

FRIENDS OF THE GOVERNMENT: **An Administrative History of the
British Columbia Government Agents**

by

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ABSTRACT

The pivotal figures in the district administration of British Columbia have been the Government Agents. For over a century, isolated citizens received the services of the state from their local agent. The tasks they performed changed but, like the British District Officer and the French Prefect, their primary supervisory and controlling roles remained intact. Civil service reform, however, broke the 'contract' between the agent, district and the government, and diminished their effectiveness. By 1958, the agent was less a unifying and more a coordinating figure.

The agents evolved from prominent persons acting alone, then collegially with other civil servants, to weak agents with reduced status. As the primary objective of government altered from the maintenance of law and order to economic and social development their behaviours changed. Their prestige was also reduced as politicians replaced them as guardians of the public interest. Improvements in transportation and communication made them less independent. Continuity, however, has been an equal characteristic of the agents. They have exercised central control through three functions: maintenance of law and order, advocating and executing government policies, and representing provincial interests. Since 1858, the agents have embodied the power of the state and fulfilled Victoria's wish to control local events.

The 1945 civil service reforms, which emphasized standardized procedures and merit in hiring practices, altered irrevocably the character of the agents. Technical skills, not local prestige and knowledge, became the critical factor in new aspirants. Their relationship with government was de-personalized and they identified more with their organization. These personnel processes and a

dramatic growth in bureaucratic structures eroded the agents' power base in their districts and the capital and their ability to act as a trustworthy link between Victoria and the regions. The political advantages that saved the agents for decades were missing and they were forgotten.

This study is about government decentralization. It chronicles the evolution of unique Canadian public servants who maintained the bond between the governed and the government from colonial to modern times. Finally, it suggests that contemporary observers must consider carefully the expectations politicians have of district public servants.

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For my parents, whose love, encouragement
and prayers have always been with me.

Two prospectors, after a long stay in the hills, arrived at a steamboat landing and after securing hotel accommodation inquired as to where they could purchase some bottled refreshment. They were directed to the Provincial Building where the Government Agent first issued liquor permits, then, as Liquor Vendor, sold them a supply which they transported back to the hotel. Later that day, the party having become somewhat boisterous, the landlord, in fear of his property, called in the local Provincial Constable (Government Agent), who proceeded to place them in custody in a cell at the rear of the courthouse. As Provincial Gaoler, he cared for them and in the morning they were arraigned before the Stipendiary Magistrate (Government Agent), who judged them guilty and assessed a nominal fine. This fine was paid to the Clerk of the Peace (Government Agent), who in turn remitted the funds to the Government Agent for transfer to the Provincial Treasury.

"The Man with Many Hats." Author and source unknown.

CHAPTER I, INTRODUCTION

We cannot be everywhere! That is why
we send men into the provinces..."
Philip the Fair, 1302

The Government Agents and their offices constitute a decentralized administrative system unique in Canada to British Columbia. Initially, the system was an innovative response to the difficulties of bringing law and order to a scattered population in a remote and uncompromising landscape. It is modelled on similar offices in Ceylon, India and former British possessions in Africa where the Government Agent, the Collector and the District Officer, respectively, discharged responsibilities comparable to the British Columbia Agents. The parallels between the North American agents and these officers of the British Colonial Service are historically significant. Similarly, the Government Agent has been a Prefect in the French sense. Historical resemblance also can be found closer to home.

In New France, the intendant represented the central authority. Louis XIV's great Minister Colbert appointed Jean Talon in 1665, intendant of New France. Talon, 'the first Canadian administrator of note,' was the centre of power in internal administration.¹ The intendant's authority, not unlike that of early Government Agents, encompassed the superintendence "of the king's justice, of his peace, order and good government and of his income and expenditure."² Like the Government Agent, he was not a local official but represented the central authority at the local level and was, as Arthur Lower whimsically states, "the great local

Pooh-Bah."³ The Dominion government later would have an agent and spokesman in each province in the position of the Lieutenant Governor. His considerable powers to oversee local affairs, like those of the intendant, would disappear with time. The Government Agent, however, had more local responsibilities than the intendant or Lieutenant Governor. Also, he was subject to political masters, not a political master himself.

It would be no overstatement to submit that the majority of urban British Columbians hardly know that the Government Agents exist. The agents have always been a vehicle for bringing the isolated areas of the province closer to their government. Victoria has never had a Government Agent office and the Vancouver office, which closed in 1983, was historically an extension of the Treasury Branch and not a multi-service office. The small size of this predominantly rural agency belies its importance.

While the agents' role is not as vital as it once was, it remains substantial. As a tax collecting bureau, for example, in 1989-90, it funnelled \$694 million into the provincial bank account and as an administrative organization it delivers a host of other government programs.⁴ It also has been used historically, as recently as 1986, to implement or co-ordinate new, experimental initiatives.⁵ Although it would be disputed by many contemporary bureaucrats and politicians, the agents are seen by many British Columbians as 'the official representatives of Government' at the local level. In sixty-one communities across the province, the Government Agent is, as were his predecessors for more than a century, broadly identified as the officer from whom thousands of British Columbians have sought the various services of the state.

The Government Agents have rendered a valuable and unique service to the people of British Columbia. Like most field-administration systems, they originated in a simpler time.⁶ Their original functions have changed but they continue to perform the role government expected them to play. This research documents the history of the Government Agents, primarily their first one hundred years, and explores how their role evolved yet remained constant over time. The study also calls attention to a neglected feature of British Columbia history: the nature and development of government services.

Administrative history has several useful purposes. It can help invent and create "better institutions and procedures," challenge "traditional views,"⁷ correct prejudices and demonstrate how individuals in an organization can take a formative role in shaping government policy. For example, J.E. Hodgetts showed how the public service of Upper and Lower Canada developed the administrative reforms necessary to realize the principle of responsible government.⁸ Yet a developmental focus, as James Fesler states in an article on early French field administration, can have merit beyond those of explaining why modern institutions are as they are. Administrative history, he says:

introduces an organic view that, though accorded lip service, has seldom been exploited to reveal change as the greatest constant, to illumine processes of growth and deterioration, sensitize observers to the tendency for new institutional relations to take shape within old forms, and to suggest strategies for facilitating change... .

At the same time, Fesler declares that administrative history greatly enlarges the scope of research. The history of administrative successes and failures reveals the relationships among factors and assists in

formulating general propositions about administrative systems.⁹ Finally, administrative history shows that solutions to administrative problems have been tried before and the problems were as intractable to historical administrators as they are to contemporary public servants.

But this research is more than administrative history. It approaches the history of the Government Agents from a broader perspective than a chronicle of their functions, their methods and their place in the administration of government as a whole. The underlying thesis of this exploration is to demonstrate that, while the Government Agents evolved into other forms, they were an authoritative and restraining influence on district affairs throughout their history. Further, the study reveals that the character, knowledge and experience of the agents were indispensable components of their effectiveness and the invalidation of these factors after 1945 was a serious blow to their authority and status. Put most simply, this study attempts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Government Agents as 'flexible, intelligent tools' in the public administration of British Columbia.

The understanding of these interactions is achieved by an interdisciplinary approach that utilizes the literature of scholars in British Columbia's political, social and geographic history as well as the extensive literature on British colonial administration. The study analyzes the yet untouched archival records on the Government Agents and their predecessors, and incorporates the views of retired agents and staff and former senior Victoria-based public servants. Finally, the exploration incorporates the work of authorities on decentralization.

Decentralization

Altering a quotation from Lord Lugard's respected book, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, it may be said that as Faith, Hope and Charity are to the Christian creed, so are Decentralization, Co-operation (with business), and Continuity to British Columbia government administration--and the greatest of these is Decentralization.¹⁰ British Columbia governments have all been proponents of decentralization. The extent to which Victoria has strengthened local government or established, expanded, and sometimes contracted provincial field services, has varied considerably over the years, but all administrations have believed that decentralization was laudable. In fact, most British Columbians would agree with John Gaus' a priori support for decentralization:

The use of decentralization and devolution for the wider participation in the making of policy within the discretionary administrative powers, for the enlistment of men and women of knowledge and responsibility for the public service, and for the application of law at points closer to the relevant conditions to which the law must apply, can be justified in their own right.¹¹

Decentralization, simply put, is the delegation of authority or power to lower levels in a territorial hierarchy. It can involve the administrative dispersal of authority, such as provincial ministries that delegate decision-making to individuals responsible for designated areas or governmental dispersal of authority, which may entail the subdivision of a province's territory into municipalities and the creation of political institutions in these areas. Decentralization involves one or more divisions of the state. The geographic break-up of a state's territory into districts or areas usually is not

an arbitrary process. It entails, as Brian C. Smith, a British scholar, notes in Decentralization: The Territorial Dimensions of the State, the application of principles which embody administrative and political values.¹² Language and history, for example, can demand the attention of administrative boundaries. Efficiency is also closely identified with decentralization. The delineation of areas which contain certain characteristics (population size or topography are popular examples) relate to the efficiency with which a public service may be administered. Optimality in the size and shape of geographic areas is often implied in decentralization.

According to a review of recent experience in developing countries, decentralization has three primary shapes.¹³ Delegation, the first form of decentralization, refers to the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to organizations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by the central government.¹⁴ In devolution, the second model of decentralization, the central government divests itself of responsibility for functions and transfers them, for example, to local government or voluntary organizations in order to address the particular characteristics, problems and needs of different regions.¹⁵ Deconcentration, the fundamental concern of this research, is the handing over of some administrative authority but not ultimate control to lower levels within the central government's departments and agencies.¹⁶ Authority, in this case, has been shifted to a lower level of administration but it remains within the control of the central governmental structure. Deconcentration, or bureaucratic decentralization, is often used to enforce

uniformity in decision-making and to minimize the centrifugal forces in society.

Brian Smith identifies two major rationales, administrative and political, for deconcentration. Access for the public is his first administrative role for field personnel. Most government departments are concerned with service delivery "and must have their officials accessible locally to deal with claims made by members of the public on those services." Supervision of the machinery of government, that is, ensuring that municipal authorities are "controlled to the satisfaction of the central authorities," is another distinguishing administrative characteristic of field staff. In this respect, the field administrator, like the French Prefect, is the chief executive of the local authority. Smith's third administrative function of field administration is to "act as the 'eyes and ears' of headquarters, assessing public reactions to policies and evaluating their effect on whatever sector they were aimed at." Field staff, Smith observes, are an important part of the 'feed-back' loop used by governments to assess the impact of policy initiatives on targeted groups.¹⁷

Or, as he asserts in his earlier book, Field Administration: An Aspect of Decentralization, "field administrators provide...government with the intelligence needed in many areas of policy."¹⁸ Smith's final administrative role is what he calls department management. This rationale for field administration relates to the co-ordinating and negotiating functions that field staff are sometimes called upon to do with representatives of other departments. In this respect, field administrators have taken a diminishing role as government has grown and other departments have decentralized their services.

By political functions, Smith alludes to those undefined political duties inherent in being a representative of the incumbent government. The first of Smith's political functions is that of maintaining political stability by settling disputes and by maintaining law and order in the face of mutually hostile social groups."¹⁹ The field administrator ensures public order, enforces the law and, most important, maintains public confidence in the government's ability to protect life and property.

Smith also believes that field administration may be used to contain political opposition notably through the manipulation of elections, a tactic characteristically employed by the French Prefect during the nineteenth century.²⁰ Policy control is another means whereby field administration can manipulate political institutions to ensure their responsiveness to the centre. This, Smith notes, "was an outstandingly important role in colonial regimes."²¹

The use of administration as an instrument of political control carries with it the task of ensuring that the field staff themselves remain loyal. As found in a study by Herbert Kaufman, which this study will consider later, the United States Forest Service developed "Techniques of Integration" to counter the tendency of officers to be 'captured' by local interests.²² Such devices as manuals, directives, and transfer policies, were used to ensure the allegiance of field administrators.

Smith's final political role of field administration "is the instigation of political change in the structure of authority and the processes of decision-making."²³ Once again, the field administrator ensures local authorities adhere to the wishes of the centre by acting as 'change agent' within political structures. The controlling characteristics of this activity can be

viewed, for example, in the developmental work field administrators have done with aboriginal groups.

The reasons, then, why a state has a deconcentration approach to the delivery of public services are many. In most jurisdictions the administrative responsibilities have been the most enduring while, on the other hand, the political roles, usually considerable in the beginning, diminish with time.

In summary, deconcentration, or field administration, is distinguished from devolution, as Smith notes, in three important respects.²⁴ First, the authority delegated to field staff is bureaucratic rather than political. Second, field administrators are generally civil servants and, third, their jurisdiction is limited by the administrative requirements of their tasks rather than by local community characteristics. The authority given, as with the Government Agents, is managerial or administrative, although as Smith suggests, its political significance may be considerable.²⁵ Finally, it should be noted that deconcentration may exist side-by-side with devolution, sometimes within federal states.

The French Prefect

While making generalizations is dangerous, two types of field administration are evident. Where specific state services, such as highways and forestry, are represented locally by senior representatives of these departments, field administration is conducted independently by each respective functional service. Coordination occurs through provincially or locally based committees or, as is often the case, not at all. "In a purely functional system there will be no general

representative of the state and central government--no... governor or prefect."²⁶

In a Prefectural field administration system, a general representative of the state is appointed the senior government official in the area. This individual is the superior field officer; all other representatives of functional ministries are subordinate. In short, the Prefect embodies all the interests of the state. An understanding of the role of the prefect is useful to this research because the Prefectural system of field administration was typical of colonial governments. British India, for example, is a notable example of a prefectural form of colonial administration.²⁷ The Government Agent, because he was the senior representative of the central executive, also mirrored functions and responsibilities found in the Prefect.

Robert Fried notes in his comprehensive historical analysis, The Italian Prefects, A Study in Administrative Politics, that the prefectural system "is the product of a long, basically uninterrupted evolution, rather than the deliberate creation of a particular time."²⁸ For the French Prefect, as well, "the importance of the weight of the past in shaping current administrative behaviour" must be recognized, Howard Machin asserts, in his book, The Prefect in French Public Administration.²⁹ Or, as Brian Chapman notes in his seminal study, The Prefects and Provincial France, "the Prefecture is loaded with the vices and virtues of his forebears. A modern Prefect is seen as the descendant of the Prefects of the past."³⁰ The prefectural system has been around for two centuries, structured in similar fashion to serve similar ends.³¹ The Prefect has traditionally had three main roles. His primary task was to maintain law and order throughout the country. He was, as Machin says, "emergency security officer...trouble shooter [and] chief

of police."³² Second, the Prefect was responsible for representing national interests at the local level. Through attendance at ceremonial functions, collection of information on local events or the maintenance of contacts with local group leaders, the prefect was the "symbolic personification of the government."³³ Third, he was both an advocate and executor of government policies. The Prefect was the director of field services and was always very much a political creature. He has consistently been "appointed at pleasure" by the government.

Two kinds of prefectural administrations have evolved. In the integrated system the Prefect is the superior field officer to whom the officials of other ministries are subordinate; in the unintegrated system, "the Prefect is only one among many channels of communication between the localities and the capital. Each ministerial representative in the field maintains independent links with its own headquarters. They are not subordinate to the authority of the Prefect."³⁴

One major trait can be identified in the overall pattern of the prefectural system--a high degree of centralization, or resistance to pressures for local autonomy and power. The prefect remains because central governments have been unwilling to dispense with the assistance of the Prefect as their local representative.

The 'political role' has fit well into this pattern of centralization. The prefect exists as the policeman of the state as well as the policeman and overseer of local government, ensuring that the central government is paramount. In private or public meetings or state ceremonies, the Prefect represents the presence and authority of the ruling political party as well as the State. Furthermore, his role as 'the eyes and ears' of the government of the day remains unchanged even with the

revolution in transportation and communication. Centralization, as embodied in the prefect, is valued by the central government because he exercises and symbolizes control over local groups and institutions.

Prefectural systems tend to be developed as instruments of centralization by autocratic, less politically tolerant states which regard decentralization with suspicion, as potentially destructive to the unity of the state. Concentration of administrative power in a single person within a defined area is not abhorrent, rather it is necessary to control dissension and political fragmentation. In brief, prefectural systems evolve in states where the primary concern is not how the central bureaucracy is to be organized but rather what degree of power is given the dependencies of the central government.³⁵

Thus, the Prefect is placed above all other government officials and reflects a political ideology that promotes monocratic state intervention over collegial forms of administrative power and responsibility. As Fesler states, it is a system that seemed particularly appropriate to absolutist, especially, colonial governments:

It is a pattern widely accepted over the world. British Colonial administration had a prefect in the District Officer...even though there is no direct counterpart in Britain's own governmental system.³⁶

The British District Officer

Before discussing the role and responsibilities of the District Officer, it is appropriate to review briefly the status of government administration in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century in order to draw attention to the possible impact of British institutions

and governmental practices on colonial administration and, in particular, the possible association between the emerging inspectorate tradition in the mother country and the district Officer. As American political scientist Louis Hartz states, "colonial societies can be seen as cuttings from the parent vine, reproducing in a new environment the characteristics of the particular group who were the founding fathers."³⁷

Few European central bureaucracies did more than England's by 1854 and none intervened as decisively, David Roberts concludes in Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State.³⁸ Twenty odd years earlier the situation was much different. "England's central administration did little in 1833 beside administer justice, collect taxes and defend the realm. It rarely touched the life of the ordinary individual and showed little concern for his well-being."³⁹ The British civil service was organized against the backdrop of a prevailing belief in local self-government, private enterprise and liberalism.

The system that emerged by mid-century, however, was a compromise, between the Victorians' distaste of powerful bureaucracies and their preference for local government. The Victorians also put their faith in men.⁴⁰ The inspectors of poor houses, insane asylums, mines and the like were tactful, vigorous, shrewd and made the new governmental agencies effective. "The lack of definite powers and of clearly defined lines of authority," Roberts concludes, "left much policy-making to the personality and persuasive powers of inspectors."⁴¹ In time these men were also called upon to licence institutions. This was a novel departure from the more general responsibility of inspection and report writing. The considerable power of these inspectors, however, was minimized by the interference of local

authorities. By 1854, the government system was that of local administration under central supervision.

The system which was developing in Britain's colonial possessions was much different. Whereas in the mother country strong central government was viewed with hostility, in the colonies a more autocratic technique was required. Britain had developed, Bolton states, "a system of political checks, balances, and compromises which were not always suited for export, and which did not always match the somewhat autocratic approach required in colonial administration."⁴² The system that developed in the colonies combined executive and judicial powers in one man. "It was the tradition of the country," as Philip Mason states in his classic work, The Men Who Ruled India, "that one man should rule; it was the way India liked to be ruled, but it was repugnant to liberalism and Whig views."⁴³ Liberal principles and the practical needs of colonial administration made an uneasy bargain.⁴⁴

Under varying names and forms, the District Officer appeared in all regions of the British Colonial Service. His functions probably originated and were most highly developed in India under the title of Collector; however, similar duties can be found in the responsibilities of the Government Agent in Ceylon and the District Officer of Malaya. The District Officer also can be found in Fiji and the Protectorates of the Pacific, in East, West and Central Africa, in Cyprus and Palestine, in British Honduras and the Bahamas.⁴⁵ He was, in the British inspectorate tradition, a man of high quality, a layman untrained in any professional or technical sense. He was, nevertheless, the right man for the time, the symbol of power and authority, ubiquitous and omniscient. "The conditions of the time," C.H. Sisson states in The Spirit of British Administration, "made it impossible for

him to become the stereotyped civil servant moving along the tramline of a rigid routine and circumscribed by legal minutia."⁴⁶

The District Officer was the centre of administration, or Prefect, in his area. A multi-purpose functionary, the District Officer "enforc[ed] the ordinances, issu[ed] licences, [kept] up the prescribed records and render[ed] the prescribed returns."⁴⁷ Although originally appointed to manage revenue, the District Officers grew in status and power because they were often the only British officials in the area. As in the prefectural system of field administration, other administrative powers were added to their growing list of functions, including the supervision of individuals attached to other departments with specialized responsibilities. The District Officer was the district's senior government official. He embodied the power of the state; all the more so when he was also given judicial authority.

The deliberate policy of combining executive and judicial authority in the hands of the District Officer served many ends. It minimized the conflicts in the field between the executive and judiciary that often plagued the centre and it assisted in revenue collection because the officer was not hampered by the absence of judicial authority. The government persisted with this dual function, primarily because of one over-riding consideration--security.⁴⁸ As Mason notes, the Collectors "could never lose sight of their first task, which was to preserve order, to keep chaos at bay."⁴⁹ The specter of the Kandyan revolt of 1818 in Ceylon and the mutiny of 1857 in India haunted the British. As is noted by C.P. Bhambhri in Public Administration in India, political stability and revenue collection were equally important:

If the British Empire was not to face violent upheavals again, the trusted officials should be put in charge of the districts and all important functions should be vested in them. The collector was to act as eyes and ears of the Raj and an effective link between the central government and the districts. He was the agent of the Raj. ...To ensure peace and order in the district, one man should be held responsible for it and that was the collector. Thus, the collectors were 'little Napoleons' who combined all important functions concerning law and order, revenue collection and settlement of litigations... . He inspired awe, fear, respect and obedience."⁵⁰

Many additions and alterations were made in the functions of the District Officer. In general terms, he was the principal agent of government at the district level, chief of police, the local magistrate, the collector of revenue and the repository of all executive authority. In practical terms, this meant he was responsible for fixing and collecting the revenue in his district, arresting, imprisoning, and trying criminals and judging civil suits and revenue disputes. All of these functions he performed in direct, daily contact with the people. This formidable combination of executive and judicial functions reinforced by personal contact made the District Officer so extraordinary.

This authoritarian and personal element in administration became a model for the governance of colonies throughout the British Empire. The District Officer ruled by the leadership of his character and his close and intimate contact with the people. Such a system produced confidence and certainty, virtues which could have degenerated into arrogance and despotism but which turned at least as often into an easy and humorous disregard for rules and regulations. As Philip Mason says, "character became more and more what saved [the

District Officer system], the character of individual district officers, choleric, eccentric, warm-hearted men, who did not always pay attention to Government orders."⁵¹ Or as Margaret Ormsby says about the gold commissioners of colonial British Columbia, "Much of their success could be attributed to their sense of humour, their understanding of human character and their willingness to settle disputes by somewhat unorthodox methods."⁵²

The District Officers were all generalists. Even the Governors "were expected to be generalists," as John Cell notes.⁵³ The variety of their functions was suitable for the generalist--a person "liberally educated, selected for intelligence and character, perhaps given additional training in law and administration, and further developed by assignments in the early stages of his career."⁵⁴ The District Officers, Government Agents and commissioners were selected during a period when the prevailing belief was that a civil servant should be a 'jack-of-all-trades', and a master of all. Administrative wisdom was that the technical expert should be subordinate to the generalist administrator.

The District Officer system supplied a vehicle for deconcentrating governmental functions and personalizing government by bringing it to the people. The District Officer became an intermediary between the people and the government. In short, the structure decongested government at the top without, in any manner, debilitating the authority of the central government over the regions. This pattern of field administration prevailed throughout most of the British Empire during the nineteenth century, and was used successfully in colonial British Columbia, and later modified to suit the different conditions of a prosperous and growing province.

Hypotheses and Administrative Questions

A review of the related literature reveals a number of compelling questions regarding the role and character of the Government Agents and their internal administrative behaviours. The first two questions, namely the rationale for using the agents as an administrative organization and their attributes as individuals, concerns organizational change, that is, the adaptation of the agents to the changing decentralization and recruitment preferences of government. The second set of questions concerns the smoothness and efficiency of the agents as an administrative instrument. The former will make a more lasting contribution to knowledge, while the latter will have practical benefits for the administrator concerned with improving administration.

Deconcentration, or bureaucratic decentralization, has been used in British Columbia to adjust to the environmental forces of governing the province. Geography, as Hodgetts asserts, dictates the major goals which the public service pursues and imposes "the conditions which govern the way in which the tasks of public servants [are]...performed."⁵⁵ The physical extent and topographical relief of British Columbia was a considerable handicap, for as Putnam says, "it increase[d] the costs of administration and...made land communication difficult and expensive."⁵⁶ Similarly, Kenneth Crawford notes that local administration in the mountainous terrain of pre-Confederation British Columbia "was handled by government agents who had to be allowed considerable discretion owing to the difficulties of communication."⁵⁷ The governmental apparatus overcame the obstinate topography of the province by the use of prestigious general agents stationed in the field and individually responsible for assigned areas and a host of

government programs. These were the early Stipendiary Magistrates, Gold Commissioners and Government Agents.

Over a century, however, the Government Agents changed from prestige-bearing general agents first acting alone and then collegially with other civil servants, to what is generally recognized as weak, local agents with reduced status. Change has been the greatest constant in their evolution. On the other hand, was continuity a more enduring characteristic of their history? Were the controlling colonial functions of maintaining law and order, policy execution and advocacy as well as representing the central government's interests in the districts still performed by succeeding Government Agents? The answer to both of these questions is the first pursuit of this study which asserts that, while the agents evolved into other forms, their primary authoritative and controlling role on district affairs remained constant throughout their history.

The character and experience of district officials was an important determinant of their status and effectiveness. John Cell notes that the Colonial Office faced a dilemma: "if the [District Officer] should move too quickly from [district to district] his knowledge of local affairs and his local contacts suffered; if he remained too long he might become a local despot, or he might make so many enemies that the [district] would become [unmanageable]"⁵⁸ Lord Lugard argued: "as a district officer gains seniority, and with it enlarged powers, it becomes increasingly important that he should remain in the district or province where he has acquired local knowledge and influence."⁵⁹ How did Victoria balance these opposing forces? Were agents promoted or transferred regularly to foster identification with the agency system or was local familiarity, even at the risk of 'capture' by the community, more important? In light

of the fact that a careerist public service was not firmly established in British Columbia until 1945, what influence did patronage have on the role of the agents? These questions form the second preoccupation of this study: namely, the influence of Victoria's recruitment practices on the status and performance of the Government Agents. In this regard, this exploration proposes that the agents were 'locally respected authorities' whose character, knowledge and experience were critical elements of their effectiveness until civil service reform, culminating in the Public Service Act of 1945, invalidated these components and they became 'impersonal, replaceable functionaries' which, in turn, had a debilitating effect on their authority and status.

These two hypotheses regarding the continuity of the agents' primary role and the influence of the agents' background in the performance of their duties are designed to explore the reasons behind administrative developments. More to the point, they inquire whether the agents have in fact altered their customary behaviours over the years or whether changing administrative and political realities and fashionable administrative models have obscured the continuous nature of their role in British Columbia district administration. The latter hypothesis also challenges the traditional and still popular belief that civil service reform was uniformly beneficial for all segments of the public service.

Herbert Kaufman's book, The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior, examines why the Forest Ranger's behaviour is so remarkably close to the organizational goals set by its leadership and provides a template for a review of the agents' administrative behaviour.⁶⁰ Underlying Kaufman's analysis is a presumption that the real work of the organization, like the Government Agents' system, centres on the activities

of the men in the field. "In their [Forest Rangers'] behaviour," he says, "lies the secret of success or failure."⁶¹ Planners and functional experts at headquarters are important but their efforts rest ultimately in the performance of the men in the field. Kaufman recognizes that decentralization, the "heart and core" of the Forest Service's administrative philosophy, places a high value on the independence of individual Forest Rangers and this sense of autonomy increases because as more duties are given the Forest Service, more inescapably, is assigned to field staff. Thus, as the individual Ranger assumes an increasingly important role in getting the work of the agency done, his feelings of local command grow.

Autonomy, however, can work against the aims of the organization. It can be a centrifugal drive--a force for disunity. Kaufman analyzes the centrifugal forces inherent in the administrative situation and, secondly, the organizational constraints developed to contain them. Kaufman challenges readers to apply his methodology to other organizations: "The centrifugal tendencies may well differ from place to place, and over time, and the modes of counteracting them are doubtless myriad. But the tensions exist, their sources can be identified, and the methods of resolving them described, in spite of cultural differences."⁶²

Using Kaufman's research as a guide, the following questions regarding the techniques of integration employed by the Government Agents are evident.

1. Flexibility or uniformity? Did the agents maintain consistent service delivery when internal communications were non-existent for many years? Was training used as a vehicle to encourage consistency or were the agents, like the

collectors of India, "rigorously picked, but trained almost wholly by doing what in fact they were learning to do."⁶³ Finally, were conferences and policy manuals used to affect the day-to-day operations of the agency?⁶⁴

2. Isolation of dispersed operations. How independent were the agents and how did Victoria overcome the physical barriers that distance brings to widely dispersed operations? Kaufman notes that the geographical dispersion of staff is a powerful centrifugal factor.⁶⁵ It builds up a sense of local command and fosters independence from central control. Brian Smith suggests that physical distance may strengthen discretion if it reduces the frequency and effectiveness of central supervision.⁶⁶
3. Advocate or executor? Have the agents acted, like the District Officer and the Prefect, as the government's 'eyes and ears' or have they been preoccupied with programme delivery? If the agents' antenna have been tuned into the needs of their communities, has this accessibility been confined to programmatic or administrative problems or have the agents also been champions or supporters of the incumbent government?
4. Reformer or enforcer? David Roberts suggests that the initial impulse for reform of mid-nineteenth century British government policies came from the reports of the government inspectors.⁶⁷ Were the agents involved in stimulating policy change? Similarly, did legal rules and bureaucratic regulations burden the agents to the point of making them 'office bound'?

5. Specialist or generalist? What were the backgrounds of the agents and who were some of the key personalities?
6. Growth or diminution? How has the number of agents fluctuated? Has there been any pattern in the opening of new offices; has it followed or preceded transportation links? How many functions have they performed over time and are any patterns discernable?

This research is divided essentially into "why" questions and "how" questions. The former two strategic questions challenge basic assumptions while the latter pertain to techniques or procedures. Answers to the second set of questions will be integrated into the analysis and formulation of responses to the hypotheses. This methodology is employed for three reasons. First, integration of the findings brings clarity and continuity to the study by following the "stages of development" perspective that emerges from the evolution of the agents. Secondly, some procedural questions may take on more significance at particular times. Finally, blending the analysis in this fashion allows the study to maintain the framework that has been constructed to organize the results of the research.

Data Collection and Study Framework

The British Columbia Provincial Archives' records on the Government Agents are quite extensive but incomplete. Gaps exist in the holdings and the majority of the material is day-to-day administrative or operational in nature. In addition, most of the material is unorganized.

The actual research began with dispatches and legislation during the colonial period. A review of the

correspondence of the governments of the colonies of both Vancouver Island and British Columbia focused on the gold commissioner and the stipendiary magistrate.

A thorough review was undertaken of all related processed and unprocessed material within the Archives. With reference to the latter, over three hundred boxes of Ministry of Finance material was reviewed in addition to volumes of unprepared material from the Vancouver, Kamloops, Merritt, Rossland and Revelstoke Government Agents. Records of the Provincial Secretary, the Attorney General, the Premier and the Ministry of Finance were searched for any reference to the agents. The Archives' considerable holdings on the British Columbia Provincial Police were reviewed in their entirety. In addition, all Government Agents were requested to peruse their records (active files or in storage) for any documentation of merit. This latter activity, unfortunately, proved worthless as old files had long since been destroyed. What little remained of the agents' history had been collected and forwarded to the Archives. Finally, the records of some regional archives were reviewed for worthwhile data as were the holdings of the provincial gold commissioner within the library of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.

As the history of the British Columbia Government Agents begins in 1858 with the appointment of the first law officials on the mainland, it parallels the origins of the British Columbia Police. A master's thesis by Frederick John Hatch, "The British Columbia Police, 1858-1871," traces the early beginnings of the police and its primary official, the stipendiary magistrate.⁶⁸ Hatch provides a good description of their role as policemen and gives a solid account of most, if not all, significant personalities during this era. Accordingly, the pages that outline the pre-Confederation period draw upon

Hatch's work but new material has been added, particularly in those areas of the stipendiary magistrate's work that was not police-related. The reader is directed to consult Hatch's thesis for a complete description of this era and, more notably, the police activities of the colonial constables and magistrates.

The most extensive post-Confederation material exists on the Cariboo district, primarily the Richfield office. Thus, John Bowron, Cariboo mining recorder, agent and gold commissioner from 1872 until his retirement after the turn of the century, receives particular attention. So, too, do the agents of the Boundary district whose records, notably from 1890 until the mid-1920's are intact. Data on other agents, with the exception of John Bowron's correspondence which thins out after 1890, is sparse at best. In fact, data availability diminishes the more contemporary the time frame, so much so that no consistent record exists of the agents during the 1930's and 1940's. What was gleaned of the agents' work during the depression and war years comes from Ministry of Finance records kept centrally in Victoria. Because these data were provincial in scope, they do not provide an intimate perspective on the agents during these two decades. The research, accordingly, is restricted in that it does not consistently chronicle the evolution of particular agents (or agent locations) across the province over the entire one hundred years. The study, thus, presents a composite picture of the agents with primary emphasis on the Cariboo and Boundary Agents. Wherever possible, an attempt is made to draw parallels with agent activity elsewhere.

Emphasis on the Cariboo and Boundary Agents does not restrict the study. While neither office was large, the agent still discharged a full range of functions. Their locations, too, are generally representative. Both

were located in mining communities, the lifeblood of the colony and the province until well into the twentieth century, and both were equally isolated from urban centres. The Cariboo and Boundary district offices also endured throughout most of the one hundred years under review. In the colonial era, a larger number of locations are considered as many of the magistrates and gold commissioners did not have specific offices. The emphasis of this study, of course, is on the period subsequent to British Columbia becoming a Canadian province when the Government Agent was a clearly distinguishable entity.

Finally, the primary sources which initially appeared to be extensive were, upon closer examination, found to be purely evidential, that is, routine administrative matters. For example, court records, assessment records, account books, receipt books and probate books compose a significant proportion of the available material. As noted earlier, this correspondence was reviewed but it took considerably more imagination in analyzing than in assessing the impact of policy announcements. This routine information, however, was useful in reconstructing the agents' work.

The study covers one hundred years: from 1858 when Governor Douglas issued his first proclamations regarding the formation of the stipendiary magistrates and gold commissioners until 1958, nine months after the retirement of John Villiers Fisher, Deputy Minister of Finance, and powerful advocate of the Government Agents as a public administration tool. It is organized into five eras, or stages of development, in the evolution of the agents. The rationale for these periods are explained in the analysis. A "Summary and Conclusions" chapter that extracts and synthesizes the relevant data from the analysis and presents the findings completes the study.

The research ends with an Epilogue that covers the three decades after 1958. The epilogue strengthens the conclusions of the study and indicates that the agents are still active in British Columbia district administration. Taking the study to 1987 had the further value of putting into historical context recent developments designed to enhance the effectiveness of the agents.

Conclusion

Many scholars plead for a more thorough examination of government functions and their development. They challenge readers to concern themselves with the whole problem of administrative change, not just parts of the problem. Brian Smith says, "The varying political significance of geography, ethnicity, history and ideology explains why...a public service is regionalized in one country, localized in another, and centralized in a third."⁶⁹ John Gaus suggests, it is people, place, physical technology, social technology, wishes and ideas, catastrophe, and personality that explain the ebb and flow of the functions of government.⁷⁰ Finally, Kenneth Crawford, in his comprehensive study of Canadian municipal government, concludes that many factors, among them geography, location, and political and constitutional development, determine the type of local government developed in a country.⁷¹ In an article on historical geography, Cole Harris refers to the need for "a breath of synthesis."⁷² The idea of synthesis is important because the study of government's institutional responses surpasses confined subject fields. This research, then, examines many phenomena, all of which may be studied separately, but whose interrelationships have not been explored more closely.

The period covered by this study was one of tremendous advancement in the development of British Columbia. Historians of British Columbia, for the most part, have concerned themselves with the great topics of the time, the political and industrial development of the province. Little has been recorded of the public officials who were called upon to carry out the wishes of those who governed and the hard work and dedication it entailed. It is with a significant number of those individuals, the Government Agents, that this study is all about.

CHAPTER II, UBIQUITOUS FUNCTIONARY, 1858 - 1871

When British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871 it was largely uninhabited. There were perhaps no more than 35,000 people in the united colonies of British Columbia at the time, of whom only 10,000 or so were non-aboriginal. These white settlers were scattered throughout the colony from the largest settlement in Victoria to tiny, frontier encampments on the distant interior plateau or in secluded valleys in the Kootenay. The colony was also isolated from the rest of the world. This isolation influenced, as Barry Gough suggests, the character of government institutions and practices.¹ In addition, the colony had few financial resources of its own, a very rudimentary government and had only recently become a single entity when the British Parliament passed legislation in 1866 joining the two colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. The designation of Victoria as the capital of the united colonies in fact received formal approval in 1868 and was still lamented in New Westminster on the eve of Confederation. In short, British Columbia in 1871 was very much a frontier society but a society, as Gough points out, that "changed from Indian territory to fur trade realm, then to colony and finally to province all within a brief span of forty years."² It was also a community that had been affected greatly by the personality of one man and his association with one organization.

The Influence of Sir James Douglas

The main thesis of William J. Trimble's dissertation, "The Mining Advance into the Inland Empire", is that in spite of unifying physiographic

features, the 49th parallel caused a distinct differentiation in the institutions of British Columbia and the bordering American territories. He attributes much of this to Governor James Douglas and his intimate knowledge of the north-west and its inhabitants and his seasoned experience as an administrator in the Hudson's Bay Company. Trimble writes:

On the whole, British Columbia may be counted fortunate that there was available in her hurried birth throes at the time of a great mining rush a man who knew thoroughly the country, who was intimately acquainted with the Indians and with Indian habits, and who was trained in a great administrative system.³

Douglas was an autocrat and indoctrinated in an autocratic system. As Walter Sage notes in Sir James Douglas and British Columbia, he was unfit for the subtleties of a colony endowed with either representative or responsible government.⁴ He ruled the colony in much the same fashion as he ruled Fort Victoria when he was Factor for the Hudson's Bay Company.⁵

For the most part, Factors in the Hudson's Bay Company were carefully selected officers who exercised great power over everything within their district. Each was left to make his own day-to-day decisions, generally free from interference. Factors were always active in their district providing a visible, hands-on administration. In addition, they were guided by two organizational values--discipline and thrift.⁶ It is no surprise that Douglas found comfort in this system when he considered the administration of the Colony that by the early 1860's encompassed a territory as far afield as the Cariboo.

The Hudson's Bay Company afforded systems of administration and methods of control that may have been

copied by the colonial administration of British Columbia. The method of dividing the colony into districts under the responsibility of a stipendiary magistrate was similar to the Company's practice of subdividing a large territory into districts and placing a Factor in charge.⁷ The issuance of licences for miners would not have been alien to Douglas for the Company had long styled a system of licences in the fur trade.⁸ The strictly hierarchal organization of the Company may have influenced Douglas' selection of magistrates and gold commissioners - men capable of taking and giving orders. The Company's preoccupation with thrift probably manifested itself in Douglas' exhortations to civil servants to keep expenses down. Most important, the Hudson's Bay Company encouraged, what H.A. Innis refers to as a "unity of structure of Canadian institutions...toward centralized control."⁹ As the sociologist S.D. Clark concluded, Douglas and administrative officials in Victoria and scattered settlements throughout the colony "profited by their long experience in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and the tradition of law and order secured through the company."¹⁰

British law was introduced to the mainland after gold was discovered in 1858 along the Fraser River. James Douglas, Governor of Vancouver Island and Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, knew that hordes of unruly miners would flock to the mainland after word got out that gold was found. Worse still, he knew that most of these miners would be American, fresh from the diggings in California, and unlikely to respect British law or the fact that American territory ended at the 49th parallel. In June, Douglas appointed the first official representatives of the government; in September the first constables, although he hesitated to recruit as many as

he thought necessary as the fledgling colony could barely afford to maintain the few officials it had on the civil list.¹¹ Douglas also preferred military support rather than a civil constabulary but Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, who became Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1858, refused. Lytton felt strongly that civil laws should be enforced by police not troops and, more important, he did not want to risk provoking the United States should British troops be seen arresting American miners. When Lytton's instructions finally arrived in October, suggesting engaging magistrates and fashioning a police force at the diggings, Douglas already anticipated his wishes.

Development of the Administrative Structure

These magistrates, forerunners of the post-confederation Government Agent, were new to the colony but were modeled, according to Hatch, after a 1792 innovation that provided for the establishment of police courts in the London area, each with stipendiary magistrates and constables. However, the colony of British Columbia in 1858 did not have a police force separate from the judiciary. "The circumstances surrounding its formation necessitated the incorporation of police duties with not only judicial duties but also with most of the other civil requirements of the Colony", he states.¹² This form of administration was familiar to Douglas. It was also the system ordained by the colonial office.

First developed in Virginia, this design was characterized by government through magistrates or justices of the peace appointed by the governor. Unlike the New England type of local government which allowed for more self-rule, the Virginia pattern embodied strong

central authority and control. Like their contemporary counterparts in England, the Virginia justices exercised both judicial and administrative powers, and when summoned to meet as a body for a whole district in courts of quarter sessions, they also had legislative authority. The justices were chosen from retired military officers, large landowners, lawyers, and merchants, and, as representatives of the central government and holders of all the real power in their communities, they were centres of a "network of little local family compacts" throughout the province.¹³

This standard administrative form then governed the colony of British Columbia. The Governor knew that the real business of running the fledgling colony resided in the field and, through the magistrates, he appropriated all power and leadership functions to himself. Although unseen at the time, the magistrates's functions and territory were as much cornerstones of the Governor's power as they were the base from which colonial administration operated. As Thomas Fleming notes in an article on school administration, colonial government in British Columbia was characterized by:

"territorial" rather than "functional" divisions of responsibility; trust in hierarchical authority; the delegation of responsibility and discretionary powers to field staff; faith in the values of law, tradition, loyalty, and seniority; reliance on personal contact; and, finally, the belief that "real administration" meant "rural" or "field service."¹⁴

For ease of administration, the colony was divided into districts. This distribution took no overall pattern; rather it followed the movement of the miners as they spread themselves throughout the territory. First came the miners and then the magistrates and their subordinate constables. Indeed, the "Mineral Ordinance,

1869" which divided the mainland into several districts served as the "limits of the several magistrerial [sic] Districts."¹⁵ By the end of 1859, there were six administrative districts: Hope, Yale, Lillooet, Lytton, Queensborough (New Westminster) and Douglas. In 1860, Rock Creek and Alexandria Districts were added and in 1864 Osoyoos and Kootenay were included, the latter being a combination of the Columbia and Kootenay districts. After the colonies were united, Nanaimo district was formed and on June 1, 1871, Omineca district was added. Figure I provides a picture of the principal settlements as they appeared on the eve of Confederation. The "Terms and Conditions of Union" note five electoral districts which were the combination of nine colonial districts and one unorganized territory, "the remainder of Vancouver Island, and all such islands adjacent thereto." The formation of districts was not only ad hoc; it was also imprecise. In most cases, the distinction between districts was a mountain range, river or some other geographic feature. This limitation was regularly acknowledged by the capital which left their precise definition to the local magistrate:

Until more accurate surveys have been made, these limits cannot be exactly defined, but it is considered that their general course and position are indicated with sufficient distinctness for all practical purposes; it being His Excellency's intention, that the Magistrates shall arrange among themselves the precise points of demarcation, between their respective Jurisdictions, on the mainlines of communication, such as Fraser River, the Waggon Road, etc. along which principal settlements are situated.¹⁶

Accordingly, magistrates like Edward H. Sanders and Henry M. Ball who had a clearer border line than most had to note in June 1870 that the "138 mile post shall

FIGURE I

**Principal Settlements of the United Colonies
of British Columbia and Vancouver Island, c. 1871**



Note: There is no record of the district boundaries of the magistrates or their successors, the Government Agents.

henceforth indicate the northern limit of the district in my charge [Sanders]."¹⁷

Districts were formed under varying pieces of legislation that often bore scant resemblance to one another. This meant that magistrates frequently did not know if they were operating within their jurisdiction. Districts were also occasionally amalgamated or disappeared altogether. In these instances, magistrates were forced to move to new centres of population or, worse, demoted or released.

These boundaries were important to the magistrates. The population or activity contained therein defined in great measure the attention the capital gave them in terms of salary or added staff. Their size and importance also defined the manner in which a magistrate viewed himself. Any limitation or reduction was cause for worry. Edward Sanders, Yale Gold Commissioner, for example, reported on April 14, 1860, that he feared the rush to the Quesnel country would depopulate his district.¹⁸ These loosely defined districts then formed the geographical base from which the magistrate operated. Their multi-faceted role was equally without distinct translation.

The Magistrates

The title 'Magistrate' or 'Stipendiary Magistrate' was a generic term--like that of 'Government Agent' following Confederation--to identify district officials who administered all services for the colonial government. Most magistrates, for instance, were gold commissioners, it being the most important of their varied functions. By virtue of their position, local knowledge and social standing, they were also appointed to the Legislative Council of the colony of British Columbia. In addition to being legislators and presiding

as justices of the peace, judges of small debts courts and, for some, county court judges, outside of New Westminster, the capital of the mainland colony where senior government officials handled local matters, the magistrates were involved in everything from road building to census taking, from school inspections to hospital inspections, from vaccinating natives to outlining potential reserves, from collecting liquor and opium taxes to assessing land for tax purposes, from supervising courts of revision to supervising the arrest of criminals by their constables, or often by themselves, from arranging for the detention of criminals to organizing the keep of 'lunatics', from searching for missing persons to representing the districts in the Legislative Council and so on. But the preservation of law and order within the mining industry was their primary task, at least in the beginning.

Governor Douglas, upon a suggestion by Lytton, proclaimed the Gold Fields Act in 1859. This legislation created the office of gold commissioner which was combined in most cases with the office of stipendiary magistrate, a design that Douglas gleaned from the Australian gold rush experience.¹⁹ Armed with both executive and judicial authority, the gold commissioner/stipendiary magistrate ruled every major and minor gold discovery from the excitement of the discoveries on the Fraser bars to the disappointment of the Big Bend strike. More than anyone else, this individual was responsible for the orderly and law abiding operation of the mine fields. In a report to Lord Lisgar, Governor-General of Canada, on November 22, 1870, Governor Musgrave outlined their duties and acknowledged their substantial contribution:

These magistrates are not only Justices of the Peace, but County Court Judges, Indian agents, Assistant Commissioners of Lands and

Works, Collectors of Revenue in the different Departments of the Public Services at the several Stations hundreds of miles apart and in very extensive Districts. I think that these appointments are singularly well filled, and I regard the successful administration of this government and the remarkable maintenance of Law and order as compared with the neighbouring territories as mainly due to the services of these officers."²⁰

The gold commissioner was, as Hubert H. Bancroft states in his History of British Columbia 1792 - 1887, 'guardian of government interests and custodian of government property'.²¹ He "alone without a jury [was] the sole judge of law and fact" (Gold Fields Act, 1859, Section XXII). Among other things, the gold commissioner issued Free Miners' Certificates, kept records of claims, allocated water to the miners and supervised the work of local mining boards. William Trimble summarized their awesome responsibilities:

The powers of a gold commissioner within the district were great...He recorded all claims, assessed all damages, and marked out plots for gardening purposes; he constituted mining boards and might fill vacancies; he had jurisdiction over all disputes as to titles, boundaries and contracts, whether relating to mines, bed rock, flumes, or mining drains; he had power to try persons for breach of the rules and regulations of the Governor's Proclamation (Gold Fields Act, 1859); and he had all the authority and jurisdiction of a justice of the peace.²²

In short, the gold commissioners ensured that peace and order prevailed in the mine fields. William H. Fitzgerald's note to H.M. Ball about his activities in the Omineca district is typical in that it portrays how the gold commissioner fulfilled his role: "On Germansen Ck. an attempt was made to drive off the fifteen chinese [sic] miners who are located there but on my arrival established them in their claims and they have not been

molested since," he wrote on October 24, 1871.²³ George W. Cox, who began as a constable in Yale and subsequently held numerous other positions including gold commissioner, was also typical of these early magistrates. He was known to be considerate and benevolent to the hapless miner. He once settled a dispute by having the rival claimants run a race from the court-house to the claim each felt was his own.²⁴ This phenomenal authority, combined as it was with the magistrates' unique aptitude for settling potentially explosive disputes, worked well for the colony.

These individuals also served the colony by keeping the capital in touch with the miners. New Westminster, and later Victoria, were always pleased to receive ideas from the field on the impact of legislation. Ball, as Colonial Secretary, wrote to W.G. Cox in April 1866 that the Governor is "at all times happy to receive suggestions from the different Gold Commissioners as to the expediency of amending any parts of the present Mining Ordinance which may be considered necessary for the more efficient working of the Gold Mines and trust that you will not hesitate to write freely on any other points you may deem requisite to be altered and amended."²⁵ Years earlier, Thomas Elwyn advised Victoria that: "The Rules and Regulations issued in conformity with the Gold Fields Act 1859--very applicable on the bars and benches of Fraser River--are almost entirely useless in this district where the mining operations are of an entirely different character."²⁶

New Westminster also appreciated the magistrate keeping the miners' attitudes in 'proper' perspective. In this case, the magistrates became more than the government's 'eyes and ears'; they became its mouthpiece. If there were problems at the diggings, they were not necessarily the fault of the government and anything the

magistrates could do to dispel potential discord was welcomed. Cox, while in Rock Creek, for instance, was asked to inform the miners that the "increased cost of provision [was] not the fault of the government...[and] to disabuse their minds of erroneous impressions which may give rise to a feeling of irritation equally unjust and unwarranted."²⁷

Finally, magistrates were occasionally asked to keep an eye on each other or, more to the point, to reflect upon their predecessor's administration when they took over a district. H.M. Ball was requested, for example, to "write officially a confidential report" on a suspected defalcation in revenue that could have taken place when Charles Brew or W.M. Cochrane, a mining clerk, was in charge.²⁸ This scrutinizing was not without its downside, however, as it tended to set one magistrate against another. O'Reilly, for one, was angered when Cox reported a "missing Record Book" to New Westminster rather than to him.²⁹ For the most part, though, the practice of encouraging magistrates to express their opinion freely paid dividends. It helped overcome the isolation of the Governor and his staff who were a week, at best, from the diggings. Until the districts started sending members to the Legislative Council, the magistrates' candid reflections on the impact of policy was the only reasonably objective opinion the executive received.

The combined roles of magistrate and gold commissioner were well adapted to the fledgling colony. One individual administered justice, superintended order at the gold mines, and kept the Governor in contact with the isolated districts. Further, as the capital had few funds to hire two persons to perform these functions, and even fewer qualified individuals to fill them, the practice was sustained until the gold commissioner's

judicial powers were officially repealed by the Mineral Act of 1897.

The efficiency of merging functions within the ambit of one district official included more than just two roles; the magistrate performed a myriad of other duties. No task for the magistrate, including that of gold commissioner, was more onerous or time-consuming than the administration of lands and works. Douglas took little time to establish a system of Crown land regulation as he realized that the gold would soon be exhausted and that the demand for land would become of paramount concern to the colony. As well, land was an excellent source of revenue. With the guidance of Col. R.C. Moody of the Royal Engineers and first Commissioner of Lands and Works, the magistrates were involved in all facets of land administration. Magistrates supervised the surveying of towns and marked out spots for public purposes; they supervised the building of roads and the sale of Crown lands; they controlled at the local level the procedures for pre-emption of unsurveyed agricultural land, the lease of timber lands, grazing leases and so forth. Moody, as we shall see, disagreed with vesting this much authority in an untrained officer but the practice continued.

Most of the magistrates' activities related to the building and maintaining of roads and bridges. Supervising this work took an inordinate amount of time and, to add to the workload, shoddy workmanship and inclement weather meant long hours ensuring repairs were undertaken. Although magistrates might authorize the building of a road or the construction of a bridge, they had to seek approval to paper walls and fill cracks in government buildings as there was always tight control on expenditures on public facilities.³⁰ Finally, they had much to do with the layout of towns and their facilities.

Mistakes were occasionally made but, in general, their guidance was timely and appropriate. After the Barkerville fire of 1868, Chartres Brew guided its reconstruction:

The town of Bark. is now about three quarters rebuilt and in a handsome and substantial manner, being a great improvement on the old town. I caused the street to be made 15 ft. wider and all the houses to be built with an even frontage and at an equal elevation of three feet above the road way.³¹

The magistrate, as assistant commissioner of lands and works, wore two hats as in his dual role as gold commissioner and magistrate. On the one hand, he was administrator of lands transactions and instructed to accept all records of pre-emptions and "cannot constitute [himself] a judge of the legality or illegality of any record that may be lodged with [him], on the contrary [he was] bound to accept all and every record that may be tendered." On the other hand, "in [his] capacity as Magistrate, when any dispute may arise in respect of such record...[he was] empowered to exercise judicial functions."³² Whether it be the coupled roles of policeman and magistrate, gold commissioner and magistrate or commissioner of lands and works and magistrate, the value of a separate judiciary, distinct from the public service, was neither fully appreciated nor affordable in pre-Confederation British Columbia.

The magistrate's role with the Indian people was more straight-forward. Although never officially appointed as Indian Agents, the magistrates often acted to protect their interests. The following letter from Charles Good, Governor Douglas' acting private secretary, to George Cox while he was in Rock Creek, illustrates the

concern the colonial government had for their well-being and the expectation that it placed on the magistrate:

You may inform Telahitza [sic] the Okanagan Lake Chief that he cannot and ought not to dispose of the lands that will be reserved for the use of himself and his people, as those lands will hereafter become of great value and indispensably necessary both to him and them.

You will receive instructions from the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works to mark out the limits of the Indian Reserves according to the boundaries the inhabitants of each village and settlement may point out, which is to be the rule adopted in defining those Reserves, and all persons should be cautioned not to intrude thereon.³³

"The Indians here have always been industrious and well behaved and should be protected," wrote Elliott in 1865 from Lillooet. Further, he recommended to the government, "the desirability of making small Reservations at the spots where Indians have been settled for years for their exclusive Right, and that they should also be secured with a perfect supply of water."³⁴

Protecting the Indians was more than delineating reserves; the magistrates were also concerned with their general well-being. Finding some Indians on the point of starvation, "I took it upon myself on behalf of the Government to bestow such relief as would enable them to subsist until the arrival of spring," wrote Philip Nind to the Acting Colonial Secretary.³⁵ "I have supplied with provisions to the amount of \$54 three Indians in this neighbourhood who were in a starving conditions and too ill to make any efforts for their support," J. Boles Gaggin wrote from Quesnelmouth in 1865.³⁶

Magistrates also acted as health officers, particularly wherein it affected the Indian population. After smallpox appeared on Vancouver Island, the magistrates

were asked to take precautions to preclude it from spreading. "A virulent kind of small pox has appeared here and proved very fatal among the Indians. There is some probability that it will extend to British Columbia; His Excellency therefore trusts you will make every exertion in your power to have both the Whites and Natives in your District vaccinated and he has given instructions for a supply of vaccine lymph (sic) to be forwarded to you."³⁷

Most important, however, the magistrates ensured that the rights of native peoples were not violated. In the tradition of district officers around the globe, British respect for equal protection under the law prevailed. The following lengthy excerpt from a letter from Philip Nind to the residents of Beaven Lake makes this abundantly clear:

I address you as one of the residents at Beaven Lake and beg that you will let the purport of this letter be known as widely as possible. Information was brought to me yesterday that several outrages have lately been committed on Indian men and women who are residing at Beaven Lake during the winter; the complainants stated that women had been dragged off against their will, violence employed towards them and their husbands, fathers or other relations when attempting to defend them, beaten and otherwise ill used, the treatment they were subjected to leading to the supposition that Indians are regarded as no better than beasts of burthen [sic] or convenience for worse purposes. I wish to intimate to all persons who frequent your house and the locality of Beaven Lake that such is not the case in the eyes of the law, and that the British Government always had afforded protection to the meanest of its subjects and will continue to do so without distinction of race or colour. If an Indian comes to me with a complaint against a white man I am just as much bound to receive that complaint and institute proceedings against

the offender as if the complaint were brought by one white man against another, it being one of the first principles of English law, (by which this colony is governed.) that before the law all men are equal and entitled to equal privileges and rights, such is the plain sale laid down and I am determined to uphold it without fear or favour.³⁸

Supervising hospitals, an extension of their health officer duties, was a thankless and irritating task for the magistrates. Because hospitals were mainly supported by public funds, "the general superintendence of the institution and the right of giving admission [was]... vested in the hands of the magistrate."³⁹ In 1870, the magistrates also acquired the added function of being hospital inspectors and were provided with English instructions for the inspectors of colonial hospitals.⁴⁰ These directions, ranging from the inspection of attendants to patient diet and washing facilities, required a visit to the hospital not less than once a month in addition to "visits of surprise".

Accounting of all district monies and transactions, however, was a much more exacting task than hospital supervision where there was considerable latitude for interpretation of the rules. In accounting, magistrates followed a code laid down in England in 1847.⁴¹ Each magistrate had a cash book with proper headings and blank paper to make duplicates. Monthly reports of their collections were advanced to headquarters, in addition to separate requisition statements. It was not until the fall of 1870 that magistrates stopped sending duplicate statements and receipts to Victoria as they were no longer being transmitted to England for final audit. Strict compliance with these rules was expected and the Colonial Treasurer frequently admonished the magistrates or their staff:

It will be superfluous, I trust, to urge upon you the necessity of a strict and punctual compliance with these Regulations in all their details. The Instructions will shew you in more forcible language than I can command, how entirely the Treasurer and Auditor respectively are, in regard to the punctual discharge of their duties, dependent upon officers acting under and in connection with them.

The most cursory perusal of the Instructions will shew how much depends upon punctuality and accuracy. Want of accuracy entails a needless amount of labour, both on the Treasurer, the Auditor, and the Accountant Officer, by multiplying queries for which ordinary care will obviate all occasion. Want of punctuality is not less to be condemned, for it creates arrears of work which, in many cases, render compliance with their Instructions, on the part of the Treasurer and Auditor impossible. On this head, it may be sufficient perhaps to state that the colonial Accounts have never yet been rendered to the Commissioners of Audit within six months of the proper time - a deplorable state of things, the recurrence of which will, it is hoped, be prevented by a strict adherence to the system now to be enforced.⁴²

New Westminster and Victoria tried to adhere to these rules, to the letter! Month after month, year after year, the lament from headquarters was the same: magistrate accounts are due promptly and must be completed with precision. "I am further to observe that in conducting official correspondence you cannot be too precise...Actual facts and figures are always preferable to mere general statements however elaborate," wrote William Young to George Cox on July 17, 1862.⁴³ Andrew C. Elliott, Lillooet magistrate and later British Columbia's fourth Premier, became so exasperated with this fastidiousness that on August 22, 1865, he informed the Colonial Secretary:

I am, and shall always be ready to attend to the instructions of the Treasury Department as to the form in which accounts are to be kept and returns made; but with the disbursements of money, I am labouring under the impression, that the Treasurer has nothing to do. But supposing I am wrong in this I must nonetheless strongly protest against being (unintel.) by the Treasurer in what, I concur to be an... insulting tone, and I earnestly hope that his Excellency will protect me from ...[such]... sick communications.⁴⁴

Punctuality and accuracy were not the only measurements of a magistrate's performance. Unauthorized expenditures were not tolerated. All special expenses required special authorization and the date and author of the authority had to be noted on the requisition. If this documentation was not available, the magistrate was required to pay for it himself. Several districts in 1866, for instance, incurred expenses "far beyond the amount noted in the Estimates" and were informed that they would not be authorized.⁴⁵ This rigidity was understandable considering the colonies' poverty.

Magistrates were also continually harassed to send their cash balances in as quickly as possible. Loans due in England demanded that magistrates "at once forward by proper means any balance of cash that may be in your Collectorate, and you will continue to do so fortnightly until further notice."⁴⁶ Elliott, for instance, was ordered in such haste to send all "cash on hand" by gold escort that it left him short of funds and he had to use his own resources to meet government commitments. After repeatedly drawing this to New Westminster's attention, he was reimbursed for his generosity three months later! In a similar vein, T. Boles Gaggin wrote that if it had not been for the kindness of the Bank of British Columbia agent in Quesnelmouth he "should have been placed in position of great difficulty in meeting even the most

trivila [sic] expenditure connected with the Administration of Justice."⁴⁷

The capital also solicited the magistrates' suggestions for means of saving money usually in the annual call for Estimates but occasionally through Circular or personal letter. As the operation of the district offices consumed the majority of the colonial budget, their opinion could not be ignored. The following letter to P.H. Nind from Charles Good, Clerk for the Colonial Secretary, is representative of the call for restraint through the Estimates process:

In the present condition of the General Revenue His Honor is impressed with the necessity of retrenchment, and he therefore desires that in sending in this Estimate you will favor him with any suggestions you may have to offer - "Confidential" or otherwise - by which it would appear to you that a saving in the Expenditure of your Department could be effected without detriment to the Public Service.⁴⁸

As noted above, magistrates were asked to prepare their portion of the Blue Book, the colonies' budget. If they were negligent or tardy, the capital, under a provision of the Colonial Regulations, could suspend an officer's salary. This was much easier said than done because the districts were self-sustaining; magistrates remitted to the colonial treasury their account balances after expenses were paid. Estimating revenue and expenditure was not too difficult. During the colonial period, revenues were modest and generated mostly from mining activity, land acquisitions or the sale of licences. In the Cariboo district, for example, over one-half of the revenue garnered was from mining. During the same period, the majority of expenditures were consumed in paying the salaries of staff and, in particular, district staff. One district was often

compared to another and if expenses were out of line, the magistrate was expected to give a full accounting for the irregularity.

It is hard to imagine how the magistrates found time for other duties. Magistrates supervised elections after the Legislative Council was established on the mainland for purposes of selecting "a person of good character and approved loyalty to represent their interests."⁴⁹ They "attended to all matters of detail in connection with [the postal] service."⁵⁰ They were advocates for proper safety procedures and organized community meetings to discuss the cautious placement of stove pipes as well as petitioning the Colonial Secretary to enable them to set up municipal councils to regulate such matters.⁵¹ They took the annual census; were appointed, in the absence of anyone else, school inspectors;⁵² sold liquor licences or regulated the activity of those delegated this privilege; took custody of 'lunatics' of whom there seemed to be an extraordinary number; supervised the telegraphic lines in their districts; and acted as health officers when local conditions necessitated change. Elliott, for instance, investigated contaminated water in Clinton and warned a mill owner "that an indictment might be preferred against him for the nuisance should it not be abated."⁵³ Finally, the magistrates, in a tradition that would continue for decades thereafter, provided annual and sometimes monthly reports on the state of their districts.

By Circular dated April 13, 1860, Charles Good, on behalf of the Colonial Secretary, instructed all magistrates to give an account "of the state of the District in [their] charge." It was to include "every other information that may appear to you to be of importance, the number of miners at work on each bar or

flat, their average earnings, discoveries of new mining ground, the state of trade, the price of provisions and the arrival of miners."⁵⁴ This circular was re-issued again in 1866 with a general request for Blue Book returns and, in addition, asked for "the most complete information possible as to the Agricultural operations in [the] District."⁵⁵

With some prompting, the magistrates completed these reports regularly. Elliott's response, which was more casual than most, provided the required data as well as the numbers of immigrants, the state of road construction, the escape of criminals which, he notes, "Had [he] possessed a horse...I have little doubt but he would have been overtaken", the construction of the gaol, the celebration of the Queen's birthday and, of course, personal issues such as the poor housing for the magistrate.⁵⁶ It is important to note that as much as Douglas and his successors appreciated this information, the task also afforded an opportunity for the magistrate to advocate legislative or administrative changes. The reports gave the magistrates an occasion to address issues often left unsaid in the course of regular administrative correspondence.

W.A.G. Young wrote to A.C. Elliott, a newly appointed magistrate in 1861, that it was "impossible to lay down rules for your guidance in every contingency. Much must be left to your own discretion and judgement."⁵⁷ This ability, as administrators, proved the magistrates' worth. While guidance from headquarters was generally welcomed, it never adequately captured the essence of their extensive responsibilities. In more cases than not, the magistrate's combination of personal style and good judgement made the difference.

The magistrates wielded tremendous statutory and discretionary authority. This power was given somewhat

reluctantly and magistrates were cautioned to use it carefully. William Young, Colonial Secretary, warned Cox that arbitrary authority was not something to be taken lightly. "At the same time, I must caution you that you cannot be too careful (underlining in original) in exercising the discretionary power now vested in you," he wrote on February 14, 1861.⁵⁸ Similarly, magistrates restrained their subordinates in the use of power. Thomas Elwyn, for example, had to reprimand his Quesnelmouth collector who issued a liquor licence without the requisite authority. "The granting of licenses is a power vested solely in the Magistracy and of my authority in this matter I am most jealous when leaving the Forks. I distinctly instructed you only (underlining in original) to issue F[ree] M[iner's] C[ertificate]. I now repeat those instructions and request that in future my orders may be obeyed."⁵⁹

But New Westminster was never consistent. On the selection of constables, for instance, the Governor in 1864 found it necessary due to "some inconvenience ...from the relations created between the Magistrate and his Constable where the latter officer is indebted solely to the former for his appointment" determined as a general rule to take the selection of constables into his own hands.⁶⁰ Magistrates could make temporary selections and recommendations but the final decision rested in New Westminster which by this time gave preference to previously released constables from other parts of the colony. In this fashion, the colonial service came to consist mainly of experienced officials. Also, Governor Frederick Seymour, first governor of the united colonies, fixed constable establishments by Governor-in-Council based on the revenues of the district which resulted in much less hiring and firing as the magistrates tended to reduce staff at even the slightest decline in

revenues.⁶¹ Four years later, however, the policy appears to have been reversed, possibly on the advice of William Young who was Colonial Secretary under Governor Douglas and now back in his former role. "The Governor will leave to you the duty of determining the number of Constables required for Cariboo, as well as the selection of the individuals to be retained."⁶²

As we have seen, in the matter of expenditures the capital was equally if not more adamant that no prior approvals be given without its knowledge. Brew, who may have been given more authority than most, was told, like his counterparts across the colony, that unauthorized expenditures were difficult to monitor. "It is very difficult to control the expenditures under votes if disbursements not provided are made without any previous knowledge on the part of the Executive," he was instructed by Philip Hankin, Colonial Secretary.⁶³ On the other hand, in matters relating to the general condition of the districts, surveying, road making or whatever, the magistrates appear to have had almost complete discretion.

Not everyone agreed with vesting discretionary authority in the magistrates. Colonel Moody, for one, did not approve of magistrates selecting sites for towns, reserves for military purposes, or determining roadways. He felt only the Lands and Works Department, sanctioned by himself, should have this authority. Even though they were to "act under my instructions...no instructions can supply the requisite specialite [sic] and experience", he wrote in a long letter to Governor Douglas imploring him to reconsider this delegation. Further, he stated, "I have simply recommended that the Lands and Works Department, and not the Magistrates of the Districts, should carry out all the legitimate duties of the Department, according to the spirit as well as the letter

of the instructions the Governor is aware I received from her Majesty's Government."⁶⁴ Moody, who repeatedly clashed with Douglas and finally left the colony in disgust in 1863 when the Royal Engineers were disbanded, simply put, felt the magistrates were not qualified engineers:

I congratulate myself in having been brought into connection with Gentlemen of such high stamp of character and such general intelligence as characterize the Magistrates of British Columbia. I have served in several Colonies and I gladly seize this opportunity of stating that the Colony of British Columbia may be considered very fortunate in having such men on the roll of its Government. I know by personal communication with them at times, with what deference they express opinion, and how reluctant they are to take upon themselves action in matters of which they have but little or no experience. I also know how willing (so far as authorized) they are to communicate with me direct on all Lands and Works matters, & how very readily & cheerfully they receive instructions from me and carry out what I desire to the best of their ability. But it is assumed in the instructions I have received that the Magistrates of the Districts are one and all possessed of Civil Engineering qualifications.

I must therefore repeat what I have at different times before urged, I cannot, nor would they (I fully believe) coincide in the view that they are so far qualified in Civil or Military Engineering as to supersede the necessity of employing the Royal Engineers in the Colony in the selection of sites of the more ⁶⁵ important Towns, nor in surveying...

As Moody's letter demonstrates, he would have happily given the magistrates a character reference. His confidence was well-placed as there are few recorded instances of the magistrates' probity being questioned.

The potential for an abuse of power, however, came to light early in the 1860's.

Rumours of land speculation by government officials were quickly extinguished when Douglas ordered them to refrain from getting involved in pre-emptions, a process whereby settlers could acquire free land providing they occupied and improved it. "The object and intent of the government in enacting [the Pre-emption law] was not to give facilities to servants of the Government to speculate in land but, on the contrary, to promote settlement, and development of the country, by rendering the acquisition of land easy to the actual settler, and to the actual settler only," Colonial Secretary Young was instructed to write the magistrates on April 5, 1861.⁶⁶ Subsequently, a further directive was issued October 30, 1862, ordering magistrates to relinquish any mining property or resign. Of those who resigned, the most notable was Thomas Elwyn. It is worth noting that Elwyn's response to this crisis was quick and decisive-- a testament to his character. At least a week before receiving the Governor's policy statement he indicated his willingness to resign. Elwyn's letter to the Colonial Secretary provides ample evidence that he, like all the magistrates, was "guided in [his] work, not by a book of rules, but only by the simple stipulations of good personal conduct, honesty, efficiency, and undivided application of interests."⁶⁷

My attention has been directed to an article in the "British Colonist" of the 21st. inst. headed "Should Judges Speculate in Mining claims?"

I cannot but feel that the arguments used in the article in question are correct, & have in fact always felt that a Gold Commissioner by having anything to do with claims placed himself in a false position.

I beg therefore to report for the information of His Excellency that I own a share in a claim on Williams Creek; that the claim has of late become so valuable that I cannot in justice to myself abandon it & that therefore should His Excellency consider that a Gold Commissioner has no right to hold a claim I am prepared to resign my appointment feeling as I do that it is due to H.E. that against an officer honoured by him with so great a trust, the slightest ground of complaint should not exist.⁶⁸

All magistrates responded to the same Circular. For Elliott, the policy must have caused some consternation as he intended to purchase a few acres. His response also precipitated a subtle comment about salaries. The "smallness of my salary," he stated, "scarcely sufficient for the comfortable subsistence of my family, compels me to adopt some such measure for the increase of my income."⁶⁹ Elliott never missed an opportunity to set New Westminster straight.

The magistrates' integrity was probably assisted, at least in part, by their frequent transfers which gave them scant opportunity to get involved in local schemes. For instance, Peter O'Reilly, on average, spent no longer than three years in one location and his colleague, George Cox, was likewise 'on the move' every three to four years. No magistrate, or constable, was transferred more than John C. Haynes who worked in six locations over a period of nine years. As Hatch suggests, these transfers helped the magistrates become knowledgeable about the colony and its residents while, concurrently, it "tended to keep the magistrates aloof from local interests and factions."⁷⁰ However, not everyone was happy with the peripatetic nature of the magistrates.

Community members frequently rejected New Westminster's or Victoria's personnel decisions. In

these circumstances, residents petitioned the capital that a magistrate not be moved elsewhere. The citizens of the Cariboo, for instance, even preferred that George Cox stay at home than represent them in the colonial Legislative Council, to which he and three of his colleagues were appointed in 1864.

I have laid before the Governor a Petition addressed to me as the Officer Administering the Government praying that no alteration may be made in the Magisterial Department in the Cariboo District.

You are desired to inform the Petitioners that his Excellency will carefully consider the prayer of the Petition; he however now requires Mr. Cox's assistance in the Legislative Council.⁷¹

These numerous turnovers also gave Victoria occasion to verify the books. All accounts had to be settled before a new magistrate took over. Even though it made for considerable work, accounts were kept distinct with a new set established the day the replacement arrived. O'Reilly, for example, was instructed to settle all of his accounts before he left for New Westminster to sit in the Legislative Council and if he could not, he was instructed to make a record "in order that no difficulties may occur in matters of account on your resuming charge of your District."⁷² Magistrates were also advised to familiarize their replacements with the district before departing but this luxury was afforded few. More often than not, new magistrates were left to fend for themselves.

New Westminster and Victoria paid negligible attention to the training needs of the magistrates. Those with police experience in the Irish Constabulary, which many of them had, probably fared better than most, but all magistrates had little knowledge of mining and

even less of the administrative detail required for their other duties. The military experience of a few like Sanders, Spalding and Gaggin, was undoubtedly of little value. What they had in common, however, was an ability to take orders and follow them. For Governor Douglas this was enough as he provided lots of commands and precious little instruction. The magistrates under Douglas, in particular, were expected, like officers in the Hudson's Bay Company, to do as they were told. Discipline was the key to Douglas' success with the magistrates.

Although discipline was not of paramount concern under governors Frederick Seymour and Anthony Musgrave after 1866, they too provided little support for the magistrates. Isabel Bescoby writes that communication with Victoria was always poor and that Musgrave, in particular, gave little encouragement to the magistrates and lesser officials in managing public business.⁷³ O'Reilly, for instance, complained about the lack of communication from Governor Musgrave: "Officers and employees not only were left to perform their jobs as they saw fit, without specific instruction and direction, they were also left in uncertain position of appointment."⁷⁴ Mistakes were made because of this neglect but most were ignored unless, of course, they involved money or something very important, such as allowing a prisoner to escape. Chartres Brew, for example, noted irregularities in the work of his predecessor, George Cox, but advised the government to ignore it lest interference "embarrass the Government and create heavy loss to some private individuals."⁷⁵ Pleading ignorance of a subject also was no excuse. Philip H. Nind discovered this when he tried in vain to dispute his appointment as Judge of the County Court for the District of Alexandria:

I regret that his Excellency has been pleased to nominate me to this post as I am deficient in that special knowledge requisite to the proper execution of its duties, nor have I any legal work to refer to for instruction and guidance. The population in this district is fond of litigation and many are acquainted with the principle and even technicalities of law, and would be only too ready to detect mistakes committed by an inexperienced County Court Judge. I respectfully submit for the consideration of His Excellency that the appointment be conferred upon some one better qualified by education and experience to undertake its duties.⁷⁶

Without training then and, in most cases, without confidence, these early officials were involved in every arena of government business. As the Victoria Colonist stated, "Is nobody competent to do anything in British Columbia except the Governor, Chief Justice, or that ubiquitous functionary 'the nearest magistrate'?"⁷⁷

Not Mere Adventurers

Because of their onerous duties one would think careful selection went into the recruitment of magistrates. In the beginning, such was not the case. Only a few officials were respectable, notably Robert T. Smith, the first Justice of the Peace and Revenue Officer for Hope and William Ladner, collector of customs and constable at Hope. Douglas' first appointments on the mainland were dismal failures. Richard Hicks, named Revenue Officer for the District of Yale in June 1858, was fired within less than a year. George Perrier, Justice of the Peace for Hill's Bar, and Captain B. Whannell, Justice of the Peace for Fort Yale, both commissioned at the same time as Hicks, were also terminated shortly after being appointed. Constables appointed either by these individuals or by Governor

Douglas were similarly poorly placed. Judge Begbie's comments about three of these dubious selections is generally reflective of the whole lot:

weak and corrupt magistrate like Mr. Hicks, having thrown men's minds and titles in discontent and confusion, was succeeded by two magistrates like Capt. Whannell and Mr. Perrier, alike ignorant of the law, surrounded by evil counsellors and carried away with the most unbounded ideas of the dignity of their offices and themselves. It appears very providential that no more serious consequences took place. In my opinion neither of these gentlemen are fitted by their learning or discretion usefully to fill the duties of the Justice of the Peace.⁷⁸

By the time the gold fields of the lower Fraser had petered out, most magistrates and their subordinate constables were gone. This was not particularly problematic as the colonies entered a period of relative calm until the cries of gold in the Cariboo were heard. By this time, as Hatch states, "a competent staff of officials was settled in the colony ready to cope with the new wave of gold seekers."⁷⁹

With some badgering from Douglas, Colonial Secretary Lytton recognized the difficulty of securing able appointees within the colonies. The only individuals the Governor could draw upon were independent miners who considered government work too irregular and low paying. Further, the job was thankless and downright dangerous as rowdy and intolerant miners were willing to respect the law only when it served their own ends. Accordingly, Lytton sent letters of introduction on men from the Irish Constabulary, for example, Chartres Brew, and others with distinguished military or civil experience, like John Boles Gaggin, A.C. Elliott, Peter O'Reilly and Thomas Elwyn.⁸⁰ "I consider it of great importance to the general social welfare and dignity of the Colony that gentlemen should be encouraged to come

from this kingdom," Lytton wrote Douglas in 1858, "not as mere adventurers seeking employment, but in the hope of obtaining profession[al] occupations for which they are calculated, such for instance, as Stipendiary magistrates, or Gold Commissioners."⁸¹

The most important of these recruits was Chartres Brew, a former Irish Constabulary Inspector. Considered the father of the British Columbia police, Chartres Brew arrived on November 8, 1858, expecting to take charge of an already formed police force. When it became obvious to him that this was not what Douglas envisioned, Brew grudgingly undertook a variety of other functions although he continued to sign his name C.I.P (Chief Inspector of Police). He was Chief Gold Commissioner, Magistrate of New Westminster, Acting Colonial Secretary, Acting Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Judge of Small Debts Court, Justice of the Peace, County Court Judge and member of the first Legislative Council. Brew won the respect of the miners wherever he was stationed by his fair settlement of claims disputes and he endeared himself to the colonial treasury by increasing the promptness with which mining licences were paid. He also undertook a leadership role in tracking down the culprits after the Chilcotin incident where nineteen workmen were killed by Indians while attempting to construct a road from the head of Bute Inlet to the mouth of Quesnel River, as well as restoring peace to the Cariboo following the Grouse Creek War in which two mining companies openly defied the law. Brew, the only magistrate who was officially appointed by the Secretary of State for the colonies, remained in the Cariboo, his last assignment, for two years until his death on May 31, 1870. He was fifty-five years old. His epitaph, written by Judge Begbie, gives strong testimony of the character of this colonial official: "A man imperturbable in

courage and temper, endowed with a great and varied administrative capacity, most ready wit, most pure integrity, and a most human heart."

By the time Governor Douglas resigned in 1864, the magistrates had gained his praise and trust. Hatch provides a good description of these gentlemen, their various assignments around the colony, and their background:

Besides Chartres Brew, two of the magistrates, Warner Reeve Spalding, and Peter O'Reilly, had previous police experience. Four, Henry Maynard Ball, Edward Howard Sanders, John Boles Gaggin, and Thomas Elwyn were ex-army personnel. Andrew Charles Elliott was a barrister at Law, and Philip H. Nind a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford. Two other magistrates, John Carmichael Haynes and William George Cox, on arriving in the Colony from Ireland bearing favourable testimonials, were first appointed constables at Yale. Boles Gaggin and Thomas Elwyn also started their colonial careers as constables at Yale.⁸²

By any standard, the performance of these individuals was uniformly impressive. Even Governor Douglas' assessment was highly complimentary. He described O'Reilly "as a gentleman of excellent character, high moral worth, and an able and active, resolute magistrate."⁸³ Thomas Elwyn gave his own personal guarantee in order to obtain gold for transport for the Gold Escort as the government would not assure safe delivery. William Cox, who took charge of the Rock Creek district during a minor gold rush, was considered by Douglas "peculiarly well adapted for frontier service, where tact and resolute will are indispensable qualities in managing the rough characters, met with there."⁸⁴ Cox, according to Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken's memoirs, "governed more in Cariboo by suaviter in modo than the fortiter in re and was liked by the miners, for he did

not put on much dignity - but was socially inclined."⁸⁵ H.M. Ball was depicted by Douglas as a "shrewd, careful magistrate, extremely methodical and correct in all his official transactions;" P. Nind he wrote, was "a gentleman of good character, fair abilities, and efficient as a magistrate."⁸⁶ With incumbents like this, it is no surprise that colonists held them in high esteem. Even as legislators, the magistrates held the confidence of the people.⁸⁷

This confidence in the magistrates is also shown by their compensation. Although they complained about inadequate salaries, with the exception of the Colonial Secretary, the magistrates were the highest paid government officials. The six magistrates (including two from Vancouver Island) were paid an average of \$218.40 per month with H.M. Ball earning the highest wage of \$283.33. The four senior Victoria officials, on the other hand, earned an average of \$208.23 per month.⁸⁸ The magistrates, and their staff, constituted by far the majority of field personnel and over one-third of all staff within the colonial public service. On the eve of Confederation the magistrates were the highest paid and largest segment of the colonial public service.

A few comments about the magistrates on Vancouver Island are appropriate. The office of gold commissioner was primarily a mainland phenomena whereas magistrates were found on both sides of Georgia Strait. James Douglas named justices of the peace and constables for the Victoria settlement shortly after his appointment as Governor. The huge influx in Victoria's population in 1858 of miners on their way to and from the diggings necessitated the employment of Augustus F. Pemberton as Stipendiary Magistrate and Commissioner of Police for Vancouver Island. Pemberton, another Irishman, was a lawyer and uncle of J.D. Pemberton, Surveyer-General of

Vancouver Island and brother-in-law of Chartres Brew. Outside Victoria, Captain Stuart was appointed magistrate for the district of Nanaimo. He was replaced by W.H. Franklyn in the summer of 1860 and remained at this post until Warner Spalding took over. Until Confederation, the mainland and Vancouver Island policing functions were administered as separate units.⁸⁹ Not until Charles Todd was named Superintendent of Police in 1875 was command of the police unified.

On the eve of Confederation, there had been, including Brew, eleven magistrates. Some were better at their job than others, but, on the whole, their efforts were commendable. This is confirmed by the simple fact that of these eleven individuals none was fired, only one quit in disgust (Cox left when he was temporarily demoted), one moved to another colony (Nind emigrated to Australia), two died in office, one was superannuated, four went on to serve the province as county court judges, one continued his career as a Deputy Minister and one became Premier.

Summary and Conclusions

The magistrates ably administered the colonial districts. Integrating many functions within the responsibility of one individual saved money and consolidated the capital's control over the districts. The magistrates responded well to this kind of strong direction. They trusted the Governor's advice and were loyal to him and where he wanted to lead the colony. At first the magistrates, as Hatch notes, were "looked to principally as a protector of person and property." As gold commissioners they were as much policemen as administrators. Later, as the colonies developed and the government sought new forms of revenue, the magistrates

took on other roles. They became, as Hatch concludes, the inhabitants' link with government, especially when they became representatives in the Legislative Council.⁹⁰ They provided the Governor with the necessary information for legislative and planning purposes and acted as his voice in the regions. They were a unifying force that bound the colonies together.

Each magistrate had tremendous delegated responsibilities with concurrent awesome arbitrary authority. They operated within a framework that was faithful to British law and endeavoured to apply it uniformly for white and Indian alike. They willingly accepted the dictates of their superiors when it came to interpretations of policy. The magistrates' success, however, was based upon their personal contact with the miners and settlers. This intimate knowledge, combined with their humour, common sense and savvy, explains why they and their powers were accepted.

The personality and intelligence of the magistrates was all important; only diplomatic, energetic and shrewd individuals were successful. Colonial British Columbia put its faith in men: men carefully selected by Lytton and rigorously supervised by Douglas. These individuals knew the colonies well because they were transferred frequently and were intimate with their respective districts because their duties involved them in everything. They were also trusted by district residents because, with the exception of the governor and a few other officials in the capital, they were the government. And it was natural for the magistrates to be appointed to the Legislative Council because they were the respected local officials and, for the most part, the community leaders. Finally, the magistrates were part of the colonial establishment. They were honourable British gentlemen selected for their strength of character and

experience in civil affairs or the military. The magistrates were model district officers as described by G.C. Bolton:

The prototype of colonial administrator was the district officer, alien, honest, and all-powerful, amalgamating in his own person a wide range of bureaucratic and judicial functions, and in many instances also acting in a political capacity as a member of the Legislative Council.⁹¹

The magistrates made no small contribution to the political stability of the colonies. More than anything else, they preserved law and order. They also brought government services to remote settlements. Even in the most isolated parts of the colonies the Union Jack fluttered from hastily erected flagpoles. Equally important, because they had both judicial and executive authority, they conveyed a sense of the majesty and power of the British Crown. In short, all three branches of government were embodied in the person of the magistrate. The colonial government had no difficulty "in acknowledging the connection between justice, administration, and political power--a connection it viewed as natural."⁹²

Two general functional orientations are apparent in these formative years for the Government Agents. The magistrates had an assured position and the right to be themselves. This freedom, combined as it were with the magistrates' strength of character and local knowledge, made the difference in their effectiveness. Secondly, the priority they gave to the maintenance of law and order helped preserve the peace and the unity of the fledgling colonies. It likewise demonstrated the power of the government in the midst of the turmoil and uncertainty of the early days before British Columbia became a province.

CHAPTER III, RESIDENT HEAD, 1871 - 1890

British Columbians were unprepared for the task of governing a province in the new Dominion of Canada. Prior to Confederation, the colony had a traditional form of administration with an appointed Governor and Executive. On the eve of Confederation the Legislative Council was only partially a representative body with a number of its members still appointed by the governor. For years, in fact, the magistrates served as the governor's nominees to the Council. While some politicians favoured Confederation because they wanted responsible government, many colonial officials, including the first Premier, John Foster McCreight, were not sure the province was ready for it.

The Crown's representative in the province, the Lieutenant-Governor, who was appointed by Ottawa not London, had to transform the colony into a province. The first Lieutenant-Governor, Joseph Trutch, a colonial official, began by calling an election and appointing an interim government under McCreight, a distinguished lawyer but a political unknown. The subsequent election confirmed his choice and McCreight headed a Cabinet consisting of himself as Premier and Attorney-General with two other members as Provincial Secretary and Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works. McCreight, however, "nominally...headed the administration [and] it might be more properly called the Trutch-McCreight ministry," as S.W. Jackman suggests.¹ The first session of the British Columbia Legislature went well but by the next session, which opened in December 1872, the goodwill had vanished. It was a harbinger of things to come.

From 1871 to 1890, the province had a succession of governments that lasted generally less than two years. There were nine ministries during this era, eight

Premiers and innumerable Ministers of State." Political parties were active at the federal level but were non-existent in post-Confederation British Columbia. It would take over thirty years before caucus solidarity around a political platform made its appearance. These years can be characterized as a period of considerable political instability.

These successive governments, however, had many weighty questions to debate. The young province was continually starved for funds to run the machinery of government and dependent upon subsidies from Ottawa. The railway from the east that was part of the Confederation bargain took half again longer than expected and Vancouver Islanders were dismayed its westernmost terminal was not on the island. It was not until the Settlement Act of 1884 was passed that the island railway controversy was finally resolved and discussions with Ottawa became more amicable. For the most part, however, relations with Ottawa were strained during this period and many legislative discussions centred around the merits of joining the Dominion. For many British Columbians, uniting with Canada was a transaction of the pocketbook not the heart. There was also considerable internal dissention between Islanders and Mainlanders, so much so that legislative representation and Cabinet membership always had to achieve a balance between the two previous colonies. By 1890, these issues lost some of their importance as the province was generally prosperous and on the threshold of tremendous economic growth. The political themes established during these gloomy years, for instance British Columbia's place in

"George Anthony Walkem was Premier twice - 1874 to 1876 and 1878 to 1882.

Canada and Ottawa-Victoria fiscal relations, would remain with the province until the present day.

The youthful province also went through another less obvious but important transition during this period as Canadians began to take over political leadership. Most of the political and social establishment in 1871 was of the Anglo/Irish gentry. These were firmly ensconced individuals who could trace their beginnings to the earliest days of the colonies. Some of them were even part of the old Hudson's Bay clique and close associates of Governor Douglas who was still visible around Victoria until his death in 1877. The magistrates, of whom Andrew Charles Elliott is an excellent example, were part of this conservative and highly Victorian group. The young province also had a growing number of 'Canadians', individuals born in Canada with more liberal attitudes. Amor de Cosmos, the province's second Premier, was from this mold. John Robson, the last Premier of this era, was also a reformer and Canadian like his political friend de Cosmos. Robson's government marked the beginning of the end for the old Victorian order, the beginning of the end for the privileged position of Vancouver Islanders so identified with the old establishment, and the end to the period of calm and retrenchment in the provincial bureaucracy.

The Fledgling Bureaucracy

The tiny provincial bureaucracy was very uncomplicated from 1871 to 1890. The only addition to the three colonial departments of Provincial Secretary, Attorney-General and Lands and Works was that of Finance (and Agriculture). The Department of Finance, originally administered by the Provincial Secretary through the Audit and Treasury branches, was constituted in 1873.

In 1872 the public service consisted of 91 permanent and temporary staff; in 1890, there were 102 employees on the civil list, an increase of twelve per cent.² For sixteen of these nineteen years, however, there were fewer public employees than there were in 1871. In fact, in 1880 the public service numbered only twenty-seven and three of these were temporary employees. The financially strapped young province could not afford the luxury of a growing public service.

The location of these few employees was generally split between Victoria and the districts. As Table I indicates, until 1881 the number of field and Victoria-based personnel was roughly equal. By 1890, however, most civil servants were either located outside of Victoria or their duties took them, for the most part, outside of the capital. Except for a brief centralization trend in the early twentieth century, until World War II, the percentage of employees in the field would hover around sixty per cent as it did in 1890. The Government Agents and the Provincial Police, who were primarily staff to the agents, constituted the vast majority of these decentralized personnel. As Table I demonstrates, the agents and the police were the largest branch of government, by far, throughout this period.

The only department of government that grew substantively during these years was the Attorney-General's Department primarily because of an increase in the Land Registry Branch which by 1890 was busy recording large land holdings by cattle ranchers and timber and railway companies. The government of William Smithe, who was Premier for four years--1881 to 1887--and longer than any of his predecessors, "had established a precedent in using public lands, a seemingly inexhaustible asset, to bonus the construction of wagon roads and railways and to pay the costs of reclamation schemes."³ Some growth

TABLE I
British Columbia Government Departments, Estimates of
Permanent Staff/Headquarters and Field in Person Years, 1871-1891

<u>Departments</u>	<u>1871</u>		<u>1880-1881</u>		<u>1890-1891</u>	
	<u>Hqtrs.</u>	<u>Field</u>	<u>Hqtrs.</u>	<u>Field</u>	<u>Hqtrs.</u>	<u>Field</u>
PROVINCIAL SECRETARY (& Minister of Mines)	4 ¹		2		4	3 ²
- Printing Branch	4		5		10	
- Post Office	1	1				
- Assay				1		
- Education Office			1		1	1 ³
SUB-TOTAL	9	1	8	1	15	4
FINANCE (& Agriculture)						
- Treasury	3		2		3	
- Audit	2					
- Assessor (Rev. Service)	5	3	1	1	1	6
- Collector	2	1				
SUB-TOTAL	12	4	3	1	4	6
LANDS (& Public Works)						
- Surveyer-General	5		3		7	2 ⁴
- Inspector of Steam Boilers	1					
SUB-TOTAL	6		3		7	2
ATTORNEY GENERAL	1		1		9 ⁵	4
- Registrar General			2			
- Supreme & County Court	3		1	1	7	4
- Provincial Police		2 ⁷	1		3	
SUB-TOTAL	4	2	5	1	19	8
GOVERNMENT AGENTS (Police and Agents combined)		22		20 ⁶		44
GRAND TOTAL	31	29	19	23	45	64

¹Colonial Secretary's Office; ²Inspectors of Mines; ³School Inspector; ⁴Timber Inspectors; ⁵Includes Land Registry Staff; ⁶Does not include Victoria Police and Gaols; ⁷New Westminster Constables; ⁸Includes Nanaimo Inspector of Mines.

Source: 1871 Data - "An Act to provide for a permanent Civil Service," No. 16, B.C. Ordinances and Acts, 1866-71 and Colonial Estimates, Appendix C., p. 634-645, Journal of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 1851-1871, ed. James E. Hendrickson, V. 7., Victoria, Provincial Archives, 1980.
 1881 and 1890 Data - British Columbia, Public Accounts, Victoria, B.C.

Notes:

- The Premier's Office, Ministers, London Agent-General, Legislation and Lieutenant Governor are excluded from this table.
- All temporary or sessional employees have been excluded where possible.
- Headquarters include Victoria-based employees except where these employees' primary work was in the field; e.g., Timber Inspectors.
- Government Agents were not a separate department. They are noted separately for analysis purposes.
- The Department of Finance (and Agriculture) was not constituted until 1873 but is noted separately for analysis purposes.

also occurred in the Provincial Secretary's Department where the Printing Branch was churning out documentation on the untapped potential of the young province for immigrants but mostly for promising investors. The Department of Finance actually decreased in size from 1871 to 1890 while the Department of Lands and Works increased by only three individuals.

Seven officials outside Victoria were not considered part of the Government Agents in 1871. By 1880, this was reduced to three but two--the Assayer and Court Registrar--probably took instructions from their local agent. Ten years later twenty public servants in the districts, though not considered agent employees were, in fact, appendages to an agent's office. In contrast, the Mines Inspectors, Assessors, and Court Registrars removed from Victoria were either indirectly supervised by the agent or, at a minimum, depended upon him for administrative support and referred to him in all financial matters. These officials, and the School Inspector, are significant, because they represent the first of what would become a growing cadre of officials outside Victoria who did not report directly to an agent. These individuals represented the beginnings of specialization, a phenomena which would increase significantly in the nineties and threaten the omniscience of the agents. In the first instance, however, the agents probably welcomed them.

The First Government Agents

Change from a centralized and mostly autocratic regime to a representative democracy affected the agents in a number of ways. More tasks were added to their heavy workload but, more important, the manner in which they did their job took on different characteristics.

The agents became more responsive to local conditions and had to share power with elected officials and other public servants. Decisions about road work, for example, were expected to include the input of the local M.P.P. Late in the 1880's, timber inspectors began appearing in some districts. Nevertheless, the agent was still the primary government representative at the local level and in remote communities he prevailed, with Victoria's guidance, completely. The process took decades to complete, but we can see shadows of the future Government Agent during this period.

The numbers of Government Agents or Gold Commissioners remained relatively constant after Confederation. As Table II indicates, there were six magistrates in 1871 and eight agents or gold commissioners in 1880 and 1890 respectively. Except for an occasional headquarters change, their districts endured throughout this period. Agents were located principally at New Westminster, Kootenay, Cariboo (Forks of Quesnelle and Richfield), Yale (or Lytton), Clinton (or Lillooet), Okanagan (Vernon), Kamloops, and Nanaimo. Their subordinate staff, that is collectors, assessors, constables, road superintendents and the like, were stationed at as many as twenty-six additional points across the province. Figure II provides a visual picture of the agent/gold commissioner and subordinate office locations across the province in 1890.

An analysis of "District Returns of Revenue" in the Public Accounts from 1872 to 1890 indicates that the district offices grew in importance to the provincial treasury. In 1875, the district offices collected 25 per cent of all provincial revenue with the balance assembled at the Treasury and in the Victoria area districts. By 1890, however, the percentage contribution from the district offices to the provincial coffers had more than

TABLE II

Government Agent/Gold Commissioner and Other Office Locations, 1871-1891

	1871*	1880/81	1890/91
Agents/Gold Commissioners	New Westminster Nanaimo Lillooet Cariboo Victoria Northern Mines	New Westminster Nanaimo Lillooet Cariboo Kootenay Laketon Yale Kamloops	New Westminster Nanaimo Yale Kamloops Richfield Forks Quesnelle Okanagon Clinton
Total Number of Agents/Gold Commissioners	6	8	8
Other Offices		Esquimalt Burrard Inlet Forks Quesnelle Lightning Creek McDame Creek Glenora Stickeen Lytton	Esquimalt Burrard Inlet E. Kootenay W. Kootenay Donald Revelstoke Hot Springs Golden Sproat's Landing Fort Steele Nelson Skeena Cassiar Hazelton Alert Bay Metlakatlah Ashcroft Rock Creek Granite Creek Wellington Chemainus Cowichan Comox Union Mines Lillooet 150 Mile House
Total: Other Offices		8	26
GRAND TOTAL:	6	16	34

*Magistrates

FIGURE II

Location of Government Agent/Gold Commissioner
and Subordinate Offices, 1890



doubled, to 52 per cent. Some of this growth was due to new revenues garnered by the district offices, for instance, the provincial Revenue Tax of 1881, as well as the dwindling proportion the Dominion subsidy contributed to the government treasury.

As we have seen, the magistrates held the loftiest position in terms of salary during the pre-Confederation period. Probably this was appropriate considering they were legislators as well as district administrators. After British Columbia joined the Dominion, their successors became more like traditional public servants and their salaries demonstrate the difference. By 1880, the agents' average salary had been surpassed by senior Victoria-based bureaucrats. Deputy Ministers in the Walkem government earned almost \$30 a month more than the average salary paid an agent and when John Robson was Premier ten years later, the gap had widened further. This can be seen in Table III where the agent salaries as a percentage of the total public servant salaries dropped by over six per cent from 1880 to 1890. Agent A.W. Vowell, who earned more than any Deputy Minister, was a notable exception possibly because he had recently been a Member of the Provincial Parliament.

Not only were the agents being paid like civil servants they were also expected to act like them. As early as May 1872, "Rules for the guidance of the Servants of the Government" were laid down. These, among other things, specified office hours, absenteeism, confidentiality and restricted smoking in public offices during office hours.⁴ Shortly after Confederation, agents were also expected to post a \$1,500 bond to protect the government from possible indiscretions. Around the same time, magistrates were informed that "public servants of the Province...living in a state of open concubinage with native, or other women...will no

TABLE III

**Total Public Servant Salaries
as a Percentage of Government Expenditures
and
Government Agent Salaries
as a Percentage of Total Public Servant Salaries, 1871-1891**

Fiscal Year	Government Expenditures (millions \$)	Total Public Servant Salaries (millions \$)	%	Government Agent/Police Salaries (millions \$)	%
1871	.522	.149	28.5	.051	34.2
1880-1881	.379	.861	22.7	.032	37.2
1890-1891	1.075	.182	16.9	.565	31.0

Source: Colonial Estimates, 1871; British Columbia Public Accounts, Victoria, British Columbia.

longer be permitted."⁵ Victoria's reach extended into the private lives of its district officials.

The same conflict-of-interest rules applied after Confederation particularly those affecting mine speculation. The mining prohibition circular was re-issued numerous times with little effect. The following excerpt from a letter from W. Stephenson, a subordinate of Bowron, would suggest Bowron, or at least his wife, gambled in mining:

Our Company on Horsefly has burst up I cannot keep it going...I was over on Horsefly but I could not share the expense therefore I had to let the claim go. I am going to make up a Co. next to our Kangaroo Creek Claim and I will put Mrs. B down for an ints. if she wants to, if not all right, but as I will be in Bark [erville] next month we can talk things over.⁶

Victoria was of two minds on the issue of agents participating in mining ventures. On the one hand, it condemned the activity, as agents, particularly the gold commissioners, were expected to bring objectivity to the administration of the mining industry. On the other hand, the capital welcomed the knowledge and contacts that came from the agents' involvement in the commercial life of their districts. It enhanced their effectiveness in dealing with district clientele and provided Victoria with a 'hands-on' perspective of the impact of its policies.

Unlike its colonial predecessor, the provincial government felt that it was more important to maintain district intimacy and risk an agent's entanglement with his region than move him too frequently. Government Agents spent years, often a lifetime, in one location. John Bowron, for example, spent his whole public service career in the Cariboo. G.C. Tunstall was agent in Kamloops for over fifteen years and William Teague was

Government Agent in Yale for fourteen years. The reasons for this change are unclear but probably in the early days of the colony the paucity of qualified, trustworthy and experienced personnel dictated that individuals move more often. By the 1870's the government had a number of competent persons it could rely upon and, equally important, these persons were no longer the Governor's 'handpicked few' whom he moved at whim and with whom he had intimate contact. The unhealthy state of the provincial treasury undoubtedly also was a factor.

This stability should not suggest that agents were always content with their placements. Agents often requested promotions or transfers, primarily to the coast. Victoria was characteristically unreceptive and let their repeated pleas go unanswered. Bowron, for example, petitioned for the job of Deputy Treasurer in 1886 but was rejected in favour of an internal candidate.⁷ H.M. Ball likewise was extremely frustrated with Victoria's unwillingness to move him from the Cariboo:

Previous to Confederation periodical changes were made in the distribution of the County Court Judges in the different Districts and as I have resided four years in this one, and passed 11 of my 15 years service in the mountains, I consider that I am entitled to an exchange and have mentioned the names of the Victoria or New Westminster Districts because neither of the Judges residing there have taken their turn of Duty in the upper portions of the provinces.⁸

A.W. Vowell, who later joined the federal public service as Indian Agent, was also notably irritated with his tenure in the hinterland: "I am heartily sick of the mountains, of bed rock, of sluices and everything connected with the 'honest miner'", he wrote Premier Smithe.⁹

Not only was the government reluctant to make permanent transfers, it hesitated to grant vacations. Agents were fortunate to get two weeks every two years and were given such a privilege only when their presence was least required in their district and when it was least expensive to government. Bowron's vacation requests were denied for years. He finally received two months' vacation after nineteen years of service to the colonial and provincial governments!

With regard to training, the situation improved little between 1871 and 1890. The lack of instruction after Confederation, however, became more noticeable because the agents' work became more visible. During the 1860's, unreliable communication with the regions forced the magistrate to rely upon initiative and common sense to solve emergent problems. By the 1870's, however, Victoria was connected by telegraph, via New Westminster, to most major centres on the mainland and in the next decade the railway linked the province from the Rocky Mountains to the coast. This curtailed the agents' independence, made their inadequacies more apparent and made them more accountable. It also brought Victoria and other authorities in much closer touch. No longer were agents able to chase criminals, for instance, as they saw fit; rather, they were expected to follow instructions. Bowron was expected to investigate which miners had been absent from their diggings, how many macintoshes or waterproof coats had been sold recently and to whom, after he received the following telegram on June 30, 1888: "Stage robbed near Alexandria by two men. One six foot tall heavy set the other nearly as tall. Both had dark water proof coats. One man had rifle the other a revolver. Government offer \$500 reward for arrest and conviction. Warrants out."¹⁰

Similarly, Victoria-based specialists by the end of this era exacerbated his dilemma. By 1890, the agent was relating to authorities who understood more, or at least thought they did, about district activities than he did and who were not hesitant to draw it to his attention. The agent also had to tolerate the advice of politicians who travelled back and forth from the capital. Although this travel was infrequent, the local member, armed with current information from Victoria, was quick to notice shoddy work. Fortunately, the agents of the 1870's and 1880's, like their magistrate forerunners, received little instruction but were a much more seasoned lot.

Not long after Confédération, 'the agents' competence was recognized when they were notified that their authority was finally formalized. Agents were acknowledged as the resident heads of their districts and all officers of the government reported to them. Although their authority in this regard had been assumed for years, it was now legitimized:

In the interests of the public service it is advisable that the several officers and servants of the Government ...in the District of the Cariboo should be organized under a resident head who should have power to officially control and direct them in the absence of special instructions from any Head of a Department here, and report to the Hon. the Provincial Secretary upon any reforms needed and upon any matters of general interest to the government.¹¹

It is interesting to note, however, that not long after, Bowron was admonished that in financial matters his authority was still limited. Overdrafts from the Bank of British Columbia, even for payment of work already authorized and completed, were not acceptable. Victoria's confidence in the agents extended only so far.

Victoria's attention to administrative issues, however, was sporadic at best. For years the agents did not know what to call themselves or their offices. An office became an agency when the local head became a Government Agent but a gold commissioner performed many of the same functions. Conversely, an individual could be an agent without being a gold commissioner as John Bowron was for eight years. In this case, not being a gold commissioner meant one less function for the agent to perform. It took a number of years before the title of agent took preeminence over that of gold commissioner. H.M. Ball called himself agent as early as 1872 but not with consistency.¹² John Bowron was referred to as Government Agent in 1873 in a letter from the Treasury Department but, until 1874, when he started using the term agent regularly, he used all sorts of other names to describe himself, for example, Sub-Accountant, Clerk of Records and Recorder.¹³ During the early post-Confederation years, the lack of a clear distinction suggests that the appointment to agent had idiosyncratic significance but little administrative purpose. Later, as we shall see, becoming an agent was momentous indeed.

Victoria also ignored the agents' numerous complaints. The agents grumbled that they were being taken for granted, grumbled about their working conditions and grumbled about their salaries. John Ash's response to Bowron's request for more money for additional duties is representative. Bowron received a similar letter eleven years later when he requested more compensation after being appointed gold commissioner:¹⁴

I am to acquaint you that a Salaried officer of the Government is expected to perform any new duty that may be allotted to him, and which may not be incompatible with his other functions and that the duties of the District Registrar of the Supreme Court do

not appear to the Council of such a nature to render any re-adjustment of your salary necessary.¹⁵

Like their magistrate predecessors, when the agents objected to new duties their pleas were similarly ignored. Bowron's wish not to be appointed assessor and collector in 1876, "as the duties devolving upon me as Clerk of Mining Records, Government Agent etc. etc. in this large and populous District occupy my whole [self]," fell upon deaf ears.¹⁶ On the other hand, if they dabbled in things not within their mandate, Victoria quickly brought it to their attention. In 1878, George A. Walkem, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and Attorney General, for example, drew to Bowron's attention that his officials were stepping out of bounds: "The Government desire that all officers under your control should be strictly confined to their duties and refrain from interfering in matters unconnected with their office."¹⁷

Victoria gave the agents few tools to do the job. Agents virtually had to beg for copies of relevant legislation even though Victoria officials realized the "absurdity" of the policy of providing them with only "an unbound copy of the Statutes."¹⁸

Immediately following Confederation, however, the biggest frustration for the magistrates was clarifying which of their duties were provincial responsibility and which more properly belonged with the federal government. Even more exasperating was defining how much they were to be paid for these multi-various tasks. This was particularly troublesome for magistrates who previously had been county court judges.

In the colonial Legislative Council, the magistrates voted for union with Canada only after being promised suitable pensions and appointment as county court judges independent of the provincial government.

Article 6 of the Terms of Union granted each magistrate a pension of £350. It was not clear, however, whether the new judges would be required to perform other functions for the new government, for example, acting as gold commissioner. At a minimum, H.M. Ball, the highest paid of the new judges, felt he would be compensated for these additional duties. Victoria refused.

For a while Victoria was in the enviable position of having the magistrates performing all the functions they did prior to Confederation but having their salaries paid by the Dominion government because they were county court judges. It did not last long. From the summer of 1871 until 1874 Ball, the most determined of the magistrates, beseeched the Lieutenant Governor and the Provincial Secretary to recognize what he thought were his legitimate rights. In May 1872 he petitioned for more salary as "in the absence of any person being appointed to do the duties of Gold Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate I, who have been performing these duties for the Provincial Government [wish to draw the salary voted in the Estimates]...in addition to the salary paid me by the Dominion Govt. as a County Court Judge."¹⁹ In the fall of 1872, he refused to act as Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages and in May 1873 he resigned his appointment as Gold Commissioner. On every occasion he was rebuked by Victoria with only his comments and no recommendation passed on to Ottawa. Soon, however, legislators in Victoria were fed up with his complaints and the complaints of others as well their services as judges and, "they were superseded in this phase of their work by men more learned in the law."²⁰ The new Government Agent took over the judges' other responsibilities and retained the stipendiary magistrate aspects of their legal work. The agents' responsibility for customs and the post office was transferred to

federal authorities and some of their police work was handed over to a new Victoria-based official, the Superintendent of Police.

The most important immediate development for the post-Confederation agents was the creation of the position of Superintendent of Police. As the magistrates, now county court judges, were being paid by the Dominion government, they could no longer direct the activities of the provincially controlled constables. In 1875 Charles Todd was appointed the first superintendent, an office he held for the next eleven years. As will be discussed later, the constables subsequently reported to an agent or to Todd depending upon their location. This dual reporting, although confusing for some, meant that the police, at least in those jurisdictions where there was no agent with magistrate's power, were finally independent of the judiciary.

The transition from colonial to provincial status was not without difficulty for the agents. The major problem was jurisdictional now that two governments were responsible for providing services. As the only service providers throughout the colony for all government services and the principal agent of government after Confederation, it was understandable that the agents received particular attention. In fact, the young province was so concerned about the issue that in 1872 it instructed agents to provide "a semi-monthly return showing fully the work performed on each day of the month [for purposes of finding]...out the exact nature of the daily routine of work performed by every paid officer of the Government throughout the Province."²¹ How the agents found time for this tedious and time-consuming activity to sort out exactly what agent functions were provincial responsibilities and what ones were within federal jurisdiction in addition to their statutory

obligations and a host of other ancillary duties is nothing short of extraordinary.

Beginning to Share Authority

The agents' primary roles remained essentially the same following Confederation. Such was the case for their gold commissioner responsibilities even though the governing legislation changed in 1884 with passage of the Mineral Act, (1884, c.10, s. 154). The job was altered, however, in two important respects.

The agent became an advocate for his district. Bowron, for instance, pleaded for years with Victoria for more interest in the quartz prospects of the Cariboo. As the attention of the province was drawn to the Kootenay mines or elsewhere, he made sure that Victoria did not forget the potential of his district. In this regard, his annual reports, completed now in draft by his subordinate officers and submitted for his review and compilation, became more elaborate. In addition, with British Columbia's inclusion in the Dominion, Ottawa became interested in the province's potential and appointed Bowron and his colleagues across the province 'local correspondents' of the Director of the federal Geological Survey Department. Even the Mayor of Vancouver got into the business of promoting the riches of the province and requested Bowron and other agents "furnish [him] desirable news" from their districts.²² Bowron, for one, relished these additional assignments as they gave him new avenues to promote the Cariboo.

Possibly in response to Bowron's badgering, but more likely due to Premier Smithe's policy of expanding public works, Victoria decided to encourage mining in a radically different way. On May 22, 1883, John Bowron was advanced the sum of \$1,500 "in aid of prospecting and exploring in the Cariboo District." Together with the "full and confidential advice of George Cowan, senior

member for the District," he was to "outfit such persons, possessing enough of confidence and pluck to give their time and energies, as are most likely to give a good account of themselves."²³ Few noticed it at the time, but Bowron became directly involved in economic development. This initiative probably convinced him that his advocacy could indeed produce results.

In one other significant way agents' mining responsibilities changed. As we have seen, Bowron was expected to consult fully with the senior Member from the Cariboo on the subsidized mining expedition of 1883. A few years later he was also instructed to consult the local M.P.P. with regard to all applications for mining leases. "The Honourable the Minister of mines, deem[ed] that the opinion of the Members or Members of the District should be obtained with regard to all applications for Mining leases...and forward [their] recommendation or otherwise as the case may be...", A. Campbell Reddie informed all gold commissioners on October 17, 1890.²⁴ This was a dramatic departure. Agents, and magistrates before them, had been requested periodically to seek the advice of their local member, particularly with regard to public works, but to make the M.P.P.'s guidance a matter of policy on issues previously left to an independent administrator was a disturbing change.

Although no longer county court judges, the agents' responsibilities as magistrate changed little after Confederation although the Magistrates Act, 1877, No. 2, s.5 and a Small Debts Act, 1886, c.6, s. 52, clarified their jurisdiction. Hitherto, the agents had operated more by custom than legal mandate. In 1888, however, a substantive shift occurred when the Police and Prisons Regulation Act (1888, c. 53, s. 1), enshrined for the first time the authority of the agent in police matters and identified the position of Superintendent of Police.

This change was important in that police constables were instructed "to obey all lawful directions and be subject to the government of the Superintendent and to the lawful orders and directions of the Government Agent having authority in the place where such constable is acting" (Sec. 4). The legislation was unclear, however, as to chain of command. It did not state, for instance, whether the agent reported to the superintendent in regard to police matters or if a constable reported to his agent or the superintendent. While it was probably written in this fashion because not all constables were within 'organized' districts headed by an agent, the ambiguity caused considerable dismay. In spite of its vagueness, the legislation meant that the agent was expected to consult with someone else in Victoria. Many agents resisted this development but the police superintendent, who actually had been appointed over a decade earlier but had no legislative authority, was the first of many Victoria specialists the agents could not ignore.

The agents and their constables continued to perform their police duties much as before. They became more involved in court work with the added responsibility of registrar of County and Supreme Court and, on occasion, were consumed by legal issues. They remained the principal law and order men in the community. This period, in fact, witnessed the most celebrated criminal act of the agent's tenure as chief constable - the murder of John Ussher, Kamloops Government Agent.

Three sons of Chief Trader Donald McLean, formerly of the Hudson's Bay Company and a member of the Chilcotin expedition, and a friend, Alex Hare, became horse thieves and troublemakers in the Kamloops district in 1879. They terrorized the community for miles around: as far away as the Similkameen, people were frightened.²⁵ After the McLeans and Hare escaped from the Kamloops gaol, John

Ussher and two constables went after them. They were cornered and after discussions with Ussher, who knew them well, the hooligans shot and killed Ussher and one of his constables. After an extensive manhunt, in which another citizen was murdered, the McLeans were finally captured by a posse, tried in New Westminster and hanged on January 31, 1881. This event demonstrated that the agents' duties could be dangerous--one suspects this was common knowledge as the magistrates had dealt with potentially explosive matters since 1858. More important, the event likely hastened the 1888 legislation that legitimized the position of Superintendent of Police. If criminal activity was getting this flagrant, it was time to designate someone to deal full-time with it. Untrained generalists had their limitations.

Lands and works activities also continued much as before although the intensity and complexity of the work increased markedly. In the Cariboo by 1881, for instance, the amount of road work had risen so dramatically that Bowron had a number of road superintendents reporting to him. In this regard, the agents' responsibility was primarily one of supervising the supervisors which, in turn, involved considerable negotiating skills as often they were in conflict with community members over the location or extent of required repairs to roads and bridges. The agents were, as before, held accountable for all expenditures on road work or public buildings in their districts and on no account was their authorized amount to be exceeded. Some discretionary authority was granted where delay might produce more cost or the agents' "more intimate knowledge of all circumstances it is probable the ends of justice may be attained," but these instances always required extensive justification later.²⁶ The agents also had to turn road work off and on, almost at will. Either due to limited

funds, or for political reasons, Victoria was continually informing the agents to release or hold back the road superintendents. The authority of the magistrate or "any agent duly appointed in writing by the Chief Commissioner" was finally acknowledged under the Public Works Act of 1888 (Sec. 2, C.A. 1888, c. 120, s. 1).

The most important development in this sphere of agent activity during the post-confederation era was the intrusion of politics, namely consultation with local M.P.P.'s on how and where road work was to take place. "As regards the particular works to be undertaken you will, as far as practicable, consult with Mr. Cowan and Mr. Wilson, Members for the District," wrote W.S. Gore, Surveyor-General on March 21, 1884.²⁷ This development limited the agent's flexibility but, more profoundly, it heralded a dramatic change: no longer was his advice the last word from the district. From now on, he had to share authority.

Over time this interference became more noticeable but the agents also became more adept in handling political figures who were frequent visitors to their offices on matters of general or administrative interest. For most agents or gold commissioners this was easy as they knew the politicians well. A.W. Vowell, for one, had briefly served in the Walkem government. Other agents were equally familiar because they were well known and influential in their region and political figures courted their favour. Endorsement from an agent was advantageous for a politician but they had to be adroit in handling requests such as Bowron received in 1888 from a Soda Creek resident who "decided to come out in the Liberal Conservative interest for the Commons in the event of Mr. Reid getting the Senatorship and solicit your vote and influence to help me win."²⁸

The agents avoided partisan activities but, because of their unique role in district affairs, they could never totally remove themselves from politics. Ministers and local politicians characteristically wanted more than the agents were willing to deliver. The dilemma was similar to the problems arising from the agents' relationship with the business community that was discussed earlier. Politicians could see the merit in unbiased officials but also valued the insights that came with an intimate association with the agent. When political parties were unknown and political skirmishes were generally confined to the floor of the Legislature, the agent could confidently steer a middle path. The next generation of agents would not find it so easy.

Politics rarely, if ever, became a factor in the agents' financial tasks. Here it was business as usual. There were more taxes to collect, the most notable being the Provincial Revenue Tax which came into force on May 9, 1881, and replaced the School Tax which the agents collected since 1876. The agents were habitually reminded that their collections were "carried on in a lax and inefficient manner [and] that a more vigorous collection should be made,"²⁹ but their only information about new financial policies sometimes came from a casual reading of the Gazette. In addition to collecting a host of taxes, the agents acted as assessors or supervised the activities of assessors for their districts. On top of this, they were expected to hold Courts of Appeal and supervise elections as the Collector of Votes and, with the advent of Confederation, were also told to keep separate accounts on a number of entries, for example, postage, customs, and excise taxes.

The nitpicking attitude of Victoria regarding the agents' accounting skills did not change after 1871. If anything, it got worse. Bowron and his colleagues were

repeatedly admonished about the sloppiness, tardiness or inaccuracy of their bookkeeping. Robert Beaven, who later became Premier, was one of the most fastidious Ministers of Finance. "Referring to voucher No. 153 cutting wood and clean office...this payment I cannot recognise as Chinese are not to be employed by the Government...I would suggest to you whether a constable or prisoner could not cut the wood," he wrote Bowron in 1878.³⁰ "Any collector neglecting to get his accounts in promptly should be reported," J.H. Turner wrote in a 1889 Circular.³¹ Victoria had little patience with administrative weaknesses.

The Agents continued sending their annual and monthly reports to Victoria. Their content did not change much and astute politicians in Victoria realized the importance of the agents in providing information. Premier Smithe, who had generally amiable relations with Ottawa over the construction of the C.P.R., kept a close watch on things through his 'man in the Kootenays', A.W. Vowell. After passing pleasantries on Mrs. Smithe's recent trip to San Francisco, Vowell noted in a July 14, 1884 letter that he "placed the Railway officials...in their proper positions regarding the line of action incumbent upon them [to] adopt whilst carrying on their works in this Province."³² In this way, Vowell kept Victoria aware of developments in a major federal-provincial dispute over legal jurisdiction at Farwell (Revelstoke). Similarly, Yale Agent, Walter Dewdney, brother of Edgar Dewdney and father of another Government Agent, advised the capital on the progress of the Onderdonk contract at the other end. In a similar vein, Marshal Bray, the Nanaimo Agent, kept G.A. Walkem, the Attorney General, apprised of growing labour unrest at the Vancouver Coal Company. By the 1880's, agents also provided summary and statistical reports to most depart-

ment heads in Victoria, not just the Mines Department. In 1885, for instance, the Department of Agriculture requested reports "regarding the agricultural products and resources of the Province...together with samples of cereals (such as wheat, barley, oats, peas, etc.,) say five pounds each."³³

As before Confederation, the agents had a multitude of other responsibilities. Many of these were social welfare matters, the most important and time-consuming of which was the care of 'lunatics'. The agents similarly continued marrying people and registering births and deaths even though they often did not know the legal subtleties of this activity. Caspair Phair, Lillooet Agent, for example, wrote a lengthy letter to A.E.B. Davie, Attorney General, describing the circumstances of a complicated case which ended with a plea, "Ought I marry them under the circumstance?"³⁴ Agents also became the government representative on hospital boards, a task they performed for years thereafter. They were made responsible for the administration of the Jurors Act, 1883, and the Graveyard Act, 1884, and continued as School Inspectors where required. In addition, they executed the wills of indigent persons, provided a missing persons bureau for distraught relatives often thousands of miles away, and assisted Indian Agents with policing.

The Government Agents' workload increased following Confederation in two ways. More tasks were added and they were expected to consult with political and other bureaucratic officials on certain matters. Although they groaned about the additions to their extensive responsibilities, they took them in their stride. The politicians similarly bothered them little and their input was probably welcomed; particularly in deciding on contentious road work. The politicians were likely close

acquaintances so consultation was undoubtedly an informal and relaxed affair. The sharing of power with other bureaucrats, however, was something else entirely but they would have to get accustomed to this new, threatening change.

Community Leaders First

The agents' ability to do all that was expected of them was dependent upon two significant factors. First, their administrative system, before and after Confederation, was extraordinarily integrated. All functions were focused and dependent upon the Government Agent and, as it was with the District Officer in the Punjab, "supervision, coordination, and control merged and operated in his person."³⁵ Through the agents, Victoria controlled government activities and provided continuity to district affairs. The fledgling province was fortunate the agents were available in the throes of its early development.

Second, the young province was similarly blessed with outstanding agents and gold commissioners following Confederation. These individuals were community leaders, known and respected in Victoria and their districts. Most were also highly knowledgeable public servants having served both the colonial and provincial governments. A significant proportion of them received their promotions after a stint as constable since after 1861 new magistrates had come from the constabulary.³⁶ Four colonial constables, notable for their allegiance to duty, fall into this category. They were William H. Fitzgerald, Arthur W. Vowell, John Howe Sullivan and Stephen Redgrave.

Fitzgerald came to British Columbia from Canada with no previous police experience. He started work as

a constable in Lytton and rose to become a stipendiary magistrate and gold commissioner. He was the first government representative in the Omineca district and opened an office at Vital Creek. Fitzgerald, a Mason like so many of his colleagues, distinguished himself by his ability to defuse potentially explosive situations.

Vowell arrived in Victoria in February 1862 and entered government service two years later as jailer at New Westminster. The son of a prominent Irish lawyer, and an ex-lieutenant in the Irish Militia, Vowell became chief constable in the Kootenay and was there during the abortive Big Bend strike. After Confederation, he was appointed gold commissioner and magistrate for the Kootenay; a year later he was sent to the Omineca. In 1875, he was elected to represent Kootenay in the provincial legislature but resigned a year later and returned to Cassiar after J.H. Sullivan drowned in the sinking of the Pacific off Cape Flattery on November 4, 1875. In 1884 he returned to the Kootenays and in 1889 was appointed Superintendent for Indian Affairs for British Columbia, a position he held until 1910. At the age of 77, he committed suicide. Vowell was noted for his "impartiality and correctness of decisions."³⁷

John Sullivan was first appointed in 1864 as constable and gaoler in Quesnel under Magistrate Gaggin. Subsequently, he was stationed in Richfield as mining recorder and then became Gaol Warden and Superintendent of Police for Victoria. In 1875, he was promoted to gold commissioner for the Cassiar district. Another constable who rose through the ranks was Stephen Redgrave, an Englishman educated at Rugby and previous Inspector with the Colonial Mounted Police in Australia. He started work in the colony as constable in Victoria and in 1864, was appointed to a similar post in the Cariboo. Redgrave resigned a year later because of the low rate of pay but

soon returned as constable and afterward was appointed magistrate at Golden where he died in 1903.

Three other colonial constables who went on to bigger responsibilities also deserve mention. Napoleon Fitzstubbs, who lost an eye in the line of duty, was employed as a constable, collector and gaoler under Philip Nind in Quesnel in 1861 and much later became Government Agent at Nelson. In 1897, he was given the job of warden of the Nelson gaol, an appointment he considered a demotion. Three years later he was superannuated. William Teague came to the colony in 1858 and within a year was appointed constable at Hope. Although he was soon promoted to Chief Constable, the lure of the Cariboo drew him away for a number of years until he rejoined the public service as Government Agent at Yale in 1873 where he remained until 1887 when prospecting captivated him again. Walter Dewdney replaced him. Dewdney began his public service as constable and gaoler in Richfield in July 1867. He was dismissed a month later for negligence in letting a prisoner escape. After reinstatement and service in Yale, he was moved to Spallumcheen (Enderby) in 1884 and then to Priest's Valley (Vernon) in 1885. Depressed and in poor health, he committed suicide at Vernon on January 24, 1892.

As a rule, colonial constables made fine gold commissioners and agents. They had the requisite experience and, most important, had proven themselves to Victoria. A number of constables worked themselves 'up the ranks' following Confederation. Jack Kirkup, who became somewhat of a legend in British Columbia's law enforcement history, is the most celebrated example. Kirkup was a constable for Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Farwell Magistrate. Kirkup, a muscular, 300-pound man born in Ontario, kept the peace unaided in Rosslund during the mining boom and eventually became agent. Like

some of the colonial magistrates, he had unconventional ways of keeping the peace. His answer to drunkenness, for example, was to lock up the drunk and then go after the saloon keeper. "Many a bartender learned to keep his difficult customers out of sight until they were normal again."³⁸ One story involving Kirkup concerns the refusal of Superintendent Hussey to give him his annual leave. After saying he was an excellent man and worked very hard, the agent concluded: "Now it [annual leave] may have been refused on the ground of the number of convictions not on the books. But here, Mr. Attorney General, let me remind you, Mr. Kirkup doesn't impound people, he pounds them."³⁹ Hussey, Kirkup's difficult boss, also served as constable (1878-80) and as Government Agent (1880-91) before being named Superintendent of Police, a post he held with distinction. According to John H. McMullin, a subsequent Superintendent and former agent, Hussey was a great man hunter but also a publicity seeker.⁴⁰

Sproat, Kirkup's one-time boss, was another important post-Confederation agent. Sproat got his start with the government in 1863 as justice of the peace and magistrate for the west coast of Vancouver Island where he worked for an English sawmill company at Alberni Canal. After a visit to England, Sproat was sent to Kootenay and in 1885 became magistrate in Farwell. In 1886, he became gold commissioner and assistant commissioner of lands and works.

West of the Kootenays two other notable agents made their mark. George Christie Tunstall and John Bowron arrived in the Cariboo with the Overlanders in 1862. Tunstall worked Williams Creek as a miner for a while and later moved to Kamloops where he became agent in December 1879. Five years later he was sent to Revelstoke and, shortly thereafter, returned to Kamloops. Tunstall held

many posts for the government: he was gold commissioner for the Yale district, assistant commissioner of lands and works, as well as stipendiary magistrate. Tunstall died January 6, 1911. One of his sons married Allie Bowron, daughter of John Bowron, one of the most notable agents of this period. John Bowron, was born March 10, 1837, in Huntingdon, Quebec. He studied law in Cleveland until he joined his classmate, George Tunstall, and his cousin in the epic 'overlander' journey to the Cariboo. In 1866, he became postmaster for Barkerville, a position he held for ten years. In 1872, he was appointed mining recorder and in 1875, Government Agent. Nine years later he was named gold commissioner. Bowron set an excellent example for his colleagues. For over thirty years this tall, slender man, nicknamed 'Slim' by his friends, was one of the Cariboo's most respected citizens. In addition to being an able administrator, Bowron was the driving force for the circulating library, the organizer of the Famous Players Society that made theatrical history in the old Opera House in Barkerville, and an ardent worker for the advancement of education in his district.⁴¹ He was a strong Cariboo advocate and "year after year, with almost monotonous regularity he reported on the quartz deposits, urging, begging, beseeching for renewed interest in the quartz showings."⁴² Married twice, he died in Victoria in 1906.

There were other distinguished district officials during this period. W. Stephenson, for example, was agent in Quesnel for over a decade following his appointment in 1877. He had previously been a subordinate of the Cariboo agent performing a host of government jobs such as constable and recorder. Stephenson and his family, at one time, were the only white persons in Quesnelle Forks, an active Chinese mining community. John Fall Allison, who Douglas at one

time considered making gold commissioner for the Similkameen, was finally appointed to the same position in 1885. Allison, a rancher, married Susan Louisa Moir, the first white woman in the Similkameen district. Similarly, Caspair Phair, Lillooet Agent, and his wife, Cerise Armit Eyre, were among the few white members in their community. Phair, an Irish immigrant, hiked overland to Lillooet from Yale in 1877 where he accepted the job of school teacher and two years later, Government Agent. He and his wife became Lillooet's most distinguished citizens: Caspair, because of his appointment, among others, as agent, assessor, gold commissioner, chief constable, coroner, fire chief, game warden, sheriff and magistrate, and Cerise, because of her ownership of the general store which became the hub of the community.⁴³ Phair, in great measure, is representative of many of the agents of this period.

Phair was the most highly regarded citizen of his district. He and his wife were the "founders" of Lillooet, arriving just before the miners but staying long after their departure. He was a district leader by virtue of position and inclination and "owned approximately half of the townsite at any given time." He also "introduced an element of class and refined living" to the community and often "opened his home to weekend guests, committee meetings and public functions."⁴⁴ Like Vowell, Sproat, Tunstall, Bowron and others, Phair was a community leader. His advice was sought after because his opinion was respected throughout his district and in Victoria. The fact that he was Victoria's representative in their midst and the sole provider of public services in the district only added to his already substantial community status.

Summary and Conclusions

The formation of John Robson's government in 1889 signalled the end of an era. Most of his former adversaries or compatriots had died or would soon be gone. The first Labour representatives to the Provincial Parliament were elected a year later and shortly thereafter Mainlanders would challenge the privileged positions of Vancouver Islanders. Vancouver, which had quickly recovered from a devastating fire in 1886 was challenging Victoria as the province's foremost city. Where only little settlements had once existed, a host of growing towns clung to the ribbon of steel created by the Canadian Pacific Railway. The new timber legislation of 1888 recognized for the first time the wealth of an asset previously ignored. Railway schemes appeared across the province. The province was awakening from a sleepy transition from colonial dependency to self reliant provincial status. In the same manner, the agents progressed from a quiet, individualistic public service to the first hesitant signs of part of an interdependent and specialized bureaucracy.

The period from 1871 to 1890 brought changes for the agents that were a harbinger of things to come. The agents of this era were the last of the old guard. Many had begun their public service careers as colonial constables or magistrates and remembered when the magistrate was the only government official in the district and the only one to whom settlers turned for advice on public policy. They could recall when their actions were limited solely by their imagination and initiative and when Victoria relied on them alone for advice on local matters. They could recollect when Victoria felt the material enterprise of government rested solely in the districts and on their shoulders.

By 1890, the agents' position as the most distinguished officials in the regions was being challenged. The locally elected representative occasionally knew more readily what Victoria expected in terms of government policy than they did. Program specialists, like the Mines and Timber Inspectors, began to question the agents' reasoned opinion. Enhanced methods of communication with the districts merely compounded this change. Victoria was, by 1890, not so far away that its commands could not reach the agents' desks in unaccustomed speed. Colonel Moody, who questioned the unbridled authority of the magistrates years earlier, would have found solace with these developments.

The agents began thinking of themselves, for the first time, as public servants. Rules of behaviour, previously assumed, were written down. Their responsibilities were even clarified by Order-in-Council. In addition, agents were a more stable lot: they often stayed in their districts for a lifetime and their number remained constant. They were a more seasoned group too, with new recruits coming from the ranks of experienced subordinates. Their salaries also came more into line with senior Victoria-based officials. Even though their tasks may not have changed much, headquarters was beginning to view them in a different light.

Finally, in the latter part of this era, the agents began to concern themselves in somewhat unfamiliar matters. Whether it be Bowron's pleadings for more interest in the quartz deposits of the Cariboo or Vowell's overseeing of railway construction, the agents became more involved in economic progress. The agents, as their magistrate predecessors had done, provided timely and regular advice to Victoria on a host of items, but the focus of those reports was changing. They were becoming less statistical, less police-like and more

centred on economic development. Like government itself, the agents' emphasis was moving beyond protection of the state to other concerns.

Although he made the following embittered observation ten years later, Malcolm Sproat, an old gold commissioner, would have felt the same about the changes around him in 1890:

Most of your so-called 'up to date' men here, towards the close of this century, are in the category of political bats--yes, demme, Sir! 'bats'. There is not, in some respects, any essential difference between the 'then' to which I refer--the antipiddling-premier period--and the 'now' that is more or less known to you. We then had Mr. Facing-both-ways, the dog-visaged demagogue, the fluent fool and the arrogant ass, just we now have those types, and always will have them. What I want to impress on thy subdued intelligence is that, until lately, the evil influence of these pests (who unfortunately have real power) was largely counteracted by the strength of the men at the head of affairs, and by the tactful firmness of the district officers of the old school. Now, alack! we have piddling premiers, a civil service queerly recruited or with its heart taken out, and, in consequence, those dangerous libertines above referred to--all the more dangerous because some of them are honest--are brought face to face with the business men and investors, on whom the existence, or, at any rate, the industrial progress of the country depends.⁴⁵

CHAPTER IV, OBEDIENT SERVANT, 1890 - 1917

The changes in British Columbia from 1890 to 1917 were startling. The province's population increased over fourfold and more people were living in cities and towns. Vancouver grew from being the second ranking city in British Columbia to the fourth largest city in the country. No longer was the Canadian Pacific Railway the province's sole rail line. New railways through many mountain valleys and across plateaus connected previously isolated centres with the rest of Canada and with the international seaport of Vancouver. Mineral production increased markedly and British Columbia could boast that it had the greatest mineral production of any jurisdiction in the country. By 1917, the fishing and lumbering industries were thriving in coastal settlements and lumbering was becoming more important in interior valleys. Agriculture, too, became more important to the provincial economy with a huge increase in land under cultivation and total acreage devoted to orchards and nurseries. All of this growth was reflected in the budgets of the ten provincial administrations that governed through these years.

Provincial government expenditures for 1890-1891 surpassed \$1 million for the first time and by 1917-1918 were nine times greater. Deficit budgets were the norm throughout this period although the McBride government shocked the province by recording the first of seven budgetary surpluses in 1904-05 and the second real budget surplus since Confederation. In 1917-18 another surplus budget was presented to the Legislature, this time by the Liberal government of Harlan C. Brewster. Many things account for this dramatic increase in public expenditures. New roads, bridges and public buildings took a large part. So too did railway subsidies and guarantees.

Until the financial crisis of 1913 and the menacing sounds from Europe overtook it, the costs of sustaining the government's workforce also increased dramatically. In 1890-91, the four government departments had a total person-year establishment of 109.¹ As Table IV indicates, by 1917-1918 the number of departments had doubled and over seven times as many personnel provided public services. The largest percentage growth occurred in the 1890's although numerically the twentieth century expansion was far more significant. The extent of the growth was not uniform across the public service; some departments matured much faster than others.

An Increasingly Complex Bureaucracy

The Provincial Secretary's Department with 19 person-years in 1890-1891 was the second largest department of government (excluding responsibility for Police and Gaols which was voted separately). By 1917-1918 the number of person-years in this department had grown to 104, the vast majority of whom were located in Victoria. As revealed in Table V, 'specialized' offices had already appeared in this department by 1890.

Mines was specifically mentioned as a Cabinet responsibility in 1874 but, for reasons of economy, the government merely added the title of Minister of Mines to the Office of the Provincial Secretary and provided no departmental staff or funds save the continued employment of an Inspector of Coal Mines. The Mines Department entered the official vocabulary with the passage of the Bureau of Mines Act, 1895 but the portfolios of Mines and the Provincial Secretary remained united. A Provincial Mineralogist was appointed at the same time. An Inspector of Metalliferous Mines, whose functions were similar to those conferred upon the Inspector of Coal

TABLE IV

British Columbia Government Departments - Estimates of Permanent Staff
in Headquarters and Field in Person Years, 1891-1918

Departments	1890-1891		1900-1901		1910-1911		1917-1918		Comments
	Hdqts	Field	Hdqts	Field	Hdqts	Field	Hdqts	Field	
Provincial Secretary	3	3*	3		6		6		*Inspector of Mines
- Board of Health			2		5		7		
- Provincial Museum	1		3		4		5		
- Printing Office*	10		23		59		56		*Incl. Bookbinding Br.
- Education Office*	1		3		4		4	3	*Teachers not included
- Free Textbook Br.					3		4		
- Industrial Education					1		7		
- School Inspection		1		3		7		12	
SUB-TOTAL PERSON YEARS	15	4	34	3	82	7	89	15	
Mines - Person Years			5	3	9	5	10	10	
Finance (& Agriculture)									
- Treasury	3		5		6		10		
- Insurance							2		
- Audit Office			5	1*	6	1*	3	1	*Inspector of Offices
- Compt-General							11	1	
- Surveyor of taxes & Inspector of Revenue				1	2		2		
- Assessor	1	6	3		3	2	5		
- Bureau of Information					3*		2		*Statistical Bureau
SUB-TOTAL PERSON YEARS	4	6	11	2	22	3	35	2	
Agriculture - Person Years			2*	2*	9*	5*	28	11	*Agriculture part of Treasury
Lands*									*Lands and Works were one Department in 1890-1891 and 1900-1901.
- Lands Branch	7		19		33		18		*Timber Insp., Rangers, Scalers
- Forests		2*		3*	5	18*	7	84*	
- Surveyor-General							28		
- Water Rights Branch					2		8		
SUB-TOTAL PERSON YEARS	7	2	19	3	40	18	61	84	

TABLE IV (Continued)

British Columbia Government Departments - Estimates of Permanent Staff
in Headquarters and Field in Person Years, 1891-1918

Departments	1890-1891		1900-1901		1910-1911		1917-1918		Comments
	Hdqts	Field	Hdqts	Field	Hdqts	Field	Hdqts	Field	
Public Works									
- Works Branch					13		20		
- Road Superintendents				9					
- Steamboiler Inspector				1*	4*	8*	5	12	*Part of Attorney General
- Electrical Energy Inspector						1		2	
- Factor Inspector							2	1	
- Parliament Bldg. Attendant			7*		13		28		*Part of Provincial Secretary
SUB-TOTAL PERSON YEARS	7	2	28	13	30	7	53	15	
Railways - Person Years						2*	4	11**	* Inspector of Tramways ** Fraser River bridge attendants
Attorney-General	2		3		4	1*	9		*Inspector of Legal Office
- Joint Stock Company Branch							3		
- Land Registry	7	4	9	11	11	32	27	72	
- Supreme and County Court	7	4	9	18	10	22	15	30	
- Legislative Library			3		4		10		
- Fisheries Department					4		3		
- Moving Pictures Act							9		
- Municipal Department							3		
- Game Act					2	14	3	36	Incl. Game Wardens
- Factories Act						1			
- Preemption Ins. action								3	
- Provincial Police	3		6	56	11	88	13	95	Exclude Geois and Headquarters. Include Victoria Police
SUB-TOTAL PERSON YEARS	19	8	30	83	46	158	95	236	
Government Agencies Person Years		44*		79		103		189	*Police & Agencies Combined
GRAND TOTAL	45	84	108	185	238	308	375	553	

Notes:

- The Premier's Office, Ministers, London Agent-General, Legislation and Lieutenant Governor, as well as Institutions have been excluded from this table. All temporary or seasonal employees have been excluded where possible; e.g., Registrar of Voters, Sheriffs and Stipendiary Magistrates.
- Person years equals the total number of paid months divided by twelve. Six or more months were considered one person year.
- Headquarters includes all Victoria-based employees.
- Field includes all employees based outside of Victoria as well as Victoria-based employees whose work was primarily in the field; e.g., Timber Inspectors, Animal Inspectors.
- Government Agents were never identified as a separate department. They are noted separately for analysis purposes. In 1917-1918 all Government Agents were accounted together, in one Vote, like other departments.

Sources: British Columbia, Public Accounts for the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 1891; June 30, 1901; March 31, 1911; and March 31, 1918. King's Printer, Victoria, British Columbia.

TABLE V

British Columbia Government Specialized Functions/Offices, 1891-1918

	1890-1891	1900-1901	1910-1911	1917-1918
Specialized Offices/ Functions by Department	Provincial Secretary - Assay - Mines Inspection - Timber Inspection - Superintendent of Education - Schools Inspection	Provincial Secretary - Superintendent of Education - School Inspection - Board of Health Mines - Provincial Mineralogist - Provincial Assayer - Mines Inspection Finance and Agriculture - Office Inspection - Surveyor of Taxes and Inspector - Fruit Pests Inspection - Animal Inspection Lands and Works - Public Works Engineer - Timber Inspection - Road Superintendent Attorney-General - Boiler Inspection	Provincial Secretary - Superintendent of Education - School Inspection - Board of Health Mines - Provincial Mineralogist - Assayers - Mines Inspection Finance and Agriculture - Office Inspection - Surveyor of Taxes and Inspector - Statistical Bureau - Livestock Commissioner - Poultry Expert - Poultry Instructor - Horticulturists - Fruit Pests Inspection - Animal Inspection Lands - Chief Water Commissioner - Timber Inspector and Scales - Steam Boiler Inspection Public Works - Public Works Engineer - Architect Attorney-General - Legal Office Inspection - Game Protection - Electrical Inspection - Tramway Inspection	Provincial Secretary - Superintendent of Education - School Inspection - Free Textbook Branch - Industrial Education - Health Mines - Provincial Mineralogist - Assayers - Mines Inspection - Mine Rescue Instructors Finance - Trust Company Inspection - Superintendent of Insurance - Surveyor of Taxes and Inspector - Bureau of Information - Statistician Agriculture - Livestock Commissioner - Poultry Instructor - Importer of Fruit Inspector - Veterinary Inspector - Dairy Inspector - Plant Pathologist /Entomologist - Soil and Crop Instructor - Markets Commissioner Lands - Forestry - Superintendent & Insp. Preemptions Works - Public Works Engineer - Steam Boiler Inspector - Electrical Inspector - Factories Inspector Railways - Rolling Stock Inspector Attorney General - Official Guardian - Fisheries - Moving Pictures - Municipal Department - Game Act
TOTAL (Specialized Functions/Offices)	5	14	24	35

Mining, was officially appointed in Nelson in 1897, in response to the rapid growth in lode mining in the Kootenay area. In 1899, the Department of Mines Act created a separate department under the ministry of John Fred Hume. No Deputy Minister was appointed until 1903. Not until 1917 did the Province establish full Ministerial responsibility for mining and give the fledgling department rudimentary tools to promote and regulate the industry.

The years 1890 to 1917 were also formative years in the government's efforts to control the important function of managing the public purse. Of foremost importance to the Government Agents was the development in 1896 of the position of Inspector of Government Offices. W.J. Goepel, a former Nelson Mining Recorder, assumed this responsibility in the Audit Office and was able, as we shall see later, to instill unquestioning respect throughout the agencies. In 1899 the Treasury Department was legally reconstituted (62, Victoria, Chapter 65). Revenue services were enhanced during the 1890's and agents or constables responsible for collecting taxes in 'unorganized' districts were given more authority. Revenue offices were also opened in isolated parts of the province; for instance, in Kaslo in 1893. A separate office of the Surveyor of Taxes and Inspector of Revenue emerged by the turn of the century.

The Department of Agriculture, too, underwent phenomenal changes over this period, expanding from a minor adjunct of the Department of Finance to a flourishing, independent department. By the time William Manson took ministerial responsibility in 1916 the department was larger than the Department of Finance and possessed an impressive array of specialist employees. The growth in the Agriculture Department from 1890 to 1917 illustrates both the rapid expansion in government

services and the tremendous change in the qualifications of the staff that performed these functions. Before 1917, Department of Agriculture specialists would have been considered an inappropriate responsibility for government.

The Department of Lands and Works was one department until 1908 when Thomas Taylor became the first Minister of Public Works. Taken together, these departments experienced the most dramatic growth of any agency of government, increasing from a strength of nine person-years in 1890-91 to a combined total of 213 person-years in 1917-18. This transformation alone bears ample witness to the extraordinary expansion in the province.

Specialization in forestry was evident in 1890-1891 with the employment of two Timber Inspectors although they were initially part of the Provincial Secretary's Department. By the turn of the century, the term Forest Ranger was familiar within the public service having been used for five years to fulfil certain forestry functions. By 1900-01, the Department of Lands and Works also had its own Public Works Engineer, F.C. Gamble, a name that would become very familiar to agents. Road Superintendents were also located throughout the province early in this period and soon became independent of the agent. Sydney Almond, Grand Forks Agent, conceded in 1912 that "he [was] no longer consulted on road work in [his] district."²

The Attorney-General's Department registered the second largest overall increase, from 27 person-years in 1890-1891 to 331 by 1917-1918. Most of this growth was taken up by the need for more personnel in the Land Registries that by 1917-1918 were located in a number of communities. The administration of justice was also enlarged considerably, from only 11 staff in 1890-1891 to

45 by 1917-1918. The department's responsibility for Game Wardens added almost 40 new person-years to the department. Finally, by the end of World War I, this department replaced the Department of the Provincial Secretary as the home to an assortment of regulatory or specialized services, such as the Motion Picture Censors and Factory Inspectors.

The Attorney-General's department established an Inspector of Legal Offices in 1910. Like his counterpart in Finance, this position raised the prospect of headquarters' wrath among many Government Agents. Lastly, the Provincial Police, in relation to other agencies, grew very little over the twenty-seven years. Some development occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century but the next seven years witnessed the addition of only nine person-years.

No doubt in response to the frenzied railway and tramway construction throughout the province, a new Department of Railways was created in 1911. F.C. Gamble, former Public Works Engineer and Deputy Minister of Public Works, was given responsibility as Chief Engineer. Unlike the Municipal and Fisheries sections in the Attorney-General's department, the Department of Railways was voted separately by the Legislature. The government put fourteen person-years at Gamble's disposal in 1917-1918.

The percentage of staff in Victoria and the field remained relatively constant over these years (see Table IV). Forty-five, or 41 per cent, of all government personnel were Victoria-based in 1890-1891 and 59 per cent were located in the field. The Government Agents and the Provincial Police constituted, by far, the majority of these sixty-four decentralized personnel. By 1917-1918, 40 per cent of the public service, or 375 person-years, were situated in Victoria. The balance

were either located in the field or, if stationed in Victoria, were, like the Inspector of Fruit Pests, regionally focused. By 1917, however, the agents and police represented less than 50 per cent of decentralized staff.

With the exception of the Lands Department, all government departments became more specialized from 1890 to 1917. Specialized functions were seven times more prevalent in 1917 than in 1890 (see Table V). Some departments had a higher degree of specialization than others but none were immune. The Agriculture Department, for instance, had eight technical specialists on the pay roll ranging from a poultry instructor to a plant entomologist and the Mines Department had four specialist positions including a provincial mineralogist, assayers, mines inspectors and mine rescue instructors. Clearly, government had become much more complex. The Finance Department was the most centralized; the Attorney General's Department was the most decentralized (Government Agents and Police excluded).

The government's salary costs also multiplied. The aggregate cost for Civil Government and Administration of Justice salaries was approximately \$182,000 in 1890-91 and over seven times larger in 1917-18. Table VI illustrates this enormous growth and displays public service salaries as a percentage of total government expenditures. Except for a decrease during the exceptionally large public works budgets of the McBride administration, the amount expended for public service salaries kept pace with total expenditures.

In the twenty-seven years, from 1890 to 1917, British Columbia changed enormously and nowhere was it reflected more than in the growth and development of the provincial public service. Departments that once were home to a potpourri of different functions became

TABLE VI

**Total Public Servant Salaries
as a Percentage of Government Expenditures
and
Government Agent Salaries
as a Percentage of Total Public Servant Salaries, 1891-1918**

Fiscal Year	Government Expenditures (millions \$)	Total Public Servant Salaries (millions \$)*	%	Government Agent/Police Salaries (millions \$)	%
1890-1891	1.075	.182	16.9	.0565**	31.0
1900-1901	2.288	.339	14.8	.085	25.1
1910-1911	8.195	.665	8.1	.128	19.2
1917-1918	8.074	1.386	17.2	.213	15.4

* Includes Civil Government and Administration of Justice salary expenditures.
Does not include salary expenditures noted elsewhere.

** Includes Police and Gaols as well as Government Agents.
Does not include Headquarters, Victoria or Esquimalt.

Source: British Columbia Public Accounts, King's Printer, Victoria, British Columbia.

specialized entities; their detached branches became thriving independent departments. The public payroll mushroomed in size and was issued to a growing number of individuals performing increasingly complex functions. In 1890 the Government Agents and the Provincial Police were Victoria's only representatives outside of the capital. By 1917, they were among a number of regionally-based public employees. In summary, the public service of British Columbia was transformed, in less than three decades, from a small, widely dispersed collection of generalists to a large and increasingly sophisticated organization.

No Longer Constables

To realize the magnitude and rate of change within the public service, one need only reflect on the Government Agents in 1890 and 1917: from small, 'one-man' offices to large offices with many employees; from self-managed offices to management by many; from long hours of labour by one or two to reduced hours of work by many; from a life in which church and community values were of major importance in decision-making to a job increasingly directed by bureaucracy; from services for the generation of revenue and the protection of the state to the provision of services for the individual; from isolated operations dependent upon horse, canoe and, in few locations, railway travel, to the automobile and a network of railways and roads; from the crudest of office fixtures to gestetners and typewriters; from limited telegram service to extensive telephone service; and from an isolated operation to an operation dependent upon instructions from Victoria.

Although the growth in the number of agents from 1890 to 1917 did not parallel that of other arms of

government, it was still considerable. As indicated in Table IV, Government Agent staff increased nearly four-fold. In the nineteenth century, the agents and the Provincial Police were almost indistinguishable. Many constables were responsible for 'agent' work themselves or supervised the activities of police constables engaged in these duties. They, or their staff, were identified as constable/recorder or constable/assessor or constable/collector or even constable/assessor/recorder.³ The reverse was also true. A number of agents were responsible for ensuring that police work was undertaken either by themselves or by subordinate constables. In 1895, probably at the urgings of the Superintendent of Police, F.S. Hussey, a former Kamloops Government Agent, the government clarified the constable's accountability somewhat. Under new legislation, the Legislature voted supply (approved expenditures) for all provincial constables separately from the agents and the Superintendent of Police was given authority to appoint and supervise provincial constables.⁴ Those constables with additional responsibilities for recording mining claims or collecting taxes, however, remained as they were - part of the agency system.⁵ If this was the Decree Nisi, the Decree Absolute of their divorce took place three years later.

The Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of British Columbia for the Fiscal Year ending 30th of June, 1899, for the first time identified the Government Agents and their staff as 'Administrative'. Although still considered part of the 'Administration of Justice' function, it signalled that henceforth the business of the agents was not police work but the management of public affairs. The next year it was only a formality when the agents were taken out of the 'Administration of Justice' section of the Estimates and placed within the 'Civil Government' division. The agents thus began the

twentieth century as a separate and distinguishable agency of government.

The agents throughout this period remained a substantial, though dwindling part, of the provincial bureaucracy. As Table VI shows, at the beginning of the era the agents accounted for almost one-third of all public servant salaries but at the end represented only approximately 15 per cent. The numerical growth of the agents, substantial though it was, did not keep pace with the increase in the rest of the public service.

As Table VII notes, there were eight Government Agents in 1890. By 1917 this number had increased almost fourfold. Most of this growth took place in the nineteenth century with a host of new agents being appointed in such widely scattered locations as Cowichan, Fort Steele, Kaslo, Fort Simpson and Atlin. Offices staffed by other government officials declined over the years as some became full-fledged agencies (an office headed by a Government Agent) while others, like Lillooet, remained an outpost. Still others, like Wellington, Alert Bay or Chemainus, lost their government offices because their economic foundation faltered and the community lost importance to neighbouring centres.

A pattern is visible throughout these developments. Government offices generally originated as constable detachments and matured into full-fledged agencies. Nelson is a case in point. In 1890 Nelson had one constable who was also mining recorder; a year later it had two constable/recorders. In 1892 it was entitled to a gold commissioner and by 1893 it had a staff complement of five: a gold commissioner/stipendiary magistrate, two constables, a mining recorder and a clerk. By 1898, Nelson was the centre of a booming mining industry and it warranted a full-fledged agency led by a government agent/gold commissioner.

British Columbia Government Agent and Other Office Locations, 1891-1918

	1890-1891	1900-1901	1910-1911	1917-1918
Agents	New Westminster Richfield Forks of Quesnelle Yale Kamloops Okanagan Nanaimo Clinton	New Westminster Barkerville Forks of Quesnelle Ashcroft Kamloops Vernon Nanaimo Clinton Cowichan Alberni Comox Golden Fort Steele Nelson Kaslo Rossland Revelstoke Omineca Telegraph Creek Atlin Point Simpson Fairview Nicola	New Westminster Barkerville Ashcroft Kamloops Vernon Nanaimo Clinton Cowichan Alberni Comox Golden Cranbrook Nelson Kaslo Rossland Revelstoke Hazelton Telegraph Creek Atlin Prince Rupert Fairview Nicola Grand Forks Greenwood Fernie Fort St. John	New Westminster Quesnel Ashcroft Kamloops Vernon Nanaimo Clinton Cumberland Alberni Golden Cranbrook Nelson Kaslo Rossland Revelstoke Hazelton Telegraph Creek Atlin Prince Rupert Fairview Nicola Grand Forks Greenwood Fernie Fort George 150 Mile House Duncan Fort Fraser Princeton Vancouver Anyox
TOTAL: Number of Agents	8	23	28	31
Other Offices Staffed by Gold Commissioners, Constables Mining Recorders, etc.	Esquimalt Burrard Inlet East Kootenay West Kootenay Donald Revelstoke Hot Springs Golden Sprout's Landing Fort Steele Nelson Skeena Cassiar Hazelton Alert Bay Metlakatlah Ashcroft Rock Creek Granite Creek Wellington Chemains Cowichan Comox Union Mines Lillooet 150 Mile House	Vancouver Windermere New Denver Slocan Grand Forks Greenwood Nakuap Porcupine Lake Lake Bennett Lillooet Yale Similkameen	Vancouver New Denver Lillooet Yale Wilmer 150 Mile House Stewart Jedway Trout lake Princeton	New Denver Lillooet Trout Lake Wilmer Yale Q.C.I. (?) Barkerville
TOTAL: Other Offices	26	12	10	7
GRAND TOTAL	34	35	38	38

The reverse was also true. Yale, which saw a flurry of activity during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880's, gradually decreased in importance. In 1889 the Yale office was supervised by Agent William Dodd who had been transferred from Lytton. By 1893, however, Dodd also had constable responsibilities for the area and by 1896 he was noted as "Agent, etc." Five years later, the district agent's office was moved to Ashcroft and Dodd, still located in Yale, was only a mining recorder. Thus by 1901, Ashcroft, an important railway and commercial centre, replaced Yale as the logical location for the Government Agent. Dodd had two choices: either be transferred to a larger centre that warranted an agent or remain where he was and become, like his community, increasingly less relevant. Others shared this experience.

The agents continued to be organized in seventeen districts. As these districts became more populated, they were sub-divided and new agent offices or sub-offices were developed. The borders between one area and another remained ill-defined, however, and many agents, like their predecessors, were confused and frustrated by the uncertainty it brought to the day-to-day administration of the office. These difficulties were ameliorated somewhat when an office was upgraded to agent status because then the office reported directly to Victoria but the problem was never really eliminated.

The administration of the Revenue Tax was particularly intractable because of these jurisdictional difficulties. The following lengthy excerpt from a letter written by Wm. G. McMynn, Greenwood Agent, to John B. McKilligan, Surveyor of Taxes and Inspector of Revenue, is illustrative:

Referring to your circular letter of the 17th instant herein, I beg to say that the

KETTLE RIVER DISTRICT, which includes the whole of the Kettle River and Grand Forks Mining divisions, for which I am Government Agent, is situate partly in the Rossland Riding of West-Kootenay Electoral District, (for which Mr. J. Kirkup is Assessor and Collector,) and partly in the East-Riding of Yale Electoral District, (for which Mr. Lambly is Assessor and Collector,) and yet wholly in the County of Yale.

As Government Agent for this, the Kettle River District, the Mining Recorder & Gold Commissioner at Grand Forks, the Deputy Mining Recorders at Camp McKinney, Westridge and Vernon have heretofore remitted their revenue collections to me as Sub-Accountant to the Treasury for this District. In your circular letter above mentioned you say, 'That all Assessors must, as formerly, remit the amount of their collections through the Agent of the Treasury in their respective Districts, namely the Government Agent.'

Now I presume that this means that the Assessors above mentioned ought to remit collections made in my District to me as Sub-Accountant and Government Agent for that District? Or must the Mining Recorder & Gold Commissioner at Grand Forks, the Deputy Mining Recorders at Camp McKinney, Westbridge and Vernon, each, keep two to more sets of books, form J., and remit partly to me as Government Agent and partly to each of the said Assessors mentioned? Which I presume would also mean that I would have to keep three sets of books and remit part of my collections to the Assessor at Rossland, part to the Assessor at Fairview and the balance to the Treasury? This you can easily understand would cause a great deal of book-keeping and mixing accounts of the different officers. It would also mean a great deal of extra work in this office, as my Revenue tax collections for the last three years total up the nice little sum of \$17,652.00.⁶

Agents jealously guarded their jurisdictions for any encroachment by neighbouring agents or mining recorders. On more than one occasion the Grand Forks

Agent reminded his colleague that revenues collected in the Grand Forks Mining Division were being improperly credited to the Greenwood Agent's office. He felt it was his "duty to this part of the country that revenues derived from it ... be accredited to it."⁷ His motives, however, were not as unselfish as they appear. An agent's status and salary were tied to the amount of revenue collected in a district; any fluctuation was a cause for concern. Agents were delighted when their district prospered but were equally interested in how this reflected on themselves.

An analysis of "District Returns of Revenue" in the Public Accounts from 1890 to 1916 indicates that throughout this period approximately 48 per cent of all provincial revenues were collected in the districts with the balance collected at the Treasury and in Victoria area districts. While there were large variations in the amount of revenue collected in the districts (notably 1890-1891 and 1900-1901), the evidence indicates that the district offices 'held their own' throughout this period. The move to do away with the 'District Returns of Revenue' Table after 1916 indicates a lack of interest in acknowledging the role of the districts in assembling the funds to pay the government's bills.

Many districts had more than one office but generally one post was senior and it was headed by a Government Agent. The other locations were sub-offices and staffed by mining recorders or constables or combinations thereof. Porcupine Lake and Lake Bennett, in 1900-1901 for example, were sub-offices to Atlin as was the Vancouver office to the New Westminster agency.

When an office grew sufficiently, as Greenwood did during the mining boom in the Boundary district, it warranted 'Agent' status and no longer forwarded accounts to an intermediary but communicated directly with

Victoria. Achieving 'Agent' status was no small matter: it meant that the office, the community and the mining recorder had finally 'made it'! The following wire to the Greenwood office from J. McB Smith, Deputy Minister of Finance, was undoubtedly received with considerable pleasure:

Discontinue accounting to Rossland office for all collections since first instant. Remit direct to Treasury. Please advise Almond to account to you as Government Agent, for collections since the first July. Advices by mail.⁸

All of the district was the agent's territory (including large settlements) until towns or villages were incorporated. Upon incorporation, the agent would attempt to extricate himself from providing services to the municipality, sometimes with little success. When Greenwood was incorporated, for instance, the agent still found it necessary to provide police services because the city could not afford a policeman.

The person-years per district varied substantially over the years. In 1890, the Kootenays (one district at the time) required eleven person-years. By 1900 there were 30 person-years (10 in East Kootenay, 20 in West Kootenay) of agent involvement in the region. Ten years later this number had increased to 38, 15, and 23 respectively. The Cariboo district also experienced tremendous growth but, unlike the Kootenays, its growth was confined to the latter years of the era. In 1910 the government provided the Cariboo district government agents with five person-years. Seven years later they increased this number to seventeen, the vast majority of whom were located in Quesnel. Nowhere did an office expand than in Westminster District. For many years there were only three staff at New Westminster with a constable stationed at Burrard Inlet.⁹ By the turn of

the century this number had grown to ten; a decade later it was up to fourteen. By 1917, however, it had mushroomed to more than forty-six person-years with thirty-eight of them located in Vancouver. On the other hand, other district offices, like Nanaimo, barely 'held their own'.

If value and status can be measured by the amount of money an individual is paid, the Government Agents fared poorly during these twenty-seven years. In 1890 the average Deputy Minister's salary was \$170/month. On the other hand, the average salary for agents was approximately \$135/month - 26 per cent lower than the Deputy Minister's.¹⁰ The lowest paid agents were William Dodd in Lytton and Marshal Bray in Nanaimo who earned only \$110/month. John Bowron, whose salary probably reflected his length of service as Richfield Agent, was paid \$172/month, almost as much as a number of Deputy Ministers and considerably more than the Deputy Provincial Secretary.

Using the Deputy Minister's salaries as a point of reference, the agents' wages did not keep pace with increments given other public servants. By 1900 the average Deputy Minister's salary had climbed to nearly \$192/month but the agents' salaries had decreased. The average agent in 1900 was earning approximately \$124/month, over 55 per cent lower than the Deputies. J.D. Graham, Atlin Agent, who earned \$175/month was an exception and he remained an anomaly for a decade even though the Klondike Gold Rush had long since passed by 1910.

The discrepancy between Deputy and Government Agent salaries had grown to 72 per cent by 1910. Some specialists were also earning more than agents by this time with the Provincial Mineralogist leading the group with a salary even higher than all of the Deputy Ministers. By

1917, however, the disparity between agent salaries and Deputy Ministers had grown all out of proportion. The average Deputy salary was \$326.25/month, almost twice that earned by an agent. Victoria-based experts also continued to receive wage increments easily outstripping the amount given the agents. For example, the Electrical Inspector earned \$251.66/month, the Chief Inspector of Mines \$355/month, the Provincial Horticulturist \$200/month and Foresters and School Inspectors were paid as high as \$266.66/month. Clearly, Victoria no longer considered the generalists as crucial as they once were.

The agents repeatedly tried to make the capital aware of their financial circumstances but had little success. The Greenwood Agent, William G. McMynn, started work as a constable/recorder in 1892 at \$60/month. Twenty years later he had only barely doubled his salary. The salary of C.A.R. Lambly went down during the ten years he was McMynn's boss due to the decrease in importance of his office. The Grand Forks Agent also complained loudly about Victoria's deafness when it came to salary increases. In short, the agents were extremely bitter throughout this period over the amount they and their staff earned.¹¹ When C. Cunningham, a constable, mining recorder and registrar of voters in Greenwood, sarcastically told the Auditor General that he and his colleagues were "scabbing against organized labour," his opinion, no doubt, was heartily sanctioned by his boss, Agent McMynn.¹² The agents correctly felt the provincial government had no salary administration policies and its absence penalized them more than most.

Victoria's thriftiness was not confined to salaries; it frequently criticized agents' travel expenses as too extravagant. Before automobiles became commonplace, very few constables or agents had the luxury of a 'Government Horse'. They were told to use the stage

or hire a buggy because it was cheaper. This cheapness, in fact, was carried to such an extreme that Victoria requested agents and constables in 1899 to get friends to sign a promissory note to cover the amount of their travel advance! McMynn's letter to Joseph Martin, the Attorney-General, indicates what one constable thought of that idea:

In reply I beg to say that in my letter to Hugh Maclean, Deputy Attorney General, dated the second of last February I answered this matter and explained then that personally my expenses on police duty were very small, as most of my time was taken up with office work here, and therefore I would prefer to advance the necessary money myself to pay such expenses and send no voucher therefore later. I can only now add that I do not care to belittle myself by asking any of my friends to sign such a note....I am willing to send you a Bank Draft on any Bank in Victoria for the amount you wish to advance to me. Or may I suggest that the amount of my bond as security to the Government be increased and thus cover the amount you wish to advance to me on a private note. It seems very strange to me that you should require me to get someone of my friends to sign a promissory note for one hundred dollars on the terms you mention, when my revenue collections for the Provincial Government during the last two months amounted to over four thousand three hundred dollars. Should however my action in this matter still be unsatisfactory to you then please to have my name struck off the list of Provincial Constables.¹³

An analysis of the travel expenses of public employees during this period is informative. In 1890-1891 Premier John Robson claimed the highest travel expenses from the public treasury due to his mission to Ottawa. In the same year, specialists requested reimbursement for 16 per cent of all travel expenses and the agents, whose travel was confined primarily to their

district, billed the government for almost 40 per cent. The balance was used by Deputy Ministers and other sundry officials. By 1900-1901 a significant shift was taking place. The Inspector of Government Offices, W.J. Goepel, and his specialist colleague, the Provincial Mineralogist, were the most prolific travellers in 1900-1901. In fact, the specialists' travel bill accounted for 47 per cent of the total amount spent by government on travel expenses. Politicians spent almost 10 per cent of the total and the agents' portion dropped to nearly 35 per cent. Ten years later the component spent by the agents would drop even more dramatically. Premier McBride and Finance Minister Price Ellison led the way in accumulating travel expenses in 1910-1911. They and their political colleagues spent over \$10,000, or 19 per cent of the total. Government specialists, too, were more on the move claiming 61 per cent of "Travel Expenses of Officers on Duty" this fiscal year.¹⁴ Agents, on the other hand, received only 13 per cent of total.

Unlike the politician and the specialist, the Government Agent was becoming more sedentary. Government Agents claimed only 4 per cent of the total funds used to reimburse civil servant travel expenses in 1917. Specialists and politicians claimed 72 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively. Even the School Inspectors' travel expenses, which were voted separately by the Legislature, were almost ten times higher than those of the agents. Agents, by 1917, were office-bound public servants.

If the agent was 'tied to his desk', the specialist and politician had taken his place in the field. Experts, M.P.P.s and Ministers were now all tampering in district public affairs. Many of them also told the agent what he could and could not do. The agent's isolation and independence was a thing of the past.

Enhanced transportation and communication links throughout the province from 1890 to 1917 reduced the agents' isolation. The Canadian Pacific Railway arrived in 1885 but by 1917 another transcontinental had completed its line to British Columbia and a host of branch and local lines appeared in many parts of the province. By 1917, most of the inhabited parts of the province were connected by railway and telegraph. The building of roads and the growing popularity of the automobile also brought more British Columbians together. By 1907, the telephone, too, was more commonplace and government expenditures on telephone services, for the first time, exceeded telegraph services. All of these advancements were powerful forces in breaching the seclusion of many British Columbia communities. They made rapid communication and transportation feasible between the scattered settlements in the interior and the capital. For the agents, particularly, they brought Victoria much closer. It was a mixed blessing.

Centralization was accentuated by these developments in transportation and communication. The Government Agent no longer could operate independent of instructions from Victoria. Previous attempts at supervision through the mail system and periodic visits from the capital were largely ineffective and the farther removed from Victoria, the more autonomous the agents were. Just as it transpired in Ceylon and India, "the telegraph and, later, the railway brought the provincial administration under closer supervision."¹⁵ On the other hand, it also brought the districts nearer to Victoria and thereby reinforced the linkage between the agent, the district and the capital. Endorsements from Victoria became more critical for the agent but so did recommendations from the district become vital to governments contemplating legislative or administrative

change. Like his counterpart in India, the British Columbia Agent, who had been a surrogate for the executive in the districts since colonial times, became less independent, however, his role as intermediary in those areas within his competence was enhanced:

The tendency to centralization was accentuated rapidly after the transfer of India to the Crown. When it took place only the principal cities were connected by telegraph and there were only a few hundred miles of railway. It was natural that with the extension and acceleration of communications, there should be greater centralization of control, making each officer in the official hierarchy less independent and more the agent of higher authority. The closer touch between government and local officers, caused by the post and telegraph made it increasingly necessary for the latter to solicit sanction before taking action and not to act in anticipation of it. References to higher authority consequently increased, and so did references to local officers from Governments seeking information on which to base their policy and administrative measures...¹⁶

The years 1890 to 1917 were years of adjustment for the British Columbia Government Agents. While their numbers grew substantially, their importance decreased as Victoria became home to a host of departmental experts. The agent also became an 'Administrative Officer'. By 1917 the agent was no longer a mobile composite officer who patrolled his district bringing law and order to isolated settlements. Transportation improvements, likewise, meant that he had to share authority with many other public servants and communication advancements curtailed his freedom. As the following study of the Boundary district will show, the Greenwood and Grand Forks Agents were still the senior government officials in their communities in 1917 but their role and

authority, like that of their colleagues around the province, had been altered during this formative period.

The Boundary Agents

For at least fifty years after Confederation, the Boundary Government Agents were part of Yale district. Identified as the 'Similkameen & Osoyoos' or the 'Similkameen & Fairview' area, this label was probably a cautious public servant's way of categorizing the revenue garnered from this part of the province. The Similkameen designation gave recognition to the area west of Osoyoos and the Fairview or Osoyoos designation provided notice of the home of the senior gold commissioner or agent for the area. Not that it mattered much, but the term stuck, far longer than it should have.

For the agents, mining recorders and police constables of the area, the Boundary district was west and south of the Kootenay region and south and east of the Okanagan region. The town of Grand Forks in the eastern portion was originally known as the Gateway City--gateway to the Boundary mining district--while the Okanagan trench seemed to mark a western end to the district. The Boundary district was framed by high mountain systems and generally lay on a large plateau. Figure III provides a visual description of the Boundary district and principal government office locations.

For most of the 1890's, the district was linked to the outside world from three directions. Prospectors came from the south up the river valleys looking for lead, silver and gold. The Hope-Princeton Trail, pioneered by Edgar Dewdney, provided a western link to the Fraser Valley and stagecoaches and the Canadian Pacific Railway sternwheeler, Aberdeen, which plied Okanagan Lake, joined the district with the north. It

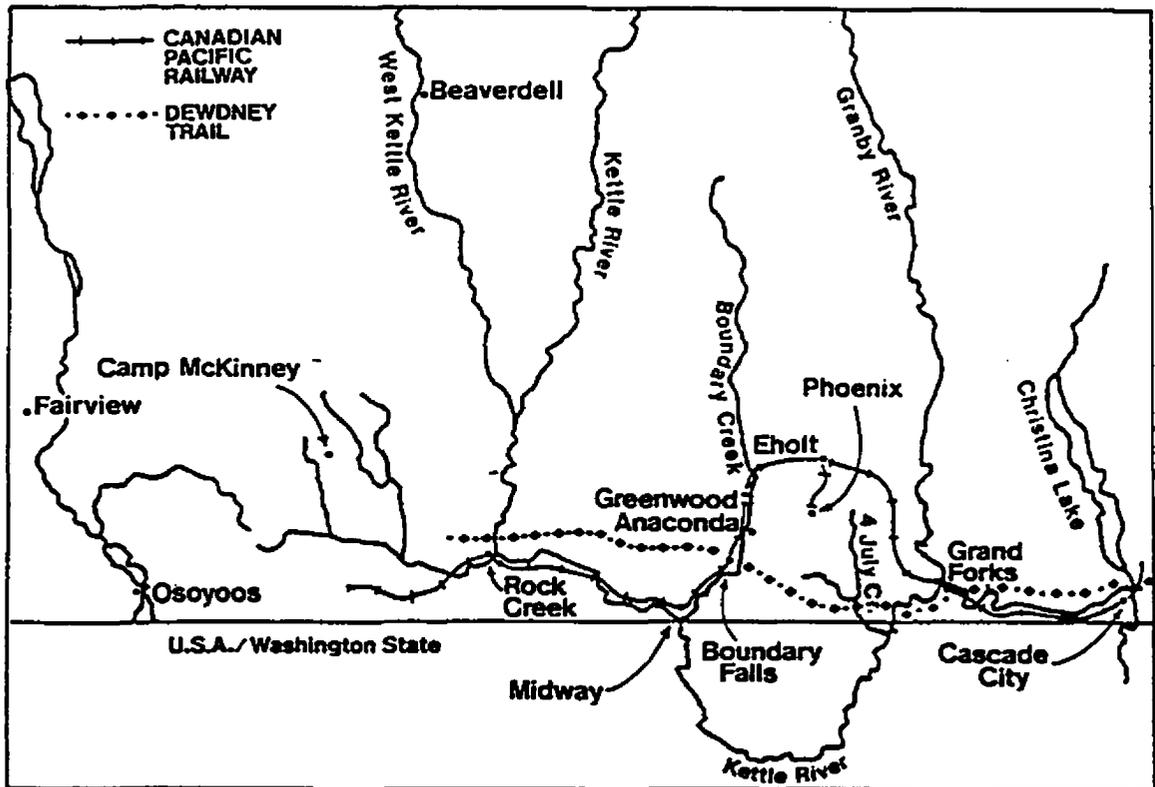
FIGURE III

The Boundary District, c. 1906



SOURCE : KNOTT, F. Pioneer Map of the Boundary District, British Columbia, Phoenix, Pioneer Publishing Co., 1906 : CM A1922

See inset below



was not long, however, before the railway reached the area.

In 1899, two years after Grand Forks became a city, the Columbia and Western Railroad (a subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific Railway) extended into the district. James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad arrived in 1902 and fourteen years later the Canadian Pacific Railway completed the Kettle Valley Railroad through to the coast. By 1916, the riches of the Boundary district were tied into the province-wide transportation network; however, by that time the mining boom was almost over.

In one of the many letters he wrote to prospective settlers, Grand Forks Agent, Sydney Almond, stated that in the Boundary district "Farming, Fruit and Cattle raising can and are being carried on" but noted it was predominantly mining country.¹⁷ The mines brought the fortune seekers and the workers who created a demand for farm products. The farmers prospered until the mines played out.

In the introduction to Builders of British Columbia: an Industrial History, G.W. Taylor submits that:

Mining, more than any other industry, has contributed to the building of the towns and cities, the communications networks, the school systems, and the laying of the foundation of a modern society. It has built more communities, encouraged the opening of more local businesses, and contributed more to the knowledge of geography and natural resources of B.C. than any community group, or business and professional organization.¹⁸

Nothing could be more true for the Boundary district. Mining was first recorded at Rock Creek when Adam Beam discovered gold in October 1859. Large numbers of miners were attracted but the diggings did not last.

Not until the 1880's were claims of any significance found but these discoveries laid the groundwork for subsequent developments. In 1890, the real boom began in the Boundary district. Dependent upon low-grade copper deposits, smelters were built in Boundary Falls, Greenwood and Grand Forks. As early as 1898 hydro-electric power on the Kettle River was developed to supply power to the Granby Consolidated mine at Phoenix and the smelter at Grand Forks. The expansion continued generally uninterrupted until 1920 when world copper prices collapsed. The Granby mine constituted the largest copper operation in the British Empire in 1918; Phoenix was a ghost town two years later. The Boundary district, within three decades, experienced phenomenal growth and development to be followed by stagnation brought on by ore exhaustion and fluctuating world demand.

Government officials arrived in the Boundary area in 1860 when Peter O'Reilly was dispatched to Rock Creek to ensure the American miners took out mining licences. William G. Cox replaced him less than a year later. The gold strike was short-lived and the district languished in relative obscurity until the Granite Creek gold rush of 1885. At this time George C. Tunstall was appointed gold commissioner and stipendiary magistrate for Granite Creek. Thomas Elwyn, the conscientious Gold Escort leader from two decades earlier, also inspected the district for the government in 1885 and proclaimed its riches were second only to the Cariboo. Three years later C.A.R. Lambly was named constable and recorder for Rock Creek and a colleague with similar duties was stationed in Granite Creek. Lambly was appointed Government Agent after he was moved to Osoyoos in July 1892, at which time W.G. McMynn replaced him in Rock Creek. McMynn remained in the Boundary district until he

was promoted to be the first Warden of Okalla Prison Farm in 1912.

McMynn, a tall, thin and austere Scotsman who became noted for his knowledge of law, made a good name for himself in the twenty-two years he worked in the Boundary country. He traced the beginnings of his career in an appeal to the Deputy Attorney General for a salary increase:

For sometime previous to July 1892 I had whenever required acted as special constable, assisting Mr. Lambly. 2nd. In July 1892 I was appointed Constable and Collector at a salary of \$60.00 for month, and Mr. Lambly was appointed a Justice of the Peace, each being allowed \$15.00 per month for horse allowance, and Mr. Lambly's office at Osoyoos was used as a base for me to work from. 3rd. In March 1893 a mining recorder's office was opened at my ranch on Meyers Creek, for the Kettle River Mining Division, with myself as recorder, constable and collector and Mr. Wm. Bullock-Webster filled my place at Osoyoos. 4th. In June 1893 my office was moved from Myers Creek to Rock Creek. At this time there were no Justices of the Peace on Kettle River, and the nearest lock-up was at Osoyoos, consequently all my prisoners were delivered there and turned over to Mr. Webster. 5th. During 1893 and the early part of 1894 the miners frequently complained that I neglected my recorder's duties, owing to my frequent absence from my office on constable duty. 6th. In March 1894 I was commissioned in a Justice of the Peace and a little later instructed by the Hon. F.G. Vernon to attend closer to my office of mining recorder and use a special constable whenever necessary. 7th. In May last past my office was moved from Rock Creek to here [Midway].¹⁹

The tremendous growth in Greenwood precipitated the transfer of McMynn's office from Midway in April 1900. Almost a year later, July 1, 1901, he was designated agent and thus became the first Government Agent in the

Boundary district. While in Greenwood, McMynn became a close friend of Dr. John Duncan MacLean, a prosperous medical practitioner. This association with MacLean, who ultimately became the twentieth premier of the province, undoubtedly was a factor in his future promotion to Superintendent of Police. Mrs. McMynn and Mrs. MacLean were also good friends.²⁰

Grand Forks' first public administrator, as in other British Columbia communities, was a police constable. I.A. Dinsmore, under the supervision of McMynn, was responsible for patrolling Greenwood and Grand Forks in 1896. Sydney Russell Almond, who was appointed mining recorder and constable, joined him in July 1897. Almond became a gold commissioner in April 1900 and agent in May 1904. Almond was born in England on May 2, 1855, the son of a Church of England minister.²¹ As a youth he apprenticed to the East India Company and spend some time there. In 1873 he came to Canada and worked on the Dawson Road, then the only Canadian route into Manitoba and the Northwest. By way of San Francisco he came to Victoria and the lower mainland in 1883 where he worked on the Onderdonk contract building the Canadian Pacific Railway in the lower Fraser River valley. He briefly returned to England but within a year was in the Kettle River Valley where he took up a pre-emption and resided until he moved to Grand Forks. He was a conscientious, albeit somewhat reluctant, agent until 1922. During his tenure, which is characterized by his repeated complaints of overwork, he received the assistance of a young man from Vernon, W.R. Dewdney.

Dewdney was the third and final individual to become Government Agent in this district from 1890 to 1917. "W.R.", as he was known to his friends, was born in Victoria, the son of Walter Dewdney who entered

government service at Richfield in 1867 and eventually became Government Agent at Vernon.²² His uncle was Edgar Dewdney, developer of the Dewdney trail from Hope to the Similkameen, M.P.P. for the Kootenays, Governor of the Northwest Territories and, later, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. The always affable W.R. Dewdney, a man who was said to have never made an enemy, joined the Grand Forks office March 1, 1901.²³ Eleven years later he replaced McMynn in Greenwood where he became a close associate of Martin Burrell, Federal Minister of Agriculture and, like his predecessor, with Dr. MacLean.²⁴ In 1922 he was instructed to take over the government office at the now defunct town of Fairview and move it to Penticton.

Table VIII indicates the number of Provincial Police and the agent person-years in the Boundary district from 1890 to 1917. Major growth ended by 1910 and during the 1920's the district lost staff and offices were downgraded. Nevertheless, until approximately 1920, the community was thriving and so was its public service. There was always more than enough work to do.

Almost from the beginning, the agents of the Boundary district requested assistance to help them with their work. Almond, as early as 1897, complained about his predicament to Leonard Norris, Vernon Agent and, at the time, senior public official for the Boundary district:²⁵

Am afraid that I am going to have a rather tough job with all these different appendages tacked on to the work of Mining Recorder, and it begins to make me think kinderly [sic] of the time when I was a Rancher. In fact the various shapes of the growth of a spud are beginning to have a ponderous fascination.²⁶

TABLE VIII

Police/Agent Positions and Person Years in Boundary District, 1891-1918

Department/Office	1890-1891	1900-1901	1910-1911	1917-1918
Government Agencies		Roseland Agency* Grand Forks - Mining Recorder (1 person year)	Grand Forks - Agent, Clerk (2 person years)	Grand Forks - Agent, Clerk, Janitor (3 person years)
		Greenwood - Mining Recorder (1 person year)	Greenwood - Agent, Mining Recorder, Clerk (3 person years)	Greenwood - Agent Mining Recorder, Clerk Janitor (2 person years)
		Similkameen - Mining Recorder Assessor (1 person year)	Similkameen - Mining Recorder (1 person year)	Princeton - Agent Assessor/ etc., Clerk (2 person years)
Police	Similkameen & Osoyoos - Constable/Recorder Constable/Collector (2 person years)	Four Constables (4 person years)	Chief Constable & Seven Constables (8 person years)	Chief Constable & Seven Constables (8 person years)
TOTAL PERSON YEARS	2	7	14	15

*Grand Forks and Greenwood Agencies were sub-offices of the Roseland Agency in 1900-1901

Source: British Columbia Public Accounts, King's Printer, Victoria, British Columbia.

When help was not forthcoming, McMynn wrote to E.G. Prior, Minister of Mines, suggesting that his duties as mining recorder be delegated to his Provincial Constable because he needed more time to attend to his "ever-increasing" duties as "Gold Commissioner, Government Agent, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Registrar of the County Court, Registrar under the Bills of Sale Act, Registrar of Marriages, Clerk of the Peace, etc.," and "especially" to look after "Court matters."²⁷

Some assistance was provided but the situation got worse. The following is a partial list of the Boundary agents' duties in 1912:

Government Agent	Registrar, County Court
Registrar, Supreme Court	Deputy Clerk of the Peace
Sheriff	Gold Commissioner
Mining Recorder	Welfare Officer
Vital Statistics Recorder	Meteorological Recorder
Registrar of Voters	Federal Registrar of Voters
Game Warden	Land Commissioner
Assessor	Collector of Revenue Taxes
Financial Officer	Marriage Commissioner
Local Board of Health	Sanitary Inspector
Cattle Brand Recorder	Maintenance of Government Buildings

In addition, as Government Agent, he was responsible for paying the salaries of all government staff, including his own; paying all vouchers for goods and services on government projects; and being, as Almond put it, "a general bureau of information." Furthermore, the agent, for most of this period, supervised road construction, acted as chief law enforcement officer and provided a "listening post" for most, if not all, government departments. This latter activity, alone, took much time as the agent gathered statistics for Victoria on everything from the quality and amount of ore shipped from local mines to the value of milk production within the district. The agents were "honoured to be,"

as the closing to their letters bears witness, Victoria's "obedient servant[s]."

Like their magistrate forebears, their easy-going nature, more than anything else, kept them afloat. When job titles were too long to list, the agents frequently used the dubious description 'etc.' to identify themselves. Letters to the Deputy Attorney General were signed chief constable, etc.; correspondence to the Deputy Land Commissioner or Richard McBride when he was Minister of Mines was signed gold commissioner, etc. This small act, if nothing else, gently reminded Victoria that they were overworked but still maintained a sense of humour.

To make matters worse, Victoria was extremely reluctant or unable to provide the agents with the necessary tools to do their job. Until a new courthouse was built in Greenwood, McMynn and his three staff worked in a 20 x 36 one-storey building originally designed as a lock-up for prisoners. In 1902 it still acted as a lock-up, government office and space for regular sittings of the County Court. McMynn received his first typewriter only after repeated requests and the machine malfunctioned most of the time. Almond got a typewriter by trying different departments until he was successful.²⁸ The first carbon paper used by the Midway office was received in 1899, again only after numerous letters, and it had been used before! Pens even had to be requisitioned from Toronto due to Victoria's unwillingness to provide them when needed. McMynn was not pleased to find he had to pay for many office supplies out of his own pocket, especially law books and copies of relevant legislation.²⁹

Nothing was more irritating to the Boundary agents than the lack of printed material on government policies. As always, copies of legislation were almost impossible

to acquire. Almond, in 1901, chastised the Deputy Attorney General for the lack of a copy of the Revised Statutes of Canada when Grand Forks had both Supreme and County Court Registries. In 1902, McMynn informed Provincial Constables that the Attorney General's Department would not issue B.C. statutes to them and Dewdney, as late as 1913, complained that he had "no list of what votes we should charge things to so as we could refer to it."³⁰ Victoria's frugality meant the agents had to seek information elsewhere.

Agents sought direction from wherever and from whomever they could. Even the experienced John Bowron had to implore Victoria's assistance in understanding the duties of a Stipendiary Magistrate. He at least was sent a copy of a manual which is more than McMynn received.³¹ For McMynn, his own library of law books were most helpful but he often referred to other agents. During the brief period that the Grand Forks office reported through the Rossland office, the Rossland Agent, J. Kirkup, helped Almond set procedures. Training for new agents was haphazard at best. McMynn received no help whatsoever; Almond was more fortunate. Almond asked McMynn if he "would advise [him] on anything pertaining to the duties of Government Agent and could [he] furnish [him] examples of different requirements I should take it as a great favour."³² Victoria believed the agents were capable of 'learning on the job'.

The Boundary Agents were first mine recorders and gold commissioners. British Columbians had yielded to the authority of these officials since gold was discovered in the sand bars of the lower Fraser River. Generally they were spread out in the districts, close to mining operations and reported to a centrally located gold commissioner who acted as overseer for the entire district. For example, for many years McMynn and Almond

received directions from Lambly in Osoyoos. On the other hand, mining recorders often had sub-recorders, whose location and appointment were generally left to a mining recorder's discretion, almost right at the mining sites. Camp McKinney, Beaverdell and Vernon were, at one time, sub-recording offices of the Greenwood office. When a mining district had grown sufficiently to warrant having its own gold commissioner, the office communicated directly with Victoria. In classic pyramidal style, Victoria chaperoned the mining industry.³³

McMynn began his annual report to C.A.R. Lambly, gold commissioner, with the statement: "The mineral development and progress generally of the Kettle River Mining Division during the year 1896 has been very marked and encouraging. During the past year there have been more free miners certificates issued and more Location Conveyance and Certificate of work record's made in this district, than during the whole of the previous three years."³⁴ He and his Grand Forks counterpart would repeat these sentiments in subsequent reports even when things did not look so promising. Mining was the lifeblood of the Boundary district and the lifeblood of the agent's work.³⁵

Unlike the unsophisticated operations on the sand bars of the Fraser and the isolated streams of the Cariboo, most of the ventures in the Boundary district by 1900 were complex large organizations, run by absentee owners. The individuals who managed the mines and smelters were professional operators and mineralogists and their legal problems were solved by solicitors--individuals, who always wanted an agent's decision in writing and who would not think twice of appealing to Victoria. A thorough knowledge of the regulations and, more important, how to apply them carefully was crucial. In addition, agents needed a working knowledge of mining

operations, the quality of ores recovered and company financial statements. McMynn's 1906 annual report is illustrative. In one paragraph he informed Premier McBride about the work of a mining company and how many tons of second-class ore they expected and at what price; in another, he reassured "capitalists", and presumably the Premier, by noting "that the Granby consolidated M.S. & P. Co. was this year placed on a 12 per cent dividend paying basis, the fourth 3% dividend for 1906 being payable to the shareholders on 31st. December, 1906."³⁶ The agent had to be both clever and diplomatic in administering the mining industry.

Victoria's haranguing of the agents for tinkering in mine speculation had as much effect in this era as it did four decades earlier. McMynn and Almond held interests in a number of local mining properties. While forced to disclose them in 1898, and warned against making any ruling or order as gold commissioner with regard to their property, they were not told to divest themselves of their investments.³⁷ McBride also issued the same warning; in fact, he reprinted the 1898 Circular in 1909, but the agents seemed little dismayed.³⁸ They continued to write unashamedly about their holdings. Almond, for instance, was able to get his "Big Chief" claim Crown granted not quite six months after McBride's second warning. Although Victoria outwardly frowned on the agents gambling in mine ventures, the capital condoned the practice as it kept the agent involved in the commercial life of the community and, as a consequence, abreast of issues facing the mining industry.

Victoria was much more uncompromising in its approach to the agents' policing responsibilities. McMynn and Almond were, for a time, constables as well as mining recorders. McMynn was also chief constable for a

few years until the Nelson office took responsibility for supervising Boundary district policemen. McMynn best typifies the composite officer because he discharged these responsibilities much longer and performed them at a time when the Boundary country was opening up to settlement. He was, in many respects, a stereotypical, no nonsense, frontier lawman. A letter to one of his constables reveals McMynn's approach to law-enforcement: "[you] need not press for a conviction on the present charge, but I think it would be advisable to ask the Magistrate to warn him to leave your part of the country."³⁹

McMynn was involved in all facets of police work and he did it unassisted for years. Horse thieves and cattle rustlers were fairly common in the early 1890's and he was a diligent investigator often spending months bringing the perpetrator to justice. He had to accomplish much of this with few resources. Leg irons and handcuffs, for example, were so scarce that frequently McMynn shared his two with the Osoyoos office. In addition, for many years he lacked adequate means of communicating with his constables. News of a criminal in the district was spread by men on horseback as the following letter attests:

Your telegram to Constable Dinsmore and myself re horses stolen from Kamloops were received here at the hand of Mr. Dinsmore (Dinsmore was in Grand Forks which was linked by telegraph) last evening at 7 o'clock. Immediately wrote instructions to Constable Deans and Elkins, and an hour later Constable Gardom left here to deliver them at Osoyoos and Fairview. He would probably arrive at Osoyoos about 2 o'clock this morning, and three hours later ought to be in Fairview, by which time Mr. Deans also ought to be in the Similkameen Valley.⁴⁰

Because the Boundary district bordered the United States, police work involved extensive cooperation with

American authorities. Occasionally Provincial Constables tracked criminals down on the other side of the 49th parallel and frequently they helped American police officers on the Canadian side of the border. In the Camp McKinney gold brick robbery, for instance, McMynn worked extensively with authorities in Seattle.

McMynn was also gaoler so he supervised prisoners and after their trials arranged for transport to Kamloops or the Lower Mainland. When an unexplainable death occurred in the area he either acted as coroner or ensured that a proper inquest took place. In addition, police constables issued liquor licences and inspected premises where liquor was consumed; they investigated the circumstances of destitute persons; and, they prepared all of the court paper work, arranged for the hearing or trial and acted as clerk during the proceedings. The agent as police constable had a very heavy workload.

Until the turn of the century, constables were responsible for any number of police and 'agent' duties. Indeed, for a number of years after 1900 constables still took direction from agents who assisted them but they were becoming more reluctant to perform non-police work. In a letter to the Chief Constable in Nelson, Almond shows his patience was wearing thin with one hesitant police constable:

This morning I applied to Wm. Dockstader, Prov. Constable ... to come down here and do some collecting (Revenue Taxes) for me, but he refused to act for me, unless instructed ... by you,

...under Section 4 of Chap. 22 1903/04, a Constable should be amenable to be Government Agent unless employed in some special work directed by you, ...your authority seems about as far away as the Superintendent... .⁴¹

Almond had a short fuse, but his letter illustrates a relationship that was clearly growing apart. Nevertheless, from the turn of the century until the mid-1920's, the agents remained heavily dependent upon the Provincial Police as their 'eyes and ears' and 'legs' in the community. As the agent became more office-bound, the more dependent he was on the constable. If the Government Agents were Victoria's field lieutenants, the police constables were its front-line troops.

From colonial times until the twentieth century, the agents were multi-duty officials. It was a system born of pioneer conditions in a vast region with few inhabitants. Even though McMynn was originally called constable/recorder he was involved, almost from his first day on the job, in the supervision of public works. In this respect he and Almond, who also oversaw the construction and maintenance of public roads, bridges and buildings, were no different from their magistrate predecessors. Dewdney, on the other hand, was much less involved because, by 1912, when he was promoted to Greenwood Agent, responsibility for the management of public works was in the hands of local department officials. For most of this era, however, the agent was the individual from whom Victoria and the community sought assistance when it was necessary to cut a trail through the wilderness, repair a road, build a bridge or construct a government edifice.

As early as 1894, Norris, the Vernon Agent, asked McMynn to undertake public work when he was requested to ensure the government building in Midway was built to specifications.⁴² A year later, he sought McMynn's advice about the condition of roads. In 1899 McMynn employed someone to look over routes for a proposed Kettle River wagon road between Rock Creek and Deer Creek and the same year he and F.C. Gamble, the new Public

Works Engineer from Victoria, surveyed the district together. In 1899 he supervised the construction of the new Midway school, an activity he also undertook in Greenwood a few years later. By 1903 McMynn was managing, with limited supervision from Victoria, the road requirements for the entire district. In fact, by 1910 McMynn wrote to Gamble that he had seventy-six men employed in road work under his supervision.⁴³

The agents took their responsibility for public works very seriously. On numerous occasions, agents ordered large companies to make repairs or adjustments when their actions put public safety in doubt. McMynn's letter to the C.P.R. Superintendent in Nelson is a case in point:

A number of complaints have lately been made to me here of the risk the public is daily incurring while travelling over the waggon road between here and Midway owing to your railroad crossing it at very dangerous places and six times, four times on the main line between Midway and Boundary Falls, and twice on the spur into the smelter at Boundary Falls. And also that at the latter place the wagon road is often entirely blocked for hours at a time by your cars on the crossings.

This waggon road was built long before the railroad, and therefore if you find that it is necessary to change this road in some way it ought to be left in at least as good condition thereafter as you found it, and traffic thereon ought not to be delayed for any great length of time.

I therefore wish to ask you to change this waggon road now to avoid these crossings and keep on the East side of your track for the whole distance...⁴⁴

Almond requested the Canadian Pacific Railway to remove a dead horse that was polluting a streambed and, in another case, ordered the Consolidated Mining and

Smelting Company of Canada not to erect their electric power poles on public highways. The agent also negotiated compromises when companies and community members disputed the location of a wagon road. The agent was district road superintendent and environmental and safety officer rolled into one.

Finally, the agents also engaged in forest protection activities for the Department of Lands and Works. McMynn supervised over thirty men fighting fires in 1910 and authorized and paid all expenditures in this regard. Likewise, agents were, for a limited time, timber inspectors with the authority to seize assets for non-payment of timber royalties.

The Government Agent continued to be the 'Chief Administrative Officer' of the district. Few government financial transactions or administrative changes occurred in the district without his knowledge and, in the vast majority of cases, without his prior authorization.

In addition, the agent was responsible for collecting taxes and royalties of all descriptions. Police constables, for a commission, helped collect the Revenue Tax and other levies. Even companies were enlisted to collect the Revenue Tax on behalf of government but accounting for the monies was always problematic. Property taxes, too, were difficult to administer as not all agents were assessors and frequently more than one assessor was responsible for an agent's district. This caused considerable confusion in the collection and submission of funds to Victoria. Being a tax collector is a thankless job under the best of circumstances. For the agents it was one big headache.

Managing public funds was not much easier. Characteristically, the agents wanted access to more funds and the unrestrained ability to spend them;

Victoria desired as few dollars as possible in district bank accounts and tightly controlled agents' spending authority. Agents paid their bills with monies advanced from Victoria and Victoria, in turn, carefully monitored agent transactions by advancing only the absolute minimum of funds. Agents responded by requesting, time and time again, more money. Victoria's response was generally positive but only after dire consequences were threatened if they overran their allocations. This argument, although more prevalent in the 1900's, was typical of the period.

Accounting for funds was time-consuming and exacting work. Huge ledger books were used and many accounts were entered in more than one book. If a recorder had the misfortune to be remitting to more than one agent, or an agent to more than one assessor, duplicate and sometimes triplicate records were kept. Agents were held accountable for all funds collected in their district and pleaded with Victoria for understanding when the books did not balance perfectly. Occasionally they had to take a few dollars out of their own salaries to balance the books as a consequence of some oversight. The critical manner in which Victoria reviewed their accounts, characteristic of its approach since colonial times, was still evident. Agents often complained about the amount of paperwork but Victoria's lack of sensitivity irritated them most. Finally, the agents were responsible for keeping accurate records of all licences issued in their districts. Liquor licences, and fish and game licences, to name only two, required extensive bookkeeping.

In short, the Government Agents were the district Department of Finance but they had no financial training or support except for the guidance they received from colleagues. The Auditors and the Inspector of Government

Offices who made their rounds offered little help and lacked forgiveness over minor accounting errors. Many agents undoubtedly wondered why they stuck at their work when they were so little appreciated.

A description of the agents' other responsibilities is almost endless. The multifarious nature of their role, envisioned years earlier by colonial governments and reinforced by decades of practice, became more comprehensive. As Registrars of Supreme and County Courts, for example, the agents took instruction from both Victoria and Ottawa. The naturalization of citizens, a by-product of this duty, required hours of investigation and letter-writing. To illustrate further, being a Registrar of Voters and Returning Officer necessitated weeks of work compiling the voters' list, sleepless weekends typing and checking it and hours dealing with the inevitable appeals and challenges to its correctness.⁴⁵ In addition, when community hospitals were built, the agents represented the government on the board of directors. The agents were upset when they were asked to perform menial tasks like scavenging the countryside for a variety of grains and grasses for display at the 1912 Lethbridge Farming Congress! Even though new technical specialists were regularly appearing in the districts and often taking over previous agent obligations, they created added financial and administrative duties.

Victoria likewise was determined to replace lost functions with new ones especially duties as Local Boards of Health and 'welfare officers'. McMynn was first asked to perform health duties in 1896 when the Vernon Agent instructed him to enforce sanitary regulations.⁴⁶ Within months he had identified numerous items that required immediate attention: "Privy pits that were never emptied...the accumulation of manure too near to

dwellings...the strongly mineralized condition of drinking water carrying large percentages of copper and arsenic used by the prospectors and, ...the improper ventilation of mining shafts and tunnels... ."47 A month later he printed up 1000 notice forms to clean premises and supplied them to his sanitary inspectors (provincial constables) who, in turn, were instructed to serve them on premises requiring attention. He later contracted to have a number of removable privy boxes made at a reasonable price and personally inspected "from house to house in Anaconda, Boundary Falls and Midway, and wherever needed secured an order for the number of such boxes required."⁴⁸ His efforts in controlling infectious diseases were equally aggressive.

After a smallpox scare in Midway in 1900, McMynn left 'no stone unturned' in disinfecting the town. For example, in January 1902, when a passenger on the westbound C.P.R. train was found to be suffering from the disease, he was placed in the pest-house in Grand Forks, the coach in which he had travelled was detached at Midway and disinfecting, and the railway camp where he had worked was disinfecting and the seventy-three men he worked with placed under quarantine. In 1907, together with the Medical Officer of Phoenix and one member of the city council, McMynn quarantined the whole city of Phoenix! McMynn was comfortable with authority.

His counterpart in Grand Forks was more of a social worker. As there were few churches in the Boundary district and charitable organizations were unknown, agents performed a variety of social welfare functions. They arranged for the placement of 'incurables' in the Provincial Home, provided emergent relief for indigent persons, engaged families to look after neglected children and saw to it that deserted women and children were fed and lodged. Husbands and fathers who neglected

their responsibilities were contacted by the agent to effect a reconciliation and, if unsuccessful, were prosecuted. To lessen the burden on the provincial treasury they also arranged for the transport of destitute families out of the province, often to far-away places.

What is most interesting about the agents' discharge of these sometimes unpleasant tasks was that they were oftentimes advocates on behalf of local citizens, even if it meant taking personal risks. Almond, particularly, was very community conscious. For example, after being criticized by the Deputy Provincial Secretary for not ensuring that destitute pensioners received only basic necessities from stores cashing-in their vouchers, he responded angrily:

The vouchers mentioned are for men entitled to go to the Old Men's Home but who will not do so & I think you will admit that the cost of their keep, including the few luxuries mentioned which I do not think should be denied them, is as cheap & possibly cheaper to the Government than if they were at the Old Man's Home. The more tobacco a man like Shick eats the less grub he requires; take the tobacco away from these old men & their liberty & one might just as well at the same time order their coffins. If you look back on the Vouchers of these three men, Shick, McRae & Halliday, you will find the average to be about \$12.00 per month.⁴⁹

The agents of the Boundary district were also community champions. McMynn, as early as 1897, tried to ensure that Midway got off to a good start. His letter regarding the purchase of a new pump is illustrative:

On the 20th inst. Mr. Jac Monaghan bought from you a pump and fittings for me and I am now expecting it. This will be the first attempt to drive a well in this town and I am therefore very anxious to make a success of it as others will then quickly follow but

I have no experience or knowledge of pumps and therefore, beg to ask you to send me instructions how to proceed with the matter, and greatly oblige.⁵⁰

As important as the delivery of field services were, much of the agents' work could not be noted in a table of statistics. While the agents could be advocates for their district they also could be government advocates; not in a political sense, but rather as conscientious public servants intent upon seeing policies implemented. Whether it be the reuse of sawdust, year after year, in the packing or storage of ice, or the proper construction of privy closets, McMyynn saw that government health policies were judiciously applied. Dewdney, too, in a rare display of aggressiveness after an outbreak of typhoid fever, recommended that C.J. Fagan, Secretary, Provincial Board of Health, take action in Greenwood as, he said, "these small towns are apt to get into a rut and if possible I believe it would be well to give the City a looking over, it is your power to do so."⁵¹ In applying forest policy, agents were equally vigilant, as Almond's report on the Kettle River Lumber Company suggests:

It seems to me that there should be some system of keeping these lumber men from taking everything in the country for nothing, a timber cruiser or inspector going through their Camps now and again and keeping track of their doings would straighten them out considerably.⁵²

Moreover, the agents were the 'eyes and ears' of Victoria, alert to incidents or changing community attitudes. McBride, as Minister of Mines and later as Premier, requested information from the agents on a number of occasions. In 1901 he solicited comments on the advisability of leases on Rock Creek. In 1911 he wanted Almond to report to him on the actions of a

pilgrimage of Doukhobors and in 1913 he asked Dewdney to investigate conditions on the Kettle Valley Railway construction and, in particular, to check into the identity of an individual, who turned out to be an Industrial Workers of the World organizer. A Lieutenant-Colonel in 1915 queried Almond regarding the prospects of obtaining military recruits.⁵³

The ubiquitous annual reports for each department provided by magistrate and agent since colonial times, of course, continued to keep Victoria informed on everything that was missed or ignored during the year. The yearly round-up of district facts and figures and inside knowledge endured as documents of interest for Victoria politician and bureaucrat alike.⁵⁴ Many reports, however, lost their intimacy as they were to be "so worded and written that it [could] be handed to the Government Printer without alteration."⁵⁵ The reports thus became less an internal, intelligence document and more a public annual report. Nevertheless, by 1917 Victoria still appreciated reading the agents' perspective on district matters even though by then, a host of other government officials could also provide information.

Finally, the agents were negotiators, oftentimes called to arbitrate between opposing groups. They were particularly aggressive, for instance, in ensuring that the concerns of their districts had a hearing in the corridors of power in Victoria or the boardrooms of the nation. Examples have already been cited of agents taking companies to task or looking out for the interests of indigent and destitute persons. Agents, however, were willing to appeal even to Ottawa for redress if conditions were not improved. McMyynn, for example, petitioned the Board of Railway Commissioners in 1907 when he felt the Canadian Pacific Railway was not willing to fulfil its obligations to the community.⁵⁶ In addition, agents

oftentimes sought intervention by the local M.P.P. when the bureaucracy did not respond quickly. Requests for more staff, for example, were frequently channelled to the M.P.P. and, in most cases, met with success. Almond, for instance, relished drawing to the M.P.P.'s attention the inadequate acknowledgement of Grand Forks' contribution to the provincial treasury:

We are all the time being reminded that we do not take in revenue enough to entitle us to any consideration, but this is not our fault, as you know, all the revenue from the Grand Forks district goes to swell the Rossland revenue; let them segregate the Rossland returns and then they will find out whether or not Grand Forks contributes any revenue. Grand Forks district should handle its own revenue and then it would be found to be as much⁵⁷ entitled to any office as Nelson is... .

The capital also continued to respect the agents' input on proposed new legislation, especially concerning mining policy. Dewdney's response to the Provincial Game Warden's request for program guidance is another good example of how district conditions influenced the development of provincial policy:

In reply I beg to say that I certainly would recommend that a bounty of 5 cents a piece be placed on Gophirs, [sic] not less than ten to be presented, and that a bounty of 10 cents each be placed on Ground Hogs. They are very destructive to the crops of farmers and I have seen men guarding their crops with shot-guns quite frequently, and this would be one of the most popular thing you could possibly do.⁵⁸

The agents' responses to Victoria's request for policy input, however, were quite parochial. They rarely travelled beyond the borders of their district and, as noted earlier, by the end of the era were office-bound most of the time. Likewise, they were rarely transferred

to other communities and their self-image, indeed their salaries, were related directly to the progress and revenues of their districts. In this respect, they were not dissimilar from the immediate post-Confederation agents. Victoria's expectations, however, were changing and its interpretation of the agents' discretionary authority and office behaviour, among others, were all challenged during this period.

Sidney Almond learned about it the hard way. During the summer of 1915, Sydney Almond made what was probably the most important decision of his public service career. Although it seemed at the time the logical and proper thing to do, his action would haunt him for months, create considerable consternation in Victoria, and produce a new directive to all Government Agents. This situation is highly informative for it illustrates, in simple terms, the dramatic changes the agent underwent from 1890 to 1917. Almond's final words on the matter were to E.E. Miller, the Boundary district M.P.P., whose intervention ultimately resolved the situation. They best describe the incident:

The Auditor-General has stuck me for \$100.00 (One Hundred dollars) by cancelling one of my vouchers for that amount; the Voucher covers \$100.00 that I paid to Joe Trombley, a Rancher on the Phoenix Road, in compensation for three heifers poisoned by eating Government dynamite.

Trombley came into this Office with Dr. Acres to make his claim & prove by the veterinary that the cows died from eating dynamite; Trombley claimed \$50.00 a head for the cattle. I told him that I could not do anything in the matter until it was proved to a certainty that the powder belong to the Government & that it had been left there by a Government employee.

I instituted inquiries through the Road Superintendent, Mr. Spraggett, & also

through the Provincial Constable at Phoenix, Mr. Stansfield. Mr. Stansfield was present when the cows were opened up & the dynamite taken out of their stomachs; through the investigations of Mr. Spraggett & Mr. Stansfield it was found that there was not a shadow of doubt that the powder belonged to the Government & had been left there by an employee of the Government but just by whom it could not be determined as Mr. Darraugh & his gang were no longer in the employ of the Government - so, eventually I comprised [sic] with Trombley with the payment of \$100.00.

These instances [he noted another occurrence of Victoria refusing payment of a voucher] have occurred without warning so that a Government Agent had no idea where or when he is going to be chucked off between stations.

It seems to me that this is a rotten piece of Imposition to make a fellow up \$100.00 when he was doing, as he thought, the best he could for the Government.⁵⁹

In earlier correspondence, Almond had reiterated that he only did what he thought was best. "The charge that the payment was made without any justification is tantamount to hanging a man without trial," he wrote shortly after the event.⁶⁰ "I must say that whoever is responsible for these actions [making him refund the \$100.00], he has shown no consideration of fair-play or justice in these matters towards me," he said in a subsequent letter.⁶¹ His most salient comment, however, was the following:

To the charge that I acted absolutely without authority and without reference to the Public Works Department, I propound the question what are & are not the duties of a Government Agent?⁶²

Victoria never responded to Almond's question directly. Reading between the lines of the ensuing

policy statement that stated "Under no circumstances must compensation of any kind be made until the whole facts of the case have been laid before the Department and you have received definite authority in writing to make compensation" he, undoubtedly, got his answer.⁶³ The duty of a good Government Agent was to consult with Victoria before making important decisions. Gone was the freedom to decide on the basis of what he thought was in the government's best interests. By 1915 the wings of Government Agents had been severely clipped.

Almond should not have been surprised that things had changed. As early as 1905, he was chastised for authorizing repairs to the Grand Forks government offices without prior approval. In 1910, a Circular letter made it clear that agents must submit a report to the department "setting forth full particulars" before undertaking any survey of proposed roads.⁶⁴

Erosion in the agent's authority was also evident in other responsibility areas. In most instances, the agents provided funds for indigent and destitute persons immediately and then consulted with Victoria. By 1914, however, the numbers of recipients had risen so sharply the Provincial Secretary decided that effective April 1 all payments to individuals would be made direct from his office.⁶⁵ Agents were left with some discretionary authority for urgent cases but monthly assistance was removed. Even mine recording had lost some of its appeal. Almond, in a letter to a law firm, fondly remembered past days:

In earlier days, the Gold Commissioner seems to have been able to grant privileges to miners that, at the present time, it would not be safe to do.

...under the 1914 Water Act, it would not be admissible to alter the course of a stream without the permission of the Comptroller.⁶⁶

As well, by 1911 forestry activities were given to regional supervisors. The authorization of government advertising was removed the same year with all accounts henceforth paid only through the Provincial Secretary's office. And, as if to 'rub salt into the wound', independent of the agent, all newspapers in the province were informed of this change by a separate letter from Victoria. The capital not only restricted the authority of agents to make payments, it by-passed them too.

Moreover, Victoria instituted controls on the administrative behaviour of field staff. These directives were not aimed solely at the agents but they felt their sting more acutely. Government employees were forbidden to: "engage in any business or employment other than their work as Government Employees, without permission" in 1908; "draw extra pay for work pertaining to their offices performed outside of regular office hours" in 1910; smoke during office hours in 1911 and in 1914 to smoke "at any time in any Provincial Government building or office;" absent himself "from his office during office hours, except in the regular discharge of his duties, without the consent first asked and obtained of the Honourable the Minister of Finance" in 1912; and so forth.⁶⁷ Victoria not only told agents how to do their job, it also dictated what was acceptable behaviour on and off the job. Almond and others protested that "hard and fast rules cannot be carried out in a country like British Columbia," but rules and procedures more than ingenuity and initiative would govern an agent's work performance from now on.⁶⁸

No one imposed Victoria's will more effectively than the Inspector of Government Offices. It will be remembered that in 1896, William John Goepel, a Nelson Mining Recorder who eventually became Deputy Minister of

Finance, was transferred to Victoria to assume this new position. His appointment was Victoria's response to the vacuum created when F.C. Hussey took a tighter rein on the Provincial Police. Although agents, constables, constable/mining recorders and so forth, still looked to Hussey and other Victoria officials for guidance, Goepel was soon firmly in command. Goepel was a tough-minded, extremely hard-working and experienced public servant. An agent found it difficult to circumvent his scrutiny. In addition, he travelled extensively throughout the province so he was never a 'faceless bureaucrat'. On the contrary, he became well-known and feared by agents.

Sydney Almond's respect for Goepel was representative of most agents. During the winter of 1908, Goepel toured the Boundary district and noticed at Grand Forks that there was some confusion between the agent and the constable as to who had possession of the keys to an office. He pointed this inconsistency out to Almond by letter from Nelson; Almond hurriedly responded by noting that it was the Constable, not him, who was in error.⁶⁹ In the other instance, a misplaced receipt from the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company at Phoenix worried Almond. His letter to the company clearly demonstrates Goepel's impact:

If you can make an affidavit that this receipt, in question, was not issued to La Rue but that it was made out in error, describing the error, and that it was destroyed, possibly, I might get that to pass the Inspector & satisfy the Audit Office...If you cannot make the affidavit or if the Inspector will not accept it, if made, then I shall, primarily, be held for the amount...

We might hold it over from the Audit Office, for a time, as we have done with several of the receipts issued by you, but we cannot work any such oracle on the inspector, it

will be a cause of put up or shut up and the latter would be tantamount to pulling down the blinds and sticking up a card with 'Vacant - Tenant required' on it.⁷⁰

On October 5 Almond paid, out of his own pocket, the \$3.00 necessary to cover the missing receipt!

Goepel's task was to ensure probity and uniform financial procedures as well as careful and effective administrative processes within government offices. More than anything else, Goepel brought Victoria to the front-counter of Government Agent offices throughout the province. Moreover, he reinforced the 'administrative' nature of the agents' job and their allegiance to one department--the Department of Finance--and not to government as a whole.

In a much more subtle way, the attitude of the Government Agent toward Victoria and the bureaucracy changed. It can be seen in their correspondence. Until about 1907 the agents wrote to the Minister, not to the department's permanent head. By World War I, agents rarely addressed letters to Cabinet members; letters to Deputy Ministers were now the norm. The flavour of the letters also altered. Nineteenth century correspondence, particularly, was more arrogant and self-assured. A Minister was treated almost as an equal and agents, for instance, thought nothing of correcting him or telling him he would have to wait for an answer to his inquiry. By the end of the period, this haughtiness was disappearing. The spirit was not completely knocked out of them, far from it; but the agents in 1917 were clearly a much more subservient lot.

Summary and Conclusions

The years 1890 to 1917 produced growth and diversification for the Government Agents but they also generated uniformity and dependence. The agents in 1917 were established in thirty-one communities across the province and were a respected and vital part of an expanding and increasingly more sophisticated public service. Their repertoire of duties did not diminish over these years; on the contrary, they were probably busier in 1917 than they were in 1890. The agents were still the number one public servant in the districts in 1917 even though, in other respects, they were different from their nineteenth century counterparts.

The 1917 Government Agent was, in short, becoming one of many public servants and less of being 'the district servant'. The 1917 agent found himself working side by side with experts a few years earlier he would not have known existed. It was not so much that he took a back seat to them but rather that he had to share the management of district affairs. In so doing, his community focus diminished somewhat for the simple reason that he was no longer the only one who knew what was best for a district. And, as Victoria specialized public services, the agent, too, became specialized. In 1890 he was a highly mobile and visible administrator; in 1917 he was an office-bound official. The agent, by 1917, still mediated district disputes and kept Victoria abreast of local events but because his knowledge of the community was now more circumspect, his effectiveness was also more limited. The Government Agents' focus narrowed in these twenty-seven years.

Nevertheless, in his district the agent was still supreme. If he had a reasonable amount of savoir faire, ability and determination, he could accomplish what he

wished. His work was interesting, always different and there was always more than enough of it. Until 1903 when Premier McBride brought political stability to the province, the agent could also be given some credit for conducting the business of government when the politicians were so preoccupied with each other that they had little time for administration. He helped, as his counterpart in India did a generation later, to maintain national integration.⁷¹

With the new century, however, the functions of maintaining law and order, the administration of justice and the collection of revenue gave way to a concern for economic development. This promoted a sophistication in organization and complicated traditional patterns of authority. Limits were put on the agents' behaviour and they lost some independence. Victoria asserted its right to determine the appropriateness of government practices and no longer could the agent set his own course and alter it as he wished. Developments in transportation and communication likewise facilitated a closer supervision of the agents by Victoria but it similarly fostered more consultation with the agent. A better understanding of local differences and difficulties was the result of this dialogue and it helped bring insights to the application of policy.

And the agents' wisdom was valued because they had credibility in their districts and in Victoria. Like McMynn and Almond, they were established members of their community having resided in them for decades and likewise having been active members in their commercial life. John Bowron, Caspar Phair and George Tunstall were still energetic public servants throughout most of this era and other agents like John Kirkup, Leonard Norris, Marshall Bray and William Stephenson were similarly long-established community leaders. The agents were also

friends of the political establishment. McMynn and Dewdney were friends of Dr. John McLean, a future Premier of the province; Dewdney was related to one of the most prominent families in the province. John McMullin, to cite another example, built a good working relationship with Alex Manson, a future Attorney-General, when he was Prince Rupert Agent. In the same vein, a few former agents or their staff became senior bureaucrats during this period. Frederick Hussey, previous Lytton and Kamloops Agent, became Superintendent of Police in 1891 and William Goepel became Deputy Minister of Finance in 1913. As Fesler found with other field officers, the agents had the right connections, information, social status and personality to be a powerful influence in district and provincial affairs.⁷² In simple terms, they were 'cousins' in a 'family' of relationships and individuals that ran the province during these years.

Finally, Victoria recognized the need during these years for leadership and, especially, financial controls and administrative consistency, within government offices across the province and found an individual capable of carrying it out. That Goepel was part of the Department of Finance meant that the agents would become part of Finance as well. For the first time, the Government Agents had a home, even though they were not sure it was where they belonged.

CHAPTER V, TITULAR HEAD, 1917 - 1958

C.W. Grain was Government Agent in Barkerville until April 1914 when his office was demoted to a sub-agency. His wife helped him with the office work for which she received sixty dollars a month, almost one-half of what he earned. Although dismayed with his fortune, he still conveyed the unwavering optimism and sense of humour so characteristic of the agents. Forty-one years later, horse travel would be a distant memory, Victoria officials would barely remember the names of district civil servants, and unassuming letters such as this to the Provincial Mineralogist would no longer be acceptable:

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 27th ult. I certainly do take an interest in my District and would dearly like to see it go ahead again.

Now that horse fed [sic] is getting somewhat cheaper I hope soon to be able to sport a horse of my own, so that I can get around the District better and really see what is going on.

I think my estimate of the output of last season was not far out of the way, as since sending it in I have heard of several nice little amounts recovered of which I did not know of at the time, apparently considerable gold was recovered in the Hixon Creek and Ah Bau Lake country.

I now enclose a sort of report handed in by a Mr. E.E. Armstrong, who has been gophering around this country for some years I think you may have met him, and know that he contains as much gas as an extra large Zeppelin, he may have located good looking quartz but I think that he is afraid to do any work on it, being afraid that he will blow up the whole ledge with one stick of powder.¹

Agent letters in 1958 were cautious and businesslike. C.W. Grain's references to individuals as well as his informal style would have been inappropriate. The Barkerville Sub-Agent of 1958 probably shared Grain's interest in his district but his attention was far less personal and intimate. For instance, it is doubtful if he knew local miners well enough to make amusing comments about their behaviour. The Government Agent in 1958 was distinctly different from his 1917 counterpart, much more than C.W. Grain was from John Bowron, who managed the Barkerville office in 1877.

For the agents the years between 1917 and 1958 were characterized by some frustration but mostly it is a period of hard work, when their skills were well-honed. On the other hand, the post-world War II years were imprecise, less deliberate for the agents. They still occupied a formidable position in district public affairs but their traditional role as Victoria's representative took a back seat to the activities of other public servants, more so than at any previous time in their history. They became less sure of themselves, less aggressive. 1958 marked the end of one hundred years of uninterrupted public service for the agents. Many of them wondered that year as they anxiously watched the retirement of their foremost advocate, John Villiers Fisher, whether the next hundred would be as distinguished.

For British Columbia the period 1917 to 1958 was one of expediency and adaptation. World War I had been a horrific experience to which the province contributed proportionally more young men than any other province in the Dominion and the post-war era produced reforms brought on by years of Edwardian neglect. The great depression of the 1930's produced not reconstruction but a sequence of ad hoc expedients which governments used to

fend off disaster. The affable Premier S.F. Tolmie, who had been elected in 1928, bounced from one crisis to another until his government disintegrated in the election of November 1933. The reign of his successor, Thomas Dufferin Pattullo, was one of almost continuous negotiation and re-negotiation, adjustment, adaptation and endless discussion between Victoria and Ottawa. His lack of support for federal initiatives, however, was his downfall. It was left to his Finance Minister, John Hart, the first Member from Victoria, to shepherd the government through the last four years of the war. The needs of wartime led to the adoption of dramatic efforts and the federal government became ubiquitous, influencing almost all matters of public policy. The civil service, and the agents for the first time in their history, had less to do.

British Columbia was quite different politically after the war. The shaky coalition of Liberal and Conservative parties formed to fend off the socialists fell apart and was replaced by a fourth political party led by a skilful politician. William Andrew Cecil Bennett became British Columbia's twenty-fifth Premier on August 1, 1952, and held tenaciously to power until 1972. Bennett's "middle of the road free enterprise" government, driven in large part by his energy and enthusiasm, capitalized on the wealth and prosperity of the province precipitated by the war and fuelled by the unprecedented economic expansion throughout the western world during the 1950's.² His government's priority of "rapid and concentrated economic development," however, threatened the agents' traditional role.³

Although the agents had been through this before in the nineties and the early twentieth century, the repercussions of civil service reform weakened their base of support in Victoria and their districts. Unlike the

province they served, the agents were not buoyant and optimistic in 1958.

The province also had been transformed in other ways. By 1958 the population had almost tripled since 1917 to approximately one and one-half million individuals. Most people lived in the few organized areas of the province by 1947;⁴ by 1958 approximately sixty-four per cent of all British Columbians lived in urban centres especially Vancouver.⁵ "At the beginning of the last war," Premier Hart noted proudly in 1939, "neither the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Canadian Northern Railway, nor the Pacific Great Eastern Railway were completed, and the Panama Canal was not open fully to commercial traffic. Today British Columbia has 3,883 miles of steam railways and 23,000 miles of highways. The hinterland is opened up and resources are rapidly mobilized. The ocean route to Great Britain is shortened greatly by the opening of the Panama Canal to all merchant ships."⁶ Three years later the Alaska Highway opened the far north to development undreamed of a few years earlier and towns in the interior and on the coast experienced tremendous growth. Everywhere the war stimulated industrial investment and housing shortages were evident in almost all towns and cities.

The period after the war was marked by even more rapid economic growth. The forest industry, for instance, grew tremendously during the 1950's. Spurred on by an obliging provincial government and a buoyant world economy, the industry expanded "to the limits of the available timber supply."⁷ Mining too went through important changes. Demand and investment capital soared after World War II. Natural gas discovered in Pouce Coupe in 1948 also precipitated unprecedented development. It was an era of road, bridge, railway, port and

dam construction, a period inextricably linked with W.A.C. Bennett, the colourful Premier.⁸

The Interventionist State

The aftermath of World War II, like that of World War I, produced another re-thinking of the government's role in society. It yielded the recognition that, as Doug Owsram concludes in The Government Generation, the positive state, based upon widespread social welfare, a managed economy and negotiation with the federal government, had finally triumphed.⁹ The period that began with the ushering out of Edwardian idealists by Liberal reformers ended with a group of pragmatists, united in coalition to keep out the socialists, but resigned to the fact that government was going to have to provide the plans for the future.

The interventionist state, then, was the product of evolving values and decades of trial and error. Its formation in British Columbia can be clearly seen in the growth of certain sectors of the public service relative to other parts. Table IX, "Growth of Government Departments by Function, 1919 - 1958, (Staffing)" and Table X, "Growth of Government Departments by Function, 1919 - 1958, (Expenditures)", identify quantitatively the expansion in government departments during this period. These two tables consider this growth through an analysis that groups together departments with similar functions.

Staffing in economic development departments, that is, those agencies whose purpose it was to encourage, develop, occasionally regulate, or, in the case of Lands (and Forests) and Public Works, provide the necessary infrastructure for private industry, increased almost five-fold from 1919 to 1958.¹⁰ Yet, they lost ground relative to those departments whose focus it was to

TABLE IX

Growth of Government Departments by Function, 1919-1958
(Permanent and Probationary Staff)

<u>Economic Development</u>	31/12/1919	1930/31	1940/41	1951*	1958*
Agriculture	78	96	68	149	160
Fisheries/Recreation and Conservation	4	3	3	5	76
Lands (and Forests)	287	360	323	924	1103
Mines	22	28	43	67	85
Public Works	107	177	178	973	520
Railways	7	8	6	6	8
Trade and Industry (and Commerce)	3		21	80	71
Highways					471
TOTAL	(43%) 508	672	640	2204	2494(30%)
 <u>Social Development</u>					
Education	63	86	121	345	355
Labour	32	35	67	88	92
Provincial Secretary	65	128	223	1815	2414
Workman's Compensation		18	16		
Health and Welfare				1870	1457
Hospital Insurance Service					205
TOTAL	(13.5%) 160	265	427	4118	4523(54%)
 <u>Regulatory</u>					
Premier's Office	1	3	2	4	2
Finance	265	340	403	610	676
Municipal Affairs			9	24	17
Public Utilities Comm.			67	54	
TOTAL	(22.5%) 266	343	416	705	749(9%)
 <u>Justice</u>					
<u>Attorney-General</u> (not incl. Police)	(21%) 243	163	148	467	583(7%)
<hr/>					
GRAND TOTAL	1177	1143	1631	7494	8349

*Civil Service Commissioner Annual Reports were only available by calendar year.

Source: Civil Lists, Civil Service Commissioner Annual Reports, GR 101.
British Columbia, Civil Service Commission Reports, Victoria, B.C.

TABLE X

Growth of Government Departments by Function, 1919-1958
(Expenditures - \$ millions)

<u>Economic Development</u>	1919-20	1930/31	1940/41	1950/1951	1957/58
Agriculture	.264	.664	.328	.882	1.834
Fisheries/Recreation and Conservation	.017	.027	.018	.036	2.171
Lands (and Forests)	.975	2.160	1.466	6.408	11.404
Mines	.248	.300	.488	.614	.756
Public Works	2.223	4.073	3.561	15.275	3.504
Railways	.079	.069	.020	.040	.062
Trade and Industry (and Commerce)	.007		.213	.561	.645
Highways					17.430
TOTAL	(28%) 3.813	7.293	6.094	23.816	37.806(17%)
 <u>Social Development</u>					
Education	2.227	4.298	4.567	16.395	49.945
Labour	.070	.633	.892	.377	.817
Provincial Secretary	1.994	3.337	5.112	8.923	14.592
Health and Welfare				22.319	28.877
Hospital Insurance Service					34.075
TOTAL	(32%) 4.291	8.268	10.571	48.014	128.306(57%)
 <u>Regulatory</u>					
Premier's Office	.012	.019	.022	.033	.060
Finance	.819	1.992	2.017	16.695	37.955
Municipal Affairs			.022	.093	.162
Public Utilities Comm. (and Motor Carrier Act)			.115	.276	.293
TOTAL	(6%) .831	2.011	2.176	17.097	38.470(17.1%)
 <u>Justice</u>					
Attorney-General	(8%) 1.039	3.250	1.921	5.787	9.395(4.1%)
 <u>Miscellaneous</u>					
Public Debt, Legislation, etc.	(26%) 3.536	8.280	8.893	21.444	11.568(5%)
<hr/>					
GRAND TOTAL	13.51	29.100	29.655	116.150	225.545
<hr/>					

Source: British Columbia, Public Accounts, Victoria, B.C.

assist society's less fortunate or provide universal social programs. Economic development departments constituted 43 per cent of the bureaucracy in 1919 but by 1958 had dropped to 30 per cent. On the other hand, social development bureaus grew from little more than thirteen per cent of government to fifty-four per cent by 1958. Regulatory departments, that is, agencies that oversaw the work of other arms of government or municipal governments, also decreased proportionally from approximately twenty-three per cent of the public service to nine per cent. The percentage of government staff engaged in social development activities quadrupled by 1958 while the three other major function areas of government got by, proportionally, with less manpower than they had in 1919.¹¹

The same is true when expenditures are considered, although the change is not as dramatic. Economic development departments constituted 28 per cent of the provincial budget in 1919-20 but only 17 per cent in 1957-58. On the other hand, social development expenditures grew from 32 per cent of the budget in 1919-20 to 57 per cent by March 31, 1958. The Department of Finance's budget also increased significantly over this period and the portion of the provincial budget used to finance the public debt decreased. The conclusion of this analysis is that the goals of government, as measured by fiscal and human resources directed toward their achievement, changed from 1919 to 1958. The human component, which in 1919 was barely beginning to take the politicians' attention, had, by 1958, become a more important element in the structure of government services.

The Liberals did not disappoint those who envisioned a bigger role for government. Overall, the public service grew by almost 40 per cent from 1917 to

1928 for which they were not apologetic.¹² In a 1928 election handbook, the Liberal party boldly asserted: "the fact remains that many departments are understaffed at present, and there is no possibility of effectively carrying on the business of the country with a lower paid staff or fewer employees at present."¹³ The Liberal government echoed the sentiments of a number of Canadian intellectuals that the state's role was to serve the individual, for the sake of the individual's potential, regardless of its impact on staffing numbers.¹⁴

Even if they had been intellectually disposed the Conservatives, who won the 1928 election, did not have the freedom to experiment with altruistic theories. The great depression forced them to implement a program of retrenchment and the public service from 1928 to 1933 decreased in size: from 1556 permanent and temporary employees in 1928 to 1424 in 1933.¹⁵

Fortunately for 'Duff' Pattullo, the worst of the depression was over when he took power in 1933. In fact, Finance Minister John Hart tabled a budgetary surplus for the 1934-35 fiscal year, the first one in nine years. The public service also increased again under Liberal supervision, growing steadily until 1944 when it numbered 2,159, an increase of over fifty per cent from 1933. In the next seven years the public service almost quadrupled so that on New Year's Eve, 1951, there were 7,494 employees on the public payroll.

W.A.C. Bennett put the brakes on staffing increases, at least somewhat. During the first two years of his administration, the total number of government employees, permanent and temporary, decreased marginally. By 1956, when he received a second and overwhelming mandate from British Columbians, staffing numbers were up to over 9,000, and two years later totalled 9,263. Over-

all, the civil service increased by eight per cent in the first six years of the Bennett government.

The trend toward more centralization of the bureaucracy, somewhat evident before 1917, was reversed by the mid-1940's. As Table XI indicates, 1585 civil servants, or sixty-two per cent, were located in the field in 1944 as opposed to 553, or fifty-nine per cent, in 1917. The reasons for this small change are unclear but can probably be explained by the increased number of health and social service professionals operating in the regions by the 1940's.

The Provincial Secretary's department grew faster than any other department during this period. As Tables IX and X indicate, the staff of the Provincial Secretary's Department increased immeasurably from 1919 to 1958. During the Oliver administration, for example, the department took over the Tranquille Sanatorium and the Boys' Industrial School and responsibility for the Civil Service Commission including Superannuation and the Workmen's Compensation Branch. The Pattullo years also produced more social service programs. Child welfare, for instance, expanded from a small, loosely organized operation in 1934 to an established field service network complete with supervisors and fifteen generalized social workers by 1939.¹⁶ In 1946, a separate Health and Welfare Department was formed to handle the province's welfare administration and health services; by 1958 it was one-half the size of its former departmental home.

Of the major departments, the Department of Public Works (including Highways, which is noted separately) experienced the next largest staff increase. There were nine times as many officials in the Department in 1958 as there were in 1919. Its budget increased almost ten-fold from 1919-20 to 1946-47. Most of the budgetary expansion occurred during the 1920's when Premier Oliver was busy

TABLE XI

**Government of British Columbia
Headquarters and Field Staff, 1917 and 1944***

1917		1944	
Hdqts.	Field	Hdqts.	Field
375 (41%)	553 (59%)	936 (38%)	1521 (62%)

*Data is not available for 1958.

Source: Premier's Correspondence with Civil Service Commissioner, July 6, 1944, GR 1222, Vol. 53, File 6.

building roads and erecting government buildings and after World War II when the obsolete provincial transportation system required a major overhaul. On the other hand, staffing expansion occurred in the 1940's possibly because a large number of employees were employed by the department but not counted as part of the Civil List until after the new Civil Service Act was implemented.

The Education Department's staffing growth was not as large as Public Works but its budgetary growth rivalled that of the Provincial Secretary's Department. The budget of the Education Department, which was not a separate department until 1920, was almost twenty-five times larger by 1958. Grants to municipalities and cities for teachers' salaries, the largest item in the education budget, remained relatively constant throughout this period, consuming approximately 60 per cent of the department's allocation.

The Department of Lands (and Forests) also grew substantially over these years although its rate of growth was slower than other departments.¹⁷ Approximately four times as many staff were employed by the department in 1958 as in 1919 while its budget increased over ten times. The initiatives of the Forest Act, 1912 (2 Geo. V, Chap. 17) that divided the province into districts under the supervision of District Foresters and Rangers were firmly entrenched during this period.

The Mines Department, likewise, continued to be administered on a foundation established a generation earlier. It was one of the few agencies of government that gained staff during the depression although, as Table X notes, its budget grew very little. The government's primary focus was to encourage further exploration either through geological mapping and surveys or through the information-gathering activities of its field personnel. Promoting the industry and geological

assistance would become the primary function, almost sacred duty, of the department for the foreseeable future.

The Attorney-General's Department became more specialized after World War II, but, as in 1919, it was still home to an assortment of regulatory services. Staffing growth in the department was not significant and its budgetary allocation lost ground compared to other departments. The Provincial Police continued to consume approximately one-third of the departmental budget. In 1923, the enactment of the Police and Prisons Regulation Act (14, Geo. V, Chap. 57) created the modern British Columbia Provincial Police. The Attorney-General was charged directly with the Act's administration and, subject to his direction, the Commissioner of Police was responsible for the organization and operation of the force. For the first time constables received uniforms, something they had sought since 1858. Even so, the Police, much like the Government Agents, remained a handmaiden to other government departments. It was not until the force was absorbed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1950 that policemen, especially in isolated communities, no longer were, as Commissioner T.W.S. Parsons put it, "composite officer[s]."¹⁸

The Department of Agriculture changed little. It remained highly specialized and was organized, like most other departments, by districts. The Department of Labour, which had district bureaus from its inception, in as many as thirteen locations in 1924, by the 1950's had lost some of its decentralized nature. Two small departments, Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce and Recreation and Conservation, both created in 1957, can trace their roots back at least a decade to earlier attempts by government to promote as well as conserve the province's physical assets. The departments of Fisheries

and Railways likewise remained relatively constant throughout this period. The Department of Municipal Affairs that was created in 1934 to be "the recognized medium of communication between the municipalities of the province and the Lieutenant-Governor in Council" grew only marginally (R.S.B.C. 1936, Chap. 197).

The Finance Department, home for the Government Agents since 1917, however, was active. The number of individuals who managed the financial resources of the province more than doubled from 1919 to 1958 and the agents were, by far, the largest branch of the Finance Department throughout the period. The agents accounted for over fifty per cent of total departmental staff from 1919 to 1958. The large number of agent personnel in the 1930's, as will be discussed later, is explained by the vast group of staff in the Vancouver Agent's office.

The most meaningful change in the department occurred in 1917 and it would have a profound impact on the Government Agents. Building on a Price Waterhouse audit that embraced all departments of government, the Brewster government brought in sweeping changes to financial management. A new Audit Act, proclaimed May 19, 1917 (Geo. V, Chap. 7), created a new section in the Treasury Department--the Controlling and Audit Branch--that centralized financial control under the direction of a Comptroller-General. As a consequence of this change and the government's overall desire to increase departmental efficiency and create "a proper centralization of control...in connection with accounting matters," responsibility for the Government Agents was also transferred to the Finance Department.¹⁹ For the first time in their history, the agents were under effective financial and administrative control. More important, because they guarded the purse in their localities, all district financial matters were brought under the same

umbrella. Thus, the agents extended Victoria's 'centralized control' throughout the province.

This transfer was not surprising. As the agents' primary function since their detachment from the Provincial Police was financial and administrative, it was only natural that they join the Treasury. Further, through the activities of the Inspector of Government Offices, the agents had been under the indirect supervision of the Finance Department for years. The Deputy Minister of Finance, in an answer to an inquiry from the Civil Service Commissioner regarding the nature of the agents' responsibilities, needed no convincing:

The functions of a Government Agent are purely of a financial character. It is his duty to receive money forming part of the Revenue of any Department of the Service and he is entrusted with the payment and expenditure of such moneys, and accounts to the Treasury for such receipts and expenditure.²⁰

This realignment put the Finance Department in firm control of district financial affairs, and reinforced its influence in other ways. The agents could be a source of valuable information--what better way to keep a handle on district finances and proceedings? The following bulletin to the agents fortified the fact that henceforth they were answerable to one department. It concurrently filled the mail pouches of the Deputy Minister with a potpourri of worthwhile local data:

In all cases where reports or particulars regarding the work or administration of offices coming under the Finance Department are made to any official or Department, a copy of such report must be forwarded to the Deputy Minister of Finance for the information of the Department. Copies of all reports of this nature made since the beginning of this calendar year should be sent in to the Treasury.²¹

It should be observed that the addition of the office of the Comptroller-General created a diarchy within the Finance Department. The Comptroller-General reported to Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance as did his colleague, the Deputy Minister. Correspondence similarly indicates that the Comptroller-General frequently issued directives to departments and the agents without first clearing them with the Deputy Minister. This broke the unity of command. Although not a new experience for the agents, this schism indirectly affected them and other branches of the department, most notably the office of the Surveyor of Taxes.

During the 1920's increased emphasis was placed by the Oliver government on the role of the assessor and collector in the Government Agents' office. For years agents wore one or both of these administrative 'hats' or the post was held by a separate individual. In 1920 the agent and assessor roles were separated completely and agents were instructed to designate one staff member, or themselves, as collector. The assessor was released to concentrate on land assessments. This meant the agent no longer had complete freedom to direct the activities of all individuals in his office; conflict and confusion ensued. In fact, for years there was ambiguity in the field as to who really was in charge in the agent's office and whether the agent could, when assessments were slow, put the assessor to work on other matters. In Vancouver the split was more pronounced as the assessor there seemed to report directly to E.E. Leason, Surveyor of Taxes; however, in many other offices the assessor also by-passed the agent. The depth of the confusion can be seen in the following excerpts from two memoranda from the Deputy Minister of Finance: the first in 1922 to the Pouce Coupe Agent and, the second, in 1924 to the Revelstoke Agent:

All staff of Treasury Department comes under the jurisdiction of Government Agent as representative of the Department and when the Assessor has completed field work his time should be fully occupied in the office primarily with his own work; if at liberty any²² other work which may be detailed to do.

...I may say that in your position as Chief Executive of the Government you have full general supervision of the staff of the Agency as a whole. The work of the Assessor in that specific capacity does not come within your jurisdiction, as this is a direct Executive appointment and in this particular position he reports direct to the Surveyor of Taxes. This also applies to the position of Collector, except to the extent that general supervision of the work, although not the detail of the same comes within the scope of the Government Agent's duties.²³

The diarchy that began in Victoria spread to the field and was devastating for the agents. It was one thing to have public servants of other departments meddling in district affairs and answering to a Victoria supervisor, but when a Treasury official, whose desk was across the room, also reported to someone different and could ignore your instruction, it was downright insulting. As Norm Blake, who started in Kamloops in 1944 and rose through the ranks to agent in a number of locations, said, "you did a rating on him [the assessor] but had to ask his permission to borrow his car."²⁴

The friction was unavoidable and aggravated by the proliferation of specialists from other departments also working in the districts. As Fesler recognized, "as soon as functional differentiation appeared at the capital and the volume of work assigned to each field area exceeded the capacities of one man, the seeds of conflict were planted."²⁵ By 1958, the agents were a small branch whose traditional functions were under attack by

specialists inside and outside of the Finance Department. It was a "much more paternal society after the war; the government was doing many things it never dreamed of doing before and some of these technically had to be administered by the people who [knew] how to do them," according to Ron Burns, who joined the Finance Department in 1935 and eventually became Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the agents.²⁶ Unlike the "early" specialization surge of the nineties, small work places were no longer dominant by 1958. The intensity of this "later" specialization in fact made the big organization imperative and pushed little units, like the agents, from centre stage.

Other district bureaus, like the Forest Service and Social Welfare field service offices, were large, well-established entities with firmly entrenched modes of operation by 1958. Even low-level functionaries in these agencies communicated directly with Victoria; decades earlier this was a function reserved only for senior officials or, more likely, the agent. Meetings between head office and district officials were also commonplace in 1958. Finally, British Columbians were accustomed to using these vast organizations by the 1950's. Once opened, the population liked the specialization package. "The role of the Government Agent that fitted very well in a pioneer society was disappearing," concluded Charles Ferber who joined the Finance Department in 1946 and became Comptroller-General in 1951.²⁷

The post-World War II specialization was also dissimilar in other ways. The 1917 district specialist relied heavily on the agent to get the work done. The agent hired, supervised and paid most of the workers. The specialist in 1917 also banked on the agent for administrative services. By 1958 all agencies of government in the district had their own administrative

structures. Further, specialization by 1958 was so sophisticated that sub-specialists were common. These individuals, unheard of a decade earlier, even grumbled at the supervision of their technically trained superiors. "The problem was greatly intensified," Fesler notes, "in our own time when specialties have proliferated so remarkably that specialists in 'subfunctions', chafe even under the direction of men professionally trained but lacking special preparation in the particular subfunction."²⁸ The Health and Welfare Department, a good example, had a host of individuals providing social welfare services in 1958 that Sydney Almond used to do by himself. The agents' skills, developed and honed in a pioneer era, were by 1958 set against a backdrop of massive development of new skills and occupations.

The agents were not prepared for this new kind of district work. District services in the 1950's focused on economic and social development that required abilities in leading change, challenging traditional patterns and values. An increased emphasis on coordination to achieve a unified result became critical. The new district functions had "a positive thrust to them that demanded[ed] a different spirit and vigor of administration than that embedded in traditional field administration."²⁹ The agents, on the other hand, were used to giving orders, used to doing Victoria's bidding and used to being obeyed. Their skills were appropriate for the clerical content of their tasks: straightforward duties with straightforward answers.

Finally, the agents in 1958 were different in one other critical respect. They no longer spoke with the same authority. Victoria still listened to their observations but they were the reflections of a bureaucrat, not a respected local official. The contemporary agent was a careerist public servant who

took orders from another careerist public servant. This transformation was the result of civil service reform which culminated in 1945.

Civil Service Reform

The first legislative mention of the term "Civil Service" in British Columbia occurred in the Revenue Act of 1879 (Chapter 202, R.S.B.C. 1911) which spelled out the responsibilities of "any officer, functionary or person whose duty it is to receive any moneys forming part of the Revenue" (Sec. 2), the oath officers were to take, the "hours of general attendance" (Sec. 16) and a number of other perfunctory administrative matters respecting the conduct of revenue officers. The legislation's primary focus was the collection and management of revenue and, as late as 1919, it was still the vehicle under which Government Agents were appointed (Sec. 13). It was, in most respects, the underpinnings of the post-Confederation Treasury Department.

In 1908, a Public Service Act was proclaimed by the McBride government but within a year it was repealed and replaced by the first Civil Service Act (R.S.B.C. 1911, Chap. 37) which provided for the appointment of a Civil Service Commission and articulated, for the first time, a classification plan for members of the civil service which included the designation of "Agent" as including "every person employed as a Government Agent, Assessor, Recorder, Registrar, Chief Clerk, and such other appointments as the Lieutenant-Governor may by Order-in-Council decide" (Sec. 3). It was one of the few instances of "Agent" being designated specifically in legislation.

The 1908 legislation's most important feature was that all public service positions were "to be held during

pleasure" and that promotions were "subject always to efficient performance of duties" (Sec. 17 and Sections 9-20).³⁰ Ensuring efficiency found favour with the business-oriented McBride government but it took the reform-minded Liberals to launch an attack on the spoils system. Had Premier Harlan Brewster lived, even two years longer, he, like Robert Borden, who included the elimination of political patronage from the federal public service in his electoral platform, may have regretted implementing the recommendations of Dr. Adam Shortt, the intellectual force behind the 1908 federal civil service reforms and the architect of the British Columbia Act.

Much like its predecessor, the 1917 Civil Service Act (R.S.B.C. 1924, Chap. 35) set out a Civil Service Commission, provided for the classification and examination of public employees and specified salaries and promotion requirements. It, too, made all appointments to the civil service during pleasure "Except where otherwise specially provided for." The latter included six classes of employees ranging from principal administrative and executive officers (First Class) to gaol guards, janitors, fire wardens and "others whose duties are not clerical" (Sec. 17 and 6). The top two classes consisted of Deputy Ministers and Technical Officers who were persons "possessing professional or other special technical knowledge and experience as may be specified by Order-in-Council" (Sec. 6). The latter designation was particularly troublesome for the agents because the Cabinet could appoint technical officers, "without competitive examinations...upon the recommendation of the Minister...provided the person to be appointed obtains from the Commission a certificate" (Sec. 15). The legislation also maintained the efficiency concept but substituted the term "merit" as the basis for promotion

(Sec. 20). Where it varied substantially from the 1909 legislation was the extraordinary powers it conferred upon the Civil Service Commissioner.

The Civil Service Commissioner's most important responsibilities were testing and certifying the qualifications of candidates for admission to the Civil Service and reporting upon the organization or proposed organization of the department (Sec. 4). The first individual holding these powers, the Comptroller-General, Alexander Naismith Mouat, recommended that he be appointed Commissioner as well as Comptroller-General in order to "strengthen the hands of the Comptroller-General in carrying out the re-organization of the several departments of the Government."³¹ The amount of work involved soon overwhelmed him; four months later he resigned and William Hedley MacInnes was appointed.

MacInnes, a Queen's University educated accountant, took his responsibility as Commissioner very seriously and proceeded with rigid determination.³² Almost immediately he implemented a bonus for all civil servants who had received little or no salary increases during the war, instituted a system of examinations for stenographers and other positions and, within a year, convinced the government to provide a retiring allowance to civil servants. MacInnes also reviewed the departmental organization plans of each Deputy Minister and the salaries and classification of employees and negotiated, not always amicably, changes he felt necessary. Even Mouat, who less than a month earlier was making similar decisions, found himself appealing to his Minister that the Commissioner's conclusions "were arrived at without full knowledge of all the circumstances."³³

MacInnes also visited the majority of government offices throughout the province. He "found that the men

welcomed this personal investigation of their work," and he learned to appreciate their problems and working conditions.³⁴ This contact, combined with his legislative mandate, made him a passionate enemy of the spoils system. MacInnes lost his first battle with the government over patronage in relation to the assessors. In the fall of 1919, new classifications for the agents, assessors and collectors were considered by the Commissioner and the Deputy Minister of Finance who initially supported assigning senior non-technical grades to these positions and their assistants.³⁵ Shortly thereafter, Deputy Minister Goepel reversed his stance.

Possibly he wanted to distance the Department somewhat from the political headaches of the assessor's job or maybe he was just being realistic; either way, an Order-in-Council approved the organization and salaries of the Department of Finance and the 'practical men' were graded Technical while the agents and collectors were noted as Class I or Class II. Four years later, MacInnes lost the same battle over the agents and two years after that yielded again regarding the collectors.

MacInnes bluntly and publicly expressed his views in confrontation over the agents and the collectors in his Annual Report. In his 1922 report MacInnes sensed a dispute was imminent. Under the heading "Transfers and Promotions", he wrote:

Many senior positions have been filled by the advancement of men trained in our Service. It has been the aim of the Commission to advance by promotion within the Service wherever possible. Under this policy better qualified men are obtained for the senior administrative positions and the encouragement it gives to the junior men tends to secure from them more enthusiastic service... . I would strongly recommend that Technical Officer positions be also filled by promotion wherever possible.³⁶

The next year the agents were given Technical Officer status which they would retain until after World War II. MacInnes was furious:

The grade of all Government Agents was altered from the first and second class to technical officer. The effect of this change was to bring the appointment of Government Agents... by Order-in-Council. At the time of the regrading these positions were included in the classified service being deemed to be senior administrative positions which should naturally be filled by promotion from the service. It will not be possible to recruit and retain a good type of civil servant in our administrative service unless he can fairly hope, in due course, to work up to the position of government agent. Only by promotion of the senior clerks or collectors to Government Agents positions can reasonable promotion be given to the regular staff. Further, by taking men who have been trained to the work and who have proved their capacity and integrity we are much more likely to secure an efficient loyal and satisfactory service. I consider that this regrading of the Government Agents' position is a retrograde step.³⁷

Unwilling to compromise, MacInnes alienated practically everyone. The Premier, as early as December 4, 1919, had written to his colleagues: "I think the present unsatisfactory condition has arisen from a misconception of the powers and duties of the Civil Service Commissioner, and that the Executive must share equally with the Civil Service Commissioner the responsibility for such misconception."³⁸ This perception of shared blame did not last for long. By 1926 the government had had enough and MacInnes was dismissed.

MacInnes responded with a lengthy epistle that articulated the terms under which he had been hired and claimed monies still owing him. As expected, his most

barbed comments concerned his administration of the Civil Service Act. This protracted excerpt from his letter captures the hostility of politicians toward the merit system, an antagonism that took another twenty years to run its course:

I contend that members of the Legislature, who are the persons responsible for the Act being in force and for the provisions of that Act, are not fair when they become unfriendly to me because I carried out the duties of my office and enforced fearlessly and impartially the provisions of that Act. Every action that I took during seven and a half years came under scrutiny, and was a matter of public record. Not one single appointment made or a certificate given has been attacked in the open. No neglect of duty has ever been charged against me. I have been criticised in connection with dismissals, concerning which I have no jurisdiction: for advancement by promotion not being more general in the service although I have always advised and made promotion within the service wherever possible. I have been criticised for reducing the cost of the civil service by men who steadily and persistently pressed for increased expenditure in their own districts. I have been subjected to much criticism of a vague and indefinite character but no specific charge that could be dealt with has ever been made...the reason for this was that the complaints were due not to any negligence or misconduct of mine but to the fact that there was strong dislike to the merit system, to the Act drafted to give that system effect and to the fact that I would not stultify myself by acceding to appointments and changes not in accordance with the Act.

...it is unjust to discriminate against me personally as has been done because of dislike to the merit system in view of the fact that I was not responsible for the adoption of the policy, for the form or provisions of the Act or for bringing in the Act into force, nor even for my selection as Commissioner to administer the Act. If the

Act and the merit system upon which it is based no longer meet with approval, let a change in them be made... .³⁹

Idealists rarely make good senior public servants and MacInnes, like Dr. Adam Shortt was not "altogether suited...for his duties of Civil Service Commissioner."⁴⁰ His successor, Arthur Cox, was much more compliant and for years the Act was virtually ignored. Norman Baker, who was Superannuation Commissioner and acting Civil Service Commissioner during the 1930's, tried unsuccessfully to draw this neglect to the government's attention. By the early 1940's, however, it could no longer be ignored.

As in 1917, war had led to the dramatic dislocation of thousands of British Columbians to industrial centres and the expanding economy and population required new infrastructures and services. Returning soldiers and new immigrants also demanded attention and were not content with an outmoded patchwork of services and opportunities. The civil service was also starved of qualified personnel, primarily in the lower ranks. In addition, British Columbians were no longer content to give government a free hand: they were tired of methods and practices carried over from earlier decades. In 1942, Vancouver Province columnist, Bruce McKelvie, reported that:

Patronage is definitely on the way out at Victoria. The Hart-Maitland coalition government has handed the public of British Columbia a Christmas present. It came wrapped up in the announcement that inequalities in the pay and ranging [ranking] of the civil service would be adjusted.

Behind...[this] proposed amendment of administrative policy may be seen a change that the public has been demanding for the past 35 years. It is the freeing of the civil service from political influence.

No part of the public of British Columbia is more eager for such a change than the civil service itself.⁴¹

Seven months earlier, on May 6, 1942, Premier Hart appointed J.V. Fisher, Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance, Chairman of a committee composed of himself, N. Baker, Civil Service Commissioner; and E. Griffith, the Administrator of Unemployment Relief, "to survey the salaries of Civil Servants in the lower salary brackets, and to report to me any existing inequalities requiring special consideration."⁴²

The Fisher committee recommended immediate salary increases for stenographers and a few other lower positions and suggested that the government consider "a complete study of the 'Civil Service Act' and Civil Service Organization and...develop an intelligent continuing survey of the entire Civil Service" [by]...the appointment of a Personnel Officer."⁴³ The committee concluded by noting that there were many instances of overdue salary increases but suggesting specifics would risk disrupting the existing organization and create new inequalities.⁴⁴ The committee did single out the Government Agents as worthy of special attention:

The Committee is unanimous in the opinion that the salaries of Government Agents and their staffs are low when compared with the rates paid in other departments to employees carrying less responsibility and performing tasks of more routine nature. It is pointed out that Government Agencies represent practically every department of the Government and require a diversified knowledge of statutory provisions, the exercise of technical qualifications, and ability in dealing with the public. A reclassification is necessary; but as a study of local conditions is imperative to determine accurately standards of work and worth, this Committee could not carry it out in the time at its disposal.⁴⁵

It would be a number of years before the agents received any salary increase, but work began on the ignored Civil Service Act on March 1, 1943, when the Provincial Secretary, George S. Pearson, instructed the committee to proceed as they suggested.

The Civil Service Act of 1945 varied little from its 1917 counterpart. The Civil Service Commission was expanded from one to three members all of whom had to have "had executive experience and have served not less than ten years in the Civil Service" (this eliminated individuals like MacInnes) and allowed for the appointment of a "Chief Personnel Officer" (Sec. 3). Not surprisingly, the 1945 Act built in a new section that articulated the responsibilities of the Deputy Minister (Sec. 9-12). The powers of the Commission were almost a carbon copy of the earlier legislation, however, in preparing the "plans for the organization of the personnel of each department" it was expected to follow "as far as possible, the same general principles in all branches of the Civil Service" (Sec. 13-14). On this statement of principle, and three others, the act varied substantially. The legislation also firmly established that vacancies were to be filled by promotion; made retirement compulsory; and, recognized associations as representatives of the employees "for the purpose of discussing any matters affecting their general welfare and conditions of employment." (Sec. 62, 69 & 72).

The 1946 Civil Service Commission Report reported that the principles of open competition and merit were being strictly followed throughout the public service and had resulted "in the appointment of personnel of a calibre well above average, which will tend greatly to strengthen the Service as a whole."⁴⁶ More than anything else, political will made the difference. As Dr.

Hugh Morrison, first Chief Personnel Officer appointed December 1945, put it in an interview years later:

...once the Premier was for it and the Provincial Secretary, the Minister in charge of the Civil Service, and it was passed through the legislature...that's the way they wanted it. They didn't want to get...with every appointment they made they would make five or six enemies. So they could seek the political wisdom of having a Civil Service Commission that would be active.⁴⁷

The 1945 Civil Service Act was a milestone in the evolution of the British Columbia civil service and the Government Agents. It represented the first occasion that government took the management of the public service seriously. Second, the Act spelled out, for the first time, that all promotions must be made from within the service, not by politicians. Third, simultaneously with the passage of the Act, the public service was totally reclassified. This process, more than anything else, demonstrated that henceforth public employees were on a new footing. The classification process also manifested a break with the past in that it presented the government with issues that are still on the political agenda:

The Committee finds, like all similar Committees before it, that the most contentious factors are: "Equal pay for equal work" (whether between males or male and female) and "Years of service (or seniority)" versus "efficiency," and that these are stressed forcefully, according to the possible benefit sought by the individual complainant.⁴⁸

Finally, fourth, for the first time, uniformity in personnel policy was deemed desirable. Standardization replaced the whims of Minister and Deputy Minister alike when organization, classification, and compensation was

to be done "in all branches" according to "the same general principles."

The reforms of 1945 fundamentally altered the manner in which all public servants--this time including the agents--were treated by bringing uniformity and standardized procedures to recruitment, classification and salary administration practices. The informal personnel techniques of the past were gone and the agents, who had suffered more than most from the indulgences of government, welcomed the change. These developments, however, dramatically and irrevocably modified their administrative culture.

Technical skills, developed through years of experience in an agent's office rather than local knowledge and prominence, became the important factor in the selection of future agents. Post-1945 agents were screened for knowledge of legislation, regulations and administrative procedures. They were individuals who worked their way up the organization until promoted to agent status. After achieving the designation they continued to mature until ready for another promotion to a higher ranking agent position in another community. An agent's career path became predictable; in fact for the first time an agent really had a career. In short, the agents became institutionalized.

Local wisdom which used to be the determining factor in the recruitment of agents became of secondary importance. Before 1945, the Government Agent was an influential member of the local community and carried this prominence with him when he assumed the mantle of agent. "He was an important member of the community in his own right, becoming Government Agent just added to his status," concluded Ken McRae, former Assistant Director of the Government Agents who started with the system in 1937.⁴⁹ Many agents were, as Fesler found in

his research, "chosen and trained as to identify themselves with the classes, families and other groups who constitute the 'Establishment'."⁵⁰

This does not suggest that the post-1945 agents were not good individuals. On the contrary, they were equally capable but they were not linked to their district and political masters as their predecessors were. And this linking, this mutual interdependence, made the agent so formidable, so different from his colleagues in the field. This connection gave him status and power in Victoria and the district. The legislative reforms of 1945 were fine, as McRae said, but "everyone isn't qualified...to [be] a Government Agent."⁵¹

Civil service reform hastened another development. It broke down the relationship between the agent, the district and the government. The agent was no longer a trusted insider and hence the community confided in him less. As a result, Victoria, too, relied on him less frequently. It likewise damaged the bond between the Minister and the agent. No longer was the Minister of Finance handling the personnel affairs of the agents; a Department Personnel Officer managed these matters after 1945. The agents and the Minister, who for ninety years were almost on a first name basis, became unfamiliar acquaintances, virtual strangers by 1958.

The tremendous changes of 1945, then, transformed the bureaucracy and the agents in unforeseen ways. Modes of operation, bureaucratic behaviours and traditions that had been built over decades were significantly altered. It was, however, an evolutionary process, not a revolution, according to Ron Burns.⁵² Ministers and public servants alike had difficulty adjusting to the new regime. Nevertheless, by 1958 a different administrative culture prevailed in the British Columbia bureaucracy, one that was more equitable and predictable and far

better suited for the demands placed upon a huge and growing work force in the modern era. On the other hand, it de-personalized the bureaucracy and institutionalized new behaviours and allegiances that were, at first, alien to many within the public service. The Government Agents, being the oldest and most established part of government, felt its effects more than most.

Financial Policemen

As an organization, the Government Agents changed little from 1917 to 1958. Most agent offices and administrative behaviours were well entrenched by 1917. Similarly, their traditional roles remained generally intact throughout this period. Middle management was introduced in the 1920's in the position of Supervisor of Agencies (and Assessors) but it lasted only a brief period and was not re-established until 1950 when it became a permanent fixture. The hiring and promotion of agents came under close scrutiny and in 1945 political meddling ended although it was a mixed blessing. Other themes that emerged in the nineteenth century continued; in particular, the agents were still overworked, under-paid and generally unappreciated. Only this time, the phenomenon had more significance.

Being part of the Treasury Department meant that the agents became an efficiency example for the rest of government. It was a painful but effective leadership role. If efficiency measures were ordered, the Treasury Department was called to implement them and the agents, being at hand, were instructed to cut back. If salary increases were withheld across government, where better to begin than with the agents? If restraint in office fixtures or new buildings was in fashion, the agents were asked to do without. In short, the Treasury Department

was expected to set an example for the rest of government and the agents, being its biggest and most visible part, received special attention.

On the other hand, being part of the Treasury gave them more authority in financial matters as it reinforced their central role in district affairs. It likewise maintained, or more likely bolstered, their confidence as the Treasury Department was a pivotal agency and became more so in subsequent years. Thus the agents continued to hold the regional purse strings and its corollary, power. Agents also were aware of, or at least part of, everything that went on in the districts. Similarly, new programs, especially those of a financial nature, were first channelled through the agents before being transferred to line departments. The agents, who had been the front-line of government services outside of Victoria since Confederation, remained in the forefront because of their financial responsibilities. They became, like their parent in Victoria, a central control agency. Finally, this change in orientation replaced the agents' constabulary function that had been such a large part of their role for years. The agents supplanted one policing function for another.

If one measures from Confederation, it took almost fifty years before the agents had a departmental home. Because of the multifarious nature of their work, they were likely considered a corporate service rather than part of a specific department. Indeed, R. Ross Napier, Supervisor of Assessors and Agencies, Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance, Vernon Government Agent and finally, Departmental Commissioner during the Tolmie administration, recommended just that in an urgent, confidential memorandum to the Provincial Secretary in 1930:

I have the honour to recommend...that the
(Government Agencies' Vote #97 Estimates -

1929-30)...and the administration of all personnel thereunder be placed under the control of the Civil Service Commissioner.

...this should be an administrative vote completely detached from any one Department, as all Departments of the Government Service are represented by these Government Agencies and complete detachment would greatly facilitate work of re-organization

This would not in any way interfere with the instructions as to duties of the Finance and other Departments being given exactly as at present to the Government Agencies, but would merely bring the personnel under proper control and administration...⁵³

His proposal never came to fruition and the agents remained part of the Treasury Department for the next seventy years. Lieutenant-Colonel Napier was only one of many who suggested ways in which their administration could be modified.

Napier was well qualified to recommend administrative changes to the structure of government services. During his time with the Surveyor of Taxes and as Assistant Deputy Minister he travelled widely, inspecting agent offices and providing advice regarding their administration. He was instrumental in the reorganizations of the 1920's, and acted as 'trouble-shooter' for various Deputy Ministers, being called upon on numerous occasions to recommend solutions to staffing and administrative problems in various government branches. The Liberals moved him to Vernon as agent in 1926 and he remained there until he was unexpectedly appointed by the Tolmie government "investigator from the first day of June, 1929, to take the initial steps in re-organization of the Civil Service, and for this purpose he...[was]... authorized to investigate and report upon the organization and work of each and every Department of the Civil Service, and each and every branch, office,

sub-office, or institution in connection therewith..."⁵⁴

Few records remain of Napier's activities. What is known is that he made twenty-three interim reports regarding the Civil Service and inquiries on "work of a very extensive and intricate nature, which did not come within the range of [his] commissions."⁵⁵ He also made a number of recommendations regarding the Treasury Department and its internal relationships, particularly with the agents. Treasury, he reported, had been "the one department which had not only failed to cooperate, but had been directly antagonistic to any measures of reform, and that [he] had found...necessary to criticise...in the severest terms. In addition the department...antagonized by my refusal to approve what I considered improper Orders-in-Council regarding appointments, etc...[and its] irregular proceedings...in connection with matters of local administration and staff, without the knowledge of the local administrative head."⁵⁶ With opinions like these, Napier's tenure was bound to be limited and on August 28, 1931, his appointment was rescinded.

His final report on the government and the agents appeared not in a government document but in an article in the Annual Report of the Okanagan Historical Society. Napier's article captured his respect and affection for the agents while bitterly denouncing the Tolmie administration. Few things escaped his attention. He criticized patronage, unsystematic training, "lack of coordination of departments in Victoria, and consequent departmental jealousy" but was most scathing over the government's lack of concern for economy:

There are forty-two Government Agencies and sub-agencies throughout the province. More than is necessary? Yes, but, unfortunately, our representatives, who most vehemently demand economy, demand it in every

constituency but their own and, without fail, one who becomes a minister immediately discovers the need of a Government Agency in his constituency if there is not one there already...The agency service has been made the excuse for many political crimes against the purse and probity of the province, but the service itself, both in salaries and necessary expenditures, and notwithstanding its primary importance, has been pared and scraped to the very bone.⁵⁷

Napier was not alone in calling for a "downsizing" of the Government Agents. In the controversial Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government to Investigate the Finances of British Columbia, more commonly known as the Kidd Report, a group of Vancouver businessmen presented the Tolmie government with a blueprint for radical administrative surgery which singled out the Finance Department and the agents for special attention. Pruning here, they noted, "would prove the most effective argument when advocating economies elsewhere."⁵⁸

At present there are thirty-seven Government Agent's offices under the Department of Finance, which may be termed the general outside administrative offices of the Province. While there may have been some justification for the creation of so [m]any offices in years gone by, it ceased to exist with the development of highways and the advent of the automobile. We are of the opinion that for purposes of administration, the Province should be divided into seven administrative areas, each area containing one or more of the Dominion statistical areas, and that the number of Government Agent's offices should be reduced forthwith to fourteen, with the object in two or three years of further reducing them to seven, so that there will be one central office in each of the seven administrative areas for practically all purposes of government.⁵⁹

Similarly, the Report of the Economic Research Committee on Revenue and Expenditures of the Provincial

Government in the Province of British Columbia by the Vancouver Junior Chamber of Commerce singled out the Finance Department. They noted that "it would be assumed that this department at least would show some tendency towards taking the lead in reduction in expenses."⁶⁰

There is of course ample room for very substantial economies in this department. This has been admitted by the Government. The existence of 37 outside offices for Agents of the Department of Finance is another example of waste, and there is no justification for it, and if there was an honest attempt to curtail expenditures so that they came somewhere near the Government Revenue, these should have been abolished five years ago.⁶¹

The Tolmie government's response to these accusations was brief. It acknowledged that the agencies operated "only where the utmost convenience and service can be granted to the public [and] in this way they aid in the collection of large amounts of revenue" but centralization would only make for larger expenditures.⁶² The number of agents, indeed the justification for the agents, was public convenience and the efficient collection of revenue, even if the original reason for their existence--the provision of services in isolated communities--was no longer relevant.

The agents were also continually subjected to reorganization initiatives that focused on rationalizing district administration. In 1917, they were one part of a much larger scheme proposed by a committee of senior public officials that envisioned "dividing the Province into 8 administrative areas with the idea of consolidating the Services in each area under the general supervision of a district commissioner."⁶³ Indeed, the centralization of government business in Penticton and Kamloops may be seen as the first hesitant steps in that

direction. Such initiatives produced little change, however, because their designers neglected to consider the political implications of inconveniencing the public. Service to their district, which had always been equal to the agents' other role of service to government, held its ground during these difficult years.

Efficiency considerations were also important to subsequent governments but draconian measures like those proposed from 1930 to 1933 were never considered again. A recovering economy, federal-provincial negotiations and World War II, distracted the government and senior public officials. The Government Agents became, particularly in the 1950's, a neglected cog in the machinery of government except, perhaps, the occasional recognition that they were overworked and underpaid. Nonetheless, a 1947 edition of the Review of Resources, Production and Governmental Finances by the Department of Finance suggests the agents remained as vital as always:

While the administrative and executive functions of the provincial government are centred in Victoria and controlled by the Departments...various local duties devolve on governmental officials that must be performed on the spot.

In a large centre such as Vancouver, several of the Departments maintain branch offices and the Public Works Department necessarily but have numerous field offices throughout the Province. Except for these cases, however, most of the varied duties which a government representative must perform are carried out by the government agent in the particular locality concerned.

The functions of the government agent and his staff are most varied and while he is an official of the Department of Finance, his duties are performed on behalf of nearly all departments of government.⁶⁴

The agents likewise maintained their physical presence throughout the province from 1917 to 1958 although most of their offices were firmly established by the late 1920's. Table XII indicates the thirty Government Agents and five Sub-Agents in 1917 increased to thirty-four and ten, respectively, by 1958. The reorganization initiatives of the Oliver and Tolmie administrations precipitated the downgrading of a number of agents but by the end of World War II, many regained their status. Three new offices opened in the 1950's: Terrace and Vanderhoof in 1953 and Kitimat in 1958. The demand for agents in these locations was brought on by the tremendous economic growth so characteristic of the decade. Terrace had become a regional service centre for a burgeoning forest industry, Vanderhoof mushroomed in size with the arrival of thousands of workers for the construction of the Kenny Dam and Kitimat was a new community built to service a huge, recently constructed Aluminum Company of Canada plant. Figures IV and V provide a visual picture of the location of agent and sub-agent offices in 1917 and 1958 respectively.

A host of other smaller locations received indirect, or ad hoc agent services, by using part-time personnel or provincial police officers. Alice Arm, Clayoquot, Hedley, Lockeport, to name only a few, had individuals in 1921 who performed some government functions and accounted through the nearest agent and persons in Bella Coola, Likely, Rosswood, South Fork, for example acted similarly in 1931. As late as 1958, the Stewart Village Clerk, in fact, provided agent services to his community as "there [was] less to support a sub-agency at Stewart than in dozens of other localities," according to the Deputy Minister of Finance, J.V. Fisher.⁶⁵

TABLE XII

Government Agents/Sub-Agents by Year, 1917-1958

	Nov. 17 1917	Dec. 31 1921	Mar. 31 1931	Mar. 31 1951	Mar. 31 1958
Agents	30	31	24	33	34
Sub-Agents	5	7	18	9*	10**

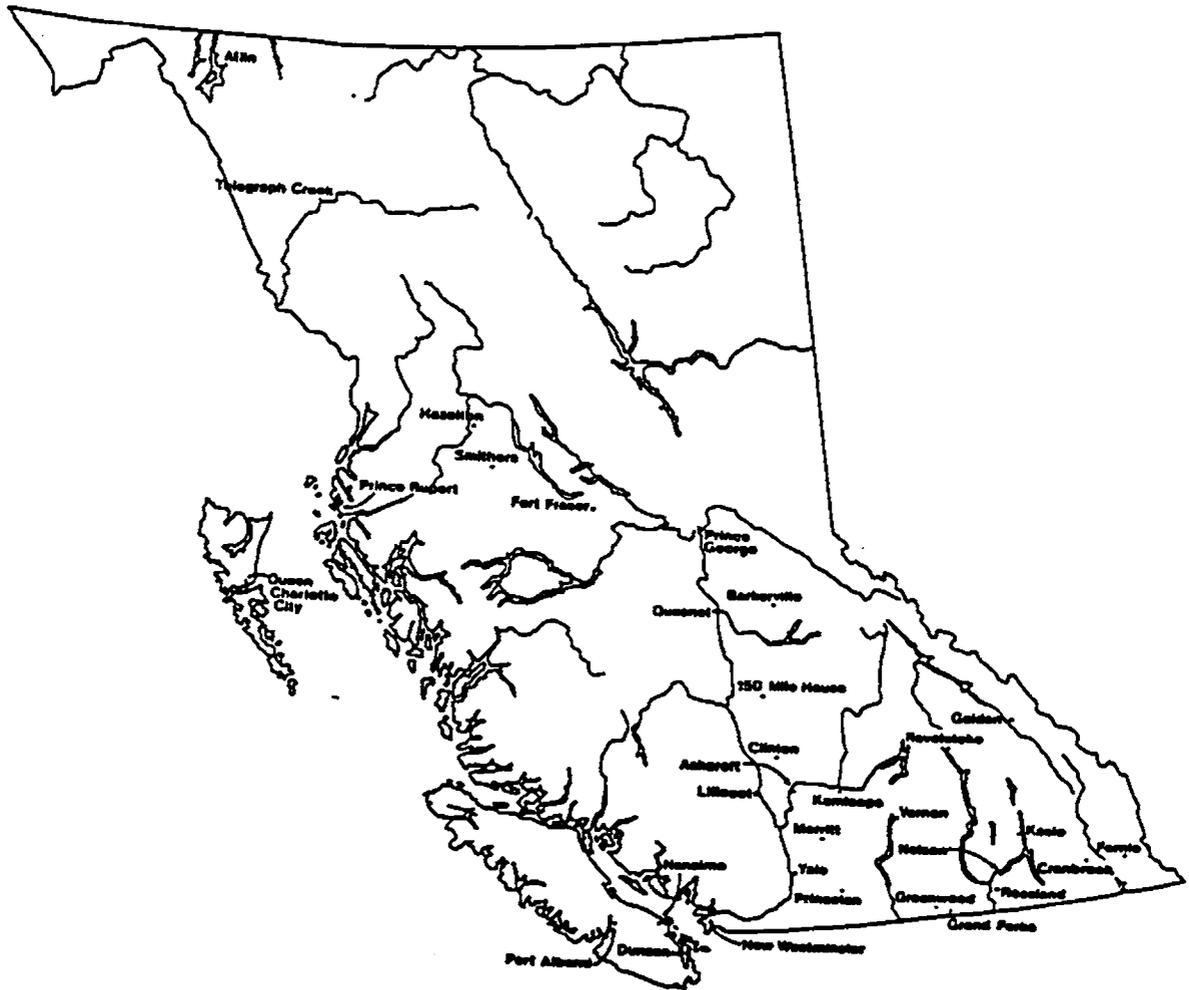
*Includes Ganges/Gulf Islands Assessor/Collector

**Includes Ganges/Gulf Islands Assessor/Collector and Telegraph Creek Sub-Mining Recorder. Does not include Stewart (office was run by Village Clerk).

Source: Civil List, Civil Service Commissioner
Annual Reports, GR 101

FIGURE IV

Location of Government Agents or Sub-Agents, 1917



The total number of staff employed in agent offices remained relatively constant from 1917 to 1945. As Table XIII illustrates, their number hovered around two hundred for most of this period. With the inclusion of the Vancouver assessor and collector's office, the figures increased significantly in 1931 and grew even larger by 1941; however, as this office was increasingly independent of the agent by this time it is noted separately. A number of offices, notably Nelson, New Westminster, Penticton, Pouce Coupe, increased in personnel from 1917 to 1945 while others, like Cranbrook, Cumberland, Fernie, Kamloops, Quesnel, and Rossland, declined. The disregard of temporary staff provisions in the Civil Service Act (1917), the desire to make more appointments open to patronage and the exigencies of the war explain the larger numbers of temporary staff from 1931 to 1945.

The growth in permanent staff in agents' offices after the war, although substantial, did not keep up with the tremendous increase across all government departments. As we saw earlier, the total public service payroll approximately tripled from 1944 to 1958. The number of agents, on the other hand, grew by only 87 per cent. The strong hand of W.A.C. Bennett, who was not a proponent of increasing the bureaucracy and, least of all, within the Finance Department, can be seen in the agents' subsequent staff complement. By 1958 the agents' offices were staffed with seven per cent fewer people than they were before the Social Credit government took office.

Table XIV depicts the total government salary budget increasing substantially over this period, although the growth was not startling on a percentage basis. Simultaneously, the salary costs for the Government Agents increased almost six-fold during these years, however, the proportion of the total salary

TABLE XIII

Government Agent Permanent Staff, 1917-1958

(Temporary)

	1917	1921	1931	1941	1945	1951	1958
	174	193(18)	203(60)	224(57)	196(77)	366	339
Vancouver Assessor		16	41	64(15)	4	11*	6*
TOTAL	174	209(18)	244(60)	288(72)	200(77)	377	345

*Victoria Assessor

Source: 1917 data - "Report on the Government Agencies," Comptroller-General's office, November 17, 1917, GR 1773, Vol. 29. 1921, 1931, 1941 and 1958 data from Civil List, Civil Service Commissioner Annual Reports, GR 101.

TABLE XIV

Total Public Servant Salaries as a Percentage of Government Expenditures and Government Agent Salaries as a Percentage of Total Public Servant Salaries, 1917-1958

Fiscal Year	Gov't Expend. (millions \$)	Total Public Servant Salaries (millions \$)	%	Gov't Agents' Salaries	%
1917-1918	8.074	1.386	17.2	.213	15.4
1920-1921	19.630	2.854	14.5	.334	11.7
1930-1931	29.100	4.401	15.1	.450	10.2
1940-1941	29.650	5.97	20.1	.492	8.2
1950-1951	124.030	*	*	*	*
1957-1958	351.303	58.140	16.5	1.25	2.1

Source: British Columbia, Public Accounts. Victoria, B.C.

*No schedules of accumulated Public Servant Salaries are available.

allocation expended by the agents decreased markedly. The agents, by 1958, consumed only two per cent of the total provincial government salary allocation. Using figures discussed earlier, the agents constituted approximately seventeen per cent of the total public service in 1917 (189 out of 1117) and roughly four per cent in 1957-58 (339 out of 8,349). The agents were not only a neglected cog in the machinery of government by 1958, they were a very small gear as well.

Although numerically small, the agents, as a group were probably the most seasoned public servants in government. As early as 1917, a lengthy report on the agents prepared for the new Minister of Finance, John Hart, by A.N. Mouat, Comptroller-General, noted with dismay that they were rapidly becoming a group of old men, a configuration that got worse, not better, by 1945:

It is apparent from these figures that there is too great a preponderance of men of older years, and that unless promotions are made from men already in the Service, and their places filled by new appointments of junior clerks, the time is not far distant when by reason of death or superannuation, the Service may become disorganized by the loss of an undue proportion of men of experience.⁶⁶

Table XV substantiates Mouat's claim. The average age of the agents in 1917 was over forty-eight years; by 1931, it exceeded fifty-four. By the 1950's, they were somewhat younger. It is not surprising that the average length of service of the agents increased dramatically over this period. Individuals hired in the 1920's remained in the service as jobs for untrained generalists were hard to come by, particularly during the depression of the 1930's. What is more interesting, however, is that the ordinary agent after 1950 was younger and

TABLE XV

Government Agents'
Average Age, Length of Service and Monthly Salary,
1917-1958
(Number of)

	1917 Agents (27)	1931 Agents (24)*	1945 Agents (31)	1951 Agents (33)*	1958 Agents (34) ²
Average Age (Years)	48.4	54.2	52.5	47.9	46.2
Average Length of Service (Years)	15.8	20.4	23.6	21.9	22.4
Average Monthly Salary (\$\$)	165.88	208.06	206.13	276.51	460.20

*Does not include Sub-Agents, Gold Commissioners, Mining Recorders
(J. Cartmel who retired in 1945 is excluded from 1945 data).

Source: 1917 data from: "Report on the Government Agencies,"
Comptroller-General's Office, November 17, 1917, GR 1773.

1919, 1931, and 1945 data from: Civil List, Civil Service
Commissioner Annual Reports, GR 101.

1958 data from: Department of Finance, Estimates Briefing
Books.

equally, or more, experienced than his predecessors. It suggests that the typical agent in the 1950's had little work experience outside of an agent's office. His 1917 counterpart, on the other hand, had worked in the private sector as much as he had in government. Even the average 1945 agent spent approximately eleven years in other gainful activities before joining government while his 1958 equivalent had less than six years experience outside of the service. All of this confirms, as we discussed earlier, that agents in the 1950's were knowledgeable public servants but less informed on matters outside the public sector.

A predominant theme over the course of the Government Agents' history has been their feeling that they were underpaid; countless examples can be found of agents requesting a review of their circumstances. As Table XV suggests, they met with limited success, their salaries increased only, on average, approximately twenty-four per cent by 1945 or, if the post World War I bonuses are considered, they made nine per cent more in 1945 than they did in 1919. Unfortunately, salary concessions, until 1945 when uniform pay-grids were established, were the prerogative of Ministers. It created many problems and stirred up considerable resentment. The agents' disgust and frustration is evident in impassioned pleas like the following from Stephen H. Hoskins, Smithers Agent, to the Deputy Minister of Finance:

...it is more than ten years ago that I was sent to this district as Government Agent, and during that time I appear to have received only \$7.66 per month increase.

Surely the length of time I have spent in the service, namely 27 years and three months, should count for something, and during that time I must have accumulated

experience and knowledge which should be of service to the Province.

...I will be very pleased if you can see your way clear to take this matter up on my behalf as it is most discouraging after having spent the best years of my life in the service of this Province, to feel that I am face to face with a stone wall.⁶⁷

And in 1924 E.M. Sandilands, Government Sub-Agent in Wilmer, wrote:

If this position was worth \$150.00 7 years ago, surely it ought to be worth more now, to say nothing of the cost of living, being now 35% more. A person in my position, is called upon, as you well know, to give to everything and take a hand in all public matters, consequently you must admit it is pretty hard getting along on \$138.00 per month...⁶⁸

The agents finally received a salary adjustment in 1944 amounting to approximately eight per cent: one agent received as little as two and one-half per cent and a couple received over twelve per cent.⁶⁹ Even with this increase the agents, on average, were only at ninety-three per cent of the maximum salary of their range with merely one agent, W.R. Dewdney, receiving one hundred per cent.

Salary increases were granted in a random way: what one Minister might grant in salary another might deny or the same Minister might recognize the special needs of one individual and disallow a similar request by another. Further, one agent could be paid a certain amount, on the rationale that a particular location warranted such a salary, while his successor could receive less. This was T.W. Herne's experience when he was transferred in 1923 from Fort George to Prince Rupert:

I notice...that I am to receive a salary of \$175.00, the same as I received in South Fort George. Now, Mr. McMullin was receiving \$195.00 in this Agency, and I consider that I should be entitled to received the same salary as he was getting, as I am taking over all his duties that he performed here. I am an old Civil Servant, and consider that if I am good enough to fill the offices of Mr. McMullin, I think that I should receive the salary that he was getting.

I might state that Mr. Pattulo [sic] informed me that he would recommend me for this position, and considered that it was promotion for me. I cannot see where the promotion comes in if the salary belonging to the Agency does not go with the position.⁷⁰

Similarly, some agents, for instance at Prince Rupert, Clinton, Barkerville, Atlin, Fort Fraser and Pouce Coupe in the 1920's, received free living quarters or additional housing allowances, while others did not. To add to the confusion, fees for certain tasks, like being Official Administrator were acceptable 'add-ons' to an agent's salary in one district but not in others. On numerous occasions, in fact, Victoria used appointments and the payment of fees as a vehicle for getting around the inadequacy of salaries. The Deputy Minister of Finance, in response to a request by H.G. Perry, M.P.P., who advocated an increase in salary for the Prince George Agent, suggested making him a magistrate whereby he could receive additional funds from the city. "I would like to see him get the increase in salary. The difficulty is an increase in salary as far as Government Agent [are] concerned would affect so many other Agents in the province and I would prefer this way out of the difficulty...", he wrote.⁷¹ While Civil Service Commissioners and Deputy Ministers often tried to maintain some semblance of equity, salary administration remained in disarray until

the reforms of 1945. The disheartening salary situation was equalled by the haphazard and subjective manner the agents' proficiency was measured.

Performance evaluations of a sort were done in 1917 in conjunction with the reorganization initiatives of the new Liberal government but they never happened consistently thereafter. The Conservatives in 1929 asked for Napier's advice regarding the administration of the offices but his ideas received little attention and, during the 1930's and 1940's, John Hart never received formal assessments on the agents although it probably mattered little to him because, through correspondence and inspection trips, he knew them intimately. In fact, a number of agents felt very comfortable in writing the quiet and practical Minister of Finance directly, a habit he welcomed. The Department, thus relied on the experience of its Deputy Ministers, W.J. Goepel, E.D. Johnson, H.N. Wright, and lastly J.V. Fisher, all of whom began their careers in a Government Agent's office, to provide it with intelligence on the capabilities of the agents' system and the agents themselves.

The insights of these individuals were complemented by the reports of the Travelling Auditors. The Travelling Auditors went everywhere and poked their financial noses into, what must have seemed like, every government transaction. The agents came in for special attention and every office, no matter how remote, received a yearly inspection. The Comptroller-General even ensured his auditors were above reproach by never allowing the same auditor to audit an office twice. Generally these reviews were straight-forward events and, especially for isolated agents, almost welcomed. The auditors concerned themselves mostly with financial matters but occasionally commented on office conditions, morale or the agent's relationship with his community.

Often they were advocates for more staff, particularly when the agent was too burdened with other work to balance his innumerable ledgers. The Travelling Auditors were very thorough and well-respected and, when they identified an office or agent with problems, the Minister and Deputy Minister (the auditors reported to the Comptroller-General) heeded their words. The insights of this intrepid group of men plus the acumen of the Deputy Ministers, then, formed the conventional wisdom on the performance of the agents for the majority of these years.

Even after 1950, performance evaluations were a rare occurrence. Cecil Davies, who was appointed Supervisor of Agencies in 1950 to assist the Assistant Deputy Minister with this duty and others related to the administration of the agents, also found the task difficult. Promoted agents, for example, were on probation for six months but rarely had their accomplishments reviewed. Ken Weir, who joined the service in Vancouver in 1940 and worked in Terrace and Prince George until becoming Lillooet Government Agent, received his first formal evaluation after he was transferred to Williams Lake in 1974 and it was mailed to him for his signature! Similarly, Norm Blake never received a commentary on his achievements until long after 1958.

If inadequate salaries were the number one irritant of the agents, being overworked came a close second. As they had done since Confederation, agents incessantly requested more staff although their pleas rarely received a sympathetic hearing. During the 1920's all agents grumbled about how much work there was to do. The Vancouver Agent, who seemed to have no end of personnel problems and administrative issues, was typically unhappy:

My staff only consists of two clerks and one stenographer. Again, I have a certain amount of work from practically all Departments to attend to...and, in a town of this size, innumerable enquiries about all kinds of things, which entails much time at the counter for my clerks as well as for myself.⁷²

Even M.P.P.'s, like J.H. Schofield from Trail, joined the chorus of complaints about the circumstances of the agents:

I have many times wondered how on earth, with his multitude of duties, he [W.H. Reid, Rossland Government Agent] managed to keep things moving...I feel sure the Auditors will bear me out...Rossland and Trail combined have a population of over 10,000, all of whom have to be taken care of by Mr. Reid, the new voters list will in itself contain over 5000 voters. I would strongly recommend and hope that you will be able to see your way clear to granting him, at least, a stenographer for six months this year and full time next, [underlining in original].⁷³

During the 1930's, when the agents were overwhelmed with the distribution of relief payments, Victoria seemed more understanding but did little to ameliorate the situation. The Minister of Finance, of whatever political stripe, always felt that his department should set an example for the rest of government.

Staffing restraints were not the only way Victoria kept the agents lean. In selecting new staff, the Department preferred to recruit men who could type thereby negating the need to rely on female stenographers. Agents were also told repeatedly that expenditures must be kept to a minimum and in preparing their estimates they had to exhibit the 'greatest care'. Accordingly, office fixtures and living quarters in most locations were less than desirable. Agents, community

members and M.P.P.s often drew these problems to the Minister's attention and the Travelling Auditors constantly noted the fire hazards for government records in agent offices. Fred Fraser, the Pouce Coupe Agent, was exceptionally irritated at his working conditions:

The lighting and heating facilities are very poor. Owing to the position of the windows the desks have to be arranged so that in cold weather one person is freezing and the other is roasting, and during cloudy weather in Winter lights have to be used for the greater part of the day.

We have the Assessor's Department with us, the Forestry representative makes his headquarters during the Summer months, and the General Road Foreman has to use our office to a considerable extent. If something of a private nature is to be talked over in a business way you have to walk the streets. In fact the building used for the Government Agency is now the most disreputable looking building here, either Provincial or Dominion.⁷⁴

Pouce Coupe and other centres finally got new Provincial buildings but on some things, like automobiles, Victoria never acquiesced. When car travel was necessary, agents were expected to use their own, or if they did not own a vehicle, the assessor's. Assessors, on the other hand, had access to an automobile because it increased their mobility and thereby their ability to collect more revenue. Even H.F. Glassey's personal appeal to the Premier's Secretary got nowhere:

Recalling your last visit, and the pleasant memories it left with me, I cannot but bring back to mind the Chat I had with The Honourable Premier on that occasion, relative to the supplying the Government Agency with a Motor Car.

...This Agency is remitting revenue in per capita far greater than any other Agency in the Province, and has YET to pay it first

FIVE CENT PIECE in RELIEF, yet I am deprived from having a Car at my disposal when my duties call me so often into the Mining Area of the district [capitals in original].

...I wish to thank you for any interest you make take in my direct appeal to you on my behalf, but a car is really needed but as told to you when here it falls on deft [sic] ears Departmentally, and in closing please accept my personal regards.⁷⁵

Restraint also was a significant factor in the closing of a number of agent offices. While the number of agents increased after Confederation, many offices opened and closed quickly. Rock Creek, Granite Creek, Cowichan, Union Mines, to name only a few, operated briefly because other communities became the economic centres for the district. Efficiency considerations became equally important in determining whether an agent's office remained open or provided the complete range of government services by the time "Honest John" Oliver won his first election as Premier in 1920.

Most of Premier Oliver's changes were decided upon in 1921 and took effect April 1922. The Civil Service Commissioner highlighted them in his Fifth Annual Report:

During the year substantial changes were effected in the organization of the Service. The office at Yale was closed. The offices at Williams Lake, Ashcroft, Merritt, Princeton, Greenwood, Grand Forks, and Rossland were reduced to Sub-Agencies. The Agency at Fairview was transferred to Penticton. The Court Registry work in Nelson and Prince Rupert was transferred to the Government Agent's office. By these changes very little inconvenience of the Service has been caused to the Public, the efficiency of the Service has been increased and substantial saving has been effected in the cost of administration.⁷⁶

The next year the economy moves continued when the work load between the Prince George and Quesnel offices

was redistributed with a much larger portion assigned to the former and the Clinton and Williams Lake offices were reduced to sub-agents. Early in 1925, the move to cut costs was still alive when Napier wrote to the Smithers Agent that "the Minister, in going into various matters pertaining to all agencies, desires to re-organize to the greatest possible extent along the lines of practical economy..."⁷⁷ The agents, for their part, accepted these initiatives with little fuss--a couple of agents were 'spoken to' for complaining too much and an assessor received a written reprimand for rebuking the administration. The communities directly affected were not always as agreeable.

The opening or closing of a Government Agent's office did not always happen as local citizens wished. In 1935 the request of Burns Lake Liberal Association for an agent's office was refused because "from a purely revenue standpoint the opening of a sub-agency at Burns Lake does not appear to be warranted."⁷⁸ In 1937, the Association pleaded with the government to reconsider but it was not until February 1, 1949, that the Fort Fraser Agent's office was relocated to Burns Lake:

We are in urgent need of proper administration.

At present we have our road administration dealt with from Vanderhoof, land recording and relief from Fort Fraser, taxes, assessment etc. from Smithers, forestry affairs from Prince Rupert, payment of wages from Public Works Dept. from Prince George, supervision of Indian Affairs from Vanderhoof, supervision of Fisheries from Smithers and Prince George, school supervision from Smithers, agricultural supervision from Smithers, and as our local doctor is coroner [this] necessitates the importing of another doctor to make a autopsy.

...It is hardly to be expected that all these branches could have direct supervision from Burns Lake but a govt. Agency established here could take care of land, tax and law administration with considerable saving to the Govt. and District. It would also ensure the prompt payment of Govt. wages which would be very beneficial.

...The Gov't Agency at Fort Fraser did its part in the early days, but now we know it has outlived its usefulness at this particular point, and is a detriment to this District.⁷⁹

Office closures were even more difficult. Often it took years before the government had enough courage to shut the doors of a Government Agent's office. The replacement of the Fairview office by Penticton, for example, was recommended by local lawyers, business leaders and public servants as early as 1917 but did not happen until the Spring of 1922. Similarly, the legal community had called for the transfer of the Hazelton office to Smithers long before it happened in October 1918. The economy moves that resulted in the amalgamation of the Merritt, Ashcroft and Kamloops offices in Kamloops, met with such an outcry that the Treasury Department had to put together a lengthy justification for the Premier after local citizens met with him to vent their anger:

On Wednesday last, I met a number of citizens at Merritt and at Ashcroft. At both these places very strong representations were made to me that the removal of the Government Agencies had caused a good deal of public inconvenience and it was alleged that no financial saving had resulted from the change, but rather that expenses had increased, and that the office at Kamloops was altogether over-staffed for the amount of work which was preformed there. At both Merritt and Ashcroft the request was made very strongly that the Government Agency should be restored, and it

was said that the inconvenience caused to the public much more than counter-balanced any saving which it was possible to make as a result of the change.⁸⁰

Both Merritt and Ashcroft remained sub-agent offices for some time. The Merritt office continued to provide most agent services while the citizens of Ashcroft had to be content with an assessor. Economies in administration and politics frequently conflicted during these years and only briefly did the former triumph. On no issue was the struggle between these two forces more evident than in the appointment of agents. In this regard, it is appropriate to review briefly the many faces of patronage from 1917 to 1945.

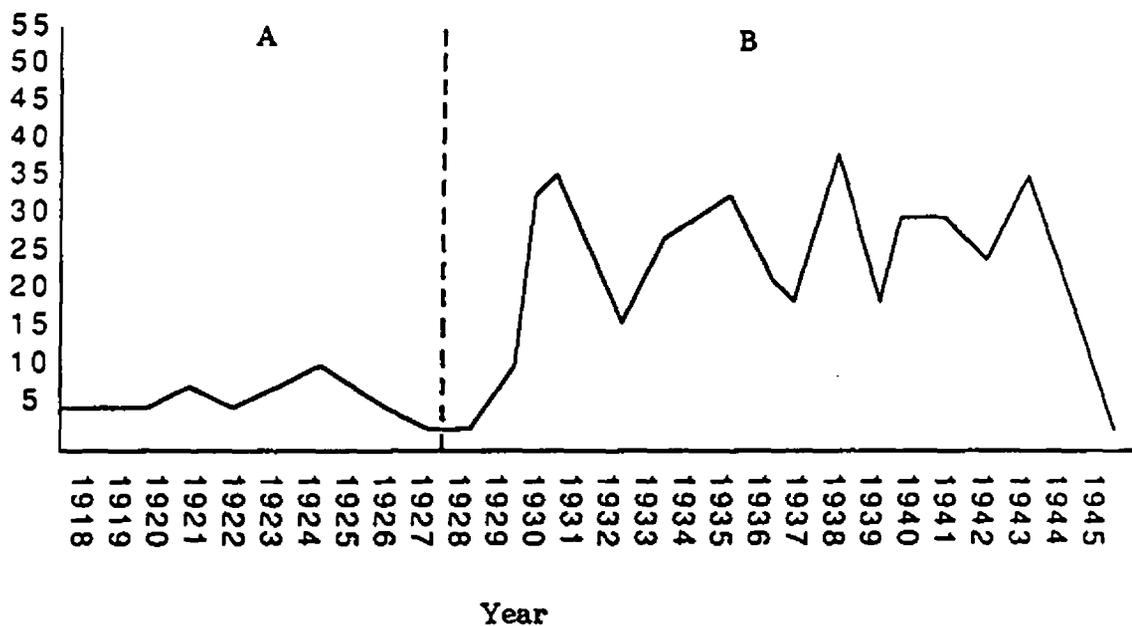
Political Interference

Until 1928, as Figure VI illustrates, patronage was less blatant in comparison to subsequent years although it should be noted, of course, that the same political party was in power these years. From the election of the Tolmie government until the end of World War II, patronage was more evident and widespread. Perhaps because jobs were scarce, patronage was also more vindictive and cruel during these years. Patronage likewise decreased in election years and then subsequently increased markedly the year after. Patronage was also hidden somewhat by laundering appointments through the M.P.P.'s office. This process was more prevalent in the 1920's than a decade later when politicians openly solicited the opinions of local party members as to the 'appropriateness' of appointments. Finally, patronage varied considerably by department. The agents were generally immune to its worst effects although it was a factor in the appointment of some agents and their staff.

FIGURE VI

**Percentage of Appointments to the Civil Service
by Order-in-Council, 1919 - 1945
(permanent and temporary)**

Percentage



- A: Made by Order-in-Council (with or without) certificate of Civil Service Commissioner.
- B: Made by Order-in-Council (unknown if Certificate of Civil Service Commissioner provided).

Source: Civil Lists, Civil Service Commissioner Annual Reports, GR 101.

From 1923 until 1945, Government Agents were classified 'Technical Officers'; sixteen agents, sub-agents or deputy government agents were appointed by Order-in-Council.⁸¹ Some received a certificate from the Civil Service Commission, others did not. Twelve of these appointments occurred after 1928; only one agent was appointed by Order-in-Council after 1936. An additional seven assessors or assessors/collectors, mining recorders, etc. were appointed by Order-in-Council during the same period. On the other hand, from April 1, 1928, to March 31, 1936, fifty-five stenographers were appointed by Order-in-Council of whom forty-nine were placed within the agents' offices.⁸² The Liberals in 1928 could quite reasonably boast, at least as far as the Government Agents were concerned, that the "policy of promotion [was] adhered to and practically no outsiders [were] appointed."⁸³

Patronage was a fact of life for members of the civil service until 1945. Many owed their positions to the repayment of favours and their continued employment depended upon the political fortunes of their friends. Most agents took it in their stride but a few found the political shenanigans, combined with the low wages and long hours more than they were prepared to accept. V.H. Harbord, Nicola Acting Agent, for example, decided a career in the service was not for him:

My salary, although I have first class references from the Inspectors, who have visited this Agency, remains the same, and in despair of ever getting a square deal from the Civil Service Commission, I am now leaving the Government Service.

...The position is a very unenviable one, as first one has to put up with dire threats from the Conservative party, and now I have been told that I must not speak to a Conservative or lose my position. I have

been even told which hotel I am to patronize.

This political Kaiserism added to constant heavy work without encouragement or remuneration is ruining my health and nerves to such an extent, that in defence of my wife and children, I must leave the Service at once...

As matters stand one is never sure of one's position for a week at a stretch, and at the present moment there is a dearth of efficient capable men to fill hundreds of vacancies in big business houses.⁸⁴

Shortly after the Conservatives assumed power, they tried to calm the fears of public employees by announcing they did not intend "to dispense with the services of public officials on account of their political leanings, providing they were giving efficient service to the Province."⁸⁵ Less than a year later, the Central Conservative Association of the Salmon Arm riding prevailed upon their M.P.P., R.W. Bruhn, to ensure A.P. Suckling was appointed sub-agent in Salmon Arm. "At present it is quite impossible to send someone into Salmon Arm from the outside for this position - in fact if this should be done, then I might as well resign," he wrote W.C. Shelly.⁸⁶

The notorious firing of Norman Watt, Prince Rupert Government Agent, however, demonstrated the shallowness of these words. Watt's dismissal was the first of many instances of political interference in the administrative affairs of the agents--meddling that extended through the Conservative, Liberal and Coalition governments. Norman Watt, a wounded war veteran, was appointed agent in 1924 after serving as private secretary for T.D. Pattullo, the Minister of Lands. On June 1, 1929, W.C. Shelly, Minister of Finance, dismissed Watt on the alleged grounds of political activity. The quick, furious public

outcry ultimately led to Watt's vindication and the embarrassment and resignation of the Minister. A.M. Manson, K.C., and former Liberal Attorney-General, said, "I can not believe that there is legitimate excuse for his dismissal. Premier Tolmie, I hope is too big a man to permit this heartless act on the part of his Minister. Let political vindictiveness be taken out on those who are in public life and not upon handicapped veterans in the public service."⁶⁷ The Veterans' Associations also took up the cause. For Pattullo it became, as Margaret Ormsby states, a cause celebre.⁶⁸ He enjoyed every opportunity he could find to badger the Minister and the government on the issue which, by this time, included malfeasance (Watt was accused of not remitting Coroner's fees to Victoria) as the reason for Watt's dismissal. He also liked encouraging Watt:

You have become historic. We had a fight in the House all week, caught Shelly shifting his ground--in plain language lying--and the Government, to save its face, moved a resolution for Departmental enquiry, which finally passed the House.

Cy Peck spoke very strongly for you for reinstatement; at the same time, beyond question to save the face of the Government, supported an enquiry into your conduct. As a matter of fact, the enquiry should not be into your conduct, but into the conduct of the Minister of Finance. You must, however, seize the opportunity to put the Minister of Finance on trial at the enquiry. I do not expect to see him Minister of Finance next year, though probably politically that will not be a good thing for us.

Manson raised the point that under the "Departmental Enquiries Act", as you are not a member of the Service, they could not compel you to come under the provisions of the enquiry unless you so wished. The Government advanced the argument that you could waive the objection.

Whatever you do, I would like, if possible, to be advised of what you do, so that I can apprise you more fully of the situation here.⁸⁹

Watt took the challenge and was completely exonerated by Commissioner W.A. McDonald, who undertook the inquiry. He thereupon received his old job back on his conditions, which included, among other things, "That the taking over of the Prince Rupert Agency will not cause demotion of the present incumbent of office."⁹⁰ Pattullo subsequently warned Watt to "be extremely careful not to write in any letters anything that can be interpreted in any way as disrespectful" and Watt acted accordingly until he retired.⁹¹

Political advantage, more than anything else, inspired Pattullo to take an interest in Watt.⁹² Also, perhaps it was because he had once been a gold commissioner himself in the Yukon. Whatever the motivation, Pattullo soon forgot his indignity at politicians tampering with the hiring of agents.

Figure VI clearly demonstrates that the Liberals were equally prone to give political favours. The Vancouver Agent was particularly susceptible to these initiatives because he supervised a large number of semi-skilled 'mechanical' positions used to maintain the Court House and an equally significant number of clerical jobs. The Secretary of the Minister of Finance, for example, told the Vancouver Liberal Association regarding the hiring of a fireman:

Robert Pyper who has been acting as Fireman on the mechanical staff at Vancouver Court-house...is an applicant for appointment to that position permanently. In order to qualify for the temporary position he had to secure the necessary Fourth Class Engineer's Certificate which he has now obtained. He is a Returned Soldier with disability.

Please let us know if his appointment meets with approval.⁹³

The Fernie Riding Liberal Association petitioned the Minister to reverse a move made by the previous government regarding their agent. "Mr. Robert Nolan who was discharged by the late government...is very anxious to get some employment as soon as possible. And the Association here also agree to have him re-instated at an early date," Harry E. Douglas wrote to John Hart shortly after the 1933 election.⁹⁴ In 1939, S.B. Hamilton's transfer as agent from Cumberland to Duncan required the blessing of the Nanaimo Liberals.⁹⁵ P.H. McCurrach, Kamloops Agent, proceeded with an appointment without first getting the necessary approval and was strongly rebuked by the Minister's office for his impatience:

...There does not seem to be reason for asking for a recommendation if you already have made an appointment. It is noted that you wrote to the Deputy Minister of Finance on August 28 indicating that a temporary stenographer might be required. Hence you had ample time to communicate with the Deputy Minister advising him of your need. Had there been any great urgency the telegraph office could have expedited your request. Your action places us in the position of having to tell Miss McCoid that her services are no longer required in the event that your appointment should not receive endorsement.⁹⁶

Finally, the local M.P.P. consulted the Minister regarding all office appointments. As late as 1944, the M.P.P. provided the district perspective, frequently favouring the promotion of individuals within the local office over outsiders. By 1946, however, M.P.P.s were submitting meekly to Victoria's recommendations. The following letter to Frank Putnam, M.P.P., regarding the appointment of a successor to J. Cartmel, Nelson Agent, is indicative of the change, even though Putnam doubted

an outsider would be "agreeable to all districts." It is interesting that the Minister could not resist noting that Hamilton had some Liberal connections:

During the past few days there was presented to the Government a special report on civil service reorganization which, among other things, stresses the imperative need for superannuation to be made effective at the appropriate time.

In view of the foregoing, it is intended to give Mr. Cartmel notice that he will be superannuated as from and on September 1, 1944, and it is proposed to replace him by sending to Nelson Mr. S.R. Hamilton, the present Government Agent at Duncan who, incidentally, is the son-in-law of the late the Honourable Mr. Brewster, and who has served as Government Agent at Greenwood, Fernie, Cumberland, as well as Duncan, and thus has had wide experience, and is without a doubt the man best fitted to take over at Nelson.⁹⁷

The transfer or promotion of agents was handled in the same parochial fashion. Competitions were unknown and agents were never informed beforehand that a position was available. Only by keeping their 'antenna' tuned to possible vacancies were they able to suggest their name be considered. McGusty, Vernon Agent, for instance, wrote to the Minister that he had "heard there is a strong possibility of the Government Agent at Duncan retiring on superannuation before the expiry of this year. If such is the case I trust it would not be asking too much to give my application for a transfer to the Duncan Agency favourable consideration."⁹⁸

The Minister made all transfer and promotion decisions, generally on the basis of advice from his Deputy and the local M.P.P. or riding association. John Hart asked H.G.T. Perry, M.P.P., for example, for his

views regarding the following personal wire from a very presumptuous Cariboo woman:⁹⁹

Am informed it is proposed appoint new Gold Commissioner Williams Lake. Old friends urged me apply position. Since 1928 have been senior clerk here and since 1930 have often been appointed Acting Gold Commissioner, Government Agent, Court Registrar. Have for long period in last seven years had full and sole charge Williams Lake office. Am quite sure my services have given full satisfaction to community and met with approval of every auditor. My grandfather represented Cariboo in house. I was born in Cariboo. Believe my appointment would meet with general satisfaction. Respectfully request your nomination.¹⁰⁰

As Jessie Foster cleverly noted, community perceptions were important. The Smithers District Chamber of Commerce, for instance, responded quickly when Stephen H. Hoskins was slated for a transfer from Smithers to Anyox:

Following resolution passed at Executive Meeting of this Chamber last night quote that the Executive of this Chamber deeply regrets the transfer of Government Agent Hoskins from Smithers to Anyox instead of to some Agency of higher standing as befits his long years of service with the Government and urges that a better Agency be obtained for him or that he be allowed to remain in his present position for the few months remaining before his age for retirement arrives...¹⁰¹

Agents also tried constantly to get a posting on the coast somewhere. J.D. Moore, Fort Fraser Agent, repeatedly reminded Victoria that he had put in his time in isolation and McGusty, the Vernon Agent, struggled for years to get a transfer to Vancouver Island. R. Hewat, Fernie Agent, in 1923 wrote to the Deputy Minister, "These fellows that want to stick in the same place all

the time make me tired. I was always willing to go anywhere the Government wished me to go, and am still willing to move anywhere if it will help the Department out any. I am not married to any place." Three years earlier he had requested a transfer to the coast because "the altitude here is far too high for my wife who has had wretched health since we have been in Fernie."¹⁰² Interestingly, the altitude of interior locations was a significant factor in the transfer requests of numerous agents; even J.V. Fisher used the "climatic conditions prevailing in the Upper country" as an excuse for his plea to get out of Vernon.¹⁰³

When a transfer or promotion arrived, agents were expected to pack up their belongings and family at almost a moment's notice and happily move to new surroundings. Because families were not easily up-rooted, agents often left them behind, sometimes for months. Travel and moving expenses, although never denied, were always dutifully requested as if the government might expect an agent to foot the bill themselves.

Agents, or their staff, rarely refused a transfer, and if they did, it often marked the beginning of the end of their career. When S. McB Smith, Nanaimo Agent in 1922, for instance, appealed a decision to transfer him to Barkerville, he was told "that the decision arrived at for transfer is final. Several transfers are being made. The policy of officials remaining at one point indefinitely is detrimental to the service."¹⁰⁴ He subsequently resigned rather than submit. Obstinance was rare as agents generally did what they were told even if they did not like it or it made little administrative sense.

The foregoing is not to suggest that Victoria was without compassion. Headquarters officials often tried to accommodate the wishes of field personnel, sometimes

going to great lengths to meet the peculiar needs of individuals. The compassion was, however, somewhat selective with some agents receiving special consideration while others were ignored. Male clerical staff, for example, were transferred quite regularly with Victoria rarely accepting any objections, yet the planned move of a clerk from the Smithers office was unexpectedly halted after the agent appealed to the Deputy Minister. "Had we known that Mr. Byrne was married and owned his own home we would not have caused him this unnecessary inconvenience," E.D. Johnson wrote the Agent.¹⁰⁵ Another clerk was allowed to remain in his location because he wanted to be near his wife's grave. Victoria's sudden reversals were uncharacteristic and infrequent.

Victoria, through the efforts of Napier, the Travelling Auditors and the occasional personal inspections of the Deputy or Minister, also tried to be cognizant of the limitations of the agents. Transfers were made when individuals were judged able to handle a new challenge or, conversely, not made when the agent lacked 'administrative experience'. Similarly, strong agents were sent to locations with particular problems or inexperienced staff. Finally, Victoria tried to superannuate agents when it was obvious they were tired; often it took longer than planned. As early as September 1920, Travelling Auditor Tyrer noted that J.A. Fraser, Atlin Government Agent should be retired.¹⁰⁶ C.L. Munroe replaced him on February 20, 1923, after almost three years of 'on again, off again' attempts to expedite a change. Victoria also tried to initiate policies regarding transfers but they were short-lived.

Concurrent with the reorganization initiatives of the early 1920's, the Finance Department endeavoured to move agents around. As McB. Smith, Nanaimo Agent, found

out, "officials remaining at one point indefinitely [was] detrimental to the service." Similarly, the Civil Service Commissioner was instructed on March 25, 1920, "that in keeping with the policy of the Government with regard to interchange of Government Agents, it has been decided to move the Government Agent at Kaslo to Fernie, and the Government Agent at Fernie to Kaslo."¹⁰⁷ The Department also considered the implications of having long-standing community members as agents but these concerns were often forgotten in the haste to fulfil the political wishes of the government. Transfer and promotional policies were a neglected, or at least, unspoken subject until the Civil Service Act of 1945 forced the Department to reconsider them.

In 1944, M.L.A.s were still involved in the personnel plans of agents but within two years circumstances changed dramatically. Premier John Hart, who for almost fifteen years had shepherded the moves, promotions, salary increases and decreases, and hiring of agents without reference to policy, approved the advancement of an agent in 1946 "provided it will not interfere with promotion within the Service."¹⁰⁸ And six years later, J.V. Fisher wrote another Premier and Minister of Finance, regarding the appointment of an agent for Powell River that "such appointments were promotional within the field of the Agencies."¹⁰⁹ It was three-quarters of a century since the term 'civil service' first received legislative recognition but finally the agents could expect ability rather than political belief to govern their careers.

Politics was a major factor. The downgrading or opening of offices, the appointment or dismissal of agents, were influenced by the political climate. For the agents, this was both positive and negative. They received new government services they might not otherwise

have obtained and they gained solid, credible new colleagues; agents that were known and respected in their communities. The furore in Prince Rupert over the Watt dismissal reinforced in the public's mind that an agent's job was something special. It also demonstrated, albeit in a negative fashion, that the agents had political support, from government and opposition alike. On the other hand, politics had a debilitating effect when appointments were given to individuals the agents thought were not the right persons but the ones with the right connections.

Politics also played a role in ensuring that the Treasury Department set an example by doing without. It was something the agents were used to--they felt abused and taken for granted since Confederation--but being a branch of Treasury gave purpose to the imposed frugality. In a kind of obstinate way they took pride in being leaders in government restraint; it fortified them when advocating efficiencies elsewhere in their districts. For Victoria, using the agents as an efficiency example was the best and quickest method to get the message to the bureaucracy and the public that it was serious about eliminating waste and duplication in government services. Beginning with the Liberals, through the Conservative response to the Kidd Report, and ending with the Bennett government's staff reductions, the agents were continually subjected to either reorganization initiatives that focused on rationalizing district administration or were simply pruned back. It is to their credit that they survived as well as they did.

Bureaucratic Influences

The influence of bureaucratic politics was muted by the inconsistent attention government gave the agents.

After passage of the 1917 Civil Service Act, the Civil Service Commissioner took considerable interest in the appointment of agents and influenced the Treasury Department's short-lived policy of internal transfers. Napier, to cite another example, as early as 1923 advocated developing an authorized stock sheet of forms to ensure that all agents used similar forms. MacInnes' efforts, like those of Napier, unfortunately had little effect except perhaps to irritate politicians and Deputy Ministers alike. Nevertheless, these individuals introduced a different way of looking at the public service: they preached consistency, standardization, and rationalization of the bureaucracy but government was not ready for radical departures. MacInnis and Napier, who were proponents of change from the capricious and inconsistent management practices of the past, were soon forgotten.

Napier, although his tenure was limited, also was the first middle management figure in the agents' history.¹¹⁰ Since colonial times, the agents reported directly to the Deputy Head or, on many issues, to the Governor or the Minister. An organizational layer between the agent and the Deputy was a mixed blessing. Middle management had the time and incentive to observe and advocate for the organization but it also created a barrier between the agent and decision-makers.

By 1950, the agents had not one but two layers between them and the Deputy Minister. Ron M. Burns, appointed Assistant Deputy Minister in 1946 when John V. Fisher became Deputy Minister, assumed overall responsibility for the agents. Cecil Davies assisted him as Inspector of Agencies. Davies, or "Great White Father," as George Brodie who joined the agents in 1947 and became Director in 1977 liked to call him,¹¹¹ performed many of the traditional inspectorate roles that

Napier and Goepel had performed generations earlier. Until 1954, when Burns moved to Ottawa, Burns and Davies reviewed everything and issued Circulars, under the authority of the Deputy Minister, on all matters that concerned the agents. Fisher still made many of the decisions but the agents were, for the first time, effectively removed from the corridors of power.

For a while Burns "didn't try to make big changes" with the agents.¹¹² However, in November 1949, with the assistance of Davies, who was a clerk at the time, he tried to bring uniformity to the work of an agent's office by developing and issuing the agents' first manual. This comprehensive document of numerous chapters and sections, with sample charts and forms included, was designed to train new appointees and ready them for promotion. Unfortunately, the manual was out-of-date within a year and keeping it current was hopeless. Burns and Davies learned the hard way what generations of agents could have told them: an agent's job was learned on the job.

The uniformity Burns and Davies sought, however, had a corollary, loss of independence. Nothing was more sacred to the agents than the ability to be their own bosses. It helped make them unique, set them apart from other civil servants. Their responsibilities may have been clerical and routine but the manner in which they completed them, the importance they gave one task over another, the short-cuts they took, the rules they deliberately forgot, these were the things that made the job bearable and, considering the tremendous variety and extent of their duties, made it possible. In short, the manual took initiative out of the job. It may have simplified work for junior staff members but for the agents, as it was for their counterpart, the Indian collector, "line upon line, precept upon precept, [the

manual] limited independence."¹¹³ The manual thus diminished the idiosyncratic element in district administration and put a bonus on homogeneity.

But Burns' motivation was more than achieving uniformity or giving opportunities to new recruits that the Civil Service Act of 1945 implied was their entitlement. The agents were becoming too dependent, referring too many things to Victoria. "A very good ploy, you know. If people started telling you how to run your show, you say to hell with you, you run the whole thing. I'll sit back and do just what I have to do. Then you have to reverse the process and when you do reverse the process, you try to make it a consistent process," Burns said.¹¹⁴ The agents were showing their worst side. The growth in government and increased specialization that was making their job frustrating and difficult was also making them shallow and petty.

It is somewhat surprising that the agents were exhibiting such behaviour in the late 1940's. They were still generally viewed as the senior civil servants in the districts and their mentor and advocate, J.V. Fisher, was now Deputy Minister. They had recently received a long overdue salary increase and equity prevailed throughout their salary grid. Aspiring clerks, providing they were willing to relocate, could even look confidently at a promising career. Their traditional responsibilities were generally intact and some new functions added considerable pages to their cumbersome manual. Indeed, government had recently treated them to something they found astonishing--a conference. It was a historic occasion, and would not be repeated for another twenty-eight years.

The agents who gathered that summer of 1945 for their first conference were an old and rather tired-looking group. The 'Dean of the Government Agents, W.R.

Dewdney, had not retired, but soon he and many of the other old timers would leave. They had never met one another and most of them did not know the Victoria people. The euphoria of being recognized obscured the realization of how significant being together was and that it signalled, however subtly, that times were changing.

For years agents had been suggesting that a conference would be a good idea. Norman Watt, in response to J.D. MacLean's short-lived request for ideas and community information from agents, broached the notion in one of his reports:

For several years past, the District Foresters of the Forest Branch of the Department of Lands have been holding annual conferences, with I understand, splendid results. The thought has occurred to me that perhaps similar results might be obtained from an annual conference of Government Agents.¹¹⁵

Twenty years passed before a senior Victoria-based bureaucrat within another department re-introduced the idea of a conference. Patrick Mulcahy, Chief Gold Commissioner and later Deputy Minister of Mines, made the suggestion as a means of getting the agents' input on existing practices and proposed legislation. He knew the value of their insights and that they were, as they had been since colonial times, "very interested and very helpful to the mining industry."¹¹⁶ The Finance Department and the Minister eventually agreed.

The costs of having such a gathering, probably more than anything else, inhibited the Minister. John Hart finally decided that the benefits outweighed the expense and approximately thirty-two agents gathered in Victoria to discuss "government policy and to exchange suggestions and information which, it is hoped, will be beneficial to

the general administration of government throughout the province."¹¹⁷ A grand time was had by all. There were three days of meetings and a banquet at the Empress Hotel which was attended by the Premier, members of Cabinet and all Deputy Ministers. For the first time in their career, the agents felt special. The Premier had something more important in mind.

John Hart realized that society's expectations of government had changed. No longer were citizens prepared to accept a government with little involvement or responsibility for their happiness. After World War II British Columbians expected Victoria to be positive, active, and most important, to provide them with service. And the agents did just that. The Minister understood that these district administrators were much more than collectors of taxes and financial overseers of other departments. The agents were an extension of government and their primary responsibility was to meet the needs of the public, whatever that may be. The conference was held, as he said, "in order that a greater measure of service may be brought to the people by the agents working in closer co-operation with government policy."¹¹⁸ As Premier Tolmie appreciated years earlier, public convenience was good politics.

The conference, like the manual that followed it, was a foretaste of the future. Uniformity in operations was viewed by government more important than individual initiative. No longer could the agents be civil servant cowboys, dispensing services as they deemed suitable. A new order, that of consistency and predictability, was required. As in Ceylon almost seventy-five years earlier when another government decided to bring all Government Agents together, the conference was an attempt to foster harmonious district administration.

A decision was taken by Gregory [the Governor] in 1873...that the first of what was to be a series 'enjoined' to bring a list of works [they] required, and each had full time to give all necessary explanation...It was 'a general meeting to discuss various subjects of public interest on which the Agents had been invited to prepare themselves. This annual 'durbar' marked the beginning of the decline of the Government Agents powers vis à vis the Secretariate in Colombo.¹¹⁹

A conference did not trigger a decline in the British Columbia agents' power as it did in Ceylon. It was a symptom not a cause of the malaise affecting the agents. A combination of circumstances including the dramatic growth in government services, the move to the Treasury Department, civil service reform, political shenanigans, the introduction of middle management all played a significant part. The passage of the Civil Service Act of 1945, however, had the most notable influence. It amplified the reverberations of changes going on in the public service and made the bureaucracy stiffer. The agents in the Boundary District, like their counterparts across the province, who required ongoing political support for their traditional role, had difficulty adjusting to this new order.

The Boundary District Agents and their Colleagues

When S.R. Almond wrote the Deputy Provincial Secretary on June 26, 1920, that "the old Voters list contained 1300 names but, at the present time I do not expect that the new List will contain more than the half of that number," it was a clear indication that the Boundary district had changed dramatically.¹²⁰ With the end of the war, the demand for ore had subsided and by 1919 the smelters were forced to suspend operations. A year later Phoenix was a ghost town and the agent, like

his colleagues in a few other communities, was valuating the town's assets and supervising their sale. The mining boom of the early 1900's was a thing of the past and the community now began the roller coaster adjustment to new economic realities. Very slowly, agriculture replaced mining as the Boundary country's primary employer.

Ironically, World War I gave the Boundary community its last excitement and World War II its next when the copper miners of 1918 were replaced twenty-four years later by Japanese "evacuated" from the coastal area of the province. Old buildings around Greenwood were renovated to house these unfortunate people and one of them would contain a small boy who would eventually join the long list of Boundary district agents.

W.R. Dewdney moved to Penticton in May 1922 when the Fairview office was finally closed. He was replaced by P.H. McCurrach, his clerk and janitor. Penticton was a larger office than Greenwood so it represented a promotion for Dewdney but, more important, he was given the responsibility of co-ordinating the reorganization of the agencies in the Boundary country. As an efficiency measure, Penticton was to be home of the Government Agent for the area with all other offices reporting through it, much like things had been done earlier when McMynn in Midway reported through the Osoyoos Gold Commissioner. It provided for, as the Deputy Minister put it, "the concentration of all important Government Business" in Penticton.¹²¹

This change was not well received by McCurrach or by Charles Mudge, Almond's replacement. While they regretted their loss in status to Government Sub-Agent (they did not know for months what to call themselves), the expectation that their offices could now get by with one person each irritated them most:

I appreciate the fact that you recognize that my various duties, previously discharged by two men, keep me fully employed but I hope you will forgive me for saying, with all respect, that I fail to see how the mere drawing of the cheques at Penticton will afford such relief or facilitate the handling, so far as the local Offices are concerned, of Public Works Pay-Rolls & other Vouchers.¹²²

But the arrangement stuck even though both of them and their successors, complained bitterly for years. It took repeated reports from the Travelling Auditors and protestations from the local M.L.A. to convince the Finance Department that additional help was required. Dewdney, on the other hand, won praise for the manner in which he handled the situation and, thereby, endeared himself to Victoria officials.

McCurrach, who Dewdney evaluated as "obliging, willing to work, strictly honest, very impartial with regard to politics...and almost teetotal", must not have complained too much because he left Greenwood in July 1926 for a promotion in the Kamloops office and eventually became agent.¹²³ Style Brown Hamilton, a veteran who lost a leg during the war, replaced McCurrach and remained in Greenwood for a couple of years until he went to Cumberland as agent. He, in turn, was succeeded by C. Nicols who stayed only a few years before trading places with L.A. Dodd, Princeton Gold Commissioner. Dodd, who would remain in Greenwood until his retirement in 1946, was one of the last of the 'old style' agents. Born in 1879, the son of William Dodd, a mining recorder, Dodd served in Yale, Barkerville, Nanaimo, Princeton and Greenwood. He was named magistrate for the County of Yale in 1911 and held the appointment until his retirement.

The Greenwood Sub-Agent office closed January 15, 1953. Three sub-agents, W.L. Draper, G.L. Hamilton and J.W. Dobbie, managed the office over the last seven years

that an agent resided in Greenwood. It had been fifty-two years since William McMyynn first opened the office for business: eight agents or sub-agents followed in his footsteps.

The Grand Forks office experienced much less turnover, with only five agents over the same period and two of these appointments were after World War II. After Sydney Almond retired on March 31, 1922, Charles Mudge, his clerk, was promoted to sub-agent. He remained in Grand Forks until 1930 when he was replaced by Ernest Harrison. Harrison, like so many other agents of his era, stayed in his post for almost two decades until W.E. McLean took over in 1949. McLean was succeeded in 1955 by R. Macgregor, who had been transferred from the Salmon Arm office.

All of these changes are as informative about Greenwood and Grand Forks as they are about the agents. The Boundary agencies became, for capable and aggressive agents, a place to gain experience in anticipation of bigger opportunities. On the other hand, for men getting close to retirement, or with little desire of advancement, Grand Forks or Greenwood were pleasant communities in which to 'slow down'. This is not to say that the Boundary Agents were bored--far from it. The communities offered considerable challenge and ample opportunity to deliver the full-range of government services only there was not the volume and hence the staff required in larger centres. The work of the Grand Forks and Greenwood Agents continued to be representative of agent duties elsewhere in the province.

With a few notable exceptions, the agents' responsibilities during these forty-one years were similar to tasks they performed from 1890 to 1917. They were no longer policemen; instead, they dispensed justice from behind the bench. They also issued motor vehicle

and driver's licences and, for a period of time, authorized liquor permits. Some old duties were now performed by other district personnel. During the 1930's especially, the dispensing of relief payments occupied much of their time but their responsibility for the administration of the government's financial matters became most important. The agents became district comptrollers. The move to restrict the agents to their offices which began at the turn of the century, was completed by the end of the 1930's. The post-1917 agents were public administrators, confined to their offices, only on unique occasions venturing outside.

The agents' primary roles, however, did not preclude their involvement in a host of other unrelated duties. During the course of these years, the agent supervised the shipment of seed grains to farmers and the examination of stenographers for the Civil Service Commissioner; resettled war veterans; paid bounties for an assortment of predators; acted as receiver in bankruptcy cases and as Official Administrator for wills without named executors; garnered relief funds for disasters and organized collections for Patriotic Funds and provincial festivities; provided information on all government programs for the public and provided the Provincial Bureau of Information with data on the district; and so forth. Ken McRae also acted as coroner in Smithers until 1952 and, like a number of other isolated agents, "found himself doing things he shouldn't have been doing."¹²⁴ They were even requested to be Village Commissioners in 1945 but the government turned it down, not on the basis that they could not handle it, but "because they would again and again be in an embarrassed position in their relations to the Crown."¹²⁵ The agents' principal roles, of course, were always paramount but they never lost sight of the fact

that they had, and always did have, as Norman Watt wrote in 1925, an obligation to make everyone "however humble or great" who came into their office "a friend of the government."

It has always been my firm conviction that an employee of the Government...can do a great deal to either enhance or defame the reputation of the Administration of which he is a part; and in this respect there is probably no office in the Service that affords wider scope in either direction than that of Government Agent... . I have from the very outset made it plain to the members of the staff that every customer must be treated in such a manner as will tend to make the customer a friend of the government.¹²⁶

Table XVI provides some indication of the agents' statutory responsibilities during the 1920's. The average number of appointments for each agent was approximately twelve with the Quesnel and Prince Rupert Agents holding the largest number at sixteen. The New Westminster Agent, F.S. Campbell, held the lowest number of statutory appointments with seven and the Grand Forks and Greenwood Agents held twelve and thirteen, respectively.

And they did all of this, as before, with little assistance from Victoria and even less encouragement. Training on the job or the guidance of a helpful colleague, was still the only way an agent learned what was expected. Mudge, for instance, had no Placer Lease experience and often turned to Hamilton for advice. Little did he know that Hamilton was almost as ignorant and had to study the act before responding. Agents also learned new tricks from their vacation replacements who usually came from larger offices with more advanced techniques.

TABLE XVI

**Government Agent Statutory Appointments
(30 Government Agents - c. 1920's)**

<u>Gold Commissioner or Mining Recorder</u>	<u>Collector/ Assessor</u>	<u>Water Recorder</u>	<u>Hospital Director</u>	<u>Stipendiary Magistrate</u>
20	17	25	22	21
<u>Commissioner of Lands</u>	<u>Official Administrator</u>	<u>Court Registrar</u>	<u>Coroner</u>	<u>Clerk of Peace</u>
23	11	18	7	17

Source: List of Government Agents with Combined Duties, GR 1773.

Thriftiness, a hallmark of the agents during previous years, was no less prevalent in this period. During the worst of the depression, agents, like other civil servants, took repeated salary reductions at a time when their workload was larger probably than any time in their history. Often Victoria criticized them for using their own cars when public transportation was available and if they had to make a trip to the coast they were instructed to do it in conjunction with another purpose, for example, escorting a prisoner or taking someone to the mental hospital. The Grand Forks Agent even used the reverse side of used pieces of paper for carbon copies to minimize costs!

Their procedures improved little over the years. The big letter books were gone but innumerable ledgers remained and the office was full of lists of vouchers, cheques and carbon copies of everything. A Public Works voucher, for instance, required six copies: two for Victoria, two for the Penticton Agent, one for the District Engineer and one for the General Foreman in Grand Forks. A copy was subsequently requested back from Penticton for the local office reference and entry in the "Roads and Detail of Work" book. In addition, the agent had receipt books for every manner of tax, bounty, fee or fine as well as record books on every travel advance, expense account or salary issued in the district. The list was almost endless and all records had to meet the careful and often heartless scrutiny of the Travelling Auditor.

Only in volume did gold commissioner or mining recorder duties change for the Boundary Agents. A few Free Miner's Certificates and the like were still issued but the region was no longer overrun by prospectors and neither was their office. The Resident Engineers for the Mines Department assumed some of their previous

responsibilities and the agents relied considerably on their expertise. Their annual report for Victoria now consisted of only statistics; the Engineers completed the lengthy assessment of mining progress and prospects for the district. The Mines Department maintained a keen interest in the agents; the Commissioner of Provincial Police was much less interested.

Agent police work almost disappeared by the late 1920's. Only rarely were they called upon to assist a constable. McMynn, until his retirement in 1923, liked to ask McCurrach to act for the chief constable in his absence but Superintendent McMullin, his successor, viewed the force as a distinct group requiring specialized experience. The agents continued to have considerable administrative contact with the police as the latter were still their 'foot soldiers' in matters of relief payments and other outside investigations. The agents also continued to pay the constable's salary and travelling expenses and issued receipt books for collections made on behalf of the government. Even after 1950 when the R.C.M.P. took over policing responsibilities from the British Columbia Provincial Police, the agents relied on the police constable as a sub-collector of various fees and licences. The agents, of course, saw the constable frequently in the court room.

Being a magistrate was tough work, something no agent relished. W.R. Dewdney, on the occasion of his retirement, spoke of the difficulties inherent in the position:

"This was very difficult, and took more out of you than most of the other work," he said. The reason for this was that he had many friends up before him on various charges. And naturally a number of these could not possibly "get off". "You had to be fair, and you can't let everybody off," he remarked of this.

One thing that made his magisterial duties particularly embarrassing was that some of these men, facing summons or charges, would come to Mr. Dewdney and talk the whole thing over with him before the case was heard in Court.¹²⁷

Style Hamilton also lamented: "I received my appointment as S.M. [stipendiary magistrate] but have had only one case. I hope they are few and far between."¹²⁸

Being a magistrate was an onerous and awesome responsibility for any agent and exceptionally so during prohibition or if the agent had the misfortune of being the district liquor vendor as well. L.A. Dodd, Telegraph Creek Agent, found this very sensitive in his isolated surroundings and McCurrach was exhorted even by his colleagues not to be too hard on the 'poor bootlegger'.¹²⁹ Further, the Grand Forks Agent had to deal with Doukhobor civil disobedience and saw many of them in court, but not as many as did his Nelson colleague.

John Cartmel, lawyer, placer miner, World War I veteran wounded at Passchendaele and Government Agent, imprisoned probably more individuals than all other agents combined. In 1929 he sentenced 104 Doukhobors to six months each and in 1932 he sentenced 500 more to three years each. "It took but 235 minutes to try 247 of them and 741 years were handed out in less than four hours," he boasted.¹³⁰ Even more controversial, Cartmel was responsible for the apprehension and placement of hundreds of Doukhobor children. Fortunately Cartmel had some knowledge of the law but his colleagues were not so lucky.

Agents were expected to perform their magistrate duties with few guides. They could use the occasional law book that gave prescribed penalties but had little else to assist them. It is difficult to imagine how

Lyman Sands, for instance, must have felt when he was appointed magistrate in Atlin at the tender age of 23! Ken McRae, who was Smithers Agent and Magistrate, said the policemen helped him greatly.¹³¹ McCurrach was deeply concerned about his paucity of knowledge:

I am informed by the Provincial Constable here that several boys under the age of 14 years are shortly to be charged with theft from dwelling houses in this district.

As the case will, more than likely be brought before me, I request that you will be kind enough to advise me if you consider it will be within my jurisdiction to try the case. I am not sure if my position as Stipendiary Magistrate confers upon me also the authority to try Juvenile Offenders. I would also appreciate very much if you would indicate what Act this case would come under.¹³²

The agents used diplomacy more than legal training to get them through this difficult task. They frequently handled small debt matters, for instance, by letter and negotiation rather than by resorting to their legal powers. Dewdney, in particular, was very patient with tardy debtors and would try many alternatives before dragging someone into court. Like their predecessors during the early gold rush days, the agents were respected for their common sense approach and sense of fair play.

Fair play was also extremely important in the agents' involvement with the Voters' List. Even after 1947 when the Department of the Provincial Secretary established a permanent list which the agents implemented and maintained, they had to be extremely conscientious. As before, the agent was heavily involved in compiling the list and ensuring its accuracy, estimating the required number of voting stations and polling booths,

appointing persons to act as scrutineers and generally ensuring that the process went smoothly.

Like all civil servants, agents and their staff were forbidden to engage in any partisan activity in connection with a federal or provincial election (Civil Service Act, 1917, Sec. 45). This prohibition, although not explicitly noted, extended to municipal politics. "The spirit of the section would be better observed by civil servants refraining from being candidates in either Municipal or School Board elections," MacInnis said.¹³³ Although the agents were prominent and highly respected members of their community, the available records indicate only one instance of an agency staff member running for office; L.S. Brown, Kamloops assessor was elected School Trustee in 1923.¹³⁴

With the advent of Prohibition in 1917, a few agents like Nanaimo, Quesnel and Telegraph Creek were made liquor vendors. An arduous task, that was supposed to be only a temporary measure to deal with the emergency of the influenza epidemic, it consumed a tremendous amount of time and lasted much longer than planned. On June 6, 1921, all agents got into the liquor business, not as vendors, but as the outlet for permits to purchase liquor. They were given a supply of application forms, a list of vendors within their districts, and were requested to commence the sale of permits immediately. This, too, took an extraordinary amount of time and agents and the Department of Finance made numerous requests to the Secretary of the Liquor Board for staff to handle the rush. This assignment remained for years and was augmented by their growing responsibility for administering the "Motor Vehicle Act".

The time-consuming responsibility of registering vehicles and licensing drivers began before the war but, by 1929, when the province could boast of some 18,200

miles of road, the agents had a whole new set of ledgers and record books to register purchases, transfers and licences.¹³⁵ Originally agents were quite possessive over the revenue gleaned from this new source but eventually were happy to see parts of it centralized in Victoria. Provincial Police were essentially responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Act but the government insisted that the agent, where possible, receive the funds so that the monies could be credited to the general revenue account as soon as possible.

As late as 1940, the agent in unorganized territories was still acting as Secretary of the Local Board of Health. He was "not required to undertake technical studies or investigations in regard to sanitation and other matters dealing with water supplies, sewage disposal and nuisances, but is required only to see that this work is carried out."¹³⁶ Provincial Police made all investigations and reported to the agent. In the Boundary district, the agents were soon relieved of these duties but as late as the 1930's, they were still the repository for anti-diphtheria and anti-rattlesnake serums and provided information on health matters for local citizens. McCurrach, like twenty-two of his counterparts (see Table XVI), was also appointed a member of the Board of Directors of the local General Hospital, a post he and his successors held until the mid-1950's.

It will be recalled that S.R. Almond was more of a social worker than his Greenwood counterpart. Had he remained agent for another ten years he would have really enjoyed his work. Until the Department of the Provincial Secretary replaced them with trained social workers in the 1930's, the agents carried out the government's income assistance, adoption and child welfare responsibilities.

Dispensing relief was their most important and time-consuming activity. Unemployment relief reached its highest in March 1933, when 128,858 single or heads of families and their dependents received financial assistance from the government.¹³⁷ The number of British Columbians turning to the state for help varied from 72,549 in May 1932 to 67,530 in May 1937. By 1940, it dropped to 53,251 and by 1943 it was almost non-existent, with only 7,362 family units receiving relief. The agents, in unorganized territories, were responsible, with the investigative assistance of the local constable, for a large portion these payments. Occasionally, as in 1933, the agents were also instructed to provide relief payments in selected municipalities. It was a thankless task that received few accolades--agents were always admonished to exhibit greater care to keep the numbers down--and it took its toll. The Kamloops Agent, E. Fisher, for example, requested three months leave because:

Economic conditions and the incidental duties in the administration of unemployment relief in that area have added to the burden to such an extent as to be devoted to the administration of the office.¹³⁸

In addition, the agents had to contend with numerous committees and councils advocating on behalf of the unemployed. On these and other relief matters they kept the 'lid on the situation' and dutifully kept Victoria informed. The agent in Prince Rupert, for example, reported:

A number of single, homeless unemployed called at the Court House building this afternoon, and a committee of five waited upon me for the purpose of making representations in respect of a certain number of single, homeless unemployed, who, on varying dates during the month of

October, were warned for camp, and who were automatically cut off relief owing to their failure to comply with such warning. This committee of the Unemployed Councils of Prince Rupert...has asked that the enclosed draft of representations be forwarded for your consideration. I am accordingly doing so... .¹³⁹

As has been noted repeatedly, a down-to earth approach helped the agents through difficult times. The administration of relief called for compassion, tact and diplomacy. It also demanded good administrators: individuals who could make decisions, process the vouchers, disperse the cheques and report accurately on trends and developments. Who was better suited for the job than the Finance Department representative?

It did not take long for the agents to become identified with the Department of Finance. Even as policemen or gold commissioners, they had always controlled the district 'purse strings. After 1917 they became, more than ever, financial comptrollers and collectors of an almost endless list of taxes for Victoria including: the Amusement Tax, Poll Tax, Pool-Room Tax, Real Estate Tax and Property Tax. The agents were also instrumental in collecting premiums for the controversial hospital insurance act put in force by the Johnson-Anscomb coalition government in 1948.

Many of these fees and taxes were collected by police constables with an equal number taken in over-the-counter but the agent accounted for all of them. Even in property assessments, the district office was independent and completed all of the preparatory and follow-through work. The Quesnel office in 1920, for example, prepared 16,000 tax notices for distribution and in one tax sale alone compiled and mailed out 3,000 notices. Some of these payments were accumulated in Victoria, like the

Real Estate Tax in 1926, but centralization was not a significant factor until after World War II.

By the mid-1950's, Victoria was taking over much of the agents' financial role. Spurred on by Charles Ferber, an aggressive Comptroller-General, the Finance Department gradually assumed responsibility for the payroll and accounting functions previously handled almost exclusively by the agents. Due to the sheer volume of accounts, Victoria also managed the collection of the Social Service and Municipal Aid Tax, or sales tax, in 1948. The Vancouver office, in particular, was affected enormously by this development as government branches in the metropolitan area soon stopped dealing with the agent and dealt directly with Victoria. In more isolated districts, the transition took longer. The accumulated impact of this centralization was demoralizing for the agents even though initially they were not resistant. Over time it became increasingly difficult for the agents to advocate the use of their services when their own department circumvented them. On the other hand, Victoria still viewed the agents as a central agency for all of government and expected the agent to be a resource for other departments:

...we wish to have mobile staff at each Agency under the directing head of the Government Agent, who, when called upon, will supply the necessary clerical help for all departments excepting possibly the Forestry Department. I would, therefore, be glad if you will arrange the alteration in the building so that the general staff (that is the assessor, collector and agent) will be as little isolated one from the other as possible...¹⁴⁰

More than anything else, the agents constrained the financial dealings of the district offices of other departments. Victoria insisted that the agents act as a

clearing-house for all financial transactions and, most important, demanded that all monies collected be deposited immediately with them. Maximization of potential interest on accounts was always of paramount importance to Victoria.

...the all important thing was to get all funds into the Treasury at the earliest possible moment, no matter how many remittances might be made to the Treasury during the month. It was pointed out that leaving an amount like this for that length of time in a non-interest bearing account as against an account bearing even 3 1/2% was a very definite economic loss which should be avoided in future.¹⁴¹

And in a letter to Cartmel, Nelson Agent, regarding the collection of motor vehicle revenue, the Deputy pressed the agent to ensure that all monies were "received by the Treasury at an earlier date which is a matter of the first importance."¹⁴²

The agent also watched the activities of other departments and community events that might affect provincial coffers. Dewdney, for instance, urged McCurrach to "keep a keen look-out [underlining in original] to see that Public Works vote is kept within proper limits, especially towards the end of fiscal year," the Surveyor of Taxes requested all agents and collectors to "supervise and watch closely the activities of the various branches of amateur athletics within the district, and where the least doubt seems to exist as to the bona fides of the association conducting the sport" to deny exemptions from the Amusement Tax.¹⁴³ The twentieth century Government Agent still embodied those functions of centralized control that were so characteristic during the nineteenth century.

Victoria also tried to use the agents in a fashion the agents never quite got right. In 1925 J.D. MacLean, Minister of Finance, informed all agents:

I am of the opinion that we should be supplied by you--as the official representative of the Government from an administrative point of view--with more information regarding local general conditions and administrative activities, etc., than is the case at the present time.

Such additional information would enable us to carry out the functions of Government more intelligently, more economically and more accurately.

...I am hereby requesting you to forward to me before the third day of each month a brief report on the work of the Agency for the preceding month. I will also welcome any comments or suggestions which may tend to improve the service and increase its popularity.¹⁴⁴

The agents' response to this overture was mediocre at best; they inundated the Minister with facts, figures and personnel information but nothing of political interest. The Quesnel Agent even asked for a raise! The only report that distracted the Minister was one from Williams Lake in which the agent indicated that an increased bounty on coyotes would be favourably received; otherwise they were mundane and bland. Four months later, MacLean stopped the procedure, probably out of frustration over what little he received. This 'political work', however, continued on an ad hoc basis during the 1930's when Victoria requested agents provide intelligence on local citizens or when John Hart solicited their opinion on the wisdom of policy decisions. As late as 1939, agents were also told to use certain companies and they provided Victoria with unsolicited input on community undesirables.¹⁴⁵ The

agents, it seems, could not bring themselves to provide more 'interesting' information when formally requested even though they did just that in countless memoranda and annual reports. The agents were Victoria's 'eyes and ears' and had been since colonial times but never realized it.

To conclude that the agents did not understand the nature of their role and their responsibility to their Minister would be an over-simplification. The Boundary and other agents fully appreciated their obligation to government. What they had difficulty recognizing, however, was that the onus for this commission was on them and that each generation of agents had to prove its worth to succeeding governments. "All governments take an interest [in the agents] and then forget and then a new one takes over," is how a cynical Norm Blake described it.¹⁴⁶ And this was relatively painless as, paradoxically, the government needed the agents more than the reverse. Until the 1950's, as Ron Burns knew from experience, the agents were the critical link in government services:

the functions of central office [were an] extension of the regional office. As things became more complicated, more technical, it reversed itself and the agencies were a link with the central office rather than vice versa. The central office policies became important; before it was what went on in the regions of a widely separated pioneer community [that was crucial].¹⁴⁷

Increased specialization and the increasing importance of a large bureaucratic government organization by the 1950's threatened the traditional administrative practices of the agents. It divided work and coordinated people by precise, impersonal rule. The standardized structures and classifications generated by the Civil Service Act of 1945, for example, brought

heterogeneity to the government labour force with fine distinctions of status and occupational fields. The agents were one among many professionals operating in the district. Power bargaining between staff and line components of the organization and between executives of different departments became commonplace. For instance, W.A.C. Bennett brought Deputy Ministers, for the first time, into the Estimates development process.¹⁴⁸ The agents still completed their annual assessment of financial requirements but more and more it was meaningless. As Ken Weir said, "what we got never resembled what we put in."¹⁴⁹ And automation, which came with the centralization of the payroll function and the collection of the sales tax, intensified the threat. Machines could do the job better and quicker. New jobs also became important and a general upgrading of skills took place. The agents increasingly found themselves challenged as being obsolete.

As discussed earlier, the agents faced the problem of new recruitment practices and methods of promotion after 1945. Determining the renewal of the organization by merit and bureaucratic processes undermined the traditional practice of political selection: a process that more often than not chose individuals with local prestige and recognition but who also proved highly successful. Burns tried to help with a manual so aspirants to agent positions had something to learn from, but it proved worthless. The agents, however, confronted another problem. Positions in government were losing their appeal and individuals questioned whether it was an honour to be working for the public service. According to Burns, their predecessors "felt it was a privilege to be working for government. They had a much more romantic view of the position."¹⁵⁰ Like the French civil service in this century, the progression from patronage to merit

was accompanied by a change in attitude by aspirants who sought security rather than prestige:

the dominant urge that led most young Frenchmen to seek careers in government offices before the war [World War I] was a desire for the calm bourgeois security they seemed to offer... In those days the public service carried high prestige; no profession or occupation enjoyed a better social rating... Magistrates and military officers, prefects and ambassadors...all of these were valued more highly than comparable employments in private life...

the dominant motivation of those nowadays [1931] seeking entry into the service of the State is more strongly than ever a desire for security... Moral considerations play to-day a less conspicuous role than formerly. As France moves forward in the direction of an "industrialization" of values, the prestige of serving the State tends proportionately to diminish.¹⁵¹

The public service of France which once was "recruited almost entirely from aristocratic and bourgeois circles...began to be filled increasingly from the middle and lower bourgeoisie."¹⁵² The new agent recruits in the 1950's, like their French counterparts, were individuals from a much broader cross-section of British Columbian society who viewed government service not with deference but as a job as good as, but certainly not better, than one elsewhere. The Civil Service Act of 1945 democratized the public service and the economic growth that followed World War II inflamed the situation by providing employment opportunities that made potential recruits question the wisdom of spending years behind a government desk.

Summary and Conclusions

John Villiers Fisher, Deputy Minister of Finance from 1946 to 1957, was an 'old style' public servant who believed government employment was a honourable profession. His retirement in 1957 marked the end of an era for he was the last Deputy Minister of Finance to start his career in a Government Agent's office. Fisher was born in Italy in 1892 and came to Canada in 1912. He enlisted during the First World War and arrived in England on October 15, 1914, with the first Canadian contingent. He returned to British Columbia five years later and was sent to Vernon where he was appointed a clerk under Leonard Norris, a seasoned agent. Fisher worked primarily as court registrar and provided holiday relief for vacationing agents in nearby districts. The Boundary agents, on a couple of occasions, turned their offices over to Fisher for two weeks in the summer. In 1923, he was moved to Victoria where he remained for the balance of his career and subsequently claimed he had a hand in every budget since. Fisher got on well with John Hart, Minister of Finance and Premier (1941 to 1947). Although only a statistician or Assistant Deputy Minister for most of his career, Fisher was Hart's principal advisor. This slim, silver-haired and impeccably dressed man who liked to smoke cigarettes from a holder, "dominated the scene," according to Charles Ferber.¹⁵³ He was "not terribly popular with his colleagues,"¹⁵⁴ however, and "observers say that seldom has there been a civil servant so careful in covering his tracks, so discreet in his public statements."¹⁵⁵ The agents viewed him much differently.

Fisher was an "advocate for the agencies," according to Ron Burns.¹⁵⁶ He trusted the capabilities of the Government Agents as an administrative system but, more important, he regarded the agent as the principal representative of government outside of Victoria. As

McRae recalled, Fisher wrote him shortly after he was appointed Smithers Agent, "the Government Agent is the titular head of the government in the area he represents."¹⁵⁷ To the agents, Fisher's presence in Victoria was a comfort. It is not unreasonable to speculate that Fisher's loyalty influenced many decisions that affected the daily lives and future of the agents.

As the 1958-59 budget, the first ever this century not crafted in part by a previous Government Agent employee, was tabled in the Legislature in the spring of 1958, the agents were an anxious group. The attitude of Fisher's replacement, Gerry Bryson, towards them was unknown. Bryson, a University of British Columbia Commerce graduate, began his career as an Administrative Assistant in the Social Services Tax Branch formed to administer the new sales tax and never worked in an agent's office. Before Bryson, the agents always had someone in Victoria with first-hand familiarity with their issues--they had political and bureaucratic support. An era, stretching a hundred years since Governor Douglas appointed Richard Hicks in Hope, had come to an end.

And the agents had other things on their minds. In the districts, countless new public workers with new skills challenged their authority and new organizations with elaborate chains of command by-passed their offices and dealt directly with Victoria. At the same time, a new climate of entrepreneurship, of give and take, and of confronting the status quo became important in district affairs and it clashed with the agents' traditional role. Just as Fesler determined, it was "the most basic conflict...between the maintenance of law and order, and the advancement of economic and social development."¹⁵⁸ The agent, an exponent of common-sense government, was expected to surrender to the specialist. New rules and procedures also governed their recruitment practices and

successful applicants lacked the same commitment and local knowledge of their predecessors. Finally, new electronic machines took over tasks agents only a generation earlier would have thought impossible. The agent in 1958 was threatened from all sides.

On the other hand, the agents were still a potent force for continuity in district administration, even by 1958. They continued to perform their customary duties in revenue collection, land assessment, mine recording, court registrar and so forth. Many of them, too, carried on the traditions of past agents. Agents like David Dalglish in Kamloops, Norm Blake in Kitimat and Ken McRae in Nelson represented the government with a style not unfamiliar to their forerunners. But these agents and a few others in the ranks, like George Brodie, were the last of an old breed that 'learned the ropes' during the 1930's and 1940's when, according to Blake, "the Government Agent did everything and...the public unquestionably accepted his authority."¹⁵⁹ By 1958, however, aspiring clerks in agents' offices could see that in the future their abilities would set them apart not their character and local knowledge. How they handled the bureaucracy, how they built up informal networks, how they manipulated the system, and so on, would determine their success.

Only the seasoned agents in 1958 remembered when the agents' administrative traditions were intact and strong. As Warren Hasting, the first Governor-General of the East India Company, noted, "It is on the virtue, not the ability, of their servants that the company must rely."¹⁶⁰ Similarly, the public service will be recalled in the districts of British Columbia by the character and unyielding sense of duty of the Government Agents.

CHAPTER VI, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In seeming contradiction, the agents were a force for continuity. The agents fulfilled, in the performance of three critical functions--maintaining law and order, advocating and executing government policies, and representing national interests--a controlling role on district affairs throughout their history. The knowledge and experience of the agents were critical elements in their success; the dilution of these factors after 1945 was a turning point in their development.

At first the local Government Agent, or Magistrate as he was known, was there to extract revenues from the people and to ensure that things did not go wrong. The role was akin to that of an earlier colonial administrator, the factor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Although he arbitrated disputes and granted licences, his primary responsibility was to maintain law and order. Like his Indian equivalent, "he...administered a system of justice which was, because of his own British origin, rooted in the great traditions of justice and equality which had been built up there."¹ A Government Agent was the first civil servant on the mainland and agents were the chief and, in most cases, the only representatives of the Crown in isolated areas of the colonies identified as districts. Their authority was augmented by participation in the colonial Legislative Council.

The second stage occurred after Confederation when the agents--now generally referred to as Government Agent--became fully established as 'the resident head' of the district and reported to the Provincial Secretary. They were instrumental in helping the fledgling province bridge the gap from colonial to provincial status. Agents levied taxes, collected land revenue and administered a host of unrelated programs. They still dispensed justice, mostly with the help of a police constable, but

lost their role as county court judge to federally appointed officials. By 1890 the agents were the leading public officials in the districts but as transportation improvements made it easier for politicians to visit their constituents, the local M.P.P.'s challenged the agents' previously unquestioned authority. Likewise, these same advancements in communication exposed them to new direction from their superiors.

The dramatic socio-economic development of the province between 1890 and 1917 changed the scope of public policy and the role of the agents. The main preoccupations of the government, keeping the peace and protecting property, were superseded by the advancement of economic development. As C.H. Sisson concluded, this change in priorities created new roles for the civil service:

The protection of property provides both the opportunity and the incentive to turn it to profitable account. This becomes a collective social interest. It has taken a wide variety of forms; but whatever form it has taken, it has introduced a new element into the civil service, which has changed its character and internal organisation.²

Technical specialists such as agricultural and forestry officers appeared during this third phase in the evolution of the agents and took their place alongside them. Responsibility for the agents was moved to the Department of Finance and the agents became office-bound bureaucrats whose primary duty was to collect revenue. The agents, as the glue that held district administration together in former years, broke down and "departmentalism and working in mutual isolation," a phenomenon that grew in the coming decades, appeared.³

As the state became more involved in caring for and protecting its citizens through public health and workers' safety, for example, the civil service was carried further along the road to specialization. The

accessibility of the automobile, too, created new responsibilities for government. The final phase in the development of the agents is littered with new assignments that were subsequently transferred to professionals in designated departments and technical skills replaced community knowledge and local prestige as criteria in the selection of Government Agents. Economic depression and war also brought unique problems and the civil service underwent tremendous change with the introduction of legislation governing its practices.

Although the government of W.A.C. Bennett was preoccupied with economic rather than social development, this last phase ended like it began, with an expansionist administration. The province experienced unparalleled growth but ignored district administration and the agents. The agents gradually became less of a unifying factor in the district and more a coordinating feature while new modes of communication and methods of control allowed Victoria to penetrate the final armour of the agents--their control over the purse strings. It would be another fifteen years before district administration and its pivotal figure, the Government Agents, were considered anew.

Over the century, the agents evolved into other forms. They changed from prestige-bearing general agents, first acting alone and then collegially with other civil servants, to weak, local agents with reduced status. It was to be expected. As the primary objective of government altered from the maintenance of law and order to economic development and improving social conditions, their customary behaviours changed. Their effectiveness and prestige in isolated communities similarly were modified as elected politicians eclipsed them as local guardians of the public interest. Improvements in transportation and communication made each agent less independent and more an extension of head office.

The seeking of sanctions became necessary before taking action rather than acting in anticipation of it. Likewise, these same advancements helped modify British Columbia society. It became more uniform and demanded a sophisticated, consistent public service and specialist services across the province.

Change, then, is an obvious characteristic of the agents since Governor Douglas appointed the first of their number. Continuity, its counterpart, now requires discussion. The British Columbia Government Agents, like their equivalent throughout the British colonial empire, originated from the French prefecture, with the agent as prefect. Their history is similar to that of the district officer, particularly the Indian Collector. The agents were generalists who were appointed the senior government officials in the districts. Their duties, as noted earlier, were essentially threefold: to maintain law and order, to advocate and execute government policies and to represent provincial interests. Implied in these functions, however, was their most important responsibility, to exercise control over the activities of the district.

This charge was obvious in the beginning when Governor Douglas told the residents of Yale on September 12, 1858, that he had given orders to Richard Hicks to have a townsite surveyed, a sawmill built, ferries established, roads opened and, most important, "carry out the view of Government in the manner best calculated."⁴ These blunt directions, so typical of Douglas, gave notice that government was interested in developing the town on its terms. Hicks interpreted this instruction as a licence to do as he wished, but Douglas' intent was much different. The paramount responsibility of the magistrates, and the agents who followed in their footsteps, was to ensure that the wishes of the central government were fulfilled in the districts. Simply put

the agent was, as Ron Burns reflected on the agents' history, "someone to get control" of the district.⁵

Preserving law and order was a key function of the magistrates. Colonial governments, particularly the one headed by Governor Douglas, were obsessed with the need for security. Among other duties, the magistrates supervised all mining activity, collected revenues, managed the dispersement of land, protected the rights of native peoples and supervised the construction of public buildings, roads and bridges. Apparent in these duties was the magistrates' responsibility for the custody of the peace and bringing order to human activity. What made them so impressive at this task was that they were armed with both executive and judicial authority. This unique and autocratic characteristic, which they shared with district officers around the globe, was efficient and highly effective. It brought speedy justice as well as the presence of the Crown to isolated settlements throughout the colony. Law and order and the colonial interest were combined in the person of the magistrate.

Maintaining law and order remained a central feature of the agents' duties well into the twentieth century. In the Boundary district, McMynn and Almond performed a host of unrelated duties designed to ensure local compliance with provincial statutes. They and their successors performed judicial functions as stipendiary magistrate, managed the operation of County and Supreme Courts, supervised the police directly until 1895 and then indirectly until 1923, and administered countless laws and regulations. They also supervised the fractious liquor laws of 1918 and brought order to the chaos caused by the sudden availability of the automobile. They became social policemen during the 1930's with the administration of relief payments and, as with Cartmel in Nelson, enforced provincial laws on rebellious Doukhobors. During World War II, they were civil defence

coordinators and after the war they resettled restless veterans. Few British Columbians thought of the agent as a law and order figure, especially after 1950 when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police took over responsibilities from the provincial police, but even then they worked in tandem with the federal authorities to administer provincial laws in isolated areas. As long as they had political support, the agents were a potent force for law and order.

The agents were always a force for central authority in another important respect--they supervised the business of government in the districts. This task, one of the primary rationales for district administration according to Brian Smith, was with them from the beginning.⁶ During the colonial era, a number of individuals reported to the magistrates, particularly police constables, mining recorders and revenue officers. After Confederation this number grew, so much that agents like Bowron supervised supervisors of road works and McMynn oversaw numerous forestry and related workers. As well, many managed sub-offices which housed any number of government officials and for decades the provincial police were the "arms and legs" of the agents when the agents became office-bound functionaries. This supervisory function reached its zenith during the early part of the twentieth century when Goepel, as Inspector of Government Agencies, was instructed to oversee the work of the agents. It is no surprise that his appointment came at a time when government felt the proliferation of the agents' supervisory and other duties required regular and rigorous audit.

But their job was more than the superintendence of programmatic duties by other government officials. The agents were the government's district financial policemen. They authorized every expenditure and reviewed every commitment. It was an awesome responsibility, one

they did not take lightly. In some respects, it was more onerous than their public duties as it involved the supervision of peers who often rejected the advice of untrained generalists.

In addition, the agents were the government's primary tax collectors. Even their policing function was insignificant compared to their extraordinary responsibility for assessing and levying land and other taxes. The agents could bring the power of the state to a multitude of programs but nothing compared to their ability to reach into a citizen's pocketbook. Just as in India, the components and functions of district administration concerned with land records, land revenue and general tax collection and licensing are features of continuity.⁷ The mandate, as well as the methods, continued to represent the authority of Victoria in the district.

The agents exhibited control over the machinery of government in another respect--by setting an efficiency example. Restraint in government operations was a continuous factor and a dramatic and painful illustration of how the power of the centre was manifested in their role. After specialists appeared in the districts, the agents were expected to do more with less and at less salary. As representatives of central administration and after 1917 of the Department of Finance, in particular, the agents were subjected to inspection, audit, staff and salary cuts, and office closures. Their resources were never sufficient to cover travel or related expenditures and their facilities were, unless an influential M.P.P. could influence Victoria to the contrary, less than adequate. As the Kidd report stated in 1932, trimming the agents "would prove the most effective argument when advocating economies elsewhere [in government]."⁸ It speaks of the calibre of many outstanding Government

Agents, that despite persistent government restraint policies, the district apparatus that they were responsible for functioned so well.

The Government Agents were Victoria's tools for law and order in the districts. It was, as Fesler found in his research, essentially a negative role.⁹ The agents were trained to maintain the status quo, not to force the pace of change. During the Bennett years, when government was preoccupied with development, they became less useful as Victoria was no longer administering a predominantly rural province.

It is evident that the agents were executors of government policy. The endless list of programs they administered has been discussed at length and need not be laboured here. What is not obvious, however, is that the agents were also program experimenters. Victoria consistently used the agents to introduce new initiatives that subsequently were transferred to line departments. In this respect, almost every government program initiated before 1900 and many after were first the responsibility of the local agent. Prominent examples include liquor licensing in 1918, auto licensing in the 1920's, administration of relief payments in the 1930's and hospital insurance in 1949.

And the agents were uniquely placed to perform this function. They were swift, efficient and, most important, administratively neutral. It required little internal discussion to implement a program because the agents had no middle management, no bureaucracy to filter instructions. Their organizational structure was totally flat. They reported directly to the Deputy Minister, often the Minister in controversial matters, so new initiatives could begin with a minimum of fuss. It was non-stop from the government to the agents to the people; in most cases a matter of receiving legislative approval

and simply forwarding the Act to the agents. This pattern was true whether or not the program administratively belonged to the Department of Finance as the agents took instructions from all quarters of government.

It was also practical to use the agents. They operated with no set procedures and no manual. They learned by doing, by trial and error. Further, Victoria did not have to develop a district apparatus to discharge its new design. If things went wrong, nothing was lost--no new investment in staff, buildings or fixtures was made. It helped that the preponderance of their duties were easily mastered clerical functions but their phenomenal diversity gives witness to government's confidence in their ability to get the job done. Economy, according to Peter Ramsay, was the rationale for the agents.¹⁰

Neutrality, however, was their most important asset. Although community allegiances occasionally got in the way, for instance Sydney Almond's problem with social welfare payments, the Government Agents could distance themselves from program value judgements. For example, an agent did not question the relative merits of selling hunting licences vis-à-vis environmental destruction, he just got the job done. How did they do this? They matched Fesler's description of "administrative generalist[s], [men] liberally educated, selected for intelligence and character...[and because] there was nothing esoteric about the knowledge required for discharge of [their] functions; experience in performing them was the teacher."¹¹ Although he reserved final judgement, Hodgett's concluding comment on the influence of generalists on government in pre-Confederation Canada sums it up nicely:

it would appear that the experience of the pre-Confederation bureaucracy fortifies the view long popular in Britain that the... permanent head with non-specialized training is much more likely than the specialist to

be conscious of those outside considerations which must be weighed by the politically responsible Minister...considerations which the expert is most likely to regard as extraneous.¹²

The agents were always policy advocates. The earliest example is the work of the magistrates to ensure the responsiveness of the quasi-political institutions, the local mining boards, to the wishes of the government. McMynn's efforts as a public health inspector, Bowron's activity as a mining promoter and Watt's attempts to pacify unemployed worker committees during the 1930's are other excellent illustrations of the agent going beyond the simple application of policy. The agents were also policy champions every time they defended Victoria's rigorous accounting and fiscal policy with other district government personnel. The agents could be community advocates but primarily they were a conduit for registering government's sentiments in the district.

The agents' policy advocacy role worked well for many reasons. First, because no middle managers screened instructions to the district or observations back from the district, the agents had no sense of loyalty to a particular department but felt responsible to all of government. Hence, they were able to write to Ministers, Deputy Ministers, anyone, and secure advice or disagree when they felt something amiss. With legislation as their only guide, this free flow of information was mandatory.

Second, their general role as Government Agent as distinct, for example, from gold commissioner or land commissioner, was never defined in statute so it gave them freedom few others enjoyed. They complained often about the absence of legal direction but, because of it, they were not restricted to a defined perspective. The lack of legislation governing their responsibilities left

much policy advocacy to the personality and persuasive powers of the agents.

Third, they were generalists who recognized their primary duty was to the Minister. As implied earlier, their minds were not crowded with technical data or bias. In applying provincial programs, the agents brought to their assignments a deeper, more political understanding of the character of the district than the specialist. The agents learned early, as C.H. Sisson found in his study of British administration, "to extract from the specialist flowers around them the honey their Minister needs, explaining as they do so that the Minister does not live on honey."¹³

Fourth, they had information the Minister needed to do his job. Their monthly and ad hoc reports informed Victoria about what was going on in the districts and this activity, more than any, demonstrated their usefulness to the bureaucracy and politician alike. Agents like Bowron relished the opportunity to inform Victoria--it gave occasion to promote his district--but a few had discomfort with the task, especially when requested to make them more informative to the politician. Being Victoria's "eyes and ears" was a sensitive pursuit that took a special kind of agent, one that was increasingly rare by the 1950's.

It is important to underscore that being knowledgeable about their community paid dividends. The more informed the agents were about their districts, the more likely Victoria was to listen to their observations. Consequently, the politician and agent built a liaison based on the sharing of information. According to Peter Ramsay, this understanding and rapport produced "a climate and standard of representation which benefited both, and the public as well."¹⁴

The British Columbia agents were successful policy proponents. Their ability in this regard came from intimate knowledge of their districts and the capacity to relay that information freely and quickly to Victoria. Victoria, on the other hand, used the data for policy development or to tailor existing practices. The system worked, for the most part, because each participant had the insight required to do his job. The agents, like their Indian counterparts, were an information-based organization.¹⁵

The third prefectural function of the agents, representing provincial interests at the local level, is difficult to differentiate from their two other primary duties. As Khera concluded in his study of the Indian collector, "the total administration is in fact one organic whole."¹⁶ The agents personified the state in everything they did. They symbolized its power especially as magistrates but it was equally apparent when they permitted the extraction of water from a stream, issued a motor vehicle licence, dispensed liquor or wrote out a relief cheque. In short, the certainty of their presence provided continuity to district activities. A wise administration, according to Lord Lugard, is characterized by two elements: decentralization and continuity.¹⁷ The Government Agents, in bringing the programs and wishes of Victoria to the main streets of rural, isolated British Columbia accomplished both.

The agents embodied the provincial government in two other ways. Often they were called upon to represent Victoria on boards of directors and other local committees. McMynn's work on the local Board of Health is a good example. So too is the energy that agents exhibited as directors of territorial hospitals. In these instances, they were clearly Victoria's designate,

in most cases appointed by Order-in-Council. The agents acted as informed citizens but their primary duty was to ensure that the provincial interest was paramount. It was a role some disliked but others, more comfortable with its quasi-political nature, sorely missed it when it was eliminated by the W.A.C. Bennett government.

Finally, the agents represented Victoria at formal celebrations, sod-turnings and the like but the function declined over time.¹⁸ Instead, the agents brought such "opportunities to the attention of the M.L.A. to put his 'best foot forward'," Ken Weir remarked.¹⁹ The agents knew their role well. If they could not represent Victoria, they made sure someone else did.

The role of the Government Agents changed yet remained constant. It is axiomatic that as government pursued different goals or differentiated its activities that the role of the agents altered. The agents, as Neil Swainson suggests in an article about the British Columbia public service, were not immune to their environment.²⁰ However, as the foregoing has demonstrated, the agents did not change in one critical respect; they embodied the power of the state in the districts throughout their history and fulfilled Victoria's wish to control local events. The agents provided full measure to Governor Douglas' design of a hundred years earlier.

Representative democracy gradually modified the patriarchal and centralizing influence of the Government Agents. According to Brian Smith, "the development of representative and responsible government...heralded a significant reduction in the authority of field staff."²¹ In time, appeals to Victoria were channelled more through the office of the Member of the Legislative Assembly than through the agent. In short, the agent's power decreased as the views of the politician came to carry more weight.

R. Ross Napier's caustic comments about politicians and the agents supports this argument:

The Government Agent was recognized as the official representative of the Government in his district, and all official matters passed through his hands...This was not permitted to continue, however, as the agency districts conformed more to the physical needs of the country than to political divisions. Local politicians, for reason readily surmised, demanded that allocations for expenditure...be made by electoral districts, a vicious system which was brought into being and still persists.²²

The influence of the politician as significant as it was, however, was not the factor that muted the agents' effectiveness the most; in fact the politician, overall, was a positive rather than a negative influence on the agents. A shift in the nature of the individual agent, which culminated in the passage of the Public Service Act of 1945, had the most dramatic impact on the agents.

"The moral influence of this Government depends more upon the men than measures," Sir Arthur Kenney wrote about his experiences as Governor of Sierra Leone.²³ Governor Douglas found this out the hard way with the dismal exhibition of his first appointments. His subsequent selections were infinitely better, as were their successors. An agent's influence, and by extension Victoria's leverage in the district, depended upon "legal and constitutional status but also from the personality of the individual holding office."²⁴ "They were men of moral stature. They were out in the open," Ron Burns said.²⁵ The combination of character, experience, and passionate regard for the welfare of his district and the moral authority resulting from these attributes made the difference in the performance of an agent. Character came from within the individual agent and was recognized

in the quality of his decision-making and effort. And it was easy to ascertain if agents had the right stuff during their lengthy apprenticeship. Good agents could balance their responsibility to Victoria and their district without alienating either. "Any problems were caused by the personality of the agent," is the way George Brodie assessed it.²⁶ Honesty, tact, diplomacy, common sense, ingenuity and good humour were attributes of able Government Agents. Gentle disregard for rules and procedures was also a sought-after characteristic. Knowledge of their district and intense interest in its well-being, on the other hand, came from living there, from being part of the community.

After the trauma of the gold discoveries when trustworthy men were few and moved repeatedly to deal with potential uprisings or fears of American intrusions, the typical agent was a local person known to the community. Indeed, the agent was picked because of past and continuing experience in the business and commercial life of the community. John Bowron lived and worked in the Cariboo and was a driving force in community affairs years before he became an agent. George Tunstall, like his friend Bowron, also dabbled in mining before joining the provincial government. Caspair Phair was a school teacher and a founding member of the community of Lillooet two years before he became agent. William McMynn was a rancher in the Boundary/Similkameen country long before he was asked to be a police constable. Sydney Almond took up a pre-emption in the Kettle River Valley before he joined the civil service and so on. It is obvious these individuals had local knowledge, local recognition. It was an invaluable tool to them and to Victoria when they assumed the mantle of Government Agent.

Twentieth century agents were no less knowledgeable about their respective communities. Dewdney lived in the Okanagan before he took a posting at Grand Forks in 1901. Jessie Foster resided in the Cariboo all her life. Alexander B. Gray, New Westminster Agent, was born and raised in the city and worked all his life at the New Westminster office. John Cartmel spent ten years as a placer miner before entering government service at Atlin. "The secret of the service was their knowledge," Blake said as he reflected upon the mentoring he received by Kamloops Agent, David G. Dalgleish, who "knew every piece of property intimately."²⁷

Moreover, a number of agents were known provincially, were political in their own right, or came from 'well-connected' families. The magistrates, the most notable example, represented their districts in the first Legislative Council of the colony of British Columbia. Arthur Vowell was M.P.P. for Kootenay. W.R. Dewdney's uncle, of course was the prominent Edgar Dewdney. "Sandy" Gray's brother, Arthur Wells Gray, was Minister of Lands and Municipal Affairs in the Pattullo government and a former mayor of New Westminster. Jessie Foster came from one of the most influential families in the Cariboo and her grandfather was a respected local politician. Norman Watt served as private secretary to T.D. Pattullo. Stylee Brown Hamilton was son-in-law to Premier Brewster. Revelstoke Agent Maxwell, who tutored Ken McRae in his early years, was a defeated Liberal candidate and "a man of considerable influence and power in the community."²⁸ It did not go unnoticed, either, that a number of the senior Victoria bureaucrats and all twentieth century Deputy Ministers of the Finance Department until 1957 got their start in a Government Agent's office.²⁹ Not all agents were linked to British

Columbia's establishment, of course, but enough were to set the tone and to provide an example.

Those agents who did not have the benefit of being "men of prestige and status in their own right," as McRae described them, attained success by remaining years in one district.³⁰ They acquired knowledge and community respect by hard work. This tenure was vital as district administration implies a kind of contract between agent and community and an agent who moved too often lost both initiative and confidence. Similarly, the public also lost enthusiasm and looked for assistance elsewhere. "The community dictates the attitude of the office...if the community supported you, you could get away with anything," Ken Weir noted.³¹ Continuity of placement compensated for the knowledge that came from being a resident. As Lord Lugard found out in tropical Africa, moving district officers was unproductive:

But as a District Officer gains seniority, and with it enlarged powers, it becomes increasingly important that he should remain in the district or province where he has acquired local knowledge and influence...It is, moreover, disheartening to the zealous District Officer to have to begin all over again in a new sphere. There are some who like change. They are not the best.³²

Civil service reforms changed everything. The 1917 legislative refinements contributed in a broad sense to providing a foundation for the tremendous changes occurring after World War II but as far as the agents were concerned, they were more neglected than observed. The 1945 Civil Service Act, however, was a turning point as it demonstrated the government's resolve to change its personnel practices. The classification and promotion of public servants henceforth could only be on the basis of standardized procedures and merit. No longer could the whims of Minister, M.L.A., or political official govern

the hiring of regular departmental personnel. No longer could Victoria's subjective decisions dictate salaries, vacation entitlements and benefits. No longer could the capital arbitrarily move an individual from one location to another while ignoring the capabilities of other qualified candidates. It took a while for these dramatic developments to take hold, but after 1945, the public service was clearly treated differently.

The Government Agents were affected by these developments in obvious and in less noticeable ways. Most important, technical skills rather than local prestige or knowledge became the critical factor in the selection of agents. Successful agents had extensive knowledge of the workings of an agent's office not the peculiarities of a district. "Personnel...unwilling to prepare...by on-the-job effort [that] wish to remain in one locality should not enter the Agency service as a career," Peter Ramsay wrote years later.³³ This dramatic shift in recruitment criteria broke down the bond between the agent and the community. The new agent was no longer someone who knew the issues and problems of a district or had a personal stake in its future. As Blake said, "after the war the agent became much more mobile...the community did not trust him as much...[they] ...were suspicious of his motives."³⁴ The district, obviously, was not ready to share information with this new kind of agent. He was an outsider, an unknown.

The agents' reasoned opinion of local issues, no longer refined by years of intimate knowledge, was less reliable. It took years of residence in a district before an agent acquired the credibility a 'local' agent brought naturally into the post. Not only did Ministers distrust the agent's wisdom, the local politician also questioned his judgement. The M.L.A. turned to local party officials or his own constituency office for advice

on district matters.³⁵ Except for the most seasoned agent who still conferred regularly with the M.L.A., this lack of trust, in most agents, produced discomfort with political contact.³⁶ The substitution of expertise for local knowledge and recognition in the selection of agents broke down the implicit three-way contract between agent, district and Victoria that existed for nearly a century.

From the beginning when Governor Douglas summoned the magistrates to sit in the Legislative Council to Premier John Hart's request that the agents convene in Victoria in 1945 in order that they might work "in closer cooperation with government policy," the agents were linked to the political apparatus.³⁷ Indeed, one of the agents' primary roles was to sensitize Victoria to the feelings and needs of their districts. In reflecting upon his years in the Vancouver Government Agent's office before World War II, Ken Weir discovered this first hand. The Government Agent's "occupation was politics, the Deputy Government Agent ran the office," he said.³⁸ Although somewhat in contradiction, Arthur G. Richardson, who joined the public service in 1946 as the government's third personnel officer, also acknowledged the agents' primary political function. "My impression was they were gaining prestige in the community [after 1945]. They were not seen to be pseudo-politicians as they were in the 1930's and the 1940's," he noted.³⁹ The agents were a part of the feedback loop between the administrative or executive arm of government and the people and their elected representatives. It was a role few of them understood; indeed, they rejected it when it was boldly requested of them by J.D. MacLean, Minister of Finance, in 1925, but it was to their advantage, something that set them apart from other public servants. "In field administration the prefectural system has been saved by

its political rather than administrative advantages," Brian Smith concluded.⁴⁰ In swapping local knowledge and prestige for technical competence the agents lost their edge.

A second development, that had been around but latent since the 1920's, grew in response to the agents' shifted allegiance. The agent's community affiliation was displaced by devotion to the agency service as a whole especially because their transfer and promotion opportunities after 1945 became the responsibility of the bureaucracy, not Ministers. As in the U.S. Forest Service, "promotion and transfer...far more than methods of staffing...foster in each officer identification with the agency--with its survival and welfare with its goals, with its procedures, with its members."⁴¹ Similarly, the need to bring uniformity to operations and thereby facilitate the transfer of personnel was recognized when agents received their first manual in 1949.⁴²

The 1945 legislation, moreover, brought homogeneity to the public service. Everyone received the same security. Most technical people had had some protection from the vagaries of politics and Ministers since 1917 but due to the nature of the agents' role they had been exempt. Now they, too, were civil servants; their salary, vacations, even their career path, had predictability. The generalist agents became specialist technicians.

Finally, the legislation put distance between the agents and Ministers, particularly the Minister of Finance. After 1945, all personnel matters were handled by the Civil Service Commission or the department personnel officer and the Minister lost familiarity with the agents. No longer did he decide their placement, their salary, their future. The internal operations of the branch were also removed further from the Minister

with the re-introduction of the Inspector of Government Agencies. Although the Inspector had little power, his position reduced the agents' ability to reach into the corridors of power. In short, the Civil Service Act of 1945 de-personalized the Government Agents' relationship with government. It is no surprise their influence deteriorated as well.

All of the post-1945 developments threatened the continuity of the agents' administrative culture; together, they critically weakened it. The new recruitment and training process for future agents and the modern bureaucratic structures endangered mores established through decades of practice. More important, these alterations eroded the agents' power base in the district and in Victoria. As a consequence, they lost essential⁴³ political support and without this endorsement were forgotten. The W.A.C. Bennett government's ambivalence toward the agents is ample evidence that the political sanction they enjoyed for a hundred years could not be taken for granted. Ken Weir, almost twenty-five years later, recalled how the image of the Government Agents had depended upon "the respect for the service as portrayed by the government [and] the calibre, experience, wisdom, and confidence of the agents themselves."⁴⁴

Civil service reform, then, irrevocably altered the character of the individual Government Agent. After 1945, he became a career public servant whose success was measured more by responsiveness to the organization than by knowledge of his district or attentiveness to his Minister. The agent became inward looking, unsure of himself, one of many in the district. No longer was his work "the path defined by an abstract call to a clearly-defined duty, but rather [it became] one of conciliation and manoeuvre."⁴⁵ Instead of being preoccupied with the

needs of his district and Minister, the agent became distracted with his position in the bureaucracy, the number of his staff, the importance of his functions and so on. The agent had been through similar times, especially when the technical specialist appeared in the districts and threatened the myth of his omnicompetence, but he could always fall back on his special relationship with the Minister, with the government and with his district. And it was this unique attachment, in the final analysis, that made the agent different.

By 1957, the agents lacked self-confidence and were unsure of their future. Their insecurity got worse, in fact much worse, before initiatives were undertaken to restore them to former prominence. Worse yet, they lost that year their link to past greatness, through the retirement of J.V. Fisher as Deputy Minister of Finance, who had appreciated their administrative heritage and potential. On the surface, their role had not changed much. They still embodied the authority and presence of the provincial government in the districts, particularly in maintaining land records and collecting revenue, and in their capacity as district administrative handymen. The controlling role of the agents in advocating efficiency in government operations continued and government still used the agents as an example to the rest of the bureaucracy. Technical specialists undermined their previous responsibilities in agriculture, public health, social welfare, and public works but it was nothing new. They had been working alongside specialists since before the turn of the century. They also were familiar with the role of local coordinator of government services. Government had called upon the agents earlier in times of rapid economic and social development to attempt to balance the often conflicting priorities of government departments. The central question that remained,

however, was whether these traditional core functions, with their considerable emphasis on the knowledge and character of the individual agent and his ability to relate openly and freely with Victoria, were compatible with the new, careerist Government Agent.

The Government Agent was the pivotal figure in district administration. He endured for many reasons: efficiency, economy, control and probably just simple convenience. He also persevered because he was, as Khera found with the Indian Collectors, "the principal point[s] of contact between the citizen and the processes of government and [was]...truly the cutting edge of the tool of public administration."⁴⁶ In simple terms, the agents were an instrument for bringing the state and British Columbians together. By 1957, almost a century had passed since Governor Douglas appointed the first public officials on the mainland. Since then, the agents built an enviable record of bringing consensus and harmony to district administration in British Columbia. They also produced exceptional public servants without equivalent in the history of the province. These two attributes, more than anything else, are the legacy they leave behind.

EPILOGUE

The Honourable Elwood Veitch, Provincial Secretary and Minister of Government Services responsible for Government Agents, announced on June 22, 1987 that it was going to be easier for British Columbians to access government services through their local agent. The Minister, who took over responsibility for the agents as the result of government reorganization that focused on regional decentralization, stated that the "Government Agents are a unique, locally based contact point between government and the public ...[and]..are now being given the mandate and the resources to make the most of this potential." The announcement confirmed in the minds of agents what they had known for decades--that their offices provide an avenue for the government and the people to get to know one another.

The Press Release noted new services to be provided, an upgrading of offices, the exploration of the feasibility of consolidating other ministry offices with Government Agents and an update of information on government programs so the agents could "respond quickly and accurately to public enquiries." Further, the agents' telephone numbers would be prominently displayed in local directories as "the Number One government information source" and they would be "the key contacts for public submissions to Cabinet and Legislative Committees." Veitch implied that government had ignored the capabilities of the agents for too long.

The Press Release illustrates that as far as the agents were concerned, things change yet remain the same. The transfer of responsibility for the agents to the Provincial Secretary from the Finance Ministry completed a circle begun shortly after Confederation when they were first included in the Provincial Secretary's portfolio.

Norman Watt would have found comfort in the Minister's exhortation to British Columbians "to visit and get to know their Government Agent." In fact, the agents who read the Press Release could be forgiven for being cynical as they had witnessed similar developments at least once in the 1960's and twice in the 1970's.

Those decades produced only stagnation and disappointment for the Government Agents. There were thirty-four agents and ten sub-agents in 1958 (including Ganges/Gulf Islands) and the same number in 1972. Norman Blake opened the only new office during this period in Kitimat in 1958. The total number of agent staff in 1958 was 345 and 304 in 1972 (both figures include Assessors) and they continued to represent, by far, the largest division of the Department of Finance. Government's total establishment, on the other hand, mushroomed. In 1958 the public service numbered 9,263. In 1972, there were 30,621 on the payroll, an increase of 230 per cent.¹ Decreases in Department of Finance staff, however, were a laudable achievement during the Bennett era and the Victoria hierarchy noted boastfully in their Estimates Briefing Books that the agents managed to do the same, if not more, with less.² Although somewhat apologetically, the agents resisted attempts to cut back their numbers and at least once advised the Deputy Minister that "the influx of new citizens to British Columbia" made it "doubly difficult to hold staff requirements down--much less reduce them."³ Similarly, the government attempted to gain efficiencies in 1961 by using the agents as coordinators "of all Government services in the district offices" but it fell short of its objective.⁴ Finally, as in the 1940's, there was only one female agent in 1957 and by 1972 there was still only one. The masculine nature of the agents, however, was changing as a number of women were Deputy Government

Agents by 1957. Although their aggregate never expanded, it did not decrease by 1972. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," was Peter Ramsay's assessment of government's approach with the agents during this period.⁵

Ramsay, who was both Personnel Officer for the Department of Finance and Inspector of Government Agencies by 1963, attempted a number of innovations to the organization and management of the agents. Building on his experience in the Civil Service Commission, he introduced modifications to the rating system used to evaluate the duties of an agent as the department was having difficulty recruiting and retaining potential agents because their salaries compared unfavourably with those in other government departments. Ken Weir sadly acknowledged that at the time "a career was out of the question for most people...it was more advantageous to stay and remain in a community."⁶ Ramsay also tried to introduce regionalization in 1968--a pattern that was being adopted by a number of government departments. "This is not a proposal to close or eliminate existing offices," he wrote, "but is a recognition of a growing trend which may become irresistible in the future."⁷ Seven years passed before his idea came to fruition. Ramsay, like his distant predecessor Goepel, reintroduced annual inspections which were used as a combination performance/management review as well as the basis of his annual report for the Minister. These visits, of course, were in addition to yearly audits by the Comptroller's Office. Finally, in 1965 Ramsay did away with the Agency Manual that his immediate predecessor, Cecil Davies, worked so hard to complete sixteen years earlier. "It was an impossible task [to keep up-to-date]...so why do it?" he noted later.⁸ In its place, he substituted general "Instructions for Government Agents," the aim of

which was "to provide information on basic operations and guidelines for the conduct of business."⁹

Two guidelines from these "Instructions" are of interest. First, the agents were expected to "be a service organization for the Provincial Government as a whole, and to act as representatives of all Departments whenever and wherever separate departmental establishments are not provided," and, secondly, to "keep the Deputy Minister of Finance informed of local developments which have more than local significance, and to report on any matter or happening which may reflect adversely on the Provincial Administration."¹⁰ The agents gave little attention to these directives since they were given no new resources to accomplish this mandate and since they realized that, the "Instructions" which purported to emanate from the Minister's Office, were simply bureaucratic guidelines. As Ramsay noted, "this unofficial and informal delegation takes place without any written authority or formal appointment [from government]."¹¹ Because the "Instructions" had no political support, few agents responded and the rest of bureaucracy ignored them.

The recruiting and training of agents carried on much as before. Positions were regularly advertised but the competitive process was still clothed in secrecy. If a position became vacant, the department Personnel Officer was informed, a requisition was completed and forwarded to the Deputy Minister and Minister for approval and then given to the Civil Service Commission for posting. Individuals were rarely, if ever, called in for an interview--it was deemed too costly. Ramsay and the Deputy Minister conferred to choose the successful candidate. Transfers occurred whenever possible, especially out of the north, as three or four years in remote areas was considered enough for any individual.

Training was, as it had been since colonial times, on-the-job. "No one teaches you how, hell, you're the Government Agent, you should know," Blake said.¹²

Moreover, less training was required as agents lost some of their cherished functions. The magistrate function "just sort of trickled away," according to McRae.¹³ Around 1955 the Bennett government started to appoint local citizens--well-known members of the community--to perform this duty. Many agents were removed from the boards of directors of local hospitals. The transfer of janitorial and maintenance staff to the Department of Public Works also hurt. Although no longer formally considered the 'boss' of the local government building, many of them acted as representatives of the Department supervising the local staff. What really irked them about this change was that they continued to have the responsibility but not the credit, and authority, for the role.

The loss of the payment function when a central computerized accounting and pay system was introduced in Victoria really hurt. "Until W.A.C. the government was Victorian in the extreme," Charlie Ferber noted.¹⁴ The Coalition government did not care "one hoot about the administration..., "everything was hand signed...hand done and the agents paid almost everything," he further noted. Cash control and efficiency, however, were not the only reasons for changes. The government needed funds; the agents took in considerable sums and the Bennett government had better uses for this money than having it languish in local bank accounts. It had been a problem for almost a century; but now technology could deal with it. At first the agents were instructed to make weekly returns and only emergency payments--an edict they were familiar with--but once the competence of Victoria's computers increased they had to relinquish

control over the district purse strings.¹⁵ "The change would not have proceeded if the technology had not been there," Ferber observed.¹⁶ By 1960 it was complete and the agents lost the "rationale for locating...within the Department of Finance," as Peter Ramsay lamented thirteen years later.¹⁷ Changing technology was a significant factor in the evolving role of the agents.

By 1972, most agents were depressed and frustrated. Most performed major functions for other departments, more so than they did for their own, and they continued to operate under unofficial directives in areas of administration increasingly sensitive to interdepartmental differences. Other local officials, such as the District Forester and Highways Engineer, were becoming stronger and more independent and accorded more pay and status; it was also getting harder to recruit and retain junior staff. Moreover, W.A.C. Bennett's only notice of their job, seemed inappropriate to the agents. The Premier assumed a personal interest in the replacement of Kelowna Agent E.R. Oatman, "a good friend of the family," in 1963.¹⁸ Although the department "went through the motions," according to Ramsay, most agents felt the appointment of R.E. Manson, Golden Agent, was a step backwards to the days of political interference.¹⁹ Few agents, if any, recognized in this appointment its positive side that the Premier considered the position important enough to warrant his personal attention. In brief, the consequential changes the agents witnessed since 1958 were all negative resulting in a weakened office.

The election of the New Democratic Party on August 30, 1972, altered everything, at least in the beginning. For the first time in decades agents gained more staff: 51 in 1973-74, 21 in 1974-75 and 106 in 1975-76.²⁰ They obtained approval for ten new offices²¹ and they

acquired new functions, such as: issuing automobile insurance for the new Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, greater responsibility for the financial management of Fish and Wildlife licences, distribution of Western Canada and Olympic Lottery tickets, collection of British Columbia Medical Plan premiums, the Rentalsman function and, commencing in July 1974, the issuance of welfare cheques to individuals residing in municipalities, a responsibility previously of local government. The latter duty, in particular, was most gratifying as they had issued "Unemployment Relief" for almost two decades until they were relieved in the early 1950's by the Health and Welfare Department. But the attention the new government gave them made the difference. For the first time since 1945 they felt special.

The agents enjoyed having the Premier as Minister and the benefits that came with having him as boss. He brought them together for conferences, the first one in 1973, and he listened to them. At the 1974 conference, for instance, Barrett spent two hours discussing their jobs and local issues. His presence provided a feeling of job security and status, an experience that some of them had rarely, if ever, felt previously. "I don't think there's any doubt at all that, even today, many of the agents who are still there look with a great deal of kindness on what Barrett did for them," said Peter Ramsay.²² As Gerry Bryson declared in his opening remarks for the 1973 two-day meeting, "the government has endorsed the system and expressed confidence in its administration. This must be an encouragement to everyone in the room, and to all employed in the agency system."²³ Ken McRae was the only one in their number who had been at the last conference in 1945.

The agents who gathered in Victoria on November 8 and 9, 1973 were seasoned public servants like their 1945 counterparts. Their average age was over forty-eight and each had, on average, almost twenty-four years of experience in the public service. This knowledge was deemed invaluable. "When Barrett became the Premier," Ramsay remembered, "he felt here is a handmade device throughout B.C. of people who are knowledgeable in their area, who can keep us informed, tell us where we're going off the trail and we can also use them as a sounding board for proposed legislation and all the rest of it."²⁴

The Barrett government felt that agents had "over the counter knowledge." At their second conference, held October 23-25, 1974, the Premier addressed the agents and charged them with the responsibility of becoming "authorities on Government in their areas."²⁵ He advised them to become acquainted with all Acts and Regulations, and, to help them, he provided Hansard and trips to Victoria to familiarize them with the debates and procedures of the Legislature. A month later the agents were told, at the request of the Minister's office, to submit a monthly report on provincial programs and community and agency matters that "were deemed of value to the Minister's Office in assessing local reaction to government programs."²⁶ Few agents understood the significance of this assignment but once more, as J.D. MacLean requested in 1925 and as recently as the ignored 1965 "Instructions," they were instructed to be the "eyes and ears" of Victoria. Barrett provided the political support for the agents to revert to a role only a handful of them could recall.

The 1974 conference was critical in another respect. Regionalization was given the go-ahead.²⁷ Linked to this initiative was the provision of relief

staff, located in regional centres, for peak demand periods or holiday replacements and the establishment of trainee positions for future agents. Seven offices were named to handle these responsibilities.²⁸ Although given only provisional approval, these concepts were revolutionary. The unparalleled recognition of the importance of training astonished the 'old timers'.

The introduction of collective bargaining was a factor in these dramatic changes. In the inactive Bennett era, gathering the agents for conferences was not considered critical, according to Ramsay. However, "when Dave Barrett came in and we got into management versus union, we got into constant change and the business of keeping up with changes made it absolutely incumbent on us to bring the agents in... ." ²⁹ Collective bargaining also brought another unforeseen change when Ramsay became the first Director of Government Agents. Ramsay felt the designation was essential for the "separation of management from the unionized workers."³⁰ Whatever the motives, the conferences, new offices, new functions and especially the administration's interest in what the agents had to say was exhilarating. It felt good to be a Government Agent.

It did not last. On April 1, 1975, the Court Registry functions that had been with the agents for almost a century passed to the Department of the Attorney General.³¹ The loss was mourned by many, especially the long service agents. The court function was special. It gave the agents "majesty" in the community, Ken McRae noted.³² All the recent new duties or any number of the old ones could never be its equivalent. The court duties were "one of our greatest interests, it gave you a knowledge of everything that was going on in the community; kept you involved with the professional people in the community; lawyers and doctors, we knew them all and

missed that contact," a disgruntled Ken Weir noted later.³³ For the senior agents, this loss meant they were no longer unique. Adding insult to injury, all positions under the new administration were advertised as promotional opportunities and over two dozen agency employees were selected. Ramsay had an inkling it was coming and had, in fact, fought it four years earlier, but the die was set. "The legal profession as a whole didn't want to have non-legal people, or non-Attorney General people administering the registries," Ramsay said.³⁴

And this was not the end of it. With the proclamation of the Assessment Authority of British Columbia Act on July 7, 1974, the responsibility for administering the assessment districts passed to the Authority. This meant that eighteen provincial assessors and support staff transferred to the Authority. Staffing restraints instituted in 1975 further reduced their number by fifteen per cent to 298. This, in turn, restricted regionalization which was only partially implemented. Nonetheless, a third and final conference under the N.D.P. government was held in October 1975, and the agents and their spouses were honoured at a reception by Lieutenant-Governor W.S. Owen and Mrs. Owen at Government House.

The new administration of Bill Bennett, son of W.A.C. Bennett, who was elected in December 1975, continued holding annual conferences for a while. Bennett and his Finance Minister, Evan Wolfe, both attended the conference in September 1976, the first ever sponsored by a Social Credit government. The purpose of this conference, the Minister stated, was to discuss the government's intention of restoring the agent to his role "until recent years" as the government's "man in the town."³⁵ Prior to the gathering, the agents were requested by the Premier and the Minister to prepare a

confidential report on their activities and these were discussed at length. This activity, in turn, precipitated a letter from the Deputy Minister of Finance to his colleagues requesting: an evaluation of the services currently received from the agents and a consideration of how they might be of service in the future.³⁶ It was hard to believe but, once again, the agents were looking for work, for recognition, for a lasting role.

The letter produced little. Most Deputies reported favourably about the services the agents were currently providing but had few suggestions for new work. A few fresh ideas emerged: notably, the agents began assisting in the registering and regulating of mobile homes under the Mobile Home Act, 1978, became strike vote observers for the Labour Relations Board, and distributed British Columbia Resources Investment Corporation (B.C.R.I.C.) share certificates when they were issued in 1979, but such tasks were of little consequence. Ramsay was not surprised. The words were reassuring but "unless all Departments are informed of it and the necessary authority is vested in the agents to make the role possible," nothing would happen.³⁷ Political muscle, once again, was missing.

In the 1980's more was lost than gained. The land commissioner function, a responsibility since before Confederation, was transferred to the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing and their Official Administrator duties were relinquished to the Public Trustee and later privatized. Their appointment as Marriage Commissioners was also turned over to the private sector as was their work for the Motor Vehicle Branch. Functions for their own Ministry were also disappearing; because the Comptroller-General increasingly made payments from Victoria, the number of cheques issued by agents declined dramatically.³⁸ The latter practice was so devastating

that Peter Ramsay, in his final annual report to the Minister, took the unprecedented step of observing that "the Finance Ministry should ensure the proper use of the service within its own competence; otherwise it [the agents] cannot retain its credibility or demonstrate its value and utility to other Ministries."³⁹ Nothing changed. The agents were still having to prove their worth to government and, worst of all, to their own department colleagues.

The government continued to express confidence in the agents but many were sceptical even of the Minister's announcement of plans to open ten new offices and his expression of "faith in the Government Agents" at their conference in 1979.⁴⁰ Only a shadow of their former service remained and they knew it. New terms, such as 'one-stop service centres', introduced in 1980 to encompass the spectrum of provincial programs delivered by the agents, also failed to impress them. And the Bennett government's restraint program in 1983 exacerbated things. More staff were cut, the regional offices that Ramsay fought so hard to develop were reduced, and the remaining four Regional Managers who supervised agents in their regions were moved to Victoria. Not until 1984 did the agents hear the familiar sound of government's renewed interest in their work.

A new Deputy Minister of Finance, David L. Emerson, who like his earlier predecessors believed in the agents' administrative and service traditions, initiated a series of initiatives to revitalize the agents. William [Bill] Mitchell, a former Treasury Board Staff Director, was chosen to be the new Director following the retirement of George Brodie in 1984.⁴¹ New program delivery standards and training programs and a search for new 'business' was undertaken. The name of the branch, which for years was the Government Agencies Branch, was changed back to the

Government Agents Branch to reaffirm the position of the agent. Some offices were given a face lift and new 'uniforms' were provided for staff. Computerization enhanced services. A new mandate stated that, in addition to their traditional roles of program delivery, the agents were responsible for providing information and promoting all government programs. Considerable attention was also given to administrative issues such as the re-issue of another manual and the development of standards-based 'protocol agreements' with client ministries. Finally, with the reorganization of government, after the election of the Vander Zalm government in 1986, further emphasis was placed on the 'one-stop shopping centre' concept introduced years earlier. New re-vamped offices, called 'Access Centres', were opened in such communities as Fort St. John, Nanaimo and Terrace.

More functions were added, although not uniformly across all agent locations. Most new duties were informational services but a number were surprising; for instance, court services became a job again in a few locations and agents became local coordinators for the direct recruitment of government personnel as they had been over two decades earlier. Veitch's statement that the agents would be given the resources to make the most of their potential appeared to have substance. Many agents again tried to look at their job afresh.

By 1987, it was thirty years since J.V. Fisher retired. The agents were located in sixty-one communities across the province and, although their responsibilities had steadily declined, there always was enough to do. The agents still performed numerous revenue and tax-related duties for the Finance Ministry and were still Gold Commissioners or Sub-Recorders, District Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages and

Registrars of Voters. They still controlled the issue of fishing and hunting licences and tags directly or through private sales outlets, fulfilled the role of Marriage Commissioner as required and provided program information tasks as varied as selling government publications and dog licences. They also continued to provide numerous services to government such as processing vouchers, issuing cheques locally and overseeing the operation of government buildings where required. Their statutory appointments remained significant and in remote communities many and varied. Although no longer the omniscient civil servants of decades past, the agents still survived, quite actively in most locations.

The course of history produced overwork, frustration, disappointment punctuated with brief periods of exhilaration and recognition for the Government Agents. One significant reason for this has been the agents' inability to take control of their future. Unlike other organizations, the agents have been unprepared, even surprised, when government asked them to do something different or removed a function. The reasons for this are many: the lack of a defined function, the absence of middle management, the responsibility for services but the accountability for none, the layman nature of their duties, the capriciousness of their clients, the dispersed location of their offices. To demarcate a future, however, understanding the past is crucial. The thirty years from 1957 to 1987 demonstrate that the agents could learn more from the previous one hundred.

Four times Victoria petitioned the agents to take full advantage of their unique place in district administration. In 1965 with Ramsay's "Instructions", in 1974 with Premier Dave Barrett's call to become 'authorities on Government in their areas', in 1976 with Evan Wolfe's desire to restore them as the government's "man in the

town", and finally, in 1987 with Elwood Veitch's exhortation that they realize their potential as the "locally-based contact point between government and the public," Victoria requested the agents perform the function that was so obvious, so natural--to be its representative, its "eyes and ears." Previous agents rendered this service in countless ways and yet when invited more formally to discharge the duty they hesitated just like their predecessors did in 1925. Most likely, it made them nervous because it was too political, too authoritarian. Whatever the reason, the agents lacked the insight that this was what their job was really all about. For almost a hundred years the substance of the Government Agents was that they had firsthand contact with the people, whose interests they were commissioned to know. They embodied Victoria in their midst and they represented the people in their reports to Victoria. The agent was a political creature.

The agent was not political in the sense that the post-revolutionary prefect was in France where his functions "extended beyond the appraisal of local opinion...to the...function of advising his political superiors on election prospects and even manipulating elections," but they were political in that they represented Victoria and embodied its power.⁴² They were also political because their business was district public affairs. They were skilled at it and, for the most part, their efforts were directed at accomplishing things for the good of their district and the good of their province. They were political because they were advisors on government, or as Ramsay noted, ombudsmen long before British Columbia acquired one.⁴³ They were also political in that they were motivated by a desire for good government, as Ken McRae declared, not to further their own status.⁴⁴ Finally, they were

political figures because government wanted them to be political figures--four times in the last thirty years alone.

Possibly the agents remain for this reason. Their presence in the district persists because politicians are convinced that British Columbians need someone close-at-hand to represent the state, to maintain the link between the governed and the government. "Decentralization is now as much dictated by the need to preserve democratic responsiveness of the administrative machinery as it is a natural outcome of the original geographic challenge," Hodgetts concluded in his study of public service of Canada.⁴⁵

The Government Agents conceivably remain because the state apparatus has become over-specialized. No one agency makes sense out of the multifarious programs of government. The one-stop or Access Centres represents a plausible solution to this problem.

Perhaps the agents endure because they are still the general interpreter of the government's will. They lost the majesty of the court registry function and their duties as land commissioner vanished but their claim to prominence lay in a closer acquaintance with the district. As more of the agents' tasks became that of public relations officers on behalf of government as a whole, their "services as an intermediary remain[ed] in demand."⁴⁶ Information services have replaced statutory functions in symbolizing the authority of the government in the non-metropolitan districts of the province.

A central problem remains--the agents' relationship with government. To solve this dilemma, government planners need to view decentralization and the future of the Government Agents from a much broader perspective. A bold and fresh approach is needed. Since government persists in requesting more of the agents and they remain reticent to enter these uncharted 'political' waters,

some combination of co-locating of Government Agent and M.L.A. offices holds promise. Together they could couple the administrative machinery and method on the one hand, with the political process on the other. It is something the agents and their respective M.L.A.s did informally and with success for decades. This informal relationship, particularly when it was extended to Ministers, made the agents so formidable and, in turn, helped bring good government to the districts as well as good administration. In this "interlinking and inter-penetration between the administrative apparatus...and the political process," Khera states, we have "the most challenging opportunities for experiment in district administration and towards building up sound administrative practice."⁴⁷ If government wishes to fulfil its true desires for the agents and, concurrently, if the agents wish to ensure their own future, it is essential that explorations such as this get under way.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. For a more recent English language study consult: W.J. Eccles, *The Government of New France*, The Canadian Historical Association Booklets, No. 18 (Ottawa: 1964).
2. Arthur Lower, *Colony to Nation*, (Toronto: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1946), p. 36.
3. Ibid.
4. Interview with Ms. Barbara Hibbon, Manager Branch Operations, Government Agents Branch, Victoria, B.C., August 26, 1991.
5. Job TRAC, Ministry of Labour and Consumer Services.
6. James W. Fesler, "Approaches to the Understanding of Decentralization," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (August 1965), p. 561.
7. John Merriman Gaus, *Reflections on Public Administration*, (Montgomery, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1958), p. 132.
8. J.E. Hodgetts, *Pioneer Public Service: an Administrative History of the United Canadas, 1841-1867*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955).
9. James W. Fesler, "French Field Administration: The Beginnings," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 5, (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1963), p. 78.
10. Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd.).
11. Gaus, *Reflections*, p.91.
12. Brian C. Smith, *Decentralization: The Territorial Dimensions of the State*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 8.
13. Dennis A. Rondinelli, John R. Nellis and G. Shabbir Cheema, *Decentralization in Developing Countries: A Review of Recent Experience*, World Bank Staff Working Papers, 581, (Washington: World Bank, 1984), pp. 9-26.

14. Ibid., p. 15.
15. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, p.9.
16. Rondinelli, *Nellis, Cheema, Developing Countries*, p. 10.
17. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, pp. 143-147.
18. Brian C. Smith, *Field Administration: An Aspect of Decentralization*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p.8.
19. Ibid., p. 96.
20. Ibid., p. 148; Robert C. Machin, *The Prefect in French Public Administration*, (London: Croom Press, 1977), pp. 10-31.
21. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, p. 149.
22. Herbert Kaufman, *The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1960), p. 217.
23. Smith, *Territorial*, p. 149.
24. Ibid., p. 142.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 152.
27. Smith, *Field Administration*, p. 46.
28. Robert C. Fried, *The Italian Prefects: A Study in Administrative Politics*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 296.
29. Machin, *French Public Administration*, p. 11.
30. Brian Chapman, *The Prefects and Provincial France*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1955), p. 65.
31. In France, the prefectoral system of public administration dates from Napoleonic Law of February 17, 1800, and in Italy shortly thereafter, with the annexation of Piedmont and much of the peninsula to the Napoleonic Empire. The system represented a rationalization of the centralizing administrations created by former absolutist governments.
32. Machin, *French Public Administration*, p. 10.

33. Fried, *Italian Prefects*, p. 247.
34. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, pp. 153-154.
35. Fried, *Italian Prefects*, p. 304.
36. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p. 559.
37. Quoted in G.C. Bolton, *Britain's Legacy Overseas*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 63.
38. David Roberts, *Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 315.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
42. Bolton, *Legacy Overseas*, p. 143.
43. Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India*, (London: Pan Books, 1987), p. 63.
44. *Ibid.*

One man rule does have a historic counterpart in the English office of the sheriff and justice of the peace. In medieval England the King had national field agents called sheriffs and justices of the peace. According to K.B. Smellie's *A History of Local Government*, these individuals were appointed to maintain law and order in the King's name. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 9-15. Through a number of transformations, stretching over five hundred years until about 1750, their powers grew steadily. In fact, not until the Industrial Revolution was in full swing did a Conservative government finally transfer their administrative duties to elected councils for the counties in 1888 (Smellie, *Local Government*, p. 38, and Fesler, *Understanding Decentralization*, p. 546).

Justices of the peace and sheriffs also exhibited plenary executive and administrative powers in colonial America where, Sir Anton Bertram argues the pattern of colonial government was established, *The Colonial Service*, (London: Vikas, 1930), p. 95. Clarence L. Ver Steeg, in *The Formative Years, 1607-1763* writes that by 1645, a system of county courts had been created in several New England colonies and that a host of duties

ranging from "handling the estates of orphans, to licensing taverns to seeing that roads were kept in good repair" was vested in the justice of peace (London: MacMillan and Co., 1965), p. 70. Julian Boyd, in an article on colonial North Carolina, also argues that the sheriff, who was supposed to be the King's agent, actually became an instrument of the local court house and through his control of the tax system and elections was able to dominate politics at the local level. "The Sheriff in colonial North Carolina," *Essays in American Colonial History*, ed. Paul Goodman, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pp. 400-424. Boyd further suggests that the sheriff was a source of stability throughout the War of Independence and a unifying force after peace was secured.

45. Bertram, *Colonial Service*, p. 63.
46. C.H. Sisson, *The Spirit of British Administration*, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1959), p. 152.
47. Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 134.
48. Colonial governments maintained this dual responsibility for economic reasons as well. One salary was cheaper than two. This was a factor in British Columbia.
49. Mason, *Men Who Ruled*, p. 203.
50. C.P. Bhambhri, *Public Administration in India*, (London: Vikas, 1973), p. 162.
51. Mason, *Men Who Ruled*, p. 200.
52. Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, (Vancouver: Macmillan, 1958), p. 181.
53. John W. Cell, *British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Policy-Making Process*, (London: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 59.
54. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p. 562.
55. J.E. Hodgetts, "Challenge and Response: A Retrospective View of the Public Service of Canada," *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. VII, 4, (December, 1964), p. 110.
56. D.F. Putnam and R.G. Putnam, *Canada: A Regional Analysis*, (Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1979), p. 310.
57. Kenneth Grant Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), p. 46.

58. Cell, *British Colonial Administration Mid-Nineteenth Century*, p. 59.
59. Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 136.
60. Kaufman, *Forest Ranger*.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
63. Mason, *Men Who Ruled*, p. 398.
64. Conferences were established in Ceylon in 1873 and held regularly thereafter as a means of establishing uniformity in provincial administration. See Leonard Woolf, *Diaries in Ceylon 1908-1911, Records of a Colonial Administrator*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).
65. Kaufman, *Forest Ranger*, p. 72.
66. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, p. 95.
67. Roberts, *Victorian Origins*, p. 72.
68. Frederick John Hatch, "The British Columbia Police, 1858-1871," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1955).
69. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, p. 46.
70. Gaus, *Reflections*, p. 9.
71. Crawford, *Municipal Government*, p. 15.
72. Cole Harris, "Theory and Synthesis in Historical Geography," *Canadian Geographer*, Vol. XV, 3, (1971), p. 162.

UBIQUITOUS FUNCTIONARY, 1858 - 1871

1. Barry M. Gough, "The Character of the British Columbia Frontier," *British Columbia: Historical Readings*, ed. W. Peter Ward and A.J. McDonald, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., 1981), p. 234.
2. *Ibid.*, p 232.

3. William J. Trimble, "The Mining Advance into the Inland Empire," *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin*, No. 638, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1914) pp. 326-327.
4. Walter N. Sage, *Sir James Douglas and British Columbia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1930), p.172.
5. See also Margaret A. Ormsby, "Douglas, Sir James," in *Dictionary of Canadian Bibliography*, ed. Marc La Terreur (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 238-239.
6. See G.P.V. and Helen B. Akrigg. *British Columbia Chronicle 1778-1846*, (Vancouver: Discovery Press, 1975), p. 184. See also John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957).
7. Decentralized authority was also a feature of the administration of the United Canadas. Decentralization in this instance, however, was more representative of the era and the laissez-faire approach to government. See J.E. Hodgetts, *Pioneer Public Service*, pp. 266 & 270.
8. See Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), pp. 106-107.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 401.
10. S.D. Clark, "Mining Society in British Columbia and the Yukon," *British Columbia: Historical Readings*, ed. W. Peter Ward and Robert A.J. McDonald, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., 1981), p.220.
11. Hatch, "Police", p.3.
12. *Ibid.*, p.7.
13. Richard B. Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario, 1791-1893, A Study of Public Welfare Administration*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 23-24.
14. Thomas Fleming, "Our Boys in the Field: School Inspectors, Superintendents and the Changing Character of School Leadership in British Columbia," *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History*, ed. Nancy M. Sheehan, Donald J. Wilson and David C. Jones, (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1986), p. 6.

15. Trutch to Brew, December 15, 1869, British Columbia Archives and Records Service (BCARS), Government Agent Cariboo (GR 216), Vol. 1. All correspondence and government documents in this study are from the BCARS. They are listed in numerical order in the Bibliography for easy reference.
16. Ibid.
17. GR 216, Vol. 1.
18. E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay, *British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present*, (Vancouver: 1914), p.72.
19. Douglas to Sir Henry Barkely, August 6, 1860: cited in Trimble, *Mining Advance*, pp. 336-371.
20. Isabel Bescoby, "A Colonial Administration: An Analysis of Administration in B.C., 1869-1871," *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. X, No. 1, (March, 1967), pp. 62-63.
21. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of British Columbia, 1792-1887*, (San Francisco: 1890), p. 421.
22. Trimble, *Mining Advance*, pp. 338-339.
23. GR 216, Vol. 1, File 6.
24. Ormsby, *British Columbia*, p. 72.
25. Gold Commissioner Cariboo, *Incoming Correspondence, 1862-1969, 1877* (GR 1783), File 8.
26. Elwyn to Colonial Secretary, August 3, 1862, GR 216, File 9. Interestingly, he was not quite sure his frankness would be welcomed and concluded his remarks respectfully. "I hope you will not consider that my opinions on these matters have been expressed more freely than my position warrants, the interests at stake are so great that I have written exactly what I think," he wrote.
27. March 11, 1861, GR 1783, File 2.
28. Philip Rankin to Ball, January 3, 1870, GR 216, Vol. 1. An investigation revealed that Cochrane was the guilty party.
29. O'Reilly to Colonial Secretary, August 24, 1865, GR 1783, File 7.

30. Circular, Colonial Secretary Office, January 6, 1866, GR 1783, File 8.
31. Brew to Colonial Secretary, October 8, 1868, GR 216, Vol. 11.
32. Colonial Secretary to Ball, April 5, 1861, Gold Commissioner, Lytton, Incoming Correspondence, 1859-1865, (GR 1784), File 3.
33. March 5, 1861, Gold Commissioner, Rock Creek, Incoming Correspondence, 1859-1862 (GR 1785), File 2.
34. Elliott to Colonial Secretary, July 15, Government Agent, Lillooet, 1859-1950, (GR 224), Vol. 1.
35. May 4, 1861, GR 216, Vol. 9.
36. Gaggin to Colonial Secretary, February 18, 1865, GR 216, Vol. 10.
37. Colonial Secretary to Ball, May 20, 1862, GR 1784, Vol. 4.
38. Nind to Y. Fellens, January 4, 1861, GR 216, Vol. 9.
39. Birch to Magistrate, Cariboo East, June 7, 1865, GR 1783, File 6.
40. GR 216, Vol. 1.
41. "Instructions laid down by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to Governors of Colonies, regulating the future mode of keeping and rendering the Accounts of colonial Receipt and Expenditure." Treasury to Sub-Accountant, Cariboo, April 24, 1866, GR 1783, File 9 and 6.
42. Treasury to Sub-Accountant, Cariboo, May 13, 1865, GR 1783, File 6.
43. GR 1783, File 1.
44. GR 224, Vol. 2.
45. Ball to Cox, February 1866, GR 1783, File 8.
46. Colonial Secretary to Magistrate, Cariboo, May 6, 1867, GR 1783, File 10.
47. Gaggin to Colonial Secretary, March 13, 1865, GR 216, Vol. 10.

48. September 16, 1865, GR 1783, File 7.
49. Circular, Colonial Secretary Office, September 23, 1864, GR 1784, File 6.
50. Young to Ball, June 23, 1862, GR 1784, File 4.
51. Gaggin to Colonial Secretary, February 16, 1865, GR 216, File 10 and Ball to Colonial Secretary, June 15, 1865, GR 216, File 10.
52. Legislation empowering the government to appoint a school inspector was not passed until 1879 but the office was not filled until 1887. Until full-time school inspectors were appointed, the magistrates and their successors performed this function in a number of districts. For an interesting analysis of the school inspectors and superintendent consult: Fleming, "Boys in the Field," pp. 285-303.
53. Elliott to Colonial Secretary, July 10, 1863, GR 224, Vol. 1.
54. GR 1784, File 2. ~
55. Colonial Secretary Office, September 26, 1866, GR 1783, File 8.
56. Elliott to Colonial Secretary, May 31, 1862, GR 224, Vol. 1.
57. July 8, 1861, GR 224, Vol. 1.
58. GR 1785, File 2.
59. July 8, 1862, GR 216, File 9.
60. Birch to Magistrate at Lytton, June 11, 1864, GR 1784, File 6.
61. Hatch, "Police," p. 57.

John George "Kootenai" Brown, who made a name for himself as a member of the Rocky Mountain Rangers and later as a conservationist and advocate for the establishment of Waterton Lakes National park, is a notable example of a constable who left the colonial police due to cutbacks by a gold commissioner. Brown was appointed constable for the Kootenay district in either February or March 1865, under Gold Commissioner Peter O'Reilly who arrived in the Kootenays approximately the same time. Brown resigned a few

months later, on July 15, 1865, as he found "it impossible to live at the present rate of wages." The colonial government was in the midst of an economy drive and O'Reilly even considered "dispensing with the services of five constables, thus saving British Columbia an annual expenditure of £1,500." See William Rodney, *Kootenai Brown, His Life and Times, 1839-1916*, (Sidney, British Columbia, Gray's Publishing Ltd., 1969), pp.52-57.

62. Young to Brew, July 6, 1868, GR 1783, File 13.
63. February 2, 1870, GR 216, Vol. 1.
64. March 10, 1862, Colonial Correspondence (GR 1372), B 1338, Letter 930/30.
65. Ibid.
66. Circular, Colonial Secretary Office, GR 1784, File 3.
67. Hatch, "Police," p. 67.
68. Elwyn to Colonial Secretary, October 30, 1862, GR 216, File 9.
69. Elliott to Colonial Secretary, December 22, 1862, GR 224, Vol. 1.
70. Hatch, "Police," p. 38.
71. Birch to Cox, November 21, 1866, GR 1783, File 8.
72. Food to O'Reilly, October 22, 1864, GR 1783, File 5.
73. Bescoby, "Colonial Administration," p. 100.
74. Ibid, p. 83.
75. Brew to Colonial Secretary, October 30, 1867, GR 216, Vol. 11.
76. Nind to Colonial Secretary, April 27, 1861, GR 216, Vol. 9.
77. *Victoria Colonist*, January 12, 1860.
78. Cited in Frederic W. Howay, *The Early History of the Fraser River Mines*, (Victoria, 1926), p. 39.
79. Hatch, "Police," p. 18.

80. For more information on these appointments consult: Margaret Ormsby, "Some Irish Figures in Colonial Days," *The British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, (1950), pp. 61-82.
81. Lytton to Douglas, September 16, 1858, Colonial Office, B1, 398/1 (GR 2045).
82. Hatch, "Police," p. 31.
83. Douglas, Confidential; Report on Officers, MS, quoted in Hatch, "Police," p. 32.
84. Ormsby, "Irish Figures" p. 67.
85. Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed. *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), p. 235.
86. Douglas, Confidential Report on Officers, MS, quoted in Hatch, "Police," p. 33 & 36.
87. *Barkerville Cariboo Sentinel*, August 23, 1866, quoted in Hatch, "Police," p. 39.
88. Civil List Act, 1871. It is important to note that there was inconsistency in the amount magistrates were paid. What one magistrate received in a particular location was not necessarily what his successor received. This unpredictability was an irritant for the magistrates and would remain a sore point with the Government Agents until 1945 when uniform salary administration policies were finally instituted.
- This inconsistency did not go unnoticed. Amour de Cosmos questioned the Colonial Secretary in the Legislative Council why the Lillooet stipendiary magistrate received a lower salary than the one in Yale when the duties were as great and the district was more expensive to live in. It was not "English fair play," he said. The Colonial Secretary's response was that O'Reilly's (the Yale magistrate) salary was fixed by Sir James Douglas and could not be altered. Former magistrates at Yale did not receive that sum, he noted.
- Dr. Helmcken also agreed that it was inequitable but felt things should be left as they were as the "whole system might be changed" following union. Dr. Helmcken's assessment turned out to be accurate. *Victoria Colonist*, January 14, 1871, p. 3.
89. Hatch, "Police," p. 101.

90. Ibid., p. 107.
91. G.C. Bolton, *Britain's Legacy Overseas*, p. 131.
92. Norma Landau, *The Justices of the Peace, 1679-1780*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p. 362.

RESIDENT HEAD, 1871 - 1890

1. S.W. Jackman, *Portraits of the Premiers, an Informal History of British Columbia* (Sidney, British Columbia: Gray's Publishing Ltd., 1969) p. 9.
2. "Size of Public Service in B.C., 1872-1981", Public Service Commission, March 15, 1982. These numbers do not correspond directly with Table I as some public servants have been excluded from Table I. Table I is also a calculation of employees by department based upon an analysis of the Estimates and Public Accounts of the province. A breakdown of staffing by department was unavailable.
3. Ormsby, *British Columbia*, p.307.
4. Attorney General Office, May 25, 1872, Attorney General, 1872-1937, 1950 (GR 429), Vol. 1, File 1.
5. Provincial Secretary to Ball, May 15, 1872, GR 216, Vol. 1.
6. Stephenson to Bowron, June 15, 1888, GR 216, Vol. 5, File 6.
7. Bowron to Provincial Secretary, GR 216, File 12.
8. Ball to Lieutenant Governor, April 26, 1874, GR 216, Vol. 12.
9. July 14, 1884, Premier Correspondence, 1883-1887, 1895-1933 (GR 441), Vol. 1, File 2.
10. Judge Harrison to Bowron, GR 216, Vol. 5, File 6.
11. Elwyn to Bowron, September 26, 1878, GR 216, Vol 3, (pt. 1), File 9.
12. Ball to Lieutenant Governor, GR 216, Vol. 12, File 1.

13. M.J. Armstong to Bowron, GR 216, Vol. 2, File 3.
14. Robson to Bowron, June 2, 1884, GR 216, Vol. 4, (pt. 2), File 25.
15. November 14, 1873, GR 216, Vol. 2, File 49.
16. Bowron to Provincial Secretary, June 21, 1876, GR 216, Vol. 12, File 1, (Bk. 2).
17. November 14, 1878, GR 216, Vol. 3 (pt.1), File 10.
18. Elwyn to Bowron, April 5, 1880, GR 216, Vol. 3, File 22.
19. Ball to Provincial Secretary, May 27, 1872, GR 216, Vol. 1.
20. Hatch, "Police," p. 47.
21. Deputy Provincial Secretary Office, December 30, 1872, GR 216, Vol. 2, File 2.
22. D. Oppenheimer to Bowron, GR 216, Vol. 5, File 7.
23. Robson to Bowron, GR 216, Vol. 4, (pt. 2), File 17.
24. GR 216, Vol. 6, File 17.
25. Susan Allison's recollections of life in the Similkameen tells of her fear of the McLean boys. Susan Louise Moir came to British Columbia in 1860 and married John Fall Allison in 1868. John Allison later became Gold Commissioner for the Similkameen. Susan Allison was born in Ceylon. She would have been familiar with the role of Government Agent as her grandfather was appointed agent in 1825 for the District of Saffragam. See Margaret A. Ormsby, ed., *A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia, The Recollections of Susan Allison*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1976) pp. 46-47.
26. F.G. Vernon, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works to Bowron, August 30, 1876, GR 216, Vol. 2, File 9.
27. W.S. Gore, Surveyor-General to Bowron, GR 216, Vol. 4 (pt. 2), File 23.
28. Aug. 21, 1888, GR 216, Vol. 5, File 6.
29. Provincial Secretary Office, Circular, 1884 (month and day unknown), GR 216, Vol. 4 (pt. 2), File 23.

30. September 5, 1878, GR 216, Vol. 3 (pt. 1), File 8.
31. Minister of Finance, Circular, November 21, 1889, GR 216, Vol. 6 (pt. 1), File 8.
32. GR 441, Vol 1, File 2.
33. Simeon Duck, Circular, September 10, 1885, GR 216, Vol. 5, File 2.
34. November 23, 1883, GR 429, Vol. 1, File 11.
35. Mangat E.N. Rai, *Patterns of Administrative Development in Independent India*. (London: Athlone Press, 1976), p. 29.
36. Hatch, "Police," p. 48.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
38. Elsie G. Turnbull, cited by Cecil Clark, *B.C. Provincial Police Stories*, (Surrey, British Columbia: Heritage House, 1986), p. 103.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Interview with Cecil Clark, Retired Assistant Superintendent of the British Columbia Provincial Police, Victoria, British Columbia, February 3, 1988. Mr. Clark joined the government in 1916 as a stenographer/clerk at police headquarters in Victoria. Clark remembers McMullin giving this personal glimpse of Hussey.
41. *Victoria Colonist*, August 27, 1933.
42. *Ibid.*
43. On November 1, 1886, Caspair Phair, in his capacity as Sheriff for the Clinton Judicial District, acted as hangman in the execution of Albert Malott. Malott was sentenced to death in the murder of Andrew Johnson near Revelstoke. The execution took place in Kamloops and Sheriff Phair had the assistance of Agents Tunstall and Dodd in performing his duty. An article in the *Inland Sentinel*, November 4, 1886, stated, "Great credit is due Sheriff Phair on this, his first official duty of this kind, for the efficient manner in which the execution was performed, he having practically looked after every detail, so that not a hitch of any kind occurred, the entire affair passing off quietly and expeditiously..." "Government Agency Review", Province of British

Columbia, Ministry of Finance, Vol. 1 - No. 3, (Winter, 1979-80), p. 15.

44. Joanne Yarmola, B.C.'s Little Nugget, A Story of Lillooet and its Miyazaki House, (Kamloops: Overland Press, 1986), p. 15.
45. Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 325.

OBEDIENT SERVANT, 1890 - 1917

1. Data on the number of employees by government department are unavailable. Using the British Columbia Public Accounts which shows the amount paid per employee per month, a substitute, or person-year, calculation has been made of the number of employees per department. A person-year equals the number of paid months divided by twelve. Six or more paid months are considered one person-year. All of the Tables, this statistic, and those following are drawn from an analysis of the British Columbia Public Accounts, King's Printer, Victoria, British Columbia.
2. S.R. Almond to J.E. Griffith, Deputy Minister of Public Works, May 14, 1912, Government Agency, Grand Forks, 1892-1953 (GR 1354), Vol. 131.
3. A December 11, 1894, list of Provincial Constables contained 53 names. Of these, only 28 were designated solely as constable. 10 were noted as constable and collector, 5 as constable and assessor, and 4 as constable and Government Agent. A few were also noted as constable and Registrar Country Court. Attorney-General, 1863-1920 (GR 676).
4. Provincial Police Act, 1895.
5. F.S. Hussey notes in a March 29, 1897, memorandum to the Attorney-General that in "...1885...there were only twenty-four constables, the majority of whom were under the direct control of the District Government Agent, whereas now they number over eighty, sixty-five of whom are appointed and controlled by me under the authority of the "Provincial Police Act, 1894" (GR 441, Vol. 6, File 1). Presumably the balance of constables, some fifteen or so, were supervised by Government Agents.

James Kirby, who entered government service as constable in 1893 and retired in 1931 as constable and mining

recorder, mentioned at his superannuation dinner his appreciation to his bosses over the years: Fred Valleau, Bill Allison and S.H. Hopkins, all Government Agents. Kirby was obviously one of those constables the Superintendent of Police did not supervise (Speech to Chamber of Mines, April 1931: Smithers Historical Society, A-1971-7-1).

6. February 24, 1902, GR 1354, Vol. 120.
7. S.R. Almond to W.G. McMynn, February 26, 1902, GR 1350, Vol. 130.
8. Telegram, Quoted in letter W.G. McMynn to S.R. Almond, July 9, 1901, GR 1354, Vol. 118.
9. Westminster, Kamloops and Nanaimo districts had gaols and staff were given dual responsibilities as Gaoler/Constable or Convict Guard/Constable. In calculating the person-year requirements for these offices it was assumed that one-half of their time was spent on agent work and the remainder as Gaoler or Convict Guard.
10. In calculating the average salary of Deputy Ministers, four positions were used: Deputy Provincial Secretary, Deputy Minister of Finance, Deputy Minister or Deputy Commissioner of Lands and the Deputy Attorney General. Only these four positions existed throughout the entire period from 1890 to 1917. The average agent salary is derived from all agent positions.
11. It is interesting to note that promoted Government Agents felt that agents were not treated that poorly. F.S. Hussey complained to the Attorney-General in 1897 that when he was Kamloops Agent he received a salary of \$125/month as well as a residence, fuel and light and the use of prison labour, the combined value of which he estimated at \$50/month. He was earning less than \$150/month as Superintendent of Police (GR 441, Vol. 6, File 1).
12. C. Cunningham to J.A. Anderson, February 20, 1907, GR 1354, Vol. 123.
13. May 18, 1899, GR 1354, Vol. 116.
14. This is the accounting designation used by the British Columbia Public Accounts throughout the period for travel expenses. Not all travel expenses, however, were identified in this section.

15. K.M. De Silva, *History of Sri Lanka*, (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1981), p. 318.
16. L.S.S. O'Malley, *The Indian Civil Service, 1601-1930*, (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 110.
17. S.R. Almond to L. Fredrickson, February 7, 1911, GR 1354, Vol. 131.
18. G.W. Taylor, *Builders of British Columbia: an Industrial History*, (Victoria: Morriss Publishing, 1982), p. 11.
19. W.G. McMynn to A.G. Smith, August 17, 1895, GR 1354, Vol. 112.
20. Interview, Clark. Clark worked closely with McMynn from 1917 to 1923 when McMynn was Superintendent of Police.
21. Grand Forks, Gazette, April 26, 1945.
22. Recorded interview with Kathleen Dewdney, wife of W.R. Dewdney. BCARC, Date Unknown.
23. "Farwell to W.R. Dewdney", *The Ledge*, April 20, 1922.
24. Penticton, Herald, February 27, 1956, p. 1 and "In Honouring Former Government Agent," Penticton, Herald, December 12, 1946.
25. John Bowron also grumbled about his workload at this time. Four years earlier the Deputy Provincial Secretary, A. Campbell Reddie, acknowledged to Bowron that he was not unique. "I can well understand that you are kept busy all the time without any additional work such as an election. The same is the burden of letters from other Agencies shewing how the work throughout the country is increasing," he wrote on September 9, 1893. Government Agent, Richfield, 1892-1894. (GR 1676), Vol. 2.
26. October 8, 1897, GR 1354, Vol. 128.
27. March 18, 1902, GR 1354, Vol. 120.
28. The Boundary Agents' problems in this regard were not unparalleled. John Bowron's request for a typewriter got the following curious response from A. Campbell Reddie, Deputy Provincial Secretary:

Your letter of the 17th ultimo, in which you make requisition for a caligraph for the use of the Government Office was duly received.

I can quite understand that the machine would prove very useful in many ways and represented it in that light to the Provincial Secretary. He, however, does not appear to be willing to entertain the application. He probably thinks that if one office was furnished with a typewriter every office would expect to be likewise supplied. March 16, 1893, GR 1676, Vol. 1.

29. W.G. McMynn to H.A. McLean, December 23, 1901, GR 1354, Vol. 119.
30. W.D. Dewdney to W.F. Bridge, Attorney General's Department, September 22, 1913, GR 1354, Vol. 1, File 6.
31. A. Campbell Reddie to Bowron, January 26, 1892, GR 216, Vol. 6, File 26.
32. June 21, 1904, GR 1354, Vol. 130.
33. The Boundary district appears to have been organized in this fashion from the outset. This structure, on the other hand, was new for other districts. John Bowron, for example, was instructed to lay out his district in this pattern in 1892. The object was to have each mining recorder represent a Mining Division with all records of mining matters "made in the record office of that division and duplicate copies sent to the office of the Gold Commissioner of the District." He was told to lay out his mining divisions with regard to present as well as "probable future developments" and that "natural boundaries such as rivers, watersheds, etc., should as far as possible" be used to delineate the division. (Minister of Mines to J. Bowron, October 15, 1892, GR 1676, Vol. 1).
34. January, 1897, GR 1354, Vol. 114.
35. An analysis of W.G. McMynn's Letter Book from February 13, 1897, to February 14, 1898, revealed 971 pages of correspondence made up of 645 letters or notes to file. Mining recording correspondence constituted 26.5 per cent of the total, administration 22.3 per cent, court work 18.1 per cent, and police work 14.6 per cent. Miscellaneous matters made up the balance.
36. February 1, 1907, GR 1354, Vol. 123.

37. Circular Letter, Minister of Mines, September 12, 1898, GR 1354, Vol. 135.
38. Circular Letter, Minister of Mines, January 11, 1909, GR 1354, Vol. 135.
39. W.G. McMynn to I.A. Dinsmore, October 30, 1897, GR 1354, Vol. 115.
40. W.G. McMynn to F.C. Hussey, November 4, 1897, GR 1354, Vol. 115
41. S.R. Almond to W.J. Devitt, October 27, 1908, GR 1354, Vol. 130.
42. Two years earlier, John Bowron was instructed by the Deputy Commissioner of Lands and Works to build and furnish a twelve patient hospital for which he was authorized to spend \$3,000. This activity, of course, would not have been unfamiliar for him like it was for the inexperienced McMynn. July 11, 1892, GR 1676, Vol. 1.
43. October 28, 1910, GR 1354, Vol. 127.
44. W.G. McMynn to W. Downie, February 20, 1903, GR 1354, Vol. 121.
45. The Government Agents also administered the national Prohibition Plebiscite in 1898.
46. A serious outbreak of smallpox in 1892 brought about the appointment of the first provincial health officer. In 1893 a new Public Health Act provided for the appointment of a provincial Board of Health. For further information on Health Services in British Columbia consult: G.F. Amyot, "The British Columbia Department of Health and Welfare", British Columbia: Patterns in Economic, Political and Cultural Development, ed. Dickson M. Falconer, (Victoria: Camosun College, 1982), pp. 362-276.

John Bowron was requested to enforce the provincial sanitary regulations by F.S. Hussey, Superintendent of Police, four years earlier than McMynn. September 28, 1892, GR 1676, Vol. 1.
47. W.G. McMynn to A.T. Watt, December 17, 1896, GR 1354, Vol. 114.
48. W.G. McMynn to Provincial Sanitary Inspector, January 20, 1897, GR 1354, Vol. 114.

49. April 26, 1916, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
50. W.G. McMynn to Messrs. Mitchell, Lewis and Stewart, Spokane, July 30, 1897, GR 1354, Vol. 115.
51. May 9, 1913, GR 1354, Vol. 1, File 4.
52. S.R. Almond to Deputy Attorney General, January 26, 1911, GR 1354, Vol. 131.
53. S.R. Almond to Lieut. Col., Willows Camp, December 3, 1915, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
54. The capital persisted in adding to the list of correspondents as it had always done and the agents complied willingly, although individuals like Almond grumbled about the added workload. On October 21, 1892, agents were requested to provide Mr. Acton Burrows, publisher of the Western World, "with as much information as possible...relating to the resources and development of the various districts in the Province." A. Campbell Reddie: GR 1676, Vol. 1.
55. Deputy Commissioner of Lands and Works to John Bowron, December 6, 1893, GR 1676, Vol. 2.
56. W.G. McMynn to Board of Railway Commissioners, September 24, 1907, GR 1354, Vol. 124.
57. S.R. Almond to E. Miller, M.P.P., January 24, 1912, GR 1354, Vol. 131.
58. W.D. Dewdney to A. Bryan Williams, November 28, 1913, GR 1354, Vol. 1, File 7.
59. October 19, 1915, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
60. S.R. Almond to Deputy Minister and Public Works Engineer, July 13, 1915, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
61. S.R. Almond to Deputy Minister and Public Works Engineer, August 20, 1915, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
62. S.R. Almond to Deputy Minister and Public Works Engineer, July 13, 1915, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
63. Circular #27, Department of Public Works, October 5, 1915, GR 1354, Vol. 247.
64. Circular, Department of Public Works, September 12, 1910, GR 1354, Vol. 247.

65. Circular, Department of the Provincial Secretary, March 2, 1914, GR 1354, Vol. 247.
66. S.R. Almond to Messrs. Lawe & Fisher, December 31, 1917, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
67. Circular, Provincial Secretary's Office, September 28, 1908, October 27, 1910, October 13, 1911. Circular, Treasury Department, February 6, 1912. Circular, Provincial Secretary's Office, January 28, 1914, GR 1354, Vol. 247.
68. S.R. Almond to J. Kirkup, Government Agent, Rossland, August 1900, GR 1354, Vol. 129.
69. S.R. Almond to W.J. Goepel, December 7, 1908, GR 1354, Vol. 130.
70. S.R. Almond to Consolidated M & S Company of Canada, August 28, 1907, GR 1354, Vol. 130.
71. Richard P. Tauk, *Bureaucrats Under Stress: Administrators and Administration in an Indian State*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 203.
72. Fesler, *The Territorial Dimensions*, p. 165.

TITULAR HEAD, 1917 - 1958

1. February 14, 1916, GR 216, Vol. 28.
2. Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 489.
3. David J. Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1983), p. 257.
4. British Columbia, *Provincial-Municipal Relations in British Columbia*, report prepared under the Public Inquiries Act by Commissioner H. Carl Goldenberg, (Victoria, British Columbia: 1947), p. 16.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
6. Budget Speech, John Hart, November 10, 1939, Premier, 1917-1952 (GR 1222), File 3.

7. Michael C.R. Edgell, "Forestry," *British Columbia: Its Resources and People*, ed. Charles N. Forward, Western Geographical Series, Vol. 22, (Victoria, British Columbia: Department of Geography, University of Victoria, 1987), p. 109.
8. Colin J.B. Wood, "Population and Ethnic Groups," *British Columbia: Its Resources and People*, ed. Charles N. Forward, Western Geographical Series, Vol. 22, (Victoria, British Columbia: Department of Geography, University of Victoria, 1987), p. 311.
9. Douglas Ooram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State 1900-1945*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 317.
10. 1919 is used because the staffing figures for 1917 are unreliable.
11. These figures are derived from an assessment of the Civil List, Annual Report of the Civil Service Commissioner, from 1923 to 1945: Provincial Secretary, Civil Service Commissioner, 1919-1945 (GR 101), Volumes 1-3. Data was not available on the years 1917 to 1919.
12. GR 101.
13. British Columbia Liberal Party, June 1928, p. 57, Treasury Department, General Correspondence Files (GR 1773).
14. For further insights consult: Ooram, *Government Generation*, 1986.
15. GR 101.
16. Superintendent of Neglected Children to Deputy Provincial Secretary, August 11, 1939, Provincial Secretary, 1929-1947 (GR 496), Vol. 13, File 3.
17. The Department's name was amended by statute in 1945 to include Forests (9 Geo. VI, Chapter 45).
18. Speech, Commissioner T.W.S. Parsons, May 3, 4, and 5, 1941, quoted in *Shoulder Strap*, Vol. X, (Victoria: Sun Publishing Co., 1941). p. 4.
19. R.W. White, Price Waterhouse to Brewster, December 5, 1916, Premier's Correspondence, 1883-1887, 1895-1933 (GR 441), Vol. 175, File 1060/16.
20. March 3, 1919, GR 1773.

21. Bulletin No. 61, April 25, 1925, GR 1773.
22. Johnson to Moore, June 7, 1922, Treasury Department, 1917-1925 (GR 1774), Vol. 11, File 7.
23. Johnson to Maxwell, January 23, 1924, GR 1774, Vol. 21, File 8-9.
24. Interview with Norm Blake, Victoria, British Columbia, September 10, 1987.
25. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p. 560.
26. Interview with Ron M. Burns, Victoria, British Columbia, May 26, 1988.
27. Interview with Charles J. Ferber, Victoria, British Columbia, November 3, 1987.
28. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p. 560.
29. Ibid., p. 563.
30. The Attorney-General Act, (R.S. 1911, c.15, s.4), the Agriculture Act, (R.S. 1916, c.3, s.9) and the Revenue Act, (R.S. 1911, c.202, s.6) are three other examples of legislation that appointed staff 'during pleasure'.
31. Mouat to John Hart, Minister of Finance, August 29, 1917, Attorney General Correspondence, 1902-1937 (GR 1323), B2136, 3989, 1/17.
32. MacInnes was forty years old when he became Civil Service Commissioner. Possibly he was a student of Dr. Adam Shortt. Dr. Shortt was Professor of Political Economy at Queen's University until 1908 when he became Civil Service Commissioner for the federal public service.
33. Mouat to Hart, November 27, 1919, GR 1773, Vol. 17. Neither were the rank and file pleased with the Commissioner's decisions. The Provincial Civil Service Association, a mostly Victoria-based group with a number of regional branches (I. Cartmel, Nelson Government Agent, was Vice-President of the Kootenay and Boundary Branch. All boundary agents were members of the Association) had been formed shortly after the act was proclaimed. It made a number of representations to the Executive Council regarding the Commissioner's salary recommendations. Quesnel members also complained of regrading inequalities in the assessor and agent's office.

34. Civil Service Commissioner, Annual Report, 1920, GR 101, Vol. 1, File 4.
35. Goepel to Hart, October 31, 1919, GR 1773, Vol. 17.
36. Civil Service Commissioner, Annual Report, 1922, GR 101, Vol. 2.
37. Ibid.
38. GR 1323, B-2153, 3661, 17/18.
39. MacInnes to Premier Oliver, April 29, 1926, GR 441, Vol. 262, File 16, p. 2.
40. Owram, Government Generation, p. 72.
41. Vancouver Province, Bruce McKelvie, December 28, 1942.
42. Hart to Fisher, May 6, 1942, GR 1222, Vol. 39, File 2.
43. "Report of Special Committee on Equalization of Salaries, with Recommendations," October 21, 1942, GR 1222, Vol. 39, File 2.
44. Ibid., p. 5.
45. Ibid., p. 3.
46. British Columbia, Civil Service Commission, Annual Report, 1946, (Victoria: December 31, 1946).
47. BCARS, No. 1366, p. 12-13.
48. Committee on Reorganization to G.S. Pearson, November 9, 1944, GR 1222, Vol. 48, File 5.
49. Interview, McRae.
50. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p. 563.
51. Interview, McRae.
52. Interview, Burns.
53. Napier to Pattullo, January 31, 1930, GR 1773.
54. Provincial Secretary, Orders-in-Council, 1872-1979 (GR 113), B-6465, No. 883/29.

55. Napier to Pattullo, February 28, 1935, GR 1222, Vol. 13, File 5, and Napier to Editor, Victoria Daily Times, September 25, 1931, Thomas Dufferin Pattullo Papers, 1924-1941 (Add MSS 3), Vol. 44, File 14.
56. Victoria Daily Times, p. 2: Ibid.
57. R. Ross Napier, "Government Agencies of British Columbia," Okanagan Historical Society, 6th Report, (1935), p. 217.
58. Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government to Investigate the Finance of British Columbia, (Victoria: July 12, 1932), p. 20.
59. Ibid., p. 21.
60. Report of the Economic Research Committee on Revenue and Expenditures of the Provincial Government in the Province of British Columbia, by Vancouver Junior Chamber of Commerce, (Vancouver: October 1933), p. 6.
61. Ibid., p. 7.
62. Committee Appointed by the Government, p. 70.
63. Interdepartmental Committee, Minutes, November 23 and November 27, 1917, GR 1773.

Government reorganization was also occurring in the federal public service. The Deputy Minister of Finance received a letter from the Assistant Director, Council Sub-Committee on Reorganization and Efficiency, Ottawa, which requested information on the organization of the B.C. public service as they were "making an investigation of departmental organizations in the Dominion government...". November 29, 1920, GR 1773.
64. Department of Finance, May 1, 1947, GR 1222, Vol. 57, File 11.
65. Fisher to Minister of Finance, April 1, 1952, GR 1222, Vol. 87, File 5.
66. November 29, 1917, GR 1773.
67. May 9, 1923, GR 1774, Vol. 17, File 2.
68. Sandilands to Deputy Minister of Finance, October 4, 1924, GR 1774, Vol. 23, File 4.
69. OIC, April 1, 1944, GR 1222, Vol. 48, File 5.

70. Herne to Deputy Minister of Finance, May 12, 1923, GR 1774, Vol. 16, File 1-2.
71. March 6, 1924, GR 1773.
72. Campbell to W.A. McAdam, A.D.M. Finance, July 11, 1922, GR 1774, Vol. 22, File 5-9.
73. Schofield to W.C. Shelley, December 30, 1929, GR 1773.
74. Fraser to Minister of Public Works, November 15, 1922, GR 1774, Vol. 11, File 7.
75. Glassey to Ben Hethy, Premier's Secretary, February 19, 1940, GR 1222, Vol. 27.
76. Civil Service Commissioner, Annual Report, 1923, GR 101, Vol. 1.
77. Napier to Smithers Agent, February 11, 1925, GR 1774, Vol. 22, File 2.
78. Hart to Secretary-Treasurer, Burns Lake Liberal Assoc., November 19, 1935, GR 1773.
79. Burns Lake Liberal Assoc. to Hart, September 4, 1937, GR 1222, Vol. 17, File 8.
80. Oliver to Hart, July 14, 1923, GR 1773.
81. An analysis was completed on all Orders-in-Council from 1917 to 1945.
82. Civil Service Commissioner to Hart, April 6, 1936, GR 1773.
83. Liberal Party, "Speaker's Handbook," 1928, p. 41, GR 1773.

Administrative Orders-in-Council regarding the Government Agents were very plentiful during this period. There were 515 Orders-in-Council from 1927 to 1937 involving: appointments, for example, Registrars of the County Court or Official Administrators; promotions, for example, Elevator Officer to Computing Clerk; organizational changes, for example, down-grading of an office to Sub-Agency status; personnel administration, for example, the appointment of replacements for vacationing staff, or increasing the monthly salary of a Janitor in Kamloops by five dollars; and so forth. In addition, a large number of Orders-in-Council related to the agents' Treasury functions were

made. As a point of comparison, the Department of the Provincial Secretary for the same period (1927-1937) had, in total, only 280 Orders-in-Council. The names, responsibilities and organization of the Government Agents were, obviously, very familiar to members of the Executive Council.

These data also point out one other related phenomena. Until the 1940's, the Minister and Deputy Minister were the departmental Personnel Officers. All staffing matters required their blessing. It is no wonder that most Ministers and Deputy Ministers welcomed the 1945 personnel innovations.

- 84. Harbord to Deputy Minister of Finance, November 7, 1917, GR 1774, Vol. 2, File 2.
- 85. Bureau of Provincial Information, December 1928, GR 441, Vol. 282, Gen. Memo. File.
- 86. Bruhn to W.C. Shelley, August 12, 1919, GR 1773.
- 87. Prince Rupert Daily News, May 18, 1929, Add MSS 3, Vol. 33, File 1.
- 88. Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 442.

Pattullo was Leader of the Opposition. In a recent election he defeated J.H. Thompson, owner of Thompson Hardware in Prince Rupert. Thompson was active in suggesting appointments to local government positions, as far afield as Atlin. Thompson nominated W.W. Wright for the position of Atlin Government Agent which he took in 1930 after the death of E.T. Cope. Thompson was, according to the Provincial Secretary, the Conservative Party's "mainstay in Prince Rupert and no doubt will be our next candidate - possibly again opposing Mr. Pattullo." S.L. Howe to W.C. Shelly, April 24, 1929, GR 1773.

For further insights into this incident consult: Robin Fisher, *Duff Pattullo of British Columbia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 219-220.

- 89. Pattullo to Watt, February 14, 1930, Add MSS 3, Vol. 38, File 1.
- 90. Watt to Bruhn, Minister of Public Works, January 27, 1931, Add MSS 3, Vol. 42, File 15.
- 91. February 13, 1931, Ibid.

92. John L. Barge, Queen Charlotte Island Mining Recorder, was also dismissed by the Tolmie government and Pattullo took his case to the floor of the Legislature as well.
93. Secretary, Minister of Finance to Thomas Braidwood, March 11, 1936, GR 1773.
94. January 2, 1934, GR 1773.
95. Nanaimo Federal Liberal Association to Hart, June 15, 1939, GR 1773.
96. Secretary, Minister of Finance to McCurrach, September 20, 1939, GR 1773.
97. Hart to Frank Putnam, June 2, 1944, GR 1222, Vol. 50, File 1.
98. April 25, 1944, GR 1773.
99. Mrs. McCoid was appointed Government Sub-Agent in Fort St. John before Jessie Foster was named agent for Williams Lake. Miss Foster was the first female full-status Government Agent.
100. Telegram, Foster to Hart, October 15, 1937, GR 1773.
101. H.M. Mathews, Secretary, District Chamber of Commerce, to J.W. Jones, June 17, 1931, GR 441, Vol. 299, File 1.
102. July 3, 1923, GR 1774, Vol. 9, File 8 and Hewat to Goepel, March 4, 1920, GR 1774, Vol. 4, File 4.
103. Fisher to Johnson, January 20, 1923, GR 1774, Vol. 13, File 5-6.
104. Deputy Minister of Finance to S. McB Smith, April 6, 1922, GR 1774, Vol. 11, File 1.
105. Johnson to Smithers Agent, May 9, 1923, GR 1774, Vol. 12, File 7.
106. Comptroller-General to Hart, September 11, 1920, GR 1773.
107. Deputy Minister of Finance to Civil Service Commissioner, March 25, 1920, GR 1773.
108. Hart to Fisher, April 11, 1946, GR 1222, Vol. 59, File 2.

109. Fisher to B.I. Johnson, February 21, 1952, GR 1222, Vol. 87, File 7.
110. William J. Goepel was appointed Inspector of Government Offices for the Department of Finance in 1896. In this capacity he was responsible for the inspection of all government offices including agent offices. The agents, however, were still part of the Provincial Secretary's Department.
111. Interview with George Brodie, Victoria, British Columbia, September 22, 1987.
112. Interview, Burns.
113. O'Malley, Indian Civil Service, p. 97.
114. Interview, Burns.
115. Watt to J.D. MacLean, February 9, 1925, GR 1774, Vol. 23, File 5.
116. Interview with Pat Mulcahy, Victoria, British Columbia, November 24, 1987.
117. Press Release, July 4, 1945, GR 1222, Vol. 50, File 1.
118. Ibid.
119. DeSilva, A History of Sri Lanka, p. 318.
120. June 26, 1920, GR 1354, Vol. 5.
121. E.D. Johnson, Deputy Minister of Finance, to McCurrach, July 17, 1922, GR 1354, Vol. 5.
122. McCurrach to Deputy Minister, July 20, 1922, GR 1354, Vol. 132.
123. "Report on Agencies," Mouay to Hart, November 29, 1917, GR 1773.
124. Interview, McRae.
125. A.D.M. Finance to Hart, September 15, 1945, GR 1222, Vol. 50, File 1.
126. Watt to J.D. MacLean, February 9, 1925, GR 1774, Vol. 23, File 5.
127. Penticton Herald, December 12, 1946.

128. c. 1926, GR 1354, Vol, 11, File 1.
129. c. 1930, GR 1773.
130. Nelson Daily News, February 1, 1945.
131. Interview, McRae.
132. McCurrach to Deputy Attorney-General, May 5, 1926, GR 1354.
133. MacInnes to Deputy Minister of Finance, February 15, 1923, GR 1773.
134. GR 1774, Vol. 10, File 6.
135. G.W. Taylor, Builders of British Columbia, p. 34.
136. G.F. Amyot, Provincial Health Officer to Deputy Provincial Secretary, August 20, 1940, Provincial Secretary Correspondence, 1929-1947 (GR 496), Vol. 2, File 10.
137. Document "Unemployment Relief, October 1, 1931 to September 30, 1942," Ministry of Human Resource, Research Division, Misc. Reports, 1933-1956 (GR 1053), Vol. 1.
138. E. Fisher to Hart, August 26, 1936, GR 1773.
139. Watt to E.W. Griffith, November 16, 1933, GR 441, Vol. 332, File 5.
140. Deputy Minister of Finance to Nelson Agent, May 29, 1922, GR 1774, Vol. 11, File 2.
141. Deputy Minister of Finance to Premier, July 5, 1922, GR 1773.
142. January 8, 1924, GR 1774, Vol. 20, File 5.
143. August 22, 1922, GR 1354, Vol. 5, File 6 & E.E. Leason to Government Agents, December 29, 1923, GR 1354, Vol. 7, File 6.
144. January 27, 1925, GR 1773.
145. A.D.M. Finance to J.P. Scarlett, Powell River Agent, August 23, 1939, GR 1773.
146. Interview, Blake.

147. Interview, Burns.
148. Interview, Mulcahy.
149. Interview with Ken Weir, Victoria, British Columbia, August 19, 1987.
150. Interview, Burns.
151. Walter Rice Sharp, *The French Civil Service: Bureaucracy in Transition*, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 84 and 90.
152. *Ibid.*, p. 85-86.
153. Interview, Ferber.
154. Interview, Burns.
155. *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, September 28, 1961, p. 7.
156. Interview, Burns.
157. Interview, McRae.
158. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p. 561.
159. Interview, Blake.
160. Quoted in Mason, *Men Who Ruled*, p. 399.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. S.S. Khera, *District Administration in India*, (London: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p.247.
2. Sisson, *Spirit of British Administration*, p.154.
3. Khera, *District Administration*, p.248.
4. Douglas to Residents of Yale, September 12, 1858, Colonial Correspondence (GR 1372), F484a/3.
5. Interview, Burns.
6. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, p. 143-147.
7. Khera, *District Administration*, p.253.

8. Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government to Investigate the Finance of British Columbia, by Vancouver Junior Chamber of Commerce, (Vancouver, 1933) p.20.
9. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p.562.
10. Interview with Peter F. Ramsay, Victoria, British Columbia, November 3 and 19, 1987. Ramsay started his public service career in the Government Agent's office in Alberni in 1937. After serving with the Canadian Scottish during World War II, he worked with the Public Service Commission from 1946 to 1954 when he rejoined the Department of Finance. In 1963 he was appointed Inspector of Agencies and in 1972 became the first Director of Government Agents.
11. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p.562.
12. Hodgetts, Pioneer Public Service, p.280.
13. Sisson, Spirit of British Administration, p.16.
14. Peter F. Ramsay, "The Government Agencies of British Columbia," November 1973, Unpublished document.
15. Peter Drucker, "The Coming of the New Organization," Harvard Business Review, (Jan-Feb. 1988), p.48. Drucker notes that British civil administration in India was the best example of a large and successful information-based organization.
16. Khera, District Administration, p.249.
17. Lugard, Dual Mandate, p.96.
18. Interview, Blake.
19. Interview, Weir.
20. Neil A. Swainson, "The Public Service," The Reins of Power, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1983), p.128.
21. Smith, Territorial Dimensions, p.158.
22. Napier, "Government Agencies," p.215.
23. Quoted by James Pope-Hennessy, Verandah - Some Episodes in the Crown Colonies, 1867-1889, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p.139.
24. Smith, Field Administration, p.47.

25. Interview, Burns.
26. Interview, Brodie.
27. Interview, Blake.
28. Interview, McRae.
29. James McBrainie Smith, Deputy Minister of Finance from 1901-1913, did not work in an agent's office but his work experience before becoming government auditor in 1879 would qualify him as a knowledgeable outsider. Smith spent seven years in the Cariboo as a prospector and two years in the Omineca district as a businessman. This experience was invaluable to him in performing his Victoria duties as his biographer noted: "By actual residence in different parts, as well as personal inspection during his journeys to the interior, he has acquired a fund of information of the province, which is extremely useful and almost indispensable to anyone holding the position he occupies in the Government service." J.B. Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary of Well-Known British Columbians*, (Vancouver: Kerr and Begg, 1890), p. 289.
30. Interview, McRae.
31. Interview, Weir.
32. Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p.136.
33. Peter F. Ramsay, "Annual Report of the Government Agencies, 1976-77," Unpublished Document.
34. Interview, Blake.
35. Smith, *Territorial Dimensions*, p.164-165. Smith notes that "specialists in politics" was one of the factors in the decline of the district officer's usefulness.
36. George Brodie is an excellent example of a seasoned agent who had a good relationship with his local M.L.A. Ken Weir noted that Alex Fraser in Williams Lake and Wes Black in Nelson used to check with him and see what problems there were so he was prepared before he went to Victoria. Interview, Weir.
37. Press Release, Department of Finance, 1945.
38. Interview, Weir.

39. Interview with Arthur G. Richardson, Victoria, British Columbia, May 12, 1988. Mr. Richardson eventually became Commissioner of the Public Service Commission.
40. Smith, Territorial Dimensions, p.161.
41. Kaufman, Forest Ranger, p.183.
42. Ibid, p.96.
43. David C. Potter, Government in Rural India: An Introduction to Contemporary District Administration, (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1964), p.250.
44. Interview, Weir.
45. Taub, Bureaucrats Under Stress, p.113-114.
46. Khera, District Administration, p.255.

EPILOGUE

1. "Size of Public Service in B.C. 1872-1981", Public Service Commission, March 15, 1982. Unpublished document.
2. Estimates Briefing Books are documents prepared by departmental staff for use by the Minister in his defence of the estimates of his department in the Legislative Assembly. The author had access to the Government Agent's portion of these books from fiscal year 1949/50 to 1977/78.
3. Peter F. Ramsay, Inspector of Government Agencies to Gerry S. Bryson, Deputy Minister, September 17, 1970.
4. Treasury Board Minute, No. 4 of January 16, 1961, quoted in memorandum, Peter F. Ramsay to G.S. Bryson, October 25, 1967.
5. Interview, Ramsay.
6. Interview, Weir.
7. P.F. Ramsay to G.S. Bryson, September 24, 1968. Regionalization was nothing new to the agents. Before Confederation, some districts had more than one magistrate, for instance, the Cariboo, and during the 1920's the Oliver administration experimented with

regionalization when Dewdney was put in charge of the Boundary Agents.

8. Interview, Ramsay.
9. "Instructions for Government Agents," Department of Finance, 1965. p. 2.
10. Ibid, pp. 3 and 4.
11. Peter F. Ramsay to Gerry S. Bryson, September 28, 1976.
12. Interview, Blake.
13. Interview, McRae.
14. Interview, Ferber.
15. Ferber noted that only when the computer was capable of writing the amount on the cheque was the transition to a centralized payroll and dispersement system able to be completed.
16. Interview, Ferber.
17. "The Government Agencies of British Columbia," memorandum, Peter F. Ramsay, November 1973.
18. Interview, Ramsay.
19. Ibid.
20. Estimates Briefing Book, Department of Finance. This represented a 58% increase over 1972-73 and was almost double the overall increase to the public service during the same period. The total public service grew by 28% from 1972 to 1975 or approximately 9000 employees.
21. Ramsay acknowledged later that it could have been fifteen or more offices. The Minister made the decision. Opening these offices was crucial, he felt, "if we were going to maintain a system worth the name." Interview, Ramsay.
22. Interview with Peter F. Ramsay, Victoria, British Columbia, May 20 and July 17, 1981, by Neil Swainson.
23. Department of Finance, November 8, 1973. Unpublished document.
24. Interview, Ramsay by Swainson, May 20 and July 17, 1981.

25. Peter F. Ramsay, "1974-75 Annual Report," Government Agencies Branch, Department of Finance.
26. Ibid.
27. Regionalization was considered a trade-off later by a number of senior agents who lost status due to the removal of the Court Registry function in 1975. They became regional agents in charge of a number of smaller agent offices.
28. Dawson Creek, Kamloops, Nelson, New Westminster, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Vernon. Vancouver Island agencies were administered out of Victoria.
29. Interview, Ramsay by Swainson, May 20 and July 17, 1981.
30. Ibid.
31. For a brief period there was a question whether the Government Agents and their Deputies would not be included, i.e., become part of the British Columbia Government Employees Union, under the new Public Service Labour Relations Act due to the loss of the court functions.
32. Interview, McRae.
33. Interview, Weir.
34. Interview, Ramsay.
35. Evan M. Wolfe to G.S. Bryson, July 13, 1976.
36. G.S. Bryson to all Deputy Ministers, January 12, 1977.
37. Peter F. Ramsay to Gerry S. Bryson, September 28, 1976.
38. The number of cheques issued by the Agents dropped by 91,149 or over 26%, in 1976-77 alone, according to Peter F. Ramsay. "1976-77 Annual Report," Department of Finance, 1977.
39. Peter F. Ramsay, "1976-77 Annual Report," Government Agencies Branch, Department of Finance, 1977.
40. "Government Agency Review," Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Finance, Volume 1, No. 3, (winter 1979-80), p.14.
41. Ken Weir, Regional Manager, was acting Director for a number of months until Mitchell arrived.

42. Fesler, "Understanding Decentralization," p.562.
43. Memorandum, Peter F. Ramsay, circ. 1970.
44. Interview, McRae.
45. Hodgetts, "Retrospective View," p. 10.
46. Sisson, Spirit of British Administration, p. 154.
47. Khera, District Administration, p.252.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

All primary sources for this study were from the British Columbia Archives and Records Service, Victoria, British Columbia (BCARS). The Treasury Department, General Correspondence Files (GR 1773) and Treasury Department, Government Agency Correspondence, 1917-1925 (GR 1774) were all unprocessed at the time of the research. The GR 1774 correspondence was subsequently catalogued, however, the GR 1773 documentation remains unprocessed.

The correspondence noted in the Epilogue has not been transferred to the BCARS. It remains the property of the Government Agent's Branch, Ministry of Finance, Victoria, British Columbia. The author secured the permission of the Director of Government Agents to use this material.

For ease of use, the primary sources used in this study are arranged in numerical sequence.

GR	55	-	Provincial Police Force. Superintendent. 1891-1910.
GR	56	-	_____ . _____ . 1910-1912.
GR	57	-	_____ . _____ . 1912-1922.
GR	58	-	_____ . 1923-1928.
GR	61	-	_____ . 1864-1887, 1891-1918.
GR	64	-	_____ . Superintendent. 1898-1918.
GR	66	-	_____ . 1891-1910.
GR	67	-	_____ . 1912-1917.
GR	91	-	_____ . 1896-1950.
GR	92	-	_____ . 1858-1868, 1898-1933.
GR	93	-	_____ . 1899-1927.

- GR 94 - _____ . 1913-1921.
- GR 97 - _____ . Inspector.
1908-1911.
- GR 99 - _____ . Superintendent.
1892-1942.
- GR 101 - Provincial Secretary. Civil Service
Commission. 1919-1945.
- GR 104 - Provincial Police Force. Superintendent.
1900-1916.
- GR 106 - _____ . Victoria Police
District. 1917-1929.
- GR 113 - Provincial Secretary, Orders-in-Council.
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