

FOREWORD

The *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, now printed in five volumes, are a timely successor and supplement to *Memoirs Nos. II, III and IV*, all published by the Provincial Archives in 1918 and long out of print. When submitting the first of the series, *Memoir No. II*, to the Attorney General, the then Provincial Librarian and Archivist, E. O. S. Scholefield, wrote that it “. . . will give an idea of the value of the Provincial legislative records from an historical point of view. It will also serve a more practical purpose in indicating the source of many laws and policies, not a few of which have survived in one form or another to this day.” Those words remain as valid today as when they were written sixty-two years ago. If anything these records and documents of British Columbia’s colonial beginnings are of much more obvious relevance to the contemporary scene than they were at the conclusion of World War I. For as they appear or reappear in print, Canada is in the midst of a national debate on the constitution, and they comprise the foundation stones of any examination of the constitutional history of British Columbia, as well as the colonial era of the province’s history. Of especial interest should be the full verbatim text of the *Debate on the Subject of Confederation with Canada*, to be found as *Appendix A* in *Volume V*. In that *Debate* can be found the reasons why the colony of British Columbia decided to become a province of the Dominion of Canada in 1871.

All the records and documents published in *Memoirs II, III and IV*, as well as much additional material, has been painstakingly edited, or re-edited, by Dr. James E. Hendrickson, of the Department of History, University of Victoria. Credit for realizing the need for this work and for persuading the then Provincial Librarian and Archivist, the late Dr. Willard E. Ireland, that it should proceed to publication and then labouring long and exhaustively to bring it to a successful conclusion, belongs entirely to him. Dr. Hendrickson’s own Introduction describes many of the editorial problems he encountered; why some documents were or were not included in the three *Memoirs*; where other records could or could not be located; how they were created and how they were subsequently kept—and requires no advance commentary. He deserves the gratitude of everyone seriously interested in the history of British Columbia.

Tribute should be paid to the staff of the Government Printing Bureau who have persevered with what may be one of the most lengthy, and certainly not least complicated, printing assignments in its own long history. Everyone who has been involved in the project since its commencement, including three provincial archivists, trusts that it may prove to be a useful and enlightening contribution to the historiography of British Columbia.

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