

**PREMIERS OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**1871 -**

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Reffiles: Premiers of BC  
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# PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Although British Columbia entered Confederation July 20, 1871 the first premier was not chosen until later, after the first general election. An interim cabinet was chosen and the Lieutenant-Governor acted as head of government. For further information see John T. Saywell "Sir Joseph Trutch: British Columbia's First Lieutenant-Governor", British Columbia Historical Quarterly XIX (1954/55), pp. 71-92, Walter N. Sage, "The position of the Lieutenant-Governor in British Columbia in the years following Confederation", in R. Flenley (ed.), Essays in Canadian History, Toronto, 1939, pp. 178-203 and, also by Sage, "From Colony to province", British Columbia Historical Quarterly III (1939), pp. 1-14 and "John Foster McCreight", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Third Series, XXXIV (1940), Section II, pp. 173-185.

**PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: BY NAME**

ORDER	NAME	PARTY <sup>1</sup>	DATES <sup>2</sup>	PARLIAMENT(S)
26 <sup>th</sup>	Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 15, 1972 - Dec. 22, 1975	30
6 <sup>th</sup>	Beaven, Robert		June 13, 1882 - Jan. 29, 1883	4
25 <sup>th</sup>	Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Aug. 1, 1952 - Sep. 15, 1972	23-29
27 <sup>th</sup>	Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Dec. 22, 1975 - Aug. 6, 1986	31-33
17 <sup>th</sup>	Bowser, William John	Conservative	Dec. 15, 1915 - Nov. 23, 1916	13
18 <sup>th</sup>	Brewster, Harlan Carey	BC Liberal	Nov. 23, 1916 - Mar. 1, 1918	14
34 <sup>th</sup>	Campbell, Gordon Muir	BC Liberal	June 5, 2001 - Mar. 14, 2011	37-39
35 <sup>th</sup>	Clark, Christy	BC Liberal	Mar. 14, 2011-	39-
31 <sup>st</sup>	Clark, Glen David	New Democratic	Feb. 22, 1996 - Aug. 25, 1999	35-36
8 <sup>th</sup>	Davie, Alexander Edmund Batson		Apr. 1, 1887 - Aug. 1, 1889	5
10 <sup>th</sup>	Davie, Theodore		July 2, 1892 - Mar. 2, 1895	6-7
2 <sup>nd</sup>	De Cosmos, Amor (William Alexander Smith)		Dec. 23, 1872 - Feb. 9, 1874	1
33	Dosanjh, Ujjal	New Democratic	Feb. 24, 2000 – June 5, 2001	36
14 <sup>th</sup>	Dunsmuir, James		June 15, 1900 - Nov. 21, 1902	9
4 <sup>th</sup>	Elliott, Andrew Charles		Feb. 1, 1876 - Jun. 25, 1878	2
30 <sup>th</sup>	Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Nov. 5, 1991 - Feb. 22, 1996	35
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Hart, John	Coalition	Dec. 9, 1941 - Dec. 29, 1947	20-21
24 <sup>th</sup>	Johnson, Byron Ingemar	Coalition <sup>3</sup>	Dec. 29, 1947 - Aug. 1, 1952	21-22
29 <sup>th</sup>	Johnston, Rita Margaret	Social Credit	Apr. 2, 1991 - Nov. 5, 1991	34
20 <sup>th</sup>	MacLean, John Duncan	BC Liberal	Aug. 20, 1927 - Aug. 20, 1928	16
13 <sup>th</sup>	Martin, Joseph		Feb. 28, 1900 - June 14, 1900	8
16 <sup>th</sup>	McBride, Richard	Conservative	June 1, 1903 - Dec. 15, 1915	9-13
1 <sup>st</sup>	McCreight, John Foster		Nov. 14, 1871 - Dec. 23, 1872	1
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Miller, Arthur Daniel	New Democratic	Aug. 25, 1999 – Feb. 24, 2000	36
19 <sup>th</sup>	Oliver, John	BC Liberal	Mar. 6, 1918 - Aug. 17, 1927	14-16
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Pattullo, Thomas Dufferin	BC Liberal	Nov. 15, 1933 - Dec. 9, 1941	18-20
15 <sup>th</sup>	Prior, Edward Gawler		Nov. 21, 1902 - June 1, 1903	9
9 <sup>th</sup>	Robson, John		Aug. 2, 1889 - June 29, 1892	5-6
12 <sup>th</sup>	Semlin, Charles Augustus		Aug. 15, 1898 - Feb. 27, 1900	8
7 <sup>th</sup>	Smithe, William		Jan. 29, 1883 - Mar. 28, 1887	4-5
21 <sup>st</sup>	Tolmie, Simon Fraser Conservative		Aug. 21, 1928 - Nov. 15, 1933	17
11 <sup>th</sup>	Turner, John Herbert		Mar. 4, 1895 - Aug. 8, 1898	7
28 <sup>th</sup>	Vander Zalm, William N.	Social Credit	Aug. 6, 1986 - Apr. 2, 1991	33-34
3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>	Walkem, George Anthony Boomer		Feb. 11, 1874 - Jan. 27, 1876 Jun. 25, 1878 - June 6, 1882	1-2 3

**PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL LIST**

ORDER	NAME	PARTY <sup>1</sup>	DATES <sup>2</sup>	PARLIAMENT(S)
1 <sup>st</sup>	McCreight, John Foster		Nov. 14, 1871 - Dec. 23, 1872	1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	De Cosmos, Amor (William Alexander Smith)		Dec. 23, 1872 - Feb. 9, 1874	1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Walkem, George Anthony Boomer		Feb. 11, 1874 - Jan. 27, 1876	1-2
4 <sup>th</sup>	Elliott, Andrew Charles		Feb. 1, 1876 - Jun. 25, 1878	2
5 <sup>th</sup>	Walkem, George Anthony Boomer		Jun. 25, 1878 - June 6, 1882	3
6 <sup>th</sup>	Beaven, Robert		June 13, 1882 - Jan. 29, 1883	4
7 <sup>th</sup>	Smithe, William		Jan. 29, 1883 - Mar. 28, 1887	4-5
8 <sup>th</sup>	Davie, Alexander Edmund Batson		Apr. 1, 1887 - Aug. 1, 1889	5
9 <sup>th</sup>	Robson, John		Aug. 2, 1889 - June 29, 1892	5-6
10 <sup>th</sup>	Davie, Theodore		July 2, 1892 - Mar. 2, 1895	6-7
11 <sup>th</sup>	Turner, John Herbert		Mar. 4, 1895 - Aug. 8, 1898	7
12 <sup>th</sup>	Semlin, Charles Augustus		Aug. 15, 1898 - Feb. 27, 1900	8
13 <sup>th</sup>	Martin, Joseph		Feb. 28, 1900 - June 14, 1900	8
14 <sup>th</sup>	Dunsmuir, James		June 15, 1900 - Nov. 21, 1902	9
15 <sup>th</sup>	Prior, Edward Gawler		Nov. 21, 1902 - June 1, 1903	9
16 <sup>th</sup>	McBride, Richard	Conservative	June 1, 1903 - Dec. 15, 1915	9-13
17 <sup>th</sup>	Bowser, William John	Conservative	Dec. 15, 1915 - Nov. 23, 1916	13
18 <sup>th</sup>	Brewster, Harlan Carey	BC Liberal	Nov. 23, 1916 - Mar. 1, 1918	14
19 <sup>th</sup>	Oliver, John	BC Liberal	Mar. 6, 1918 - Aug. 17, 1927	14-16
20 <sup>th</sup>	MacLean, John Duncan	BC Liberal	Aug. 20, 1927 - Aug. 20, 1928	16
21 <sup>st</sup>	Tolmie, Simon Fraser	Conservative	Aug. 21, 1928 - Nov. 15, 1933	17
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Pattullo, Thomas Dufferin	BC Liberal	Nov. 15, 1933 - Dec. 9, 1941	18-20
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Hart, John	Coalition	Dec. 9, 1941 - Dec. 29, 1947	20-21
24 <sup>th</sup>	Johnson, Byron Ingemar	Coalition <sup>3</sup>	Dec. 29, 1947 - Aug. 1, 1952	21-22
25 <sup>th</sup>	Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Aug. 1, 1952 - Sep. 15, 1972	23-29
26 <sup>th</sup>	Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 15, 1972 - Dec. 22, 1975	30
27 <sup>th</sup>	Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Dec. 22, 1975 - Aug. 6, 1986	31-33
28 <sup>th</sup>	Vander Zalm, William N.	Social Credit	Aug. 6, 1986 - Apr. 2, 1991	33-34
29 <sup>th</sup>	Johnston, Rita Margaret	Social Credit	Apr. 2, 1991 - Nov. 5, 1991	34
30 <sup>th</sup>	Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Nov. 5, 1991 - Feb 22, 1996	35
31 <sup>st</sup>	Clark, Glen David	New Democratic	Feb. 22, 1996 - Aug. 25, 1999	35-36
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Miller, Arthur Daniel	New Democratic	Aug. 25, 1999 - Feb. 24, 2000	36
33 <sup>rd</sup>	Dosanjh, Ujjal	New Democratic	Feb. 24, 2000 – June 5, 2001	36
34 <sup>th</sup>	Campbell, Gordon Muir	BC Liberal	June 5, 2001 – Mar. 14, 2011	37-39
35 <sup>th</sup>	Clark, Christy	BC Liberal	Mar. 14, 2011 -	39

**PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: BY PARTY AFFILIATION**

ORDER	NAME	PARTY <sup>1</sup>	DATES <sup>2</sup>	PARLIAMENT(S)
1 <sup>st</sup>	McCreight, John Foster		Nov. 14, 1871 - Dec. 23, 1872	1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	De Cosmos, Amor (William Alexander Smith)		Dec. 23, 1872 - Feb. 9, 1874	1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Walkem, George Anthony Boomer		Feb. 11, 1874 - Jan. 27, 1876	1-2
4 <sup>th</sup>	Elliott, Andrew Charles		Feb. 1, 1876 - Jun. 25, 1878	2
5 <sup>th</sup>	Walkem, George Anthony Boomer		Jun. 25, 1878 - June 6, 1882	3
6 <sup>th</sup>	Beaven, Robert		June 13, 1882 - Jan. 29, 1883	4
7 <sup>th</sup>	Smithe, William		Jan. 29, 1883 - Mar. 28, 1887	4-5
8 <sup>th</sup>	Davie, Alexander Edmund Batson		Apr. 1, 1887 - Aug. 1, 1889	5
9 <sup>th</sup>	Robson, John		Aug. 2, 1889 - June 29, 1892	5-6
10 <sup>th</sup>	Davie, Theodore		July 2, 1892 - Mar. 2, 1895	6-7
11 <sup>th</sup>	Turner, John Herbert		Mar. 4, 1895 - Aug. 8, 1898	7
12 <sup>th</sup>	Semlin, Charles Augustus		Aug. 15, 1898 - Feb. 27, 1900	8
13 <sup>th</sup>	Martin, Joseph		Feb. 28, 1900 - June 14, 1900	8
14 <sup>th</sup>	Dunsmuir, James		June 15, 1900 - Nov. 21, 1902	9
15 <sup>th</sup>	Prior, Edward Gawler		Nov. 21, 1902 - June 1, 1903	9
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Hart, John	Coalition	Dec. 9, 1941 - Dec. 29, 1947	20-21
24 <sup>th</sup>	Johnson, Byron Ingemar	Coalition <sup>3</sup>	Dec. 29, 1947 - Aug. 1, 1952	21-22
16 <sup>th</sup>	McBride, Richard	Conservative	June 1, 1903 - Dec. 15, 1915	9-13
17 <sup>th</sup>	Bowser, William John	Conservative	Dec. 15, 1915 - Nov. 23, 1916	13
21 <sup>st</sup>	Tolmie, Simon Fraser	Conservative	Aug. 21, 1928 - Nov. 15, 1933	17
18 <sup>th</sup>	Brewster, Harlan Carey	BC Liberal	Nov. 23, 1916 - Mar. 1, 1918	14
19 <sup>th</sup>	Oliver, John	BC Liberal	Mar. 6, 1918 - Aug. 17, 1927	14-16
20 <sup>th</sup>	MacLean, John Duncan	BC Liberal	Aug. 20, 1927 - Aug. 20, 1928	16
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Pattullo, Thomas Dufferin	BC Liberal	Nov. 15, 1933 - Dec. 9, 1941	18-20
34 <sup>th</sup>	Campbell, Gordon Muir	BC Liberal	June 5, 2001 - Mar. 14, 2011	37-39
35 <sup>th</sup>	Clark, Christy	BC Liberal	Mar. 14, 2011 -	39
26 <sup>th</sup>	Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 15, 1972 - Dec. 22, 1975	30
30 <sup>th</sup>	Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Nov. 5, 1991 - Feb. 22, 1996	35
31 <sup>st</sup>	Clark, Glen David	New Democratic	Feb. 22, 1996 - Aug. 25, 1999	35-36
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Miller, Arthur Daniel	New Democratic	Aug. 25, 1999 - Feb. 24, 2000	36
33 <sup>rd</sup>	Dosanjh, Ujjal	New Democratic	Feb. 24, 2000 - June 5, 2001	36
25 <sup>th</sup>	Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Aug. 1, 1952 - Sep. 15, 1972	23-29
27 <sup>th</sup>	Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Dec. 22, 1975 - Aug. 6, 1986	31-33
28 <sup>th</sup>	Vander Zalm, William N.	Social Credit	Aug. 6, 1986 - Apr. 2, 1991	33-34
29 <sup>th</sup>	Johnston, Rita Margaret	Social Credit	Apr. 2, 1991 - Nov. 5, 1991	34

## PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

NAME	PARTY <sup>3</sup>	DATES <sup>2</sup>	PARLIAMENT(S)	NOTES
1. McCreight, John Foster		Nov. 14, 1871 - Dec. 23, 1872	1	Called upon to form government November 13; Cabinet sworn in November 14. Resigned December 20, 1872 after vote of non-confidence but held office till successor appointed.
2. De Cosmos, Amor		Dec. 23, 1872 - Feb. 9, 1874	1	Resigned to contest federal election. Vacated seat.. (William Alexander Smith)
3. Walkem, George Anthony Boomer		Feb. 11, 1874 - Jan. 27, 1876	1-2	Resigned after vote of non-confidence (had lost legislative support in fall 1875 election).
4. Elliott, Andrew Charles		Feb. 1, 1876 - Jun. 25, 1878	2	Resigned after personal electoral defeat and defeat of his supporters in the May 1878 election.
5. Walkem, George Anthony Boomer		Jun. 25, 1878 - June 6, 1882	3	Resigned upon appointment to B.C. Supreme Court. Vacated seat.
6. Beaven, Robert		June 13, 1882 - Jan. 29, 1883	4	Resigned January 27, 1883 after vote of non-confidence; actually stepped down when Smithe ministry appointed.
7. Smithe, William		Jan. 29, 1883 - Mar. 28, 1887	4-5	Called upon to form ministry January 27, 1883; sworn in January 29, 1883. <b>Died in office.</b>
8. Davie, Alexander Edmund Batson		Apr. 1, 1887 - Aug. 1, 1889	5	New Cabinet announced to Legislature on April 1, 1887. <b>Died in office.</b>
9. Robson, John		Aug. 2, 1889 - June 29, 1892	5-6	Sworn in August 2, 1889. <b>Died in office.</b>
10. Davie, Theodore		July 2, 1892 - Mar. 2, 1895	6-7	Resigned to take up position as Chief Justice of B.C. Vacated seat.
11. Turner, John Herbert		Mar. 4, 1895 - Aug. 8, 1898	7	Dismissed by Lieutenant Governor Thomas McInnes following apparent electoral defeat of government supporters.

**PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST**

NAME	PARTY <sup>1</sup>	DATES <sup>2</sup>	PARLIAMENT(S)	NOTES
12. Semlin, Charles Augustus		Aug. 15, 1898 - Feb. 27, 1900	8	Lieutenant Governor Thomas McInnes called upon Robert Beaven to form a government but after the latter tried unsuccessfully for four days, McInnes turned to Semlin. Dismissed by McInnes due to perceived lack of legislative support.
13. Martin, Joseph		Feb. 28, 1900 - June 14, 1900	8	Insufficient legislative support remained after June 1900 election; Lieutenant Governor Thomas McInnes called upon Dunsmuir to form a new Ministry.
14. Dunsmuir, James		June 15, 1900 - Nov. 21, 1902	9	Resigned. Later served as Lieutenant Governor.
15. Prior, Edward Gawler		Nov. 21, 1902 - June 1, 1903	9	Dismissed by Lieutenant Governor Joly de Lotbiniere for conflict of interest. Later served as Lieutenant Governor.
16. McBride, Richard	Conservative	June 1, 1903 - Dec. 15, 1915	9-13	Elected Premier in first election to be held along party lines. Resigned to become Agent-General. Vacated seat.
17. Bowser, William John	Conservative	Dec. 15, 1915 - Nov. 23, 1916	13	Resigned after party defeat in September 1916 election but waited until November because of delay in counting soldiers' votes.
18. Brewster, Harlan Carey	BC Liberal	Nov. 23, 1916 - Mar. 1, 1918	14	<b>Died in office.</b>
19. Oliver, John	BC Liberal	Mar. 6, 1918 - Aug. 17, 1927	14-16	Personally defeated in June 1924 election although party won; regained seat in August 1924 by-election. <b>Died in office.</b>
20. MacLean, John Duncan	BC Liberal	Aug. 20, 1927 - Aug. 20, 1928	16	Resigned after personal and party defeat in July 1928 election.

**PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST**

NAME	PARTY <sup>1</sup>	DATES <sup>2</sup>	PARLIAMENT(S)	NOTES
21. Tolmie, Simon Fraser	Conservative	Aug. 21, 1928 - Nov. 15, 1933	17	Resigned after personal and party defeat in November 1933 election.
22. Pattullo, Thomas Dufferin	BC Liberal	Nov. 15, 1933 - Dec. 9, 1941	18-20	Resigned as party leader rather than participate in a Coalition government. His resignation was announced in the House on December 4, 1941.
23. Hart, John	Coalition	Dec. 9, 1941 - Dec. 29, 1947	20-21	Announced his resignation as party leader October 2, 1947 but did not step down until December 29, 1947.
24. Johnson, Byron Ingemar	Coalition <sup>3</sup>	Dec. 29, 1947 - Aug. 1, 1952	21-22	Resigned after personal and party defeat in June 1952 election.
25. Bennett, William Andrew Cecil	Social Credit	Aug. 1, 1952 - Sep. 15, 1972	23-29	Resigned after party defeat in August 1972 election.
26. Barrett, David	New Democratic	Sep. 15, 1972 - Dec. 22, 1975	30	Resigned after personal and party defeat in December 1975 election.
27. Bennett, William Richards	Social Credit	Dec. 22, 1975 - Aug. 6, 1986	31-33	Resigned as party leader May 22, 1986 and stepped down formally on August 6, 1986.
28. Vander Zalm, William N.	Social Credit	Aug. 6, 1986 - Apr. 2, 1991	33-34	Did not hold seat until after October 1986 election. Resigned as party leader but did not resign his seat.
29. Johnston, Rita Margaret	Social Credit	Apr. 2, 1991 - Nov. 5, 1991	34	Elected by the Social Credit Caucus April 2, 1991. Position confirmed by vote at leadership convention July 20, 1991. Resigned after personal and party defeat in October 1991 election.
30. Harcourt, Michael Franklin	New Democratic	Nov. 5, 1991 - Feb. 22, 1996	35	Elected in the 35th General Election, October 17, 1991. Sworn in November 5, 1991. Announced resignation November 15, 1995.

**PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: DETAILED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST**

NAME	PARTY <sup>1</sup>	DATES <sup>2</sup>	PARLIAMENT(S)	NOTES
31. Clark, Glen David	New Democratic	Feb. 22, 1996 - Aug. 25, 1999	35-36	Elected in the 35th General election, October 17, 1991. Elected leader at party convention, February 18, 1996. Sworn in February 22, 1996. Announced resignation August 21, 1999.
32. Miller, Arthur Daniel	New Democratic	Aug. 25, 1999 – Feb. 24, 2000	36	Named interim party leader August 21, 1999. Sworn in as Premier August 25, 1999. Resigned February 24, 2000 prior to the swearing in of Ujjal Dosanjh.
33. Dosanjh, Ujjal	New Democratic	Feb. 24, 2000 – June 5, 2001	36	Elected leader at party convention February 20, 2000. Sworn in as Premier February 24, 2000. Resigned after personal and party defeat in May 2001 election.
34. Campbell, Gordon Muir	BC Liberal	June 5, 2001 – Mar. 14, 2011	37-39	Elected leader at party convention September 11, 1993. Elected May 16, 2001 and sworn in as Premier June 5, 2001. Nov. 3, 2010 Campbell announced his intention to resign after a new leader was selected at an upcoming BC Liberal leadership convention.
35. Clark, Christy	BC Liberal	Mar. 14, 2011 -	39	Elected leader at party convention Feb. 26, 2011. Sworn in as Premier Mar. 14, 2011.

## PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

### NOTES

1. Party government was not introduced to British Columbia until June 1, 1903 when McBride became Premier. Prior to that time "group government" existed, that is to say, loose alliances of MLAs formed around various leaders. For further information about this period see Edith Dobie, "Some aspects of party history in British Columbia, 1871-1903", Pacific Historical Review I (1932), pp. 235-251 and Walter N. Sage, "Federal parties and provincial political groups in British Columbia, 1871-1903", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, XII (1948), pp. 151-169.
2. Derived for the most part from the Oath Book, The British Columbia. Gazette and/or Orders-in-Council, and the British Columbia. Journals. For more detailed information, see Judith Antonik Bennett and Frederike Verspoor. British Columbia Executive Council Appointments 1871-1986. Victoria: British Columbia Legislative Library, 1989. Later information was taken from Vivienne Bruce and Judith Antonik Bennett. Vander Zalm Cabinet. Victoria: British Columbia Legislative Library, 1991, and Vivienne Bruce. Johnston Cabinet. Victoria: British Columbia Legislative Library, 1991.
3. The Coalition was effectively ended January 19, 1952 with the departures of the Progressive-Conservative leader Anscomb, and three other Progressive-Conservative Ministers from the Cabinet. For the rest of its term, the government was essentially BC Liberal and the Progressive-Conservatives formed the Opposition (having displaced the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation).