

**APPENDIX.**



**SESSIONAL PAPERS.**

# FIRST REPORT

OF THE

## REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES

FOR THE

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,

1872-3.



VICTORIA :

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1874.

# FIRST REPORT

OF THE

## REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, & MARRIAGES,

FROM

1ST SEPTEMBER, 1872, TO 31ST DECEMBER, 1873.

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*To His Excellency the Honorable JOSEPH W. TRUTCH, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:—

In compliance with the 17th Section of an Act passed in the First Session of the First Parliament of the Province of British Columbia, intituled "An Act respecting Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in the Province of British Columbia," the following Report is presented:

The Act took effect on the 1st day of September, 1872, and although the period under review is from that date until the 31st December, 1873, my Report covering the operations of the Act, over a population so limited as that of British Columbia, must necessarily be extremely brief.

Whilst fully recognizing the utility of the system of Registration now inaugurated in the Province, as well as the soundness of the principles upon which it is based, it will not be out of place to advert to the fact, that the Act is founded upon the Ontario Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act, 1869, of which, with the exception of a few trifling alterations, it is a transcript.

The Ontario Act, it must be remembered, was framed expressly to meet the wants of an old and wealthy Province, having a large and permanently settled population, with an unrivalled general Municipal system, which could be utilized in carrying it into effect; and the result, as might well be expected, has proved most favorable. It will, I think, be readily admitted that British Columbia possesses but few, if any, of these elements of success; and therefore it is not to be expected, at this period of the existence of the British Columbia Act, that it will be found to have attained results equally satisfactory.

There are many obstacles in the way of obtaining complete Returns, chiefly arising from the great distance from Registry Offices at which a large portion of the population reside; the want of cheap and speedy means of communication; the migratory habits of the people of the Mining Districts; and the difficulty of disseminating, over a Territory so vast and sparsely settled as that covered by the Registration Districts, information of the provisions and requirements of the Act; but, notwithstanding these disadvantages the Returns for the past year, although not as complete as could be wished, augur well for the future, and I feel confident that within a short period (unless interfered with by Dominion Legislation) as favourable results from the operation of the Act may be looked for, in proportion to population, as have been already attained under similar Acts in other parts of the Dominion.

Upon constitutional grounds there may not exist any objection to each Province, within its own limits, informing itself on the subject of population; but if the British North America Act be examined, amongst the subjects reserved by the 91st Section for the exclusive jurisdiction of the Dominion Parliament, the item "Census and Statistics" will be found enumerated, and it seems quite clear that this item is intended to comprise the very information which British Columbia is seeking to obtain, through the medium of the Registration Act, and at her own expense. The British Columbia Act, therefore, as well as the Registration Acts of Ontario and other Provinces, is liable to be practically swept away at any moment; and, in the event of any legislation by the Dominion Parliament on this subject, British Columbia should be prepared to obtain, if possible, a transfer to the Dominion Government of the machinery and records already established under the Provincial Act.

The Act might be amended, with much advantage to its successful operation, particularly with respect to the sections providing for Marriage Returns, and in one or two minor points; but in the face of the 91st Section of the British North America Act, just referred to, I have felt considerably embarrassed as to whether or not any alterations should be recommended involving additional expense, for which an adequate value might not be received, in consequence of Dominion legislation; and although the present Returns may not be considered quite as satisfactory as could be desired, I have concluded that any recommendations for amending the Act would be premature, before it is known what action the Dominion Government intend to take with respect to the establishment of a Statistical Bureau at Ottawa; and, in the meantime, any change in the present regulations that may be deemed necessary can be made under Section 18, which provides that "The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may, from time to time, make such further rules, orders, and regulations as may be required for the purpose of more effectually obtaining the information required by this Act." I will, however, take the opportunity, in a subsequent part of my Report, of suggesting the practicability of utilizing Section 18 in obtaining more complete Returns.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 1, the Province was divided into Nine Registration Districts, viz.:-

- No. 1. Consisting of the Electoral Districts of Victoria City and District, Esquimalt and Cowichan.
- No. 2. Consisting of the Electoral Districts of Nanaimo and Comox.
- No. 3. Consisting of the Electoral Districts of New Westminster City and District.
- No. 4. Consisting of the Electoral District of Yale.
- No. 5. Consisting of the Polling Division of Clinton and Canoe Creek, in the Electoral District of Lillooet.
- No. 6. Consisting of the Polling Division of Lillooet, in the Electoral District of Lillooet.
- No. 7. Consisting of the Electoral District of Cariboo, except the Polling Division of Omineca.
- No. 8. Consisting of the Polling Division of Omineca, in the Electoral District of Cariboo.
- No. 9. Consisting of the Electoral District of Kootenay.

By Section 2, the Registrar General of Titles is created Superintendent of District Offices, and District Registrar in his own District. This section is, perhaps, the most objectionable feature in the Act, and effects a most singular combination of offices, the duties of one position being inconsistent with the duties pertaining to the other position, as well as conflicting materially with the Registrar's duties, under other and more important legislative enactments. Under this section also, and in addition to the creation of the Registrar-General a District Registrar, eight District Registrars were appointed, as provided for by the 3rd Section; and, as soon as possible, after the division of the Province into Registration Districts, all necessary books and forms were procured and forwarded to the District Registrars, together with forms of medical certificate under Section 11.

Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 relate more immediately to the public than any other portions of the Act, and point out the persons upon whom the duty devolves of reporting

Births, Deaths, and Marriages. This duty falls principally on parents and clergymen, and in cases of death upon the occupant of the house wherein the death happened; in fact, upon that portion of the community whom it was but reasonable to suppose would take the greatest interest in performing the duties which have necessarily fallen to their lot; and the majority, as a rule, acknowledge the vast superiority of the present general Registration system over the old system of Church Registries hitherto subsisting in this Province. For more general public information, a table of the persons required to make reports of Births, Deaths, and Marriages will be found in the Appendix, arranged in the order prescribed by the Act.

The duty of the Medical Practitioner, a very slight one, is defined by Section 11, and consists in making a certified return of the cause of death, within thirty days thereafter, in the form supplied by the office, on application.

Any erroneous entry that may have been made in the Register may be corrected, under the provisions of Section 12, within one year after the making of such entry.

Section 13 provides for the infliction of a penalty on District Registrars, for any refusal or non-performance of duty; and Section 19 renders every person required to make reports liable, for refusing or wilfully neglecting so to do, to a penalty of not less than five dollars, or more than twenty dollars, and costs.

The 14th Section provides for the compilation, by the Registrar-General, from the District Returns, of a General Register, and for arranging, indexing, and binding the original Returns.

Section 15, amongst other things, provides that extracts may be taken from the Register, and that such extracts shall be *prima facie* evidence in all Courts of Law and Equity in the Province, of the facts therein stated. Establishing, as it does, a very simple and inexpensive method of perpetuating evidence of a most valuable character, not only to the present but to future generations, it at once becomes, in point of utility, one of the most valuable provisions of the Act, and is of itself sufficient to stamp it in public estimation as one of the most important enactments in the Provincial Statute Books. Although legislation against fraud is in all cases more or less ineffectual, yet the value of the evidence to be obtained under this section is greatly enhanced by the provisions of Section 16, which provides that any person, knowingly or wilfully, making or causing to be made any false statement, touching any of the particulars required to be reported in pursuance of the Act shall, upon conviction thereof, forfeit a sum of not less than fifty, and not exceeding one hundred dollars.

Up to the present time it has not been deemed necessary to take any steps under Section 18, but for the purpose of obtaining more complete returns and thus greatly increasing the value of the Act for statistical purposes, this section becomes most important, as a means whereby more extended facilities for Registration may be given to those persons who reside at so great a distance from Registration Offices as to render a compliance with the provisions of the Act almost an impracticability, and I would suggest that under this section, and so soon as conveniently may be, one or more Collectors of Reports should be appointed for each of the Polling Divisions, of which the Districts on the Mainland are composed, and in Vancouver Island a Collector should also be appointed for each of the Districts as defined upon the Official Maps of the Lands and Works Department. The Collector's duties would of course be limited to simply receiving reports, filling up forms supplied by the Department, attesting the signatures of informants, and forwarding the forms in a complete state to the District Registrars. The extra expense would be very trifling, as additional books would not be required, and would consist chiefly of postage and, perhaps, a small fee on each report, payable by the Government to the Collector.

As Superintendent, I have been unable to personally inspect any of the District Offices; nor do I see any probability of doing so during the current year, or in fact until such time as a Deputy Registrar, possessing the qualifications prescribed by the "Land Registry Ordinance, 1870," shall have been appointed, who could in my absence be entrusted with the Records of the Land Registry Office, which are of a private, as well as of a public nature. That the District Offices should be visited and the books examined, the returns for the past year afford ample proof.



To the great importance of Registration, the inhabitants of British Columbia should by this time be fully alive. The Department has made every effort to render them cognizant of the purposes of the Act, and that sufficient time should be allowed for all persons to make themselves familiar with its requirements, the Sections providing for the infliction of penalties, when these requirements have not been complied with, have so far been allowed to remain a dead letter, and such also appears by the third annual report of the Registrar General of Ontario to have been the course adopted in that Province.

The question, whether Indians and Chinese, being members of a Christian Denomination, having since their conversion ceased to be Indians and Chinese within the meaning of the Act, scarcely comes within the scope of this report, but so far as an opinion can be formed from the peculiar nomenclature of several of the Marriage Reports, the fact that the Act does not apply to Indians and Chinese appears to have been ignored, both by the Clergyman making the report and the Registrar receiving it.

The returns, as I have before stated, may not be considered quite as satisfactory as could be desired, and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, scarcely represent a fair proportion of the actual number of Births, Deaths and Marriages which ought to have been reported for the year 1873. Taking this into consideration, as well as the difficulties with which the Act has had to contend, and the want of a census upon which to base calculations, I have not deemed it advisable in this my first Report to make any estimate, on the basis of population, of the number of Births, Deaths, and Marriages which might reasonably have been expected, and which in older countries is closely followed, by the actual returns. Any such calculations at this period in the history of the Act, and under existing circumstances, would necessarily be unreliable, and I have, therefore, confined the Tables in the Appendix to a statement of the actual facts.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

I have the honor to be

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

H. B. W. AIKMAN,

Registrar-General.

*Land Registry Office,  
1st June, 1874.*

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## APPENDIX.

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### REMARKS ON THE APPENDIX.

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TABLE A.—This table is a Schedule of Births registered since the Act came in force. The number for the four months ending 31st December, 1872, being 50, and 164 for the year 1873, making a total of 214.

TABLE B.—Is a summary of Marriages, showing a total of 103 for the same period, being 15 for the four months ending 31st December, 1872, and 88 for the year 1873.

TABLE C.—Is the analysis of Deaths for the like period, showing 37 for the four months ending 31st December, 1872, and 112 for the year 1873, making a total of 149.

TABLE D.—This table is an abstract of the causes of Death, and is far from satisfactory. No less than 55 Registrations having been made, with the column for "Certified cause of Death" left blank. This, I believe, is partly attributable to the fact that a large portion of the population, both on the Mainland and on Vancouver Island, are not within reach of medical advisers, and partly to the indifference manifested by medical men in complying with the provisions of the Act.

TABLE E.—Shows the times in which the Reports of Births, Deaths, or Marriages, respectively, must be made, the persons required to make such reports, and the information to be given.

TABLE A.

Being a Summary of Births Registered from the commencement of the Act until 31st December, 1873.

Districts.	Male.	Female.	Number where both name and sex are omitted	Total.	Grand Total.
1872 (4 months).					
No. 1	16	16	...	32	
" 2	2	2	...	4	
" 3	2	6	...	8	
" 4	2	...	...	2	
" 5	1	...	...	1	
" 6	...	...	...	...	
" 7	3	...	...	3	
" 8	...	...	...	...	
" 9	...	...	...	...	
	26	24	...	50	50
1873.					
No. 1	38	49	...	87	
" 2	11	16	...	27	
" 3	15	11	...	26	
" 4	7	4	...	11	
" 5	2	3	...	5	
" 6	...	1	...	1	
" 7	2	3	...	5	
" 8	1	1	...	2	
" 9	...	...	...	...	
	76	88	...	164	164
					214







TABLE D.

Deaths Continued (Abstract of Causes).

Class.	1872.	1873.
I. Zymotic .....	4	6
II. Diseases uncertain seat.....	2	3
III. Tubercular .....	1	8
IV. Brain and Nervous System .....	4	7
V. Organs of Circulation .....	5	12
VI. Respiratory Organs .....	4	18
VII. Organs of Digestion .....	1	6
VIII. Urinary Organs .....	...	2
IX. Organs of Generation .....	...	1
X. Organs of Locomotion .....	...	2
XI. Atrophy .....	...	3
XII. Violent death .....	2	3
Not specified .....	14	41
<b>TOTALS</b> .....	<b>37</b>	<b>112</b>
I.		
Cholera Infantum .....	2	1
Whooping Cough .....	1	1
Syphilis .....	1	...
Influenza .....	...	1
Diphtheria .....	...	1
Variola .....	...	1
Typhus fever .....	...	1
	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
II.		
Dropsy .....	1	1
Hæmorrhage .....	...	2
Hæmoptysis.....	1	...
	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
III.		
Phthisis .....	1	7
Hydrocephalus .....	...	1
	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
IV.		
Apoplexy .....	1	...
Paralysis .....	1	2
Meningitis .....	1	...
Convulsions.....	1	...
Puerperal Mania .....	...	1
Brain disease .....	...	3
Brain fever .....	...	1
	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
V.		
Heart disease .....	5	6
Aneurism .....	...	5
Glandular disease .....	...	1
	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>

TABLE D.—Continued.

Class.	1872.	1873.
VI.		
Pneumonia .....	1	3
Catarrh.....	...	1
Asthma.....	...	2
Lung disease .....	3	9
Bronchitis.....	...	3
	4	18
VII.		
Gastritis .....	...	2
Peritonitis .....	1	...
Liver disease .....	...	4
	1	6
VIII.		
Kidney disease .....	...	2
IX.		
Organs of Generation.....	...	1
X.		
Rheumatism.....	...	1
Joint and bone disease .....	...	1
	...	2
XI.		
General debility .....	...	3
XII.		
Wounds .....	1	...
Drowning.....	1	...
Premature birth .....	...	1
Accidents.....	...	2
	2	3
Not specified .....	14	41

TABLE E.

## BIRTHS.

Notice of every Birth, within 60 days thereafter, must be given to the District Registrar of the District wherein the birth happened :—

1st.—By the father.

(In case of his death or absence)—

2nd.—By the mother.

(In case of the death or inability of both parents)—

3rd.—By the person standing in the place of the parents.

(If none such, then)—

4th.—By the occupant of the house or tenement wherein the child was born, or by the nurse present at the birth.

And every such notice must contain the following information :—

1. The date of the birth.
2. The name of the infant.
3. Its sex.
4. The name and surname of the father.
5. The name and maiden surname of the mother.
6. The rank or profession of the father.
7. The signature, description, and residence of the informant.
8. Name of accoucheur.

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#### DEATHS.

Every death, either before the interment of the body or within 30 days thereafter, must be reported to the District Registrar of the District wherein the death happened:—

1st.—By the occupier of the house or tenement wherein the death took place, or if the occupier of the house be the person who shall have died, then—

2nd.—By some one of the persons residing in the house in which the death took place ; and if the death shall not have taken place within a house, then—

3rd.—By any person present at the death or having any knowledge of the circumstances attending the same, or by the Coroner who may have attended the inquest held on such person.

And every such notice must contain the following information :—

1. Name and surname of deceased.
2. Date of death.
3. Sex.
4. Age.
5. Rank or profession.
6. Place of birth.
7. Name of physician (if any).
8. Description and residence of informant.
9. Religious denomination of deceased.

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#### MARRIAGES.

Every Marriage, within ninety days thereafter, must be reported to the District Registrar of the District wherein such Marriage was celebrated, by the Clergyman, Minister, or other person authorized by law to celebrate Marriages; and every such Report must contain the following information:—

1st.—The name of the Bridegroom;

His age;  
Residence when married;  
Place of birth;  
Condition;  
Rank or profession; and  
Name of parents.

2nd.—The name of the Bride;

Her age;  
Residence when married;  
Place of birth;  
Spinster or widow; and  
Name of parents.

3rd.—Name of witnesses;

Residence of witnesses;  
The date of marriage;  
Religious denomination of Bride and Bridegroom respectively;  
By whom married; and whether by license or banns.