissioner: Gordon McG. Sloan.

Report


Chief Justice Sloan, Commissioner of the 1945 Forest Inquiry, was again appointed to review the forest resources of the Province. He found government inconsistencies in granting timber licences and recommended better control over licensing. New licences should be issued for twenty-one years instead of in perpetuity and an immediate moratorium on the issuing of licences should be declared. A permanent forest advisory council should be established and another forestry review should be conducted in ten years - 1966.

1955

156. FOREST MANAGEMENT LICENCES INQUIRY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 369, February 17, 1955.

Commissioner: Arthur E. Lord.

Report


No impropriety was found in the issuance of forest management licences.

1955

157. INQUIRY IN THE MATTER OF LOTS IN THE SUB-DIVISION OF LOT 1476, SAYWARD DISTRICT, PLAN 8255

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 716, March 29, 1955.

Commissioner: L. Arnold Hanna.

Report

Report of inquiry pursuant to the "Public Inquiries Act" into the amount of damages which would be suffered by reason of road construction on the part of the owners of lots which have not consented to such construction, and as to the costs
which should be payable to such owners who appeared at any hearing of the Inquiry. June 20, 1955. 9p. Typescript. Tabled: January 18, 1956.

The Comox Logging and Railway Company was requested to compensate owners for damages and to take measures which would make the logging road as inoffensive as possible.

1955

158. VANCOUVER CITY POLICE FORCE INQUIRY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1618, June 24, 1955.

Commissioner: Reginald Hibbert Tupper.

Reports


The Commission was established because the Final Report on Traffic in Narcotic Drugs in Canada by the Special Committee of the Senate of Canada dated June 23, 1955 expressed "the opinion that more vigorous effective enforcement of all pertinent law holds the answer to much of the problem in the city of Vancouver."

The Commissioner found that discipline had not been of a high order and that the Chief Constable did not have the confidence and respect of his subordinates. More funds were needed to upgrade training and service.

1956

159. ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE TREE-FRUIT INDUSTRY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 3181, December 21, 1956.

Commissioner: Earl D. MacPhee.

Report


The Commission was appointed to inquire generally into problems of production, packing, storage, processing and marketing of fruit in the Province.

1957

159A. BRITISH COLUMBIA CIVIL SERVICE ACT: A BOARD OF REFERENCE

Appointed under the Civil Service Act by Order-in-Council no. 1683, July 9, 1957 (Sloan) and Order-in-Council no. 1123, May 9, 1958 (Carrothers).

Commissioner: Gordon McG. Sloan; replaced by Alfred William Carrothers upon the resignation of Sloan due to the pressure of work.
A board of Reference was established to examine the British Columbia Government Employees’ Association request for the right to bargain collectively on behalf of the provincial civil servants. The Board was to suggest alterations to the Civil Service Act consistent with Canadian constitutional practice. Carrothers recommended that government employees be granted the right to bargain collectively, but not be granted the right to strike. Also, membership in the association was not to be a condition of employment in the civil service. If negotiations failed, disputes would be settled by binding arbitration. The report, commissioned by the Social Credit Government, was not released until the New Democratic Party came into power twelve years later. The new Government felt these recommendations were too limited and established a new commission by Order-in-Council no. 3786, October 19, 1972.

1958

160. ROYAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 74, January 17, 1958.

Commissioners: Sperrin N.F. Chant (Chairman), John E. Liersch, Riley P. Walrod.

Reports


The Commission was requested to inquire into the provincial educational system with particular attention to programs of study and pupil achievement. The public school system was found to compare favourably with that of any other country and its basic educational philosophy was sound.

A précis of the report of the Royal Commission on Education in British Columbia. 1960. iv, 119p. [Queen’s Printer]

Related Reports

Research studies series:

Vol. I


No. 2. A study of first year university students’ opinions on Grade XI and Grade XII training. 1959. 82p. Mimeographed.

Vol. II

No. 3. Principals’ and Vice- Principals’ judgements on school practices. 1959. 31p. Mimeographed.


M.A. theses supervised and financed by the Commission:


Research sponsored and financed by the Commission and carried out by the Department of Education, Division of Tests, Standards and Research:

A ten-year comparison of ability and achievement of B.C. Grade VII pupils. [1959?] 16p.; appendix.

Report not located.

Report and Addenda prepared for the Commission by the Pre-primary Education Committee of the Royal Commission on Education. [1959?] 120p.

Report not located.

1958

161. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ROAD-USER CHARGES

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 376, April 11, 1958.

Commissioners: Henry Forbes Angus (Chairman), George Lindsay, Alfred John Bowering, William Fairful Veitch.

Report


The Commission was requested to recommend alternate and more efficient methods of taxing road users. As a result a new department was established by the Department of Commercial Transport Act (S.B.C. 1959, c. 12).
1958

162. JUVENILE DELINQUENCY INQUIRY BOARD


Report


The Board was established to examine briefs submitted to the Select Standing Committee of the Legislature on Social Welfare and Education during the 1958 Session and to solicit more briefs to recommend better preventive measures which might be adopted, particularly at the community level, to deal with the problem of juvenile delinquency.

1958

163. SECOND NARROWS BRIDGE INQUIRY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1466, June 18, 1958.

Commissioner: Sherwood Lett.

Report


The Commissioner was asked to inquire into the circumstances of the collapse on June 17, 1958 of the Second Narrows Bridge, which was being constructed across Burrard Inlet under contract with the British Columbia Toll Highways and Bridges Authority. The Commissioner concluded that the collapse was due to a design failure in the temporary structures and recommended “that erection contractors submit to engineers full particulars of the erection procedures and details of design of the temporary works which the contractor proposes to adopt . . . “ (p.11).

1958

164. INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND MERITS OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL WOODWORKERS OF AMERICA AND THE COMPANIES REPRESENTED BY FOREST INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1814, August 2, 1958.

Commissioner: Gordon McG. Sloan.
In a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council Sloan informed the Government that the parties had come to an agreement after some discussion with him. Consequently it was unnecessary to hold any public inquiry into the dispute.

The Majority Report signed by Goldenberg and Jamieson recommended a wage increase with which Wilkinson could not agree in his appended Minority Report, as he did not think any wage increase was justifiable at that time.
The terms of reference concerning cash advances to be made to the Power Commission by the Government were delineated.


The Commission examined the electric rate structure of the British Columbia Power Commission and found unnecessary any changes or increases in the rates.


The Commission found the proposed 12 percent rate increase to be unjustified and recommended "that an over-all authority should be established in the Province to control and direct the generation, transmission, and distribution of all electric power in British Columbia . . . " (p. 196). As a result, in 1962 the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority was created.

1959

167. COMMISSION IN THE MATTER OF A TREE-FARM LICENCE AND IN THE MATTER OF EMPIRE MILLS LIMITED

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1676, July 27, 1959.

Commissioner: Charles William Morrow.

Report


Taking over the matter from the former Commissioner, the late Gordon McG. Sloan, Justice Morrow was asked to examine the evidence given in connection with the application of Empire Mills Limited, of Squamish, for a tree-farm licence and to decide "Should the area applied for by Empire Mills Limited, Squamish, be managed under a Tree-Farm Licence?" (O-in-C). The answer to the question was affirmative; the only remaining question (beyond the scope of the Commission) was "Should the Empire Mills Limited be granted a tree-farm licence?"

1959

168. INQUIRY INTO MARRIAGES ENTERED INTO AND SOLEMNIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE DOUKHOBOR FAITH OR CREED

Appointed pursuant to Section 42 (then Section 34) of the Marriage Act as enacted by the Marriage Law Amendment Act, 1959, which provided that a Marriage Commissioner so designated would have the powers and duties of a commissioner appointed under the Public Inquiries Act, by Order-in-Council no. 2352, October 15, 1959.

Commissioner: William Evans.
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Report


The Marriage Commissioner was appointed to register “official” Doukhobor marriages. No final report was issued.

1960

169. COMMISSION ON TREE FARM LICENCES

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 130, January 21, 1960.

Commissioner: Charles William Morrow.

Report


The Honourable Gordon McG. Sloan was appointed December 19, 1957 as “Advisor to the Government in relation to the Forest Resources of British Columbia” under the Minister of Lands and Forests. He died before completing the investigation into allegations that tree farm licencees bidding for crown timber had an unfair advantage over bidders not holding tree farm licences. Judge Morrow was appointed to examine the evidence acquired and to complete the report.

1960

170. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ROAD-USER CHARGES

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 314, February 8, 1960.

Commissioners: Henry Forbes Angus (Chairman), George Lindsay, Alfred John Bowering, William Fairful Veitch.

Reports


The Commission recommended “certain adjustments in licences and fees on particular classes of commercial vehicles, to be implemented as soon as possible.” (p.1).

This second commission was different from the 1958 study which was conducted in circumstances which had prevailed for twenty-five years. Its purpose was to "assess and report upon the operation of the Department of Commercial Transport Act, and other ancillary legislation enacted in 1959, particularly with a view to its application to particular classes of commercial vehicles . . . " (p. 1).

1961

171. ROYAL COMMISSION ON EXPROPRIATION
Commissioner: J.V. Clyne.

Report

The Commission was appointed to inquire into limiting the liability of the Crown, compensation, arbitration boards and appraisers.

1961

172. PUNTELEDGE RIVER INQUIRY
Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 3193, December 19, 1961.
Commissioner: Henry Forbes Angus.

Report

The Commission was appointed by the Government of British Columbia at the request of the British Columbia Power Commission. The Commissioner was asked to inquire into provisions for the conservation of fish in relation to the cost of the required protective measures and the operation of the British Columbia Power Commission's power plant.

1962

173. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY: WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT
Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 238, February 1, 1962 (DesBrisay) and by Order-in-Council no. 168, January 20, 1964 (Tysoe).
Commissioners: Alexander Campbell DesBrisay, deceased and replaced by Charles W. Tysoe, appointed upon death of DesBrisay.

The Commission was appointed to inquire into the administration of the Act, proposed amendments, appeal procedures and related matters.

1963

174. ROYAL COMMISSION ON GASOLINE PRICE STRUCTURE

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2653, October 17, 1963.

Commissioner: Charles William Morrow.

Report


The fairness of the price structure of gasoline at the refinery, wholesale and retail levels in the Province was considered. A five-year moratorium on the construction of service stations was recommended, as well as consistent retail mark-up and an end to consignment selling and subsidization of lessee-operated outlets.

1965

175. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO REDEFINITION OF ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2233, August 5, 1965.


Report


The Commission, officially nicknamed "The Provincial Redistribution Commission", was requested to inquire into the need, if any, for amendments to the Constitution Act to ensure effective and fair representation of the people in all parts of the Province.

1966

176. ROYAL COMMISSION ON AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 239, January 25, 1966.

Commissioners: R.A.B. Wootton (Chairman), P.A. Lusztig, C.E.S. Walls.
Report


The Commission was instructed to inquire into all facets of automobile insurance. It recommended accident insurance payable on a no-fault basis.

1967

177. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO INVASION OF PRIVACY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1, January 3, 1967.

Commissioner: R.A. Sargent.

Report


R.A. Sargent was originally appointed November 9, 1966 by Order-in-Council no. 3292 after the November 5th death of Lloyd Craig, President of the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada, to inquire into the invasion of his privacy by a rival union, the International Pulp and Sulphite Workers Union. After ten days of hearings the proceedings were quashed by court order. A new Order-in-Council on January 3, 1967 reconstituted the commission with clearer terms: to inquire into “the nature and extent of the use of recording devices and records thereof for the purpose of invading the privacy of persons or organizations . . . with a view to determining whether any legislative enactment . . . [was] necessary for the preservation of privacy as a civil right.” (p.2). This time the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada brought action against Sargent stating that he had exceeded his authority but Mr. Justice Seaton refused the injunction. The Commissioner recommended that provincial laws be enacted to regulate electronic eavesdropping (for civil aspects) but that federal authorities should have the right to use electronic devices for the peace, protection and good government of Canada.

1969

178. LIQUOR INQUIRY COMMISSION

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 278, January 31, 1969.

Commissioners: Charles William Morrow (Chairman), Martin M. Johnson, Edward M. Lawson.

Report


The Commission was appointed to inquire into and review further the laws governing the distribution, sale, and consumption of spirituous, vinous and malt liquors, with reference to the 1952 Liquor Inquiry Commission.
1969

179. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 528, February 21, 1969.

Commissioners: Meredith Milner McFarlane (Chairman), Robert Wise Phipps, Robert F. Gardiner.

The Commission resigned March 14, 1969 without holding a hearing or issuing a report. The Commissioners considered the Opposition to be interfering with their mandate by continuing to discuss the matter in the Legislature after the Commission had been appointed. The Commission had been requested to inquire into the financial difficulties of the Commonwealth Group, a complex of financial and investment corporations under the control of A.G. Duncan Crux. The adequacy of the laws governing financial and investment companies generally was also to be considered. The Government's introduction of a bill to provide a loan to the Commonwealth Group to keep it afloat precipitated Opposition debate and the resignation of the Commission. The Opposition wanted a Committee of the House to investigate the situation rather than a royal commission. The Government continued its investigation under the provisions of the Securities Act instead.

1971

180. ROYAL COMMISSION ON DISTURBANCES IN A PORTION OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER KNOWN AS "GASTOWN"


Commissioner: Thomas A. Dohm.

Report


An inquiry was requested into circumstances of the disturbance which occurred on Saturday night, August 7, 1971 in Gastown, including "the nature of the police intervention and whether or not such intervention was appropriate in the circumstances." (O-in-C). The Commissioner reported that police officers over reacted and used unnecessary, unwarranted and excessive force (with horses and riot gear) to disperse a mostly peaceful crowd of young people gathered for a marijuana "Smoke-In". More effective methods of crowd control in the future were suggested.

1972

181. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 3786, October 19, 1972.

Report


The Commission was asked to provide the necessary background information “to assist the Government in drawing up a model legislative framework to govern employer-employee relations in the public service of the province . . . ” (p.ii). The Commission assumed that collective bargaining was essential and put forward a plan to ensure the orderly and efficient introduction of collective bargaining into the public service in British Columbia. This included the right to strike and compulsory payment of dues to the bargaining agent in accordance with the “Rand Formula”, but not compulsory union membership.

1972

182. LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE INQUIRY ACT

Appointed under the Legislative Procedure and Practice Inquiry Act (S.B.C. 1972, Second Session, c. 6), assented to October 27, 1972.

Commissioner: Gordon Hudson Dowding, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Reports


The Speaker of the House was authorized to act as a Special Commissioner to investigate parliamentary practice in the United Kingdom, Canada and other jurisdictions and to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly regarding the adoption of new procedures when relevant.

Related Report


Edward McWhinney was appointed May 30, 1974 as a Special Commissioner “to examine the publication, broadcasting, distribution, and reporting of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly by various means of communication . . . ” (p. 5). The introduction of radio and television into the House was considered, especially with respect to the status of parliamentary immunity from libel prosecution for members making statements in the House. This document was also printed as the Fifth report.
1972

183. ROYAL COMMISSION CONCERNING THE PREPARATION AND TENDERING OF BIDS PERTAINING TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADDITION TO THE CAMPBELL RIVER AND DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 4307, December 12, 1972.

Commissioner: Harry L. Purdy.

Report


The Commissioner was appointed to determine if there were irregularities in bidding in 1972 for construction of the Campbell River and District Hospital and to study alternate methods of obtaining competitive bids on construction projects.

1973

184. ROYAL COMMISSION ON POST SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE KOOTENAY REGION


Commissioners: Ian McTaggart-Cowan (Chairman), Geoffrey C. Andrew, Timothy C. Byrne, John F. Ellis, Leo S. Gansner, Raymond Hughes, James Patterson, Elizabeth E. Wallach.

Report


The Commissioners recommended “that all forms of post secondary education in the Kootenay region - vocational, technical and academic - be brought within the responsibility of the Department of Education through the Kootenay Institute for Post Secondary Studies.” (p. xiv).

1973

185. ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES


Reports


The interim report recommended a moratorium on the spraying of herbicides and pesticides until the Commission completed its report.

Immediate interim changes to the administration of pesticides in British Columbia were recommended so that only one agency was responsible.


A Department of Environmental Protection to oversee pesticide control was proposed and its functions were outlined.

1973

ROYAL COMMISSION ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN’S LAW


 Commissioners: Thomas Rodney Berger (Chairman), Ross Douglas Coliver, Sydney Segal, Rita T. MacDonald, Mish Vadasz.

Reports


Fifth report of the Royal Commission on Family and Children’s Law.


The Commission's mandate was to inquire "into all aspects of the laws in force in the Province which relate to children and family relationships; into the administration of justice relative to these laws; and into the need for alternative or ancillary social agencies and services to augment the courts in these matters." (O-in-C). The Commission resulted in passage of the Family Relations Act (S.B.C. 1978, c. 20), assented to June 29, 1978.

1974

187. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO JERICHO HILL SCHOOL


Commissioner: B. Chud.

Report


The Commissioner was requested to "examine the organization and operation of Jericho Hill School to discover any restrictions upon the extension of the operation or programmes to meet more fully the needs of the children . . . ." (O-in-C).
1975

188. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON PROPERTY ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1489, April 24, 1975.


Report


This commission resulted from a recommendation by the Select Standing Committee on Municipal Matters "that a special commission be appointed to inquire into all ramifications of an assessment system based on actual value, and to review all aspects of real property taxation procedures . . . " (Letter of Transmittal). The report was not completed to the satisfaction of the Commissioners as the Commission was terminated by Order-in-Council no. 1583, May 20, 1976, as amended July 29, 1976, effective August 14, 1976.

1975

189. PUBLIC INQUIRY COMMISSION APPOINTED TO EXAMINE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1708, May 15, 1975.

Commissioners: George Stuart (Chairman), James Pritchard, Mel Scott.

Report


The Commission was established to resolve a budgetary conflict between the Department of Education and the College. The Commission was to "examine the overall administrative, operational and financial processes utilized in the operation of Vancouver Community College Technical and Vocational Institute and the impact of these processes on the delivery of College services to the community." (p. ii). The Commission concluded that the College needed to define its purpose more clearly and needed to develop better budgetary control.

1975

190. ROYAL COMMISSION ON FOREST RESOURCES

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2044, June 12, 1975.

Commissioner: Peter H. Pearse.
Reports


*Synopsis of timber rights and forest policy in British Columbia, report of the Royal Commission on Forest Resources.* October, 1976. 55p. [Queen’s Printer?]

The Commissioner was asked “to inquire into ... all matters relating to the disposition of rights by the Crown to harvest timber and to occupy forested land in British Columbia ...” (O-in-C).

**Related Reports**

*Taxes and miscellaneous levies on forest resources in British Columbia; policy background paper produced by the Royal Commission on Forest Resources.* July, 1975. 76p. [Queen’s Printer?]

**TASK FORCE ON CROWN TIMBER RIGHTS**

The Task Force on Crown Timber Disposal was established January 12, 1974 by the Minister of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources under the chairmanship of Peter H. Pearse.


1975

191. **FOREST INDUSTRY LABOUR DISPUTES COMMISSION**


Special Mediator: Henry E. Hutcheon.


The major industrial bargaining units in the Province’s forest industry were deadlocked in negotiations to renew their collective agreements. Justice Hutcheon was appointed Special Mediator in an attempt to resolve their differences. As mediation failed, he submitted a report outlining the disparities and his recommendations for resolution.
1975

192. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO REDEFINITION OF ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 2420, July 21, 1975; amended by Order-in-Council no. 3438, October 30, 1975 (giving one more week to submit report).

Commissioners: T.G. Norris (Chairman), Fred Bowers, Lawrence James Wallace.

Report


The Commission was asked to determine the need, if any, for amendments to the Constitution Act of British Columbia to ensure fair representation of all of the people of the Province.

1975

193. INDIAN RESERVE LANDS CUT-OFF INQUIRY

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 3625, November 20, 1975.

Commissioners: Ross Collver (Chairman), Adam Eneas, John Squire.

No inquiry was held or report produced as Order-in-Council no. 1120, April 1, 1976, stayed the work of the Commission indefinitely effective February 29, 1976 “pending discussions, now in progress, between the Government of British Columbia and the Federal Government.” (O-in-C).

1975

194. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY CONCERNING THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF PRACTICAL NURSES AND RELATED HOSPITAL PERSONNEL

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 3703, December 1, 1975, and amended by Order-in-Council no. 154, January 16, 1976 to read “related” rather than “other” hospital personnel.

Commissioner: Noel A. Hall.

Report


The Commission was established “to recommend the most effective type of training programme for practical nurses and related hospital personnel and the remuneration to be paid students while they undertake training in the hospital industry.” (p. 8). The Commission recommended establishment of a Practical Nurses/Orderly Apprenticeship Program in which trainees be paid a stipend ranging from 50 percent to 100 percent of the pay rate for qualified Practical Nurses/Orderlies.
BRITISH COLUMBIA ROYAL COMMISSIONS 1943–1980

1977

196. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE GRIZZLY VALLEY NATURAL GAS PIPELINE
Appointment under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 130, January 11, 1977.
Commissioner: Walter Kirke Smith.

Report

The Commission was instructed to inquire "into the conduct of the public business relating to the proposed development and construction of the Grizzly Valley Natural Gas Pipeline." (p. 1). Allegations had been made that irregularities in trading of securities or real estate transactions had occurred as a result of confidential information obtained relating to the proposed pipeline construction. No irregularities were found.

1977

197. ROYAL COMMISSION ON BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY
Appointment under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 454, February 7, 1977.
Commissioners: Lloyd George MacKenzie (Chairman), Sydney Wallis Welsh, David Hilton Chapman.
Reports


An inquiry was made into the circumstances of the imminent closure of the plant operated by British Columbia Railway due to lack of business. The Commission recommended that special assistance in the form of relocation or retraining be given to employees who were to be laid off.


The Commission concluded that the Fort Nelson extension was not viable and could not be made viable in the foreseeable future and should be discontinued.


The Commission’s task was “to make inquiry into and concerning all aspects of the management and development of the British Columbia Railway . . . . and the participation of the Crown therein as shareholder . . . . ” and “the relationship of the railway to the economic and social well-being of the Province . . . . ” (O-in-C). The Commission concluded that the railway’s role was very limited and had little potential for expansion as other modes of transportation were more viable. If not transferred to the Canadian National system it should be made a genuinely autonomous crown corporation.


1977

198. A.E. FILMER & G.D. MCKINNON

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 853, March 9, 1977.

Commissioner: Thomas Kemp Fisher.

Report


The Commissioner was requested to “inquire into an allegation that the Regional Crown Counsel, A.E. Filmer, bribed or threatened or inferred bribery or threats to
Crown Counsel, G.D. McKinnon.” (p. 1). The issue arose from a conflict regarding employment of Crown Counsel on contract rather than as civil servants on a much lower pay scale. No evidence of overt bribery was found.

1977

199. ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE INCARCERATION OF FEMALE OFFENDERS

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 3632, December 5, 1977.

Commissioner: Patricia M. Proudfoot.

Report


Allegations of irregularities in the operation of Oakalla Women’s Correctional Centre, including sexual misconduct between male staff and female inmates had been made by the media. The Commission was established subsequent to a confidential report by the RCMP to inquire into “whether or not the programs, equipment and facilities provided in the Province . . . for the . . . incarceration of female offenders are conducive to good correctional practice . . . ” (O-in-C). The Commissioner concluded that there were not enough female prisoners to provide adequate facilities or programs.

1978

200. ROYAL COMMISSION ON ELECTORAL REFORM, 1978

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 82, January 12, 1978.

Commissioner: L.S. Eckardt.

Reports


The Commissioner’s terms of reference were “to secure, by whatever redefinition of electoral districts is required, proper and effective representation of the people of all parts of the Province in the Legislative Assembly . . . ” (O-in-C). Allegations were made by the Opposition that the Commissioner’s recommendations had been altered by the Government before actual printing and tabling of the report. No evidence was found in a subsequent investigation by the Ministry of the Attorney-General.

Related Report

1978

201. LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE INQUIRY ACT

Appointed under the Legislative Procedure and Practice Inquiry Act (S.B.C. 1972, Second Session, c. 6), assented to October 27, 1972, by the Speaker of the House on October 24, 1978.

Commissioner: E. George MacMinn.

Report


The committee structure in the British Columbia Legislature was studied to consider "the advisability of... adopting a Committee format which would permit the examination of Legislation and Estimates in Standing Committees as opposed to a Committee of the Whole or Committee of Supply". (Introductory remarks). Numerous proposals for restructuring the committee system were made.

1979

202. ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY—HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION—URANIUM MINING

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 170, January 18, 1979; terminated by Order-in-Council no. 442, February 27, 1980.

Commissioners: David V. Bates (Chairman), James W. Murray, Valter Raudsepp.

Reports


The Commission was established to inquire into the adequacy of existing measures to provide protection in all aspects of uranium mining in the Province, especially as to worker and public safety and protection of the environment.


The Government terminated the Commission on February 27, 1980 and asked the Commissioners to report their findings by May 31, 1980. On this date the Government ordered a seven year moratorium on the locating and recording of mineral claims for the purpose of uranium exploration and the development of uranium deposits on existing claims. The Commission requested an extension to continue to receive submissions to April 15, 1980 and to complete their report by October 30, 1980. This was granted by Order-in-Council no. 597, March 13, 1980. In its final report the Commission concluded that uranium mining may be a future necessity and may be feasible if adequate safeguards are ensured. It recommended continuance of exploration only, at present, so that uranium sources are at least known.
Related Report


The Commission's extensive resource centre has been preserved in toto at B.C. Research, 3650 Wesbrook Crescent, Vancouver, B.C. V6S 2L2

1979

203. INQUIRY INTO AND CONCERNING AN ALLEGATION BY HIS HONOUR JUDGE GOVAN MADE ON MAY 9th 1979 THAT THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL, MR. RICHARD VOGEL, OR SOME UNNAMED PERSON IN THE MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL, HAD PURSUED A COURSE OF CONDUCT WITH RESPECT TO MATTERS COMING BEFORE HIS HONOUR JUDGE GOVAN IN HIS CAPACITY AS A JUDGE OF THE PROVINCIAL COURT FROM WHICH HE INFERRED THAT HIS INDEPENDENCE AS A JUDGE OF THE PROVINCIAL COURT WAS BEING INTERFERED WITH

Appointed under the Public Inquiries Act by Order-in-Council no. 1885, July 5, 1979.

Commissioner: P.D. Seaton.

Report


Judge Philip Govan ruled a chapter of the Family Relations Act (S.B.C. 1978, c. 20) to be ultra vires. Govan alleged he was requested by the Attorney-General's ministry to transfer himself elsewhere in the province and that this constituted interference with judicial independence. No evidence of intentional impropriety was found but the Commissioner cautioned the Ministry that the judiciary had its own independent function and is not intended to assist the Executive as part of a team.

1980

No Royal Commissions were appointed.
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