

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Thirty-third Annual Report of the
PURCHASING COMMISSION

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31

1975



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in right of the Province of British Columbia.

1976

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Third Annual Report of the
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Printed and bound by the Government of British Columbia
at the Government Printing Office, Victoria, B.C.

*The Honourable Evan Wolfe,
Minister of Finance,
Province of British Columbia,
Victoria, B.C.*

SIR: We have the honour to submit the Thirty-third Annual Report of the Purchasing Commission, covering the period January 1, 1975, to December 31, 1975.

T. L. VARDY
Chairman

L. J. WALLACE
Member

G. L. J. GILES
Member

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Thirty-third Annual Report of the Purchasing Commission

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GENERAL

As stated in previous Annual Reports, the total purchases under the Act include purchases made by the divisions of those departments with authority to purchase delegated under section 10 of the Act. Records for these divisions are therefore included in the table below. The division appearing in previous records as the Curriculum Resources Branch is now changed in name to Publications Services.

| Department and Division | Number of Purchase Orders | | Total Value of Purchase Orders | |
|---|---------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| | 1974 | 1975 | 1974 | 1975 |
| <i>Education—</i> Publication Services | 2,150 | 1,307 | \$ 8,462,962 | \$ 7,620,459 |
| <i>Provincial Secretary—</i> | | | | |
| (a) Legislative Library and Archives | 937 | 883 | 32,530 | 17,972 |
| (b) Library Development Commission | 474 | 293 | 186,532 | 258,802 |
| (c) Queen's Printer | 4,460 | 4,606 | 5,589,813 | 5,253,022 |
| <i>Finance—</i> Purchasing Commission for all departments | 58,622 | 51,055 | 113,526,670 | 112,876,920 |
| Totals | 66,643 | 58,144 | 127,798,507 | 126,027,175 |

The year 1975 has been one of challenge, with the inflationary trend again the dominant factor. The conditions indicated in the Thirty-second Annual Report still prevail, namely, the inability or unwillingness of suppliers to offer or maintain firm prices, lengthy delivery schedules, and to varying degree, shortages of materials.

Substantial price increases in most areas of the market place have been evident, so much so that the situation has been of prime concern to all Governments in the western world. Stringent measures have been taken, even to the extent of imposed legislation to try to halt, or preferably roll back, the continued escalatory trend of expenditure of public funds. The Province of British Columbia has been no exception in this regard, and its supporting decisions have been contributory to a decrease in total expenditure by the Purchasing Commission for the year under review when compared with that of 1974.

The over-all decrease in expenditure is \$1,771,335, or approximately 1.4 per cent. Because of inflation, the number of purchase orders issued is a better indicator, and this has been decreased by 8,499 or 12.8 per cent.

The total value of purchases for the year is \$126,027,125, and includes emergency purchases of which there is a decrease of 8,383 from the previous year, giving a total of 15,632.

In May 1975 the Purchasing Commission acquired new quarters at 914 Yates Street, Victoria. The move from Superior Street has been greatly appreciated by

most, and the merging of the work force under the same roof has proved effective. Proper work flows have been planned, co-ordination has improved, and the benefits so obtained have already been apparent in the smoother and more efficient operation of the Commission as a whole.

STAFF

The staff now totals 95 employees and includes the nucleus of a new section to re-establish control of inventories. A start has begun with office furniture, and early reports indicate progress made and good co-operation from departments in this large task.

The small increase in staff, together with a number of internal procedural changes, has resulted in a reduction in the amount of temporary help. The service to departments, not always hitherto possible, has improved and the willingness of the clerical staff to adapt to changes has brought about the increased efficiency mentioned earlier. It is to be commended for its contribution in this regard, especially so during the numerous times of stress experienced, such as mail strikes and other adverse labour and market conditions. This contribution is well recognized and certainly appreciated.

BUSINESS MACHINES SERVICES DIVISION

Despite a reduction in new purchases of business machines during the latter half of 1975, the machine inventory has increased a further 1.13 per cent within the Provincial Service. Although the division no longer maintains services at the B.C. Institute of Technology and other community colleges, additional demands for maintenance of equipment have been made because of the acquisition by the Department of Attorney General of Provincial Courts in cities and municipalities throughout British Columbia. To date, several hundred machines appear to be involved requiring extra time and attention to bring the equipment up to Provincial standards. Until this is completed, a true inventory will not be available.

The Department of Health and Hospital Insurance requested the division to absorb the maintenance of the equipment in the B.C. Medical Plan as its contractual services expire. This is gradually being accomplished.

It is recommended the employment of apprentices be encouraged and that the present standard of a minimum of one apprentice per each five journeymen-technicians on staff be maintained. Such programming is necessary to meet the demands of personnel leaving or retiring, as it has repeatedly been shown it is virtually impossible to obtain suitably trained staff through the conventional market place without considerable retraining.

Table 1—Machines as at December 31, 1974

| Type of Machine | Number in Departmental Offices | Number in Vocational Schools | Number in BCIT | Total Number |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Typewriters | 7,754 | 896 | 206 | 8,856 |
| Adding and calculating machines | 4,487 | 401 | 620 | 5,508 |
| Dictation/transcription equipment and tape recorders | 5,409 | 387 | 104 | 5,900 |
| Miscellaneous equipment—posting, bookkeeping, cash registers, duplicators, etc. | 1,667 | 358 | 136 | 2,161 |
| Total as at December 31, 1974 | 19,317 | 2,042 | 1,066 | 22,425 |
| Percentage increase in 12 months | 25.24 | 2.3 | 24.24 | 22.87 |

Table 2—Machines as at December 31, 1975

| Type of Machine | Number in Departmental Offices | Number in Vocational Schools | Number in BCIT | Total Number |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Typewriters | 8,600 | 281 | | 8,881 |
| Adding and calculating machines | 5,587 | 180 | | 5,767 |
| Dictation/transcription equipment and tape recorders | 5,933 | 195 | | 6,128 |
| Miscellaneous equipment | 1,790 | 113 | | 1,903 |
| Total as at December 31, 1975 | 21,910 | 769 | | 22,679 |
| Percentage increase in 12 months | 13.42 | 62.3 ¹ | | 1.13 |

¹ Decrease.

THE VANCOUVER OFFICE

F. H. Leonard, Chief Purchasing Agent in Vancouver, reports a successful year for the Vancouver Office. It has been a year of unusually high incidence of medical problems amongst the staff; the morale factor, however, remained high and the staff turnover was *nil*.

Two new positions were established, including one of purchasing agent, bringing the staff to a total of 14. In the Business Machines Vancouver Section, the staff totals 10.

A revised organizational procedure, together with more closely defined delegation of responsibilities, has been introduced, and this has contributed to a more efficient operation with the help of an enthusiastic staff.

SURPLUS DISPOSAL SECTION

The proceeds realized from the sale of Government surpluses by public offer or auction has shown a substantial increase of \$215,538 for a total of \$560,903. The funds are returned to Consolidated Revenue.

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Department of Highways— | \$ |
| (a) Equipment | 375,372 |
| (b) Buildings | 29,553 |
| Other departments | 155,978 |
| Total | 560,903 |

In addition, new storage premises for surplus furniture and similar equipment has been acquired. With this facility the transfer of surplus equipment between departments has been greatly improved and obvious savings have been apparent in this area.

LANGFORD WAREHOUSE

There has been no change in the function of the warehouse and the number of its employees. The demands placed upon it by the departments have been slightly reduced and the value of goods processed is \$925,815; the amount the previous year was \$1,038,048.

CONCLUSION

The Commission gratefully acknowledges the specialized purchasing done under delegated authority by the Queen's Printer, the Director of Publication Services, the Legislative Librarian and the Archivist, and the Superintendent of the Library Development Commission.

The co-operation extended by the departments in adjusting to the several procedural changes inaugurated during the year is also appreciated.

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