

**LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
1903-**

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LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION

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LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION

INTRODUCTION

Leaders of the Opposition existed in the B.C. Legislature prior to the introduction of party government in 1903 but their position was based on loose alliances and was not always clearcut. A salary for the position was established by S.B.C. 1915, c.14, s.3, thereby formally acknowledging its existence.

Precise dates for the beginning and end of a term have not always been available. Comments in the Detailed Chronological List (pp. 4 - 8) may make it clear why an approximate date has been used.

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION: BY NAME

NAME	PARTY	DATES ¹	PARLIAMENTS ²	SESSIONS ³
Anscomb, Herbert	Conservative	Feb. 1952 - June 1952	22	1952
Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 1969 - Aug. 1972	29	1970-1972
Barrett, David	New Democratic	June 1976 - May 1984	31-33	1976-1984
Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Sep. 1972 - Nov. 1973	30	1972-1973
Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Nov. 1973 - Dec. 1975	30	1974-1975
Berger, Thomas Rodney	New Democratic	Apr. 1969 - Sep. 1969	--	-----
Black, Dawn	New Democratic	Jan. 2011 - Apr. 2011	39	2011
Bowser, William John	Conservative	Nov. 1916 - Aug. 1924	14-15	1917-1924
Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1912	12	1911-1912
Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Mar. 1916 - Sep. 1916	13	1916
Campbell, Gordon	Liberal	Mar. 1994 - June 2001	35-36	1994-2001
Connell, Robert	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Nov. 1933 - Jul. 1936	18	1934-1936
Connell, Robert	Social Constructive	Aug. 1936 - June 1937	18	1936-1937
Dix, Adrian	New Democratic	Apr. 2011 -	39	2011
Gingell, Fred	Liberal	Feb. 1993 - Mar. 1994	35	1993
Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Apr. 1987 - Oct. 1991	34	1987-1991
Hawthornthwaite, James Hurst	Socialist	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1910	12	1910
James, Carole	New Democratic	June 2005 - Jan. 2011	38-39	2005-2011
King, William Stewart	New Democratic	Jan. 1976 - June 1976	31	1976
Macdonald, James Alexander	Liberal	Oct. 1903 - Oct. 1909	10-11	1903-1909
MacPhail, Joy	New Democratic	June 2001 - June 2005	37	2001- 2005
Maitland, Royal Lethington	Conservative	Sep. 1938 - Oct. 1941	19	1938-1941
Patterson, Frank Porter	Conservative	June 1937 - Feb. 1938	19	1937
Patullo, Thomas Dufferin	Liberal	Jan. 1929 - Nov. 1933	17	1929-1933
Pooley, Robert Henry	Conservative	Aug. 1924 - Jul. 1928	16	1924-1928
Skelly, Robert Evans	New Democratic	June 1984 - Apr. 1987	33-34	1984-1987
Strachan, Robert Martin	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic ⁵	Apr. 1956 - Apr. 1969	25-28	1957-1969
Webster, Arnold Alexander	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Apr. 1953 - Mar. 1956	24	1953-1956
Williams, Parker	Socialist ⁴	Mar. 1912 - Mar. 1916	13	1913-1916
Wilson, Gordon	Liberal	Oct. 1991 - Feb. 1993	35	1992
Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Oct. 1941 - Feb. 1952	20-22	1941-1951
Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	June 1952 - Mar. 1953	23	1953

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION: BY POLITICAL AFFILIATION

NAME	PARTY	DATES ¹	PARLIA- MENTS ²	SESSIONS ³
Anscomb, Herbert	Conservative	Feb. 1952 - June 1952	22	1952
Bowser, William John	Conservative	Nov. 1916 - Aug. 1924	14-15	1917-1924
Maitland, Royal Lethington	Conservative	Sep. 1938 - Oct. 1941	19	1938-1941
Patterson, Frank Porter	Conservative	June 1937 - Feb. 1938	19	1937
Pooley, Robert Henry	Conservative	Aug. 1924 - Jul. 1928	16	1924-1928
Connell, Robert	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Nov. 1933 - Jul. 1936	18	1934-1936
Webster, Arnold Alexander	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Apr. 1953 - Mar. 1956	24	1953-1956
Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Oct. 1941 - Feb. 1952	20-22	1941-1951
Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	June 1952 - Mar. 1953	23	1953
Strachan, Robert Martin	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic ⁵	Apr. 1956 - Apr. 1969	25-28	1957-1969
Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1912	12	1911-1912
Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Mar. 1916 - Sep. 1916	13	1916
Campbell, Gordon	Liberal	Mar. 1994 - June 2001	35-36	1994-2001
Gingell, Fred	Liberal	Feb. 1993 - Mar. 1994	35	1993
Macdonald, James Alexander	Liberal	Oct. 1903 - Oct. 1909	10-11	1903-1909
Patullo, Thomas Dufferin	Liberal	Jan. 1929 - Nov. 1933	17	1929-1933
Wilson, Gordon	Liberal	Oct. 1991 - Feb. 1993	35	1992
Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 1969 - Aug. 1972	29	1970-1972
Barrett, David	New Democratic	June 1976 - May 1984	31-33	1976-1984
Berger, Thomas Rodney	New Democratic	Apr. 1969 - Sep. 1969	--	-----
Black, Dawn	New Democratic	Jan. 2011 - Apr. 2011	39	2011
Dix, Adrian	New Democratic	Apr. 2011 -	39	2011
Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Apr. 1987 - Oct. 1991	34	1987-1991
James, Carole	New Democratic	June 2005 - Jan. 2011	38-39	2005-2011
King, William Stewart	New Democratic	Jan. 1976 - June 1976	31	1976
MacPhail, Joy	New Democratic	June 2001 - June 2005	37	2001- 2005
Skelly, Robert Evans	New Democratic	June 1984 - Apr. 1987	33-34	1984-1987
Connell, Robert	Social Constructive	Aug. 1936 - June 1937	18	1936-1937
Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Sep. 1972 - Nov. 1973	30	1972-1973
Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Nov. 1973 - Dec. 1975	30	1974-1975
Hawthornthwaite, James Hurst	Socialist	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1910	12	1910
Williams, Parker	Socialist ⁴	Mar. 1912 - Mar. 1916	13	1913-1916

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION: BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

NAME	PARTY	DATES ¹	PARLIAMENTS ²	SESSIONS ³
Macdonald, James Alexander	Liberal	Oct. 1903 - Oct. 1909	10-11	1903-1909
Hawthornthwaite, James Hurst	Socialist	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1910	12	1910
Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1912	12	1911-1912
Williams, Parker	Socialist ⁴	Mar. 1912 - Mar. 1916	13	1913-1916
Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Mar. 1916 - Sep. 1916	13	1916
Bowser, William John	Conservative	Nov. 1916 - Aug. 1924	14-15	1917-1924
Pooley, Robert Henry	Conservative	Aug. 1924 - Jul. 1928	16	1924-1928
Patullo, Thomas Dufferin	Liberal	Jan. 1929 - Nov. 1933	17	1929-1933
Connell, Robert	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Nov. 1933 - Jul. 1936	18	1934-1936
Connell, Robert	Social Constructive	Aug. 1936 - June 1937	18	1936-1937
Patterson, Frank Porter	Conservative	June 1937 - Feb. 1938	19	1937
Maitland, Royal Lethington	Conservative	Sep. 1938 - Oct. 1941	19	1938-1941
Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Oct. 1941 - Feb. 1952	20-22	1941-1951
Anscomb, Herbert	Conservative	Feb. 1952 - June 1952	22	1952
Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	June 1952 - Mar. 1953	23	1953
Webster, Arnold Alexander	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Apr. 1953 - Mar. 1956	24	1953-1956
Strachan, Robert Martin	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic ⁵	Apr. 1956 - Apr. 1969	25-28	1957-1969
Berger, Thomas Rodney	New Democratic	Apr. 1969 - Sep. 1969	--	1969
Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 1969 - Aug. 1972	29	1970-1972
Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Sep. 1972 - Nov. 1973	30	1972-1973
Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Nov. 1973 - Dec. 1975	30	1974-1975
King, William Stewart	New Democratic	Jan. 1976 - June 1976	31	1976
Barrett, David	New Democratic	June 1976 - May 1984	31-33	1976-1984
Skelly, Robert Evans	New Democratic	June 1984 - Apr. 1987	33-34	1984-1987
Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Apr. 1987 - Oct. 1991	34	1987-1991
Wilson, Gordon	Liberal	Oct. 1991 - Feb. 1993	35	1992
Gingell, Fred	Liberal	Feb. 1993 - Mar. 1994	35	1993
Campbell, Gordon	Liberal	Mar. 1994 - June 2001	35-36	1994-2001
MacPhail, Joy	New Democratic	June 2001 - June 2005	37	2001- 2005
James, Carole	New Democratic	June 2005 - Jan. 2011	38-39	2005-2011
Black, Dawn	New Democratic	Jan. 2011 - Apr. 2011	39	2011
Dix, Adrian	New Democratic	Apr. 2011 -	39	2011

* See DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST PP. 4-9

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

NAME	PARTY	DATES ¹	PARLIAMENTS ²	SESSIONS ³
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Macdonald, James Alexander	Liberal	Oct. 1903 - Oct. 1909	10-11	1903-1909
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Resigned as party leader.

Hawthornthwaite, James Hurst	Socialist	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1910	12	1910
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Two Liberals and two Socialists formed the Opposition after the November 1909 election. John Oliver, who had succeeded Macdonald as Liberal party leader, lost his seat in the election. When the new Legislature opened in January 1910, one of the Liberal MLAs, John Jardine, seconded the nomination for Speaker "On behalf of His Majesty's loyal Opposition" (Vancouver News-Advertiser, January 21, 1910, p. 1). The other Liberal, Harlan Carey Brewster, challenged Jardine's propriety in assuming this role (Vancouver Province, January 24, 1910, p. 2) and the question of opposition leadership was held temporarily in abeyance. One of the Socialists, Hawthornthwaite, by virtue of an alphabetical seating arrangement, physically occupied the seat traditionally assigned to the Leader of the Opposition in the B.C. Legislature (*ibid*). He initially rejected the idea of being Leader (as being in conflict with the tenets of socialism) but claimed that he was entitled to keep the seat by right of seniority (News-Advertiser, January 23, 1910, p. 15). A few days later he appears to have changed his mind and was reported as having "assumed the functions of Opposition leader" (Victoria Colonist, January 27, 1910, p. 1), presumably until the session ended in March. By the next session, however, Brewster was being referred to as Leader of the Opposition (Victoria Times, January 14, 1911, p. 1).

Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Jan. 1910 - Mar. 1912	12	1911-1912
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See above. Lost seat in March 1912 election. No Liberals sat in the Legislature until 1916.

Williams, Parker	Socialist ⁴	Mar. 1912 - Mar. 1916	13	1913-1916
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No Liberals were elected in the 1912 election so the two Socialists who were elected formed the opposition. Williams was designated as Leader of the Opposition but declined (Victoria Colonist, April 4, 1912, p. 4). When the session commenced in 1913, however, the press was referring to him as such (Victoria Times, January 21, 1913, p. 3) and according to the Public Accounts 1914-1915 he received the salary established by S.B.C. 1915, c.14 for the 1915 session. When two Liberals were elected in the March 1916 by-elections they became the official Opposition. Brewster received the salary for the 1916 session.

Brewster, Harlan Carey	Liberal	Mar. 1916 - Sep. 1916	13	1916
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See above. Became Premier when party won September 1916 election but had to wait until November to assume office because of extended soldiers' vote.

Bowser, William John	Conservative	Nov. 1916 - Aug. 1924	14-15	1917-1924
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Resigned as party leader after personal and party electoral defeat in June 1924 election.

Pooley, Robert Henry	Conservative	Aug. 1924 - Jul. 1928	16	1924-1928
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Chosen as House leader after Bowser's electoral defeat and subsequent resignation. A new party leader, Simon Fraser Tolmie, was chosen November 1926 but did not sit in the Legislature until the 1928 general election at which time he became Premier. Pooley continued as House leader until that time.

Patullo, Thomas Dufferin	Liberal	Jan. 1929 - Nov. 1933	17	1929-1933
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Chosen as House leader January 1929; became party leader May 1930.

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

Connell, Robert	Co-operative	Nov. 1933 - Jul. 1936	18	1934-1936
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Chosen as House rather than party leader Commonwealth as the CCF in B.C. at that time consisted of two Federation separate parties, each with their own executive, which co-operated under the aegis of a joint provincial council.

Connell, Robert	Social Constructive	Aug. 1936 - June 1937	18	1936-1937
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Connell was expelled by the CCF Provincial Executive August 1, 1936. Three other MLAs joined him and formed the Social Constructive Party (later renamed the B.C. Constructive Party) which still outnumbered the CCF and Conservatives in the Legislature and thus became the official Opposition.

Patterson, Frank Porter	Conservative	June 1937 - Feb. 1938	19	1937
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Died.

Maitland, Royal Lethington	Conservative	Sep. 1938 - Oct. 1941	19	1938-1941
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Party lost Opposition status after October 1941 election but in December formed a Coalition government with the Liberals.

Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Oct. 1941 - Feb. 1952	20-22	1941-1951
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The Coalition government fell apart in January 1952. Anscomb and 11 Progressive Conservatives were awarded official Opposition status by the Speaker when the Legislature met in February (decision upheld by the Legislature) as they outnumbered the 8 CCF Members.

Anscomb, Herbert	Conservative	Feb. 1952 - June 1952	22	1952
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Resigned as party leader after personal and party defeat in June 1952 election.

Winch, Harold Edward	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	June 1952 - Mar. 1953	23	1953
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Resigned as party leader.

Webster, Arnold Alexander	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation	Apr. 1953 - Mar. 1956	24	1953-1956
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Resigned as party leader.

Strachan, Robert Martin	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic ⁵	Apr. 1956 - Apr. 1969	25-28	1957-1969
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Resigned as party leader.

Berger, Thomas Rodney	New Democratic	Apr. 1969 - Sep. 1969		
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Resigned as party leader after party defeat in August 1969 election. **Never sat in the Legislature** as Leader of the Opposition.

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 1969 - Aug. 1972	29	1970-1972
Became Premier when party won August 1972 election.				
Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Sep. 1972 - Nov. 1973	30	1972-1973
Resigned as party leader.				
Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Nov. 1973 - Dec. 1975	30	1974-1975
Became Premier when party won December 1975 election.				
King, William Stewart	New Democratic	Jan. 1976 - June 1976	31	1976
King acted as House leader after Barrett's defeat in December 1975. Barrett returned to the House after winning a by-election in June 1976.				
Barrett, David	New Democratic	June 1976 - May 1984	31-33	1976-1984
Resigned as party leader.				
Skelly, Robert Evans	New Democratic	June 1984 - Apr. 1987	33-34	1984-1987
Resigned as party leader after party defeat in October 1986 election.				
Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Apr. 1987 - Oct. 1991	34	1987-1991
Became Premier when party won October 1991 election.				
Wilson, Gordon	Liberal	Oct. 1991 - Feb. 1993	35	1992
Resigned as Leader of the Opposition, but retained party leader position.				
Gingell, Fred	Liberal	Feb. 1993 - Mar. 1994	35	1993
Interim leader				
Campbell, Gordon	Liberal	Mar. 1994 – June 2001	35-36	1994-2001
Elected party leader September 11, 1993. Became Leader of the Opposition on March 9, 1994 when sworn in as a M.L.A. Became Premier when party won May 2001 election and sworn in June 5, 2001.				
MacPhail, Joy	New Democratic	June 2001 - June 2005	37	2001-2005
Named interim NDP leader on June 16, 2001. Official Opposition status denied in Speaker's Statement dated July 12, 2001. Termed Leader of the Opposition by Speaker beginning July 25, 2001 in Debates.				
James, Carole	New Democratic	June 2005 – Jan. 2011	38-39	2005-2011
Elected leader of the British Columbia New Democratic Party on November 23, 2003. Elected as MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill in the 38th General Election on May 17, 2005 and sworn in as an MLA on June 15, 2005. Re-elected in the 39th General Election on May 12, 2009. December 6, 2010 announced she would step down as Leader after an interim leader is chosen in January 2011.				

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

Black, Dawn	New Democratic	Jan. 2011 – Apr. 2011	39	2011
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Jan. 19, 2011 Selected interim Leader of the British Columbia New Democratic Party. A leadership election to take place on April 17, 2011.

Dix, Adrian	New Democratic	Apr. 2011 -	39	2011
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Apr. 17, 2011 Elected leader of the British Columbia New Democratic Party. Elected as MLA for Vancouver-Kingsway in the 38th General Election on May 17, 2005, re-elected in the 39th General Election on May 12, 2009.

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION

NOTES

- 1 Dates as House Leader or as Leader of Opposition party whether the Legislature was in session or not.
- 2 Parliaments actually attended as Leader of the Opposition.
- 3 Sessions actually attended as Leader of the Opposition.
- 4 Williams was elected as a Socialist Party of Canada candidate although he was also a member of the Social Democratic Party of Canada. He was subsequently expelled from the SPC for holding dual membership and sat as a Social Democratic Party of Canada member (until May 1916 when he was read out of the SDPC).
- 5 Name changed in 1961.