

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

PURCHASING COMMISSION

FOR THE PERIOD

APRIL 19TH, 1943, TO DECEMBER 31ST, 1943



PRINTED BY
AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

VICTORIA, B.C. :

Printed by CHARLES F. BANFIELD, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty.
1944.

VICTORIA, B.C., January 5th, 1944.

To His Honour W. C. WOODWARD,
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

Herewith I beg respectfully to submit the Annual Report of the Purchasing Commission of the Department of Finance for the period April 19th, 1943, to December 31st, 1943.

JOHN HART,
Minister of Finance.

The Hon. John Hart,
Minister of Finance, Victoria, B.C.

SIR,—We have the honour to submit the First Annual Report of the Purchasing Commission, covering the period April 19th, 1943, to December 31st, 1943.

C. B. PETERSON,
Chairman.
E. W. GRIFFITH,
Member.
J. M. STEWART,
Member.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT *of the* PURCHASING COMMISSION for the period April 19th, 1943, to December 31st, 1943.

Pursuant to the provisions of the "Purchasing Commission Act," being chapter 54 of the Statutes of 1943, the members of the Commission were appointed on April 19th, 1943, and held their first meeting the following day. In all, sixty-four meetings were held during the balance of the year, and, in addition, personal control over certain phases of the operations has been exercised by the Chairman. The proceedings of all meetings are recorded and indexed for reference.

As a result of the war-time conditions, it has not been possible to put into operation all the functions contemplated by the Act—such as the establishment of warehouses, and the making of bulk purchases—for the reason that supplies have not been available in sufficient quantity. It will be generally understood that normal market conditions do not prevail at the present time, and, in the purchasing of supplies and equipment, consideration has had to be given not only to prices, but also to the limited sources of supply.

This situation became so acute that the Commission considered it advisable to have a Buying Agent located in Vancouver to keep in close touch with market conditions, obtain prices, inspect materials, and generally to report on the availability of supplies, including second-hand equipment. This appointment was made on October 1st and the Vancouver Buying Agent is now rendering valuable assistance.

Coincident with the assumption of control over office furniture and equipment, as provided by the Act, the making of a detailed inventory and valuation of this property throughout all Government offices was undertaken, and this has already resulted in substantial economies being effected. Transfers have been arranged so as to obviate the necessity of making new purchases, and much equipment previously discarded is being repaired and put into service. The experienced cabinetmaker, who was appointed on October 1st to carry on this work, is showing excellent results.

The excessive cost of maintaining the large number of Government-owned typewriters, and the inadequacy of the service obtainable in outlying districts, prompted the Commission to establish its own facilities in Vancouver for rebuilding, repairing, and servicing all the machines in that area and throughout the Interior of the Province. A repair-shop was equipped and an expert mechanic employed on June 1st; another mechanic was added to the staff on August 1st. These two men have been able to cover the whole Province other than Vancouver Island, and very favourable reports on the services rendered have been received from the several districts. Due to the high priority rating required, it has been impossible to purchase new machines, and consequently a large number have required extensive repairs or rebuilding in order to keep them in service. Altogether, excellent results have been obtained at a very reasonable cost, and it is proposed to extend the service as occasion arises.

Along with the ordinary routine necessary to purchasing, the Commission has given special attention to the following:—

- (1.) Curtailment of emergency purchasing, and the fostering of competitive bidding.
- (2.) Ensuring coal supply to the several Government institutions, and providing adequate reserves under present difficult conditions. The supply of coal is purchased on contracts, but, owing to prevailing conditions, neither contractors nor the collieries were able to guarantee either quantity, size, or quality. Deliveries were so uncertain that it was found necessary to make provision for reserves, both on the mainland and on Vancouver Island.

- (3.) Inventories of Government property in addition to the inventory of office furniture and equipment. Each Department of the Government is providing its own inventory, and these are being checked and consolidated by the Commission staff. Due to the volume and variety of this equipment, the final summary is not yet available for submission.
- (4.) Supply and replacements of automobiles required for the several Government Departments for essential services. The severe restrictions controlling the supply of automobiles even for essential services forced the Commission into the used car market. Even here a scarcity is felt, and the problem of replacement continually engaged the attention of the Commission. Annual statements of operating costs of every automobile in Government Service are being obtained so that full information may be available as a guide to replacement.
- (5.) Disposal by transfer or sale of surplus and worn-out equipment and supplies to the best advantage. The principle of advertising, either general or local, was adhered to.
- (6.) The acquisition of numerous articles of second-hand equipment, necessitated by priority requirements.
- (7.) The following matters pertaining to the prescribed functions of the Commission are being studied and put into effect:—
 - (a.) The building-up of a complete commodity price list.
 - (b.) Standardization of supplies and specifications for same.
 - (c.) The testing of materials and supplies.
 - (d.) Distribution of business, having regard to quality, price, and service.
 - (e.) Consideration of plans for making bulk purchases for all Government institutions as and when conditions permit.

In carrying out its duties the Commission has endeavoured to adhere to the policy of giving preference to goods produced or sold locally, as laid down in section 9 of the Act, in so far as compatible with the provisions of sections 5 and 13.

At this time figures are not available which would allow a comparison in volume of purchases with previous years. However, detailed records of purchases are now being maintained and will be submitted in future reports.

VICTORIA, B.C. :

Printed by CHARLES F. BANFIELD, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty.
1944.