



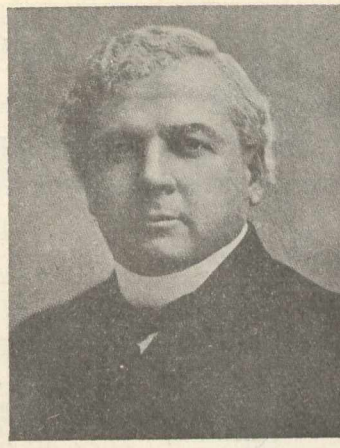
HON. PRICE ELLISON,  
Minister of Agriculture,  
(Okanagan.)



HON. W. J. BOWSER,  
Attorney-General,  
(Vancouver.)



HON. A. E. MCPHILLIPS,  
President of the Council,  
(Islands.)



HON. RICHARD MCBRIDE,  
The Ever Successful Premier,  
(Victoria.)



HON. H. E. YOUNG,  
Minister of Education,  
(Atlin.)

# British Columbia Elections

By WALTER W. BAER  
Of Victoria Times

FOUR elections within nine years with a decreasing period of time expiring between each is the unexampled record in the Province of British Columbia. The administration of Premier McBride has been returned to power with forty supporters, as against thirty-nine last term. The last general election took place on October 3, 1909, so that the last legislature lived out but little more than half its term. No one appears to be quite sure why the last legislature was dissolved, as there was no direct issue placed before the electorate nor had any legislation been placed on the Statute Books which appeared to require the endorsement of the people. Premier McBride asserts that his object in appealing to the electorate was for "an endorsement of his railway policy," and, so far as the electorate understand it, that policy has been "endorsed."

The chief and most frequently urged argument made in the appeal of the government for a return to power and a vote of confidence in the administration was that Premier McBride found the province in a condition of bankruptcy and that, by his wise administration, it has been converted into a province the most prosperous of any in the Dominion. Whatever view may be held as to the statesmanship of the methods by which this feat has been accomplished there can be little doubt that the statement is a statement of fact.

There had been no strictly party lines in the political affairs of the province up till this time. Since confederation conferred autonomy on the province its governments were composed of representative men whose political affiliations in federal politics were forgotten, the members of the government acting in common cause—according to their convictions—for the good of the country. Mr. McBride, on accepting responsibility for the formation of a ministry ended all that. Though it cost him the political affinity of several strong men with whom he had sat in membership in opposition to the government he composed his cabinet of pronounced Conservatives—with one exception—and rigidly drew the party lines. The country was not exactly prepared for this and Mr. McBride was returned without a majority in the legislature. The three Socialists elected held the balance of power. Premier McBride formed an alliance with these and for the first term of his office was saved from repeated defeats only by their solid vote.

IN its first term the new government gave evidence of its stability and redeemed the credit of the province. It passed drastic taxation laws and touched every available source of revenue. Income taxes, personal property taxes, business taxes, school taxes and land taxes were readjusted and, with the banks assured of their securities capital began to flow into the province, at first slowly and timidly, but, with the passing years in stronger currents until within the last year, since when, for the first time during this period it is slackening its mighty impact.

The much lauded "Railway Policy" of Premier McBride has played a large part in fostering the popularity of the government. In 1910, after an appeal to the electorate, the government entered into covenants to guarantee six hundred miles of the Canadian Northern Railway for the extension of their transcontinental ambition to the Pacific Coast. The guarantees also included provision for a section of railway on Vancouver Island extending northward from Victoria to some point yet in process of determination. Construction having begun on both the mainland and the island these projects



HON. D. M. EBERTS,  
Speaker of Legislature,  
(Saanich.)



HON. W. S. ROSS,  
Minister of Lands,  
(Fernie.)



RALPH SMITH,  
Former M.P.,  
Defeated in Vancouver.



H. C. BREWSTER,  
Defeated Liberal Leader,  
(Alberni.)



HON. THOMAS TAYLOR,  
Works and Railways,  
(Revelstoke.)

will be advanced rapidly to completion. The railway legislation for this year guarantees the bonds of 450 miles of railway from Howe Sound to Fort George, opening up a large and fertile area of agricultural lands—at present without transportation facilities—and also affording access to illimitable timber areas. The actual guarantee in both these cases is "of the bonds of the company, guaranteed both as to principal and interest" in the sum of \$35,000 per mile, with provision in the agreement of both companies that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may further guarantee the bonds of the

company which further guarantee shall be of the same effect as if made a part of the first instruments.

PERHAPS no feature of the government policy has done more to attract capital to the country than the Timber policy. The government permits the location of square-mile sections to any extent and, upon their location, an annual "License Fee" of \$150 per claim of 640 acres is paid to the government. The estimates for the current year show that from this source alone the government expects a revenue this year of \$1,800,000. In comparison with this enormous sum for the privilege of maintaining their claims to the timber resources of the province may be set the sum of \$500,000 placed in the estimates as anticipated royalties on timber to be actually cut and manufactured, the royalty being 50 cents per thousand feet. The statement was made by the Minister of Lands on the floor of the legislature during the last session that it will take the government engineers until the end of the year 1918 to survey the Crown Lands held under Timber licenses already paying revenue to the provincial treasury. The acquisition of these licenses has brought an enormous sum of money into the provincial treasury and it has been lavishly spent, the estimates for public works expenditure this year being fifty per cent. in excess of the sum provided in the public works estimates of Ontario.

The Liberal or opposition party in the province put up a brave and undaunted contest. They protested against the exploitation of the resources of the province in the manner which—they alleged—was wholly in the interests of capitalists and speculators. They argued that the present market value of the timber land alienated to the speculators reaches the enormous total of \$214,000,000, and they asserted that—by the bartering and transfers of these licenses—speculators had already realized a clean profit of \$100,000,000 without cutting a single stick of the timber sold. They charged corrupt practices in the administration of the public works department, and obtained information which they alleged justified their contentions.

ONE of the chief grievances of the opposition was that access could not be had to the Public Accounts. A motion to have these referred to the Select Committee of the Legislature was withdrawn at the request of the Premier on the assurance that he would personally move to have these accounts referred in ample time for thorough investigation. He did move the reference just six hours before the prorogation and dissolution of the legislature. The Public Accounts Committee has not met for six years.

It may surprise the readers of the CANADIAN COURIER, as I am sure it will surprise Eastern politicians of every political creed, to know that the estimates for the year 1912 were passed by the legislature in its closing hours within the short space of fifty minutes. Though the sum involved reached the sublime total of nearly \$16,000,000 after the lone Liberal in the opposition had made a brief speech attacking a particular item of the estimates, there was no criticism nor any halt to the terrific speed with which the votes were rushed through.

Premier McBride has made good his boast that he would "show Canada something unexampled in the history of the Empire." The Liberals were unable to elect a single representative in the whole province and the Opposition now consists of two Socialists, Parker Williams, of Newcastle, and Jack Place, of Nanaimo. The situation is unique.