

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

---

FIRST ANNUAL REPORTS

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT OF NEGLECTED  
CHILDREN

AND

MOTHERS' PENSIONS

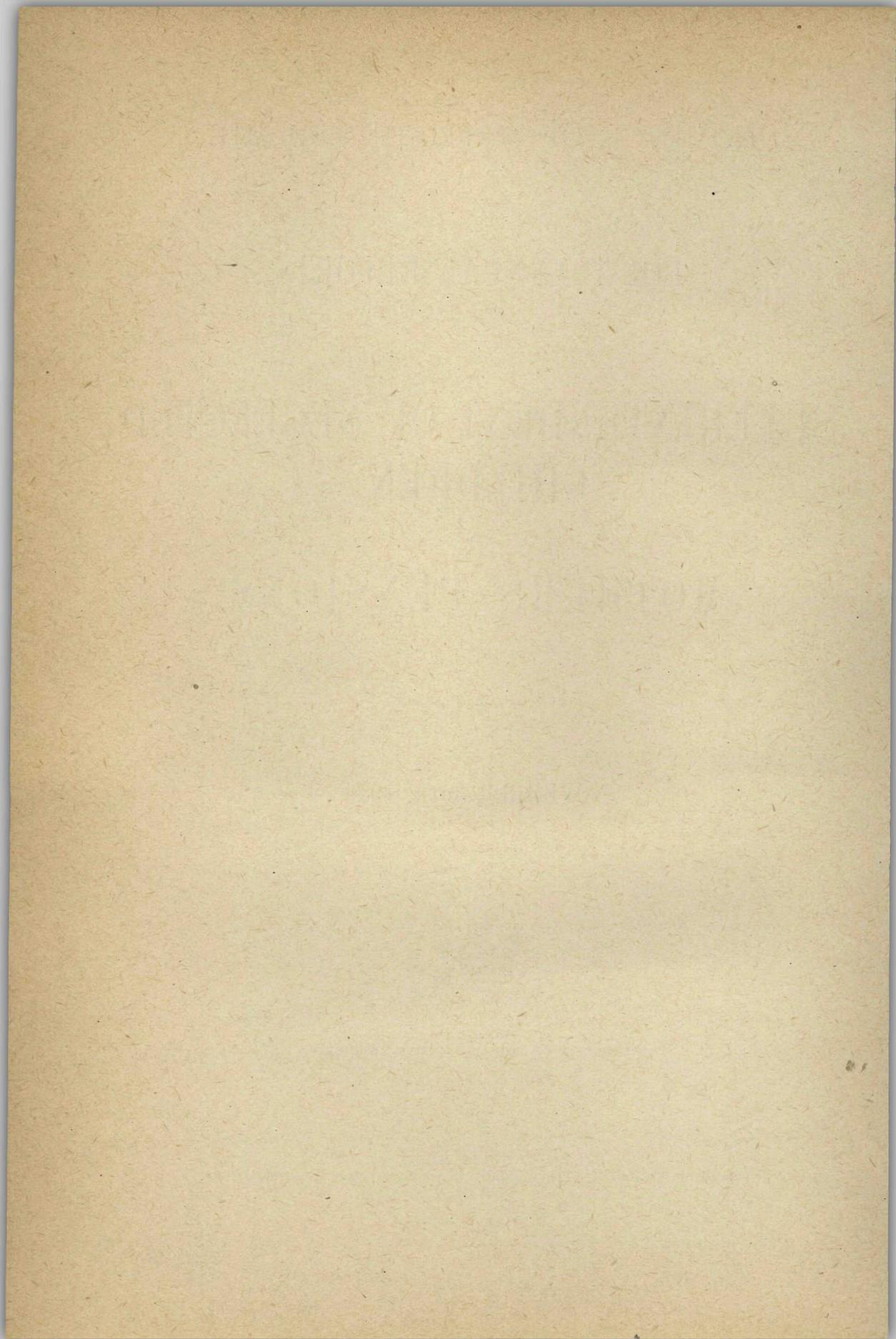
FOR THE YEAR ENDING

NOVEMBER 30TH, 1920



PRINTED BY  
AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

VICTORIA, B.C. :  
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1921.



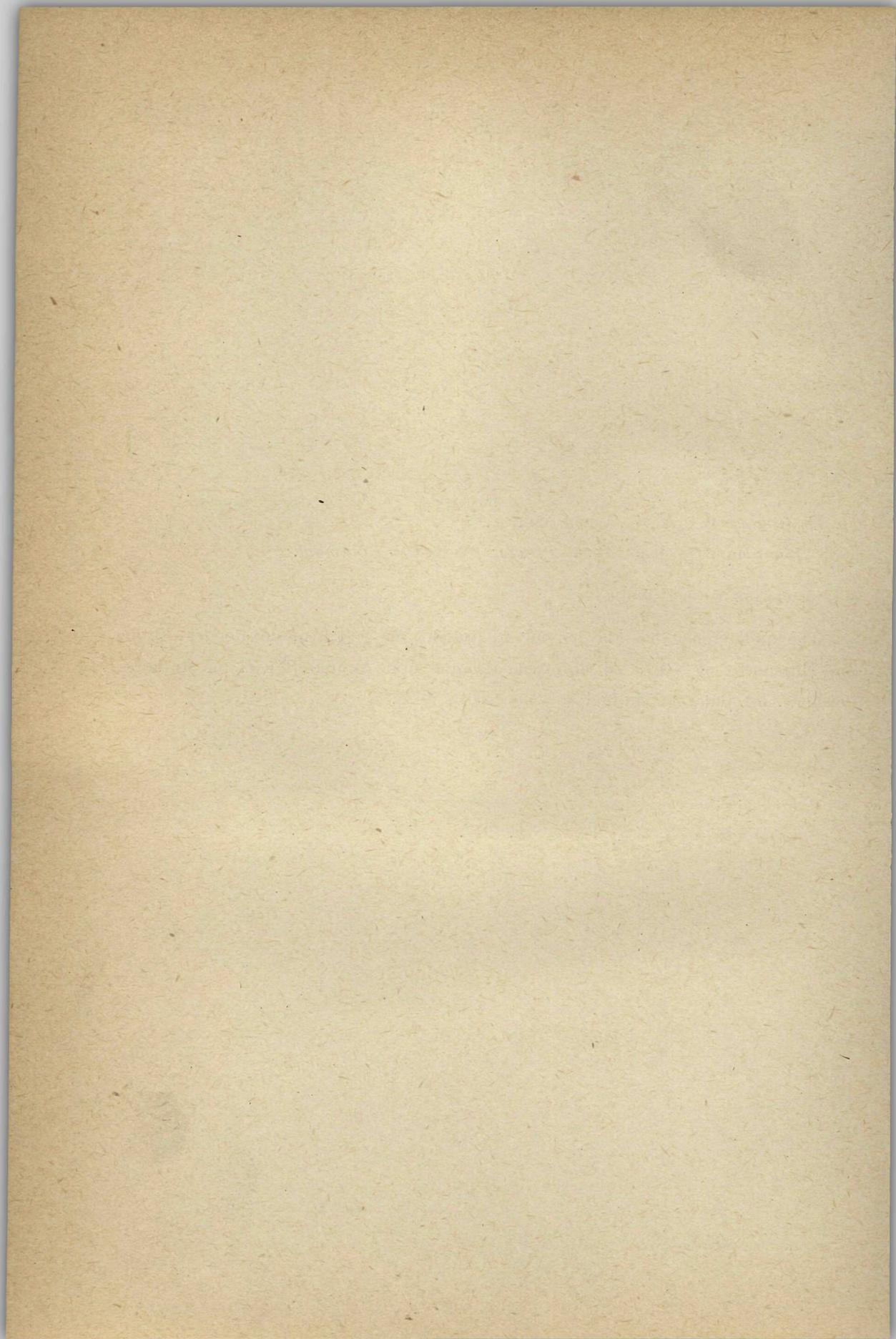
*To His Honour* WALTER CAMERON NICHOL,  
*Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

The undersigned has the honour to present the first Annual Report of the Superintendent of Neglected Children, also the first Annual Report on Mothers' Pensions, for the year ending November 30th, 1920.

J. W. DE B. FARRIS,  
*Attorney-General.*

*Attorney-General's Department,*  
*Victoria, B.C., February 8th, 1921.*



# REPORT ON NEGLECTED CHILDREN.

VANCOUVER, B.C., December 23rd, 1920.

The Honourable J. W. de B. Farris,  
Attorney-General, Victoria, B.C.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit herewith my first Annual Report as Superintendent of Neglected Children for the year ending November 30th, 1920.

As this office was only opened in December, 1919, the year has been spent largely in the work of organization, and even yet is only in its initiatory stages. The first month was spent in securing offices, drawing up and having printed the necessary forms, etc., and conducting an educational campaign throughout the Province.

This had just been commenced when, at the first of the year, I was asked to take charge of and reorganize the Boys' Industrial School, which to a great extent interfered with the work of this Department.

Then in April, 1920, the "Adoption of Children Act" was passed, entailing further work for this office, as notice must be served on the Superintendent of Neglected Children in all applications for adoption. At the same time the "Mothers' Pensions Act" was approved, which necessitated reorganization and entailed a great deal of work, as shown in the report on same included herein.

## NEGLECTED CHILDREN.

One of the difficulties we had to contend with in this connection was that many had the mistaken idea that it was the duty of this Department to follow up all complaints and reports of alleged neglected children and to apprehend same and bring them before the Judge for commitment, for they did not understand that this was the duty of the cities and municipalities and that our responsibility did not begin until after the child had been before the Court and had been proved to be neglected. Of course, we acted in an advisory capacity and suggested what action to take in the various cases that were reported to us.

During the year ninety-two cases have been reported to the office, involving a total of 148 children. Of these, twenty-six children were committed to a Children's Aid Society, the other cases being satisfactorily settled without Court proceedings.

Since January of this year the *per capita* grant to Children's Aid Societies taking care of children committed from unorganized districts has been paid through this Department. The amount paid is \$2 per week per child. Below is a statement of the amount expended:—

Month.	CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER.		CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF VANCOUVER.		TOTAL.	
	Children.	Amount.	Children.	Amount.	Children.	Amount.
January .....	31	\$ 269 71	56	\$ 496 00	87	\$ 765 71
February .....	30	248 57	56	464 00	86	712 57
March .....	30	252 00	56	496 00	86	748 00
April .....	28	240 00	60	483 71	88	723 71
May .....	28	248 00	59	522 57	87	770 57
June .....	30	236 57	59	505 71	89	742 28
July .....	31	269 72	60	531 43	91	801 15
August .....	30	265 72	61	544 28	91	810 00
September .....	33	287 42	61	516 28	94	803 70
October .....	36	317 14	57	504 85	93	821 99
November .....	40	320 00	53	454 28	93	774 28
Totals .....	347	\$2,954 85	638	\$5,519 11	985	\$8,473 96

The actual number of children paid for during the year from the above were:—

Society.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Children's Aid Society of Vancouver .....	31	19	50
Children's Aid Society of the Archdiocese of Vancouver .....	35	29	64
Totals .....	66	48	114

Over and above this amount grants to the amount of approximately \$13,000 were made to societies taking care of orphan and destitute children.

#### INSPECTION OF INSTITUTIONS.

I inspected the home of the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver on Wall Street, and also the Providence Orphanage, New Westminster, in which the wards of the Children's Aid Society of the Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver are placed, and found that the children there were being well taken care of by those responsible.

#### "ADOPTION ACT."

Since the passing of the "Adoption Act" in April, 1920, there have been filed at this office forty notices of application for adoption. Fourteen of these were boys and twenty-six were girls.

This Act will be of great value and protection to children, as the child, once it is legally adopted, has the same rights as a natural child.

When the papers are properly filled in there is, as a rule, no difficulty in putting through the order.

I would like to point out that the "Adoption of Children Act" and the "Mothers' Pensions Act" will provide for many children who would otherwise have to be dealt with under the "Infants Act."

The "Mothers' Pensions Act" will enable mothers, who because of their inability to provide for them would have had to place their children in an institution, to care for these children at home.

The "Adoption of Children Act" will do away with the difficulties we have had to contend with in the past in regard to foster homes, as before the foster child was not protected in cases where the foster parents died without making a will in which the child was specifically mentioned.

## REPORT ON MOTHERS' PENSIONS.

*The Honourable J. W. de B. Farris,  
Attorney-General, Victoria, B.C.*

SIR,—I have the honour to submit herewith the first Annual Report on the Work of Mothers' Pensions up to November 30th, 1920.

### MOVEMENT.

The movement for the enactment of a mothers' pension law in British Columbia began definitely as early as 1911 by the various women's organizations interested in social reform calling attention to the justice of the principle of such a law and passing resolutions in favour of it.

### PRINCIPLE.

The principle is simple. It is the recognition of a widely held and deeply rooted conviction that home-life and a mother's care are of such value in the proper rearing of children that no child should be deprived of their benefits on account of poverty alone.

### HISTORY OF MOVEMENT.

The very rapid growth of the movement in a very brief period of years shows what a long-felt want it has supplied. Like many great movements, it has been to some extent a matter of evolution.

Compulsory education laws had made it necessary to make State provision in the way of clothing, books, and, in some cases, of money for the children of indigent parents to attend school.

The Oklahoma law, enacted April 10th, 1908, provided for a "school scholarship" equivalent to the earnings of a child to be paid to the widowed mother when such earnings were regarded as necessary to her support.

In Ontario in 1914 the Local Council of Women requested permission to create a fund to be known as the "Mothers' Pension Fund," to be dispensed to mothers who felt obliged to take their children from school before they were 14. The advent of the war prevented this being carried out.

The placing of orphan and neglected children in foster homes instead of institutions was a step in the right direction and worked untold benefit to the children.

Public opinion in the matter of providing help in some better way than by the older forms of poor relief or the uncertainty of private charity had been steadily growing, and since the passing of the first definite "Mothers' Pension Act" in Missouri on April 7th, 1911, followed by the Illinois "Funds to Parents Act," also of 1911, the enactment of mothers' pension laws has gone forward by leaps and bounds. Almost every State in the neighbouring republic has passed such laws.

In Canada, Manitoba was the first Province to pass a "Mothers' Pension Act" in 1916. Saskatchewan followed in 1917, Alberta in 1919, and British Columbia, April 17th, 1920. Ontario has passed an Act to come into force in October, 1920, and Nova Scotia has one under consideration.

### PREPARATION-WORK.

In British Columbia, after much education and publicity-work, it was realized that the time had come when the Legislature would have to be approached.

A Committee was appointed by the New Era League of Vancouver, composed of Mrs. J. Allan Clark, Mrs. H. G. Taylor, and Mrs. Jean K. Macken, who were assisted by Mrs. John Forrester, of New Westminster; Mrs. Gordon Grant, of Victoria; Mrs. J. H. MacGill and the late Mrs. W. H. Griffin, of Vancouver.

They organized a large deputation of representative bodies, and through the Attorney-General, the Hon. J. W. de B. Farris, the Government was approached during the session of

1918. Mrs. Ralph Smith, M.L.A., who had ever championed and ardently worked for the cause, introduced the delegation. The following list of delegates and organizations shows how widely spread the realization of the necessity of such a law had become:—

Leader of delegation, Mrs. J. A. Clark, New Era League; National Council of Women, Mrs. R. S. Day; Provincial W.C.T.U., Mrs. Spofford; Victoria Local Council of Women, Miss Mary Lawson; New Westminster Local Council of Women, Mrs. J. Forrester; Vancouver Local Council of Women, Mrs. A. U. de Pencier; Nanaimo Local Council of Women, Mrs. John McMillan; Women's Institutes, Mrs. Ralph Smith; Canadian Club, Mrs. J. White; Child Welfare, Mrs. T. Harold; Daughters of the Empire, W.B.A. Maccabees, Mrs. Hugh Wilson; American Woman's Club, King's Daughters, Mrs. George W. Beattie; New Westminster W.C.T.U.; New Westminster Liberals, Mrs. John Forrester; Nanaimo W.C.T.U.; Vancouver Liberals, Mrs. Stanley Brown; Woman's Independent Political Party, Mrs. Gordon Grant; Citizens' Union, Mrs. A. Borland; Woman's New Era League, Mrs. H. G. Taylor; Trades and Labour Council, Miss H. Gutteridge; University Women's Club, Vancouver, Mrs. J. H. MacGill; University Women's Club, Victoria, Mrs. (Captain) Clark; Prince Rupert, Revelstoke (proxy), Mrs. Ralph Smith; Equal Franchise Association, Mrs. W. H. Morrow; Reconstruction League, Miss McLeod; Daughters of Scotia, Mrs. I. Rose; Vancouver Ratepayers' Association, Mrs. J. K. Macken; Benevolent Association, New Westminster, Mrs. Chas. Welsh; Woman's Forum, Mrs. John Dixon; W.C.T.U., Vancouver, Mrs. Wm. Bryan; Chilliwack, Miss Barrow; Victoria City, Mayor Todd; Vancouver City, Mayor Gale; New Westminster, Mayor Gray; Vancouver City Relief, Rev. George Ireland; Ministerial Association (Lower Mainland), Rev. Mr. Stevens; Salvation Army, B.C., Commandant Jaynes; Provincial Child Welfare, Mr. Dougan; B.C. Great War Veterans, Captain Whittaker; Fraser Valley Institutes, Mrs. Fadden; Kaslo, Mrs. John Keen; B.C. Federation of Labour, Mr. D. McCallum; Ministerial Association, Victoria, Rev. H. S. Osborne; the Community Home Service; American Girls' Club; North Vancouver Suffrage Societies; Federation of Parent-Teachers' Associations; South Vancouver Women's Forum; Victoria Order of Nurses; Provincial Graduate Nurses' Association; Local Graduate Nurses' Association; Widows, Wives, and Mothers of Great Britain's Heroes, Mrs. J. Kemp.

The Premier, the Hon. John Oliver, in eulogizing the delegation, said it was the most businesslike and representative delegation that had ever appeared before the Government.

So convincing were the arguments in favour of the Act that the Government appointed a Commission to report on the advisability of bringing down legislation in the matter. This Commission, composed of Mr. E. S. H. Winn, Mrs. C. E. Spofford, Mr. Duncan McCallum, and Mr. T. B. Green, was called the Health Commission, and reported on the following questions: Health Insurance, Public Health Nursing, Mothers' Pensions, and Maternity Benefits.

The report of this Commission was received by the Provincial Parliamentary Session of 1919-20, and in it the necessity for mothers' pensions was so strongly emphasized that the existing "Mothers' Pension Act" was passed on April 17th, 1920.

#### TERMS OF ACT.

Under the Act the following are included as properly being qualified to receive assistance:—  
Any mother who is:—

- (a.) A widow; or
- (b.) A married woman whose husband is an inmate of the penal institution or public hospital for insane; or
- (c.) A woman whose husband is unable to support his family by reason of sickness or accident arising while his wife was residing in this Province; or
- (d.) A deserted wife; or
- (e.) Any other person whose case, in the opinion of the Superintendent, is a proper one for assistance under the provisions of this Act.

It will thus be seen that it is very broad in its scope and application.

#### ADVISORY BOARDS.

Following the passing of the Act, Advisory Boards to deal with cases making application have been appointed by an Order in Council to co-operate with the officials of the Mothers'

Pension Department, which was placed under the supervision of the Superintendent of Neglected Children. The existing advisory committees are as follows:—

- Vancouver—Judge Helen Gregory MacGill, Mrs. Robert McNair, Mrs. J. A. Clark, Mrs. Joseph Sheasgreen, Mrs. J. C. Kemp, and Judge Shaw.  
 Victoria—Mrs. C. E. Spofford, Mrs. Stewart Henderson, and Mrs. Robert Dinsdale.  
 Nanaimo—Mrs. G. B. Brown, Mrs. Margaret Neave, and Mrs. Maude Woodcock.  
 New Westminster—Mrs. Christina Forrester, Mrs. Helen Smith, and Mrs. Maud Dorgan.  
 Revelstoke—Mrs. J. B. Ward, Mrs. Alex. Honson, and Mrs. W. J. Dickey.  
 Fernie—Mrs. Lorne Workman and Mrs. Annie Duthie.  
 Cranbrook—Mrs. Gertrude Miles, Mrs. Verna Constantine, and Mrs. Louisa Roberts.  
 Nelson—Mrs. Elesa McCulloch, Mrs. Annie Rutherford, and Mrs. Marion Crease.  
 Rossland—Mrs. Margaret York, Mrs. Isable Stephens, and Mrs. Sarah Pitt.  
 Trail—Mrs. Lillian Thom, Mrs. Jessie Walker, and Mrs. Teresa Martin.  
 Penticton—Mayor Chambers, Albert H. Huntley, Mrs. Agnes Smith, Mrs. Maud Burtch, and Mrs. Veila McGregor.  
 Vernon—Mrs. D. D. Lockhart, Mrs. Mary Knight, and Mrs. Elsie Richards.  
 Armstrong—Mrs. Frances Groves, Mrs. Jennie Hall, and Mrs. Susie Inglis.  
 Kelowna—Mrs. Mary Cameron, Miss Minnie Reckie, and Mrs. Jennie McDonald.  
 Kamloops—Mrs. D. B. Johnstone.

#### ADMINISTRATION.

Very shortly after the passing of the Act applications began to pour into the office from all parts of the Province. Up to the end of June, 1920, 390 names and addresses were placed on file, and as soon as the printed forms were available they were mailed to the applicants. Ending with November 30th, 1920, there have been 1,182 applications placed on file and they still continue to be received in large numbers.

Early in July six temporary investigators were appointed to visit and report on the applications received. At present there are two investigators for Vancouver and the surrounding district; one for the unorganized districts of the Mainland; one for the City of Victoria and one for the other parts of Vancouver Island.

The Local Advisory Boards visit and report on the cases in their own districts.

The Advisory Board for Vancouver was formally inaugurated and the Act declared operative on Friday, September 3rd, 1920, by the Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. J. W. de B. Farris, under whose Department the Act is administered and to whose sympathetic attitude towards the cause much of the credit of the passing of the Act is due.

In addition to the members of the Board, there were present Mr. D. B. Brankin, Superintendent of Neglected Children; Mr. G. F. Pyke, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Ralph Smith, M.L.A., who is now joyfully realizing the culmination of her efforts on behalf of the mothers' pensions; Mr. M. A. Macdonald, M.L.A., and Mr. J. S. Cowper, M.L.A., who had assisted with the measure before the Legislature.

A "movie" film of the proceedings was taken by Photographer Kean and appeared in due course on the screens of this and other Provinces.

Ending with November 30th, 636 pensions have been granted in the whole Province.

During the month of September, 1920, there was paid out for mothers' pensions in British Columbia the sum of \$55,227.50. This included in many cases pensions for the months of July and August as well, for those who had applied before July 15th, 1920. In October \$28,750.50 was expended and in November \$34,511.50, making a grand total of \$118,489.50.

It was a great boon to many of the mothers to receive the pension for three months in a lump sum in September. They were enabled in many cases to take their children out of the orphanages, rent little homes or rooms, purchase furniture, and provide for the winter clothing and fuel.

#### LETTERS OF APPRECIATION.

Many were the letters of appreciation and gratitude received from the mothers who were benefited. To many who had struggled on for, deprived of the rightful bread-winner, with failing health, due to the double burden of providing for the family and caring for the home, as well as in some cases nursing invalid husbands, it seemed, as they said, "too good to be true."

The following letters will give some idea of the gratitude of the mothers:—

Mr. D. B. Brankin.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of cheque in October, also the one from your office of November 2nd.

Words fail to express my gratitude for same, which certainly has been a great help to us.

Thanking you and all concerned in this good work,

I am,  
Yours gratefully,

.....

Mr. Brankin.

DEAR SIR,—I hardly know how to begin to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to you in allowing me the mothers' pension. It has been such a blessing to me in getting us warm clothes and fuel, but words fail me; all I seem to be able to say is many, many thanks and may God bless you all in the good work you have undertaken.

I beg to remain,  
Yours very sincerely,

.....

Mr. Brankin.

DEAR SIR,—Thank you for the mothers' pension check I received this afternoon, for which I am indeed grateful. It will enable me to care for my children in a better way than I have been able to do this last three years, and no one knows how heavy a mother's heart is when she has to leave her children to look after themselves while she goes to work to keep them, and a mother is very dear to a child when it is left alone all day, but I am so thankful that this pension will give us the chance of giving what is every child's birthright, a mother's love and care.

Yours very gratefully,

.....

CLASSIFICATION OF APPLICATIONS.

The large number of applications has been due to various causes. Many cases were those who had been receiving help from the various cities and municipalities for some time and who would now come under the Act.

The "flu" epidemic had caused a very large number of necessitous cases. War conditions had largely increased the number of deserted wives and families. Many of the men lived with other women and even married other wives overseas and are beyond the jurisdiction of this Province. The proximity of the United States has enabled many deserting husbands to shirk their responsibilities and cross the border.

In classifying the applications that have been filed, investigated, and considered by the various Boards, we find that out of 1,000 cases 665 are widows, 203 are deserted wives, 76 have husbands who are incapacitated from various causes, tuberculosis, paralysis, arthritis, and other forms of rheumatism predominating. Those confined in mental hospitals number 24 and in prison 6. Divorcees number 15, unmarried mothers 7, and 5 have remarried.

The children number 1,075 boys and 1,013 girls; in all, 2,068. This number does not include children over 14 and under 16 who are earning wages.

CLAUSES WHICH RENDER APPLICANTS INELIGIBLE.

The number of cases not granted come under sections 4, 5, and 7 of the Act, which state that:—

"4. No mother shall be entitled to apply for or receive an allowance under this Act unless:—

"(a.) She is a British subject; and

"(b.) Has been a resident of this Province for at least eighteen months prior to making application for assistance under this Act; and

"(c.) Has a child or children under the age of 16 years living with her; and

"(d.) Is without the necessary means with which to support this child or children.

"5. No application for an allowance under this Act shall be granted unless the Superintendent is of the opinion:—

"(a.) That the applicant is a fit and proper person to have the custody of her child or children; and

"(b.) That it is in the best interests of her child or children that the applicant should have the custody of them.

"7. Payment of the allowance granted under this Act in respect of any beneficiary shall cease:—

- "(a.) Upon the beneficiary ceasing to reside within the Province; or
- "(b.) Upon the remarriage of the mother."

#### CLASSIFICATION OF THOSE INELIGIBLE.

Cases coming under these heads may be classified as follows:—

(1.) Not indigent number 69 and include cases where there were other sources of income sufficient to maintain the family either from investments, property, rentals, boarders, or older children who were contributing.

(2.) Those who were not eligible under the terms of the Act included the following:—

- (a.) Those in receipt of military pensions number 13; of workmen's compensation, 18.
- (b.) Those who had not completed the eighteen months of residence number 28.
- (c.) Those whose husbands were not British subjects number 27. In many of the latter cases the wives were themselves of British birth and even native-born British Columbians. They felt the hardship of the Federal Act that made them of the nationality of their husband, especially when he had not taken out papers of naturalization after years of residence in British Columbia.
- (d.) In some cases the mother felt that she could not give up her salary when it was largely in excess of the pension. Some, indeed, thought they should get the pension in addition to a fairly large salary.
- (e.) In some cases it was felt that the children would not be benefited by the pension being granted.
- (f.) In one case a widow and four children were deported by the Immigration Department.

(3.) Pensions lapsed or were withdrawn from the following causes:—

- (a.) Five cases of remarriage of the mother.
- (b.) One case of the death of the mother receiving pension.
- (c.) Two cases of the death of children.
- (d.) One case of the child reaching the age of 16.

These latter cases will, of course, increase in number each month.

One application was happily withdrawn when the husband, who had been a prisoner of war in Germany, was able to get in touch with his family.

Some applicants withdrew of their own accord when they understood they were not eligible under the terms of the Act.

#### WORK OF ADVISORY BOARDS.

Up to November 30th, 1920, the Vancouver Advisory Board has held twenty-one sessions and the members have devoted themselves assiduously to deciding each case on its own merits, always keeping before them the one principle of what is best for the child in all of the varying conditions that are presented.

In the District of Kamloops Mrs. D. B. Johnstone has carried on the work up to the present alone. She reports having investigated twenty-three cases, and is glad to state that where the pension has been granted the children are more suitably clad, look healthier and happier, and a great burden has been lifted from the shoulders of the mother.

In Revelstoke the Advisory Board held its organization meeting on August 25th, 1920. It has held eight meetings up to November 30th, 1920, and dealt with nine applications. The Board notices a marked improvement in the home conditions of those who have received pensions and states that a general feeling of appreciation prevails among them.

In Armstrong the Board did not receive its official appointment until October 28th, 1920. Some applications had been dealt with before it was organized. Two cases were dealt with up to November 30th, 1920. Mrs. Susie Ingles writes of one case: "A more grateful little mother you could not imagine. She often says that the pension of \$50 a month takes her off 'worry street' and places her where she can give her little ones what they need."

The Nelson Advisory Board held its first meeting on September 2nd, 1920. It has held six meetings up to November 30th, 1920, and has investigated eighteen cases, of which fourteen were granted. Mrs. Crease for the Nelson Board writes: "The beneficiaries in Nelson are most grate-

ful and we think that as an economic question it will eventually pay the State an hundredfold. The mothers will be able to keep their children at school longer and better fit them to care for the mothers themselves later. One said: "Now I shall be able to put my girl through for a teacher, and look what that means. She'll help us all later for she is a good girl." In several cases the mothers were working too hard and for them the grant is a great boon."

The Westminster Advisory Board held its inaugural meeting on Tuesday, September 7th, 1920, and has investigated forty-eight cases, recommending thirty-four for pensions. Ending with November 30th, 1920, the Board has held nine meetings. Mrs. Dorgan, the Secretary, writes: "All recipients, as far as we are able to investigate, are making good use of the funds and in some cases the pension is nothing short of a blessing. Owing to the large number of cases that are continually coming in the Board cannot carry on the follow-up work systematically. The Board would suggest that clergymen who recommend applicants should familiarize themselves with the terms of the "Mothers' Pensions Act," as the Board receive many cases where the applicants do not in any way come under the Act, which makes unnecessary work for them."

The Trail Advisory Board since being organized has held two meetings, the first on September 17th and the second on November 5th. At the first meeting six cases were brought up and it was decided to interview these at once. Of the six, five have been granted the pension; the other one is still in abeyance. At the second meeting three more cases were discussed, and of these three, one has been granted a pension, the other two not being indigent. In general the people of the district appreciate the benefits derived from the Act and consider that so far it has been quite satisfactorily administered. It has proved a great boon to those mothers actually in need of help and probably next to the "Workmen's Compensation Act" is the most popular piece of legislation of recent years.

The Rossland Advisory Board since its appointment in July has held meetings from time to time as the applications have been received and has kept in touch with applicants since. Twelve cases have been investigated; ten of these are now in receipt of the pension, one has proved not indigent, and one is now being dealt with. The amount distributed in Rossland up to the end of November is \$1,943.10. Twenty-three children under the age of 16 have been benefited not only by having their mother with them, but by her ability, through the means of mothers' pensions, to procure the necessities of life more readily. The general feeling, particularly where there are a number of very young children, is that this assistance is a godsend.

As some of the mothers now receiving help from the Patriotic Fund automatically cease to be eligible for that-relief, they may be expected to apply for mothers' pensions.

Too much praise cannot be given to the various Advisory Boards throughout the Province. Their work of visiting, investigating, and keeping in touch with the various families has been wholly a labour of love for public welfare. They will reap their reward in the knowledge that they have so infinitely bettered conditions among the many widows and children.

The happier and more contented mother has a different outlook on life and can approach the questions that confront her in the care and upbringing of her children with a stouter heart.

Those of us who have been in close personal touch with the mothers themselves cannot but express our great admiration for the kind of women who are receiving pensions. Nowhere could a better type of mother be found than these brave women who have in their times of adversity tried to do double duty to their children, in many cases causing permanent detriment to their health.

#### PROBLEMS.

Many are the difficult problems that concern the Advisory Boards in the decisions they reach regarding each application.

(1.) For example, what constitutes indigence in the mother? Some hold property assessed at a value over and above the amount stipulated have it heavily encumbered or for other reasons it is not revenue-producing. Where there is no will it cannot be disposed of during the minority of the children.

(2.) Where there are older children contributing to the support of the home there are circumstances which prevent their giving what would be sufficient for their board; they may have incurred debts for their education which have to be paid.

(3.) Where there are children over the school age of 14 and under 16 employed are earning a little money, the question arises, should they be granted pensions?

(4.) Where there are relatives in the home who are not able to contribute sufficient for their support, would the granting of the pension assist them instead of the children?

(5.) Should provision be made for children *in utero* or those conceived while the husband is incapacitated for work and the family receiving a pension?

(6.) A rather remarkable situation is met with in the case of deserted wives who have secured legal separations with orders not sufficient for the support of themselves and their children, but whose papers have been drawn up with a clause barring them from taking further legal proceedings against the deserting husband and father. The question arises, should the man be free to throw his responsibility upon the State?

In the outlying districts of the towns and cities many of the mothers own their own little homes, in some cases free from encumbrances. In these cases the problem of living is somewhat reduced.

Housing conditions in the congested districts of the cities are serious. It is especially noticeable in rooming-houses, where the overcrowding of families and inadequate sanitary arrangements are a menace to health.

Mothers whose pensions are so insufficient that they work part of the time are obliged to live near their work to save time and car fare. These conditions, coupled with the street environment, are detrimental to the children.

More stringent enforcement of the laws, especially those relating to housing and health conditions, and also the "Deserted Wives Act," would assist the Advisory Board materially in their decisions.

Speaking generally, the administration of the "Mothers' Pensions Act," even for the very short time it has been in force, has accomplished what its most earnest advocates hoped it would do in the cause of social reform.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

DAVID B. BRANKIN,

*Superintendent of Neglected Children.*

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VICTORIA, B.C. :

Printed by WILLIAM H. CULLIN, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

1921.

