

“A Natural Outcome of Free Schools”: The Free Text-Book Branch in British Columbia 1908–1949

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ABSTRACT

Impetus for the 1908 establishment of the Free Text-Book Branch in British Columbia arose from three sources: a new emphasis on social reform in the nation as a whole; the vibrant state of the province's economy; and political pressure instigated by parents, their School Trustee representatives, and organized labour, supported by the Vancouver School Board and City Council. It represented a concerted effort to provide equality of educational opportunity to all students enrolled in the public school system. In spite of the diverse array of challenges encountered, it was a change whose time had come.

RÉSUMÉ

L'établissement, en 1908, d'une succursale de la Free Text-Book en Colombie-Britannique tire son origine de trois éléments : l'importance renouvelée d'une réforme sociale sur le plan national; une économie provinciale prospère; et les pressions politiques initiées par les parents d'élèves, les commissaires d'école et les syndicats, pressions soutenues par le Conseil scolaire et le Conseil municipal de Vancouver. Cela représentait un effort concerté pour assurer des chances égales en matière d'éducation à tous les élèves du système scolaire public. Malgré les défis de toutes sortes, il s'agissait d'un changement qui s'imposait.

At the turn-of-the-twentieth century, many parents of British Columbia public school pupils were angry about the cost of their children's textbooks.¹ In August of 1903, as parents prepared to purchase books for the new school year, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* labelled one typical textbook list “absurdly extravagant.” The *Colonist* placed the blame squarely on teachers, declaring that “upon their devoted heads should descend the vengeance of the offended parents,” concluding that “demands by the teachers upon the pockets of the parents simply emphasize the urgency of improving our school system to the extent of supplying books, etc., absolutely without cost to the scholar.”² These concerns continued over the ensuing five years. A January 1908 editorial in the *New Westminster Daily Columbian* declared, “This is the time of the year when the irate parent indignantly demands whether it is not possible to do

something to abate the cost of supplying school books.”³

The Department of Education established the Free Text-Book Branch in July of 1908. Impetus for the establishment of a “free” textbook depository and distribution system was threefold: social, economic, and political. The first impetus was a prevailing emphasis on social reform in the nation as a whole, which was reflected in the province. The decision to establish the Branch was based in a fundamental belief in equal educational opportunity for all students. It occurred in a milieu awash with new ideas about equality of opportunity and construction of better lives through means such as easier access to education and health care, improved living and working conditions, and recognition of the rights of women and children. These ideas were already evident in a movement toward provision of free textbooks in other provinces and in the United States. The 1907 report of the Ontario Textbook Commission recommended a free system for that province and noted that “There is a marked tendency in all progressive communities on this continent towards this system. No place that has ever adopted it has gone back to the old system.”⁴ The second impetus was the healthy state of the province’s economy, supported by its resource industries. The third was political pressure instigated by members of the public and their school trustee representatives, as well as organized labour, which was advocating for both free distribution and local printing of the texts, subsidized by the provincial government.



Figure 1: *Until mid-century the textbook was the de facto curriculum. Provision of free textbooks was an important step toward equal educational opportunity for children.*

Image #CVA 273-4, Lord Tennyson Elementary, 1923, courtesy of City of Vancouver Archives.

Although the clarion call for free textbook provision in the province may have come initially from individual parents, the cause quickly became increasingly widespread, prominent, and political. This paper is concerned with the application of political pressure on the provincial government, the reform which resulted, and the challenges of carrying out that reform. Since the textbook was central to school instruction and assessment in this period, as well as the most visible representation of the educational system beyond the school building, an examination of textbook provision policy enables insights into the history of education more broadly.

Pressure for Textbook Provision Reform

When the British Columbia public school system was established in 1872, John Jessop, the first Superintendent of Schools, immediately set to work to develop a list of authorized textbooks based on the one in place in Ontario. By 1875, he could boast that all the books on his list were in use in British Columbia schools.⁵ These books were purchased from publishers by local booksellers who, after adding on their overhead and profit margins, made them available for sale to parents. In 1908, with the establishment of the Free Text-Book Branch, textbooks viewed as crucial—primers, readers, and arithmetic books—on the authorized list were distributed to elementary schools around the province from a central facility, and loaned to students, while the remainder continued to be sold through retail booksellers.

The first impetus for textbook provision reform stemmed from a desire in the nation for social reform more broadly, encompassing concerns about equality of opportunity, improvement of health care and living conditions, and access to education.⁶ Women's organizations such as the Women's Institutes, The National Council of Women, The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the Canadian Suffrage Association were lobbying for women's rights and the betterment of families. The Victorian Order of Nurses was providing nursing services in those rural areas that lacked medical facilities. With immigration at a high point just before the onset of World War I, there were concerns about assimilation of immigrant children, child labour, and preparation of future citizens for participation in a vibrant resource-based economy. Universal free schooling was considered essential to addressing these challenges and all of Canada's nine provinces had free public schooling for elementary school children by this time.⁷ Children's Aid Societies had been established across the country by 1905. Several provinces had passed legislation to protect children from neglect and abuse, including premature participation in the labour force. Volunteer organizations for the moral and social benefit of children were soon to be established, including Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT). In 1907, Vancouver appointed a physician as full-time medical inspector of school children.⁸ In an attempt to democratize course options, vocational courses such as domestic science and industrial education were being introduced into larger urban schools and agricultural studies courses into rural schools.⁹ A timely article from *Cosmopolitan*, which the *Victoria Colonist* chose to reprint in 1903, conveyed the tenor of the times: "Distinctions among students based on anything but scholarship are an evil. If any

pupils are to have books free, all should be so provided, that there may be in school no difference between the children of the poorer and those of the richer families.”¹⁰

The Department of Education was also influenced by contemporaneous practices in other provinces, as well as in the United States. David Wilson, first Free Text-Book Branch Officer in Charge, noted in his first official report, that the new free textbook system was congruent with the philosophy of “free schools,” and that other Canadian provinces were “furnishing pupils of their schools, free of charge, with all or nearly all the books required for the common school course.”¹¹ He pointed out that, in Alberta, textbooks were given outright to students. In Ontario the 1891 Public School Act provided that the public school board of any city, town, or incorporated village could furnish free textbooks for its pupils and, in response, the city of Toronto instituted a free system the following year. In 1896, the Ontario School Act gave rural school boards the authority to meet the expense for free textbooks by a general tax on ratepayers; although few boards took advantage of the opportunity. The Ontario Textbook Commission recommended in its 1907 report that a free textbook system be implemented throughout the province: “The evidence concerning free book systems now in vogue in many States and in the leading cities in the United States, in the City of Toronto and in the Province of Manitoba indicates that this is a subject to which the Department of Education should direct its serious attention...”¹²

The second impetus for reform arose from the booming economy. Resource-based industries such as forestry, the salmon fishery and canneries, copper and coal-mining, and fruit-growing were thriving. In 1905, the annual surplus of the province surpassed \$600,000. In 1910, it was \$2.4 million, while the surplus accrued between 1905 and 1910 totalled \$10 million. There were funds available to put toward social causes such as the promotion of equality of educational opportunity through provision of free textbooks.

A third factor was political pressure applied by parents, the BC School Trustees Association (supported by individual school boards), and the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council, which acted on behalf of organized labour. In October 1904, a committee of the Board of School Trustees of Vancouver recommended to the board that the subject of free textbooks be on the agenda of a joint meeting of the school boards of the four major cities in the province: Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster, and Nanaimo.¹³ Vancouver Trustee J.J. Dougan, who was also Secretary of the newly formed British Columbia School Trustees Association, noted that many schools were “furnished with free copy books and exercise books, and these were regarded as a step to free text books, as the system was found to be working so well.”¹⁴

In February 1906, the BC School Trustees Association, at its second annual convention, passed a resolution “strongly in favour of the Provincial Government undertaking to furnish free textbooks to the Boards of the Province at the smallest margin of profit.”¹⁵ In September 1907, the Association carried on in the same vein, passing a number of resolutions, including, “That the government of British Columbia be asked to provide free text books for the public schools of the province.”¹⁶ This resolution was “said to be the most important of all, and will be urged before the government stronger than all the others.”¹⁷ In January of 1908, the association sent

a delegation to the Minister of Education to lobby for a list of changes, with free textbooks and school medical inspections identified as the two priority items.¹⁸ On January 7, the day before the delegation was to present its resolutions to the provincial government, Association President P. Peebles published a letter to the editor of the New Westminster *Columbian*. Presenting himself in the role of champion for members of the public, he declared, "It is the opinion of not only the New Westminster people, but of the people of the whole province, that something should be done on that question immediately."¹⁹ He noted that he had received about fifty letters from trustees around the province, urging him to ensure that the government paid sufficient attention to that one particular resolution "even if the others should have to wait."²⁰ He also commented that he appreciated the "opportunity of letting the public know what is being done to remove the incubus from their necks."²¹ In a February letter to the editor of the Vancouver *Province* in which he defended universal access to education, J.J. Dougan remarked, "Our educational system is understood to be free: it is in all respects save school-books."²² He continued, "owing to the exorbitant price of the highest texts the youth is further discouraged, and, so has to leave school with a mere smattering of knowledge."²³

The Vancouver Trades and Labor Council added its voice to that of the trustees. After conducting an enquiry into textbook costs, "being pressed by organized labor all over the Province,"²⁴ and armed with formal endorsement from the Vancouver School Board and the City Council, the Trades and Labor Council submitted a petition to the provincial government, calling for free textbooks. The Council's influence in the decision to establish the Branch is evident in a March, 1908 letter from H.E. Young, Minister of Education, to Harry Cowan of the Council, in which Young acknowledges the "kindly advice" provided by Cowan and a Mr. Kernighan.²⁵

In addition, the Council, with the support of school trustees, attempted to convince the Education Department of the value of printing the textbooks locally, in order to provide employment opportunities and to avoid heavy shipping costs from eastern Canada.²⁶ There was an element of repugnance attached to the idea of supporting firms in eastern Canada. As Burnaby School Trustee Maxwell Smith proclaimed in 1907, "We need not be made the victims of eastern publishing who unload large quantities of poorly bound volumes on us at enormous combine prices."²⁷ The "combine" was a reference to what was also known as the "textbook ring," an oligopoly of three powerful Toronto publishers, W.J. Gage, Copp, Clark, and The Canada Publishing Company, who controlled the publishing of the lucrative *Ontario Readers*. The "ring" was on people's minds because the Ontario Textbook Commission had published its findings in January of 1907, concluding that the "ring" was charging exorbitant prices and making huge profits on cheaply-bound books.²⁸

The province declined to fund local printing, on the recommendation of Alexander Robinson, Superintendent of Education, who viewed it as too expensive and who found, upon investigation, that it was not done in any other province.²⁹ Also, as the Minister of Education, Dr. H.E. Young pointed out to the Victoria Printing & Publishing Company, copyright considerations prevented the Department from issuing its own textbooks without developing completely new content. He added,

“and while I know it would meet with the approval of a large section of the community to do all the work here, yet as I say, in the initial stages of the experiment, the Department does not feel itself justified in undertaking a very large expense. It is however the intention of the Department, as soon as circumstances warrant, to have everything done in British Columbia.”³⁰

Efforts to have textbooks printed locally continued for many years. In its 1924 brief to the Putman-Weir Commission on Education, the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council again demanded that the government provide all textbooks free of charge, pointing out that “British Columbia is particularly fortunate in that we have within the Province the raw materials and facilities for producing the paper, and a Government owned printing office which could easily be equipped for the manufacture of school books.”³¹

In November of 1928, the Victoria Trades and Labor Council entered the fray, with a delegation to the Victoria School Board which called for the King’s Printer to print the books, for the Victoria School Board to buy them wholesale and sell them to students at cost plus overhead expenses, and for curriculum revisions to be less frequent so that texts did not need to be replaced so frequently.³² Such efforts were doomed to failure because of economies of scale. British Columbia was simply too small a market to warrant the printing of texts locally except in isolated instances where content and purposes specific to British Columbia were involved.³³

A New Textbook Provision Policy

On February 25, 1908, the Minister of Education, Dr. Young, announced the decision to provide free textbooks in both urban and rural school districts.³⁴ Although the immediate impetus for free textbooks in British Columbia did not arise from the provincial government, but indirectly from the social reform movement, and more directly from parents’ concerns and political pressure, the government did take note and responded reasonably quickly.

Reaction was generally favourable.³⁵ However, retail booksellers spoke up against the plan. In fact, *Bookseller & Stationer*, the national booksellers’ journal, had been arguing against a free textbook policy since at least 1890, using two main lines of argument. First, the government had no “right to go into the book business and deprive the regular trade of their custom.”³⁶ Second, the policy would “create within the children a spirit of extravagance.”³⁷ In other words, students could not be expected to take the same care with books given to them at school as they would with books their parents had purchased for them. The *Victoria Colonist*, although it seemed to be in support of the cause of free textbooks from an ideological standpoint, also supported the booksellers, at least to a degree, objecting in 1905 to government competing with private business.³⁸ In 1908, the Dominion Booksellers’ Association seconded this opinion, noting that free textbooks “will make sad inroads upon the profits of the booksellers and stationers in the smaller towns [of Ontario], where the school book business is the backbone of their trade.”³⁹

The British Columbia booksellers’ most immediate concern centred on the stocks

they had in inventory when the free textbook policy was announced. Few parents would choose to purchase books from the local booksellers when they could obtain them free-of-charge at school. A number of booksellers and stationers wrote to the Department prior to implementation of the plan, requesting that it purchase the stocks of textbooks owned by their compatriots across the province. The Minister of Education refused to comply, explaining that the booksellers and stationers had sufficient notice to prevent them from purchasing new texts for the following fall.⁴⁰

Another source of concern originated with parents, but was taken up by booksellers. In an age prior to the advent of antibiotics, parents everywhere worried that previously-used books could harbour germs and disease. For example, a parent in Woodstock, Ontario, wrote to the Ontario Minister of Education in 1902, stating that:

I believe I am safe in saying the bulk of the textbooks are in bad shape very dirty, scribbled, worn and torn ... to say the least in a filthy state. More than that no one knows where these books are going nor where they have been; nor with what they may have come in contact in the shape of disease.... Books coming out of families where chronic disease exists are especially reprehensible.⁴¹

The booksellers, who had their own agenda, made the most of such concerns, talking about “disease-infested books”⁴² and books that were “dirty in the extreme,”⁴³ and announcing that the Health Officer of the city of Boston had “certified to the increase of contagious diseases from the use of free school-books.”⁴⁴

British Columbia education officials were well aware of these concerns. In February 1908, prior to the implementation of the program in British Columbia, the Vancouver *Daily Province* quoted School Inspector James Hughes of Toronto (which had a system of free textbooks), who reported that 271 books were confiscated because they had been in the possession of students living in homes where people had contacted contagious diseases.⁴⁵ When the department changed from a lending to a giving plan in the 1912–13 school year, Vancouver Inspector W.N. Winsby commended the decision, pointing out that giving students books was much more sanitary than lending.⁴⁶

Some fanciful ‘solutions’ were proposed. A *Colonist* article acknowledged concerns about books that harboured disease, but assured its readers that “many of these will be found to be perfectly clean and hygienic. The rest can easily be disinfected before redistribution.”⁴⁷ However, the article fails to enlighten readers as to exactly how the books were to be disinfected. Publisher W.J. Gage, notorious for grasping a sales opportunity when he saw one, began advertising germ-proof slates in 1909. According to Gage, there was a “new process of manufacturing slates so as to render them sanitary and proof against germs [which was] undoubtedly the greatest improvement made, so far, in this indispensable school article.”⁴⁸

Textbook Provision Policy in Practice

The Free Text-Book Branch was established in July of 1908 in the basement of the

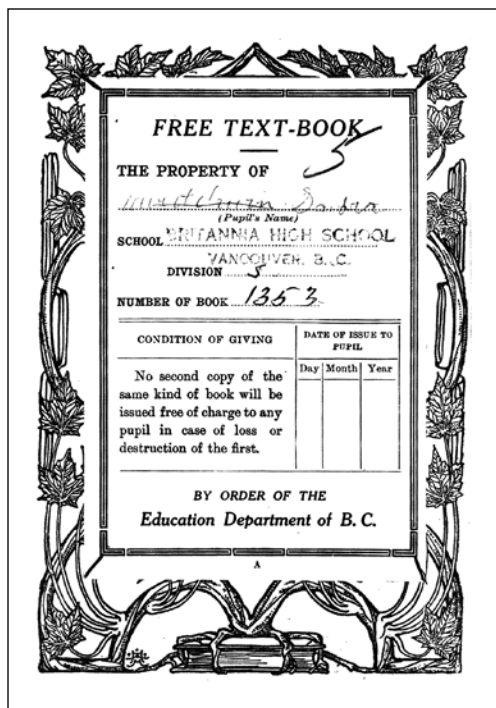


Figure 2: *Free Text-Book Branch sticker inserted into textbook.*

New Canadian Readers, 20th Century Edition, Fifth Reader, Toronto: The Educational Book Co., 1901. Historical Collection, University of British Columbia Education Library.

Parliament Buildings in the capital city of Victoria. The new arrangement was swiftly organized and at the outset almost all the elementary schools, as well as the provincial Normal School, took advantage of the offer of free textbooks.⁴⁹ The arrangement was like a “Lending Library, a book being charged to a pupil when received and marked off when returned.”⁵⁰ A printed copy of the regulations pertaining to this arrangement was glued inside the front cover of each book.

The enormous task of organizing the Branch fell to School Inspector David Wilson, who was appointed Officer in Charge, remaining in the position until his 1920 retirement. Wilson and his minimal staff of three full-time personnel ordered the books, organized procedures for storage and distribution, and developed an array of record-keeping forms, including requisitions, agreements, record books, and receipts.⁵¹

Considering the vast distances to schools in remote locations, the difficulties posed by the province’s mountainous terrain, and the limited transportation options available, the fact that all 195,598 books reached their 410 school destinations by the end of the first school term was an impressive administrative feat.⁵² The Branch was a boon to schooling in rural communities. As Director P.G. Barr pointed out in his 1959 review of the history of the branch, “Prior to reorganization, a \$1 book in Victoria or Vancouver might sell for \$1.50 in Atlin or Michel, and pupils had difficulty in obtaining the proper books at the right times.”⁵³

Primers, readers, and arithmetic texts were initially supplied on a lending basis,



Providing remote schools such as this one with free textbooks was a daunting challenge.⁵⁴

Figure 3: Longworth School, Fraser-Fort George, ca. 1928.

Image C-06392 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

along with consumable copybooks, exercise books, and scribblers. The primers were published by the Educational Book Company, the readers by W.J. Gage, the arithmetic texts by Morang, and the consumable books printed by the Kinleith Paper Company. These choices were a great coup for publisher William Gage since he owned all the firms but Morang. It must have been especially welcome at this time because the firm had lost the lucrative *Ontario Readers* contract the previous year, following the release of the Ontario Textbook Commission report. Record-keeping books and school flags were also supplied, with maps and globes added to the list in April 1909.⁵⁵

In early September, the *Victoria Colonist* reported a very positive response to the new system from people within the education system:

A number of appreciative letters have been received from secretaries of school boards as well as from individual teachers, expressing gratification at the new system. It is found that, apart from the advantage to the poor scholar, school work now progresses much more smoothly and effectively.... Now everybody is supplied with the requisite materials from the start and so there is no lost time.⁵⁶

By the end of the 1908 calendar year, after six months in operation, the Branch had shipped 569 cases to 410 public schools, at a cost of \$20,084.19 or \$0.61 per student. Wilson estimated that “If the parents of the thirty-three thousand school-children throughout the province had purchased the text-books called for by the 726 school requisitions at the prevailing retail prices, it would have meant an outlay for them of \$27,347.25.”⁵⁷ This was a reported savings to the public of \$7,263.06 or

36.1 percent less than what it would have cost to purchase the texts from the booksellers.⁵⁸ Wilson assured his readers that “this new departure in connection with the free school system of the Province seems to have been most favourably received by all who patronize the public schools, and that it can only be regarded as a further proof of the progressive spirit of those who initiated it.”⁵⁹

The reported cost-savings to parents are hypothetical and somewhat inaccurate since they are based on the assumption that parents would have purchased all the necessary texts each year. In fact, retail booksellers were not the sole option for obtaining textbooks available to the parents of the province. It was common practice for books to be passed down from one sibling to another. When that option was not available, many parents would most certainly have borrowed them from friends, neighbours, or relatives, or purchased them from second-hand bookstores. Also, as a later Officer in Charge of the Branch pointed out, “free text-books are not really free, for they must be paid for by the Government through taxation.”⁶⁰ Regardless, the Free Text-Book Branch was meeting its mandate to facilitate universal access to education, while expenditures may have represented some savings to the parents of the province.

The free textbook list was continually enlarged. *Universal Spelling* books, *Essentials of Health*, and *Elementary Agriculture and Nature Study* were added in 1909–10; *Latin Lessons*, and Drawing-books (no title) in 1910–11; *First Steps in English*, *Canadian Civics*, and *Syllabus of Physical Exercises for Schools* (the latter two for teacher use only) in 1911–12; and *How to be Healthy*, *World Relations and the Continents*, *History of Canada*, *New Method Writing Pads #1 and #2*, and writing manuals in 1912–13. Books continued to be added until the Great Depression brought the practice to a temporary halt in the 1930s.⁶¹

In 1909–10, the second year of operation, all of the elementary schools in the province participated in the program. In 1910–11, high schools, superior schools (grades one to ten), and night schools joined the plan. By 1912–13, free textbooks were sent to 662 schools in all parts of the province.⁶² The table below provides comparative information for the first five crucial years when the plan was under the greatest scrutiny.⁶³ Note that the 1908–09 report encompasses the Interim 1908 report. Total costs include the books, freight, and labour, as well as salaries for the three members of the Branch staff.

Table 1: Free Text-Book Branch Sales and Profits to Parents

Year	Schools	Students	Books Ordered	Total Cost	Net Profit
1908 (Interim)	410	33,000	195,598	\$20,084.19	\$7263.06
1908–09	430	35,000	263,974	\$25,637.37	\$7784.78
1909–10	482	37,629	125,141	\$24,886.49	\$4650.41
1910–11	560	45,125	116,377	\$19,751.98	\$4866.92
1911–12	609	50,170	141,886	\$25,487.52	\$5903.23
1912–13	662	57,384	256,944	\$45,364.29	\$13,083.38

Source: British Columbia Department of Education, *Annual Reports of the Public Schools*, 1909–1913.

David Wilson chose to refer to parents' savings as "profits." It is a peculiar term because it implies that the parents and the Branch were engaged in a commercial endeavour involving the making of money. Money may have been saved, but it was not being made.

In November 1909 the Branch reported a high number of requisitions due to the sale of 161,112 scribblers during the 1908–09 school year. This was reduced to 41,905 orders in 1909–10, most of which were filled from reserve stock, and dropped completely in 1910–11. This may help to account for the drop in so-called profits in 1909–10. When the school term began in 1912, the student population had risen sharply and fifty-three schools were added. This, along with the destruction of 80 percent of the books in the schools in preparation for the conversion from a lending to a giving system that year, accounts for the huge increase in orders and profits.⁶⁴

Challenges in Implementing Reform

Political will can be a necessary catalyst for social reform; however, in the final analysis it becomes the responsibility of someone to take the required practical steps to implement the desired changes and they can look very different on the ground. Certain challenges and conflicts arose. One such conflict stemmed from the mundane difficulties posed by the quotidian tasks associated with the accountability necessary to maintain the system at school board and school levels. While British Columbia schoolchildren and their parents were the beneficiaries of the scheme, beleaguered teachers, school administrators, and school trustees encountered its drawbacks.

On top of their many other duties, teachers were held responsible to school boards for requisitions and records to account for books received and their disbursement, to be completed in accordance with strict guidelines set out by the Free Text-Book Branch.⁶⁵ In May of 1908, the Department sent an explanatory circular which provided instructions for requisitioning books.⁶⁶ Later, it sent a postcard to each teacher with a reminder to specify entries of all requisition receipts and disbursements.⁶⁷ In November of 1909, a circular was issued with a set of specific guidelines in order to reduce the loss, damage, and destruction of books. The circular reminded its readers that the success of the free textbook system was dependent on the care taken of the books and it urged both teachers and principals to concern themselves with overseeing the use of textbooks by the pupils, with special attention to the use of books by junior pupils. Only the Medical Health Officer, School Inspector, or Superintendent could condemn free texts to be destroyed. Wilson tried to underline the importance of the circular in his final note: "This circular should be preserved for the future guidance of all concerned. A copy should be pasted in book-case or in Principal's or Teacher's Record."⁶⁸

It was mandatory for teachers to file a report on a form supplied, recording the number of books in use, in reserve, the total number received, returned, lost, or destroyed, with receipts attached. Wilson justified this meticulous recording of expenditures because he believed that taxpayers had a right to know. As he put it in his January 1909 report, "the people of the province collectively are the principals in the

purchase and distribution of these free textbooks for the use of their children, [and] it is proper that they should learn whether or not this experiment has been of advantage to them financially.”⁶⁹

Wilson noted in his report for 1909–10, the “inevitable and expected shrinkage” of free textbook stock, due to missing, lost or destroyed books.⁷⁰ School Inspectors, who were employed by the Department of Education, continually blamed teachers for insufficient care of the free textbooks supplied, inadequate record keeping, and incompetence when following the “simple” directions of circulars. For instance, in the 1910 *Annual Report*, Inspector J.S. Gordon of Victoria wrote to Superintendent Robinson,

In too many of the schools of all classes there is not sufficient care being taken.... The records in many cases are poorly kept; in a few cases, not kept at all. Some teachers, instead of following the simple directions given for the keeping of records, have worked out systems of their own which are less simple and less likely to be understood by their successors. In not a few instances, when I was asked to condemn books as unfit for use, no information could be secured as to how long the books had been used. This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs and one quite inexcusable. It is to be hoped that teachers will pay more attention in future to the simple task of keeping a satisfactory record of all free text-books supplied.⁷¹

The responsibility to monitor adherence to the agreement fell on the shoulders of the school trustees. With every shipment a receipt form was sent to the Secretary of the Board, containing a list of the texts intended for each school, accompanied by a request that the boxes be checked, and the receipt form returned signed and dated. Trustees were expected to oversee teachers’ record keeping and guarantee that suitable accommodation was provided for the textbooks in closed bookcases.⁷² They were also expected to pass on records to new teachers and to promptly notify the Department of school closures, in order to prevent “the useless despatch of free text-books.”⁷³ Like the teachers, the trustees found these responsibilities onerous.

Providing “suitable accommodation” for the books was particularly challenging. For example, Inspector J.S. Gordon noted in 1910 that “In a few schools proper book-cases have not yet been provided by the trustees.... Trustees will do well to secure book-cases with suitable locks for the safe keeping of the free text-books supplied them.”⁷⁴ In 1918, Wilson felt the need to define the term, “closed bookcase” more explicitly: “by a book-case is meant a suitable receptacle for books which can be locked, and that simple or open shelves for books should not be described as a book-case.”⁷⁵ He reported the following:

- (a) 569 schools with suitable book-cases:
- (b) 160 with book-cases which cannot be locked:
- (c) 16 with book-cases the locks of which are out of order or the keys lost:
- (d) 49 supplied with simple or open shelves:
- (e) 40 without any accommodation for free text-books:

- (f) 9 reports without the required information as to number and kind of book-case supplied.⁷⁶

He resorted to asking the school inspectors to include in their regular classroom visits “a careful examination of the free text-book accommodation and in case it was not satisfactory in any instance to notify the offending School Board.”⁷⁷

The responsibility of maintaining records was arduous from the perspective of the Department as well. In his six-month Interim Report Wilson stressed, “All this [paperwork] appears very simple, but to secure the return of some 480 receipts cost the Free Text-book Branch several hundred letters of request and many duplicate receipts.”⁷⁸ In 1910, Wilson noted that “There have been many failures to return official receipts as soon as possible after arrival of shipments, but perhaps it is well to remember that there will always be a fair proportion of one’s correspondents who are not possessed of the virtue of promptitude.”⁷⁹ His predecessor, J.L. Watson, was not so sanguine. He commented that “It is very hard to understand the lack of business promptitude in this matter on the part of some school officials.”⁸⁰ He then added a less than subtle warning: “a neighbouring Province has completely solved the problem of securing the prompt return of receipts by compelling the School Board to pay for the shipment unless receipt for same has been returned within thirty days.”⁸¹

The arduous responsibility of caring for the texts had been compounded by the initial decision to lend rather than give them to students. Schemes elsewhere in Canada used different systems. For example, Alberta allowed free textbooks to become student property, and New Brunswick sold textbooks at cost to parents. BC had chosen what was thought to be a “middle course,” namely, lending the books. This system looked promising at first. However, once the process got underway, the administrative complexities, in connection with wear and tear and loss of books, led to a reconsideration of the lending plan.

School Inspector Albert Sullivan of Nelson wrote in his 1910 report, “The advisability of giving the child his [*sic*] reader, arithmetic, etc., unconditionally, instead of lending it to him, has been suggested by the officer in charge of the Free Text-book Branch. Those who supervise the free-texts in the class-rooms are becoming convinced of the wisdom of this suggestion.”⁸² The conversion from a “lending” to a “giving” plan took place in June 1912 and applied to both elementary and secondary schools. Students were allowed to keep their own books from the previous year, provided that they were in good condition, and necessary for their continued studies.

The major reasons for adopting the giving plan were threefold: the time necessary to keep track of the books when loaned to students; the fact that the elementary school books, in particular, wore out after only two or three years, so some students were using dirty and damaged texts; and parental concerns about the unsanitary nature of used books. The change in plan led to a more careful examination of the books in use and in stock, followed by the destruction of any copies that showed signs of wear. As a result, 80 percent of the total books issued were destroyed in 1912, the

year of conversion to the giving plan.⁸³

Overall, according to the *Annual Reports* of subsequent years, the giving plan was a continued success, much more so than the lending experiment had been. In 1913, Inspector Winsby of Vancouver, the largest school district in the province, wrote to Robinson conveying his endorsement. "Under the 'giving plan' the free text-book system is causing universal satisfaction. The new plan has many advantages over the old 'lending plan', not the least of which are that it greatly simplifies the accurate keeping of the necessary record-books..."⁸⁴

The Free Text-Book Branch was able to meet the demand for textbooks from schools in all parts of the province. For the most part, the problems which arose did so at the receiving, not the delivery end of the system. This made a situation which arose in January of 1920 particularly startling. That month, *History of Canada*, by historian and war hero G.L. Grant, was abruptly removed from the provincial authorized list, and thus from the list of free textbooks. This was due to concerns regarding Grant's depiction of the Métis resistances, which was considered too sympathetic to the Métis, as well as his descriptions of German and British actions during World War I, which were viewed by some as neither sufficiently critical of the Germans nor laudatory enough of the British.⁸⁵ This situation left the Branch in a predicament. There was no other history textbook available at such short notice, so teachers were instructed by the Department of Education to teach civics for the remainder of the year. J.L. Watson, the newly-appointed Officer in Charge, concluded his 1920 *Annual Report* by referring to "a very trying situation ... when owing to the wholly unexpected demands made for supplies at that time, the Free Text-book Branch was unable to furnish some of the items asked for on all requisitions presented."⁸⁶ He was referring to the Branch's inability to supply sufficient copies of *Canadian Civics* to meet the extraordinary and unexpected need.

The plan was refined in response to the financial impact of the Great Depression, with the Branch devising new strategies and administrative practices almost immediately. In September 1929, a new policy was put into practice that allowed students who independently purchased second-hand books from other pupils to be reimbursed approximately 50 percent of the cost of new books by their school boards, a change which benefited both parents and the Department of Education.⁸⁷ As another cost-saving measure, in the 1931–32 year, the Council of Public Instruction cut 50 percent of its grant money to the purchase of new books for school libraries, adding an extra burden for the purchase of books onto the school boards.⁸⁸

During 1931–32, the Free Text-Book Branch abbreviated its name to the Text-Book Branch, signifying a significant shift.⁸⁹ In this guise, the Branch became the sole purchaser of all textbooks, and began to operate on what it referred to as a commercial basis. Those books that were on the "free" list were issued to schools as before. Those that were not on the list were purchased from publishers and then resold to booksellers, who, in turn, sold them to students at a price not to exceed the amount set by the Text-Book Branch. In its third year of operating along these lines, it declared a profit of \$2,783.20. This involved gross sales of \$176,903.88, less discounts given to the booksellers, freight and duty charges, as well as salaries and wages for

staff. P.G. Barr, Officer in Charge, congratulated himself and Branch employees for “carr[ying] our entire overhead and conduct[ing] the Branch along business lines at a reasonable profit.”⁹⁰ Although quotes used by Barr to support a request for a raise in salary should be taken with a grain of salt, it seems that both local school boards and booksellers were pleased with the change. Comments include: “Must certainly praise you and your staff for the promptness and accuracy.” “We might say that we appreciate the system for handling text-books.” “Our board appreciates very much the privilege of ordering text-books through your office and will continue to do so if it is quite in order.”⁹¹

The Department had always exercised financial prudence in managing the Free Text-Book Branch. From the beginning, although books from specific publishers were authorized, the Branch kept its options open by refusing to enter into contracts stipulating price or numbers of texts to be purchased.⁹² Staffing was kept to a minimum, requisitions were carefully monitored, and books were obtained by the cheapest means possible. Careful records by Officers in Charge, principals, and teachers continued to be required. In fact, principals and teachers continued to be admonished for the costs incurred when not following procedures.



Figure 4: *Shipping Area, Text-Book Branch, 1949.*

Image I-00430 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

For example, in 1933, the Branch reported,

Unfortunately, it is necessary to draw the attention of teachers once more to the manner in which free supplies may be obtained from this office.... It is obvious from correspondence received by us during the school year that Teachers' and Principals' Record Books of Free Texts are not all kept in the manner in which they should be; in fact, some have been 'missing' when the new teacher reported for duty. We ask for the co-operation of all inspectors, principals, and teachers with a view towards a marked improvement in these matters.⁹³

In the 1934–35 year, the Officer in Charge gratefully acknowledged the receipt of paper covers from two banks, “so that the life of the text-book may be prolonged. [He added] “We hope these and ‘home-made’ covers will be put to good use in every school in the Province.”⁹⁴

On December 2nd, 1933, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* recommended “a very substantial reduction of public expenditure, and the Education Department, which spends so much public money, must do its fair share in the good work of practising severe and rigid economy.”⁹⁵ George Weir, Education Minister in the newly-elected Liberal government, was cautioned “to mind his decimal points ... and go in for retrenchment and a system of education that the country can afford.”⁹⁶ Weir, in an address to the Victoria and District Teacher's Federation the next day, acknowledged



Figure 5: Storage Area, Text-Book Branch, 1949.

Image I-00431 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

that “there would necessarily be some measures of economy instituted” but assured his listeners they “would not impair the efficiency of the department.”⁹⁷ He went on to say, “There had been some criticism concerning ‘too much free education’. That is not so, he declared, and intimated there could not be too much free education, but the public was entitled to receive value for the services.”⁹⁸ In March of 1934, the Branch returned to its initial practice of “lending,” rather than “giving” the texts, no doubt another effect of financial restraint.⁹⁹ In the wake of economic crisis, this measure, that had served the province’s schoolchildren for twenty-two years, came to an end. However, they continued to have access to “free” textbooks.

The next major change in policy did not occur until 1949, when a Text-book Rental Plan was introduced “as a Government-subsidized scheme to enable students in a Province which maintained a free, non-sectarian educational system to participate fully in the system without penalty through the purchase of expensive textbooks.”¹⁰⁰ Instead of purchasing some texts, and receiving the others “on loan” free of charge, students in grades seven to thirteen were asked to pay a small annual rental fee, supported by, according to P.G. Barr, an average subsidy over the ten-year period that was little more than the salary and wages paid to the office staff.¹⁰¹ Rental fees for the school year 1949–50 were \$3.50 for grades seven to nine and \$4.00 for grades ten to thirteen. The scheme was not compulsory and students who wished to purchase their own texts could do so, but 85 percent chose the rental option.¹⁰² In 1950–51, Barr reported that 92 percent of high school students were participating, “which is ample proof of this voluntary scheme’s success.”¹⁰³ In 1959, all were reported participating.¹⁰⁴ Students in the elementary grades continued under the old system.

The approaches to textbook distribution used in British Columbia between 1908 and 1949 are found in Table 2.

Conclusion

It is not surprising that the British Columbia Department of Education implemented a free textbook system in 1908. It did so in a milieu that was awash with new ideas about social reform and expectations for greater equality of opportunity. Textbooks were seen as a means to provide an equal education. Some children may have had more resources and opportunities available in their home environments, but textbooks offered a democratic basis from which to begin instruction in the school setting. This included increased fairness to students in rural communities because the Department’s methods of provision were more efficient than those of the rural booksellers and, of course, some books were now free. In the past, they had been more expensive in rural and small town bookstores than in city stores due to increased transportation costs to get them to rural destinations.

The implementation of a system of free textbooks in British Columbia was also due to the healthy economic circumstances of the province in the first decade of the twentieth century. These circumstances changed over time and the system altered accordingly, changing from a “lending” to a “giving” system and then back to a “lending” one, and eventually moving to a system whereby students in high schools paid a rental fee.

Table 2: Textbook Distribution, 1908–1949

1908	1910	1912	1932	1949
Dept. of Education authorizes textbooks.	Dept. of Education authorizes textbooks.	Dept. of Education authorizes textbooks.	Dept. of Education authorizes textbooks.	Dept. of Education authorizes textbooks.
Dept. purchases elementary school primers, readers, arithmetic texts, and consumable books from publishers. Retail booksellers purchase other elementary and all high school authorized textbooks from publishers.	High schools, superior schools, and night schools join the plan. Dept. purchases selected textbooks from publishers. Retail booksellers purchase other authorized textbooks from publishers.	Dept. purchases selected textbooks from publishers. Retail booksellers purchase other authorized textbooks from publishers.	Dept. purchases all textbooks from publishers.	Dept. purchases all textbooks from publishers.
Dept. stores free textbooks in a depository. Booksellers add their costs and profit margin to other authorized textbooks.	Dept. stores free textbooks in a depository. Booksellers add their costs and profit margin to other authorized textbooks.	Dept. stores free textbooks in a depository. Booksellers add their costs and profit margin to other authorized textbooks.	Dept. stores free textbooks in a depository and sells the rest to private booksellers. Booksellers sell texts at prices which cannot exceed an amount set by the Text-Book Branch.	Dept. stores free textbooks in a depository
Depository distributes free textbooks to school districts. Schools lend the books to students. The remaining authorized textbooks are purchased by parents from booksellers.	Depository distributes free textbooks to school districts. Schools lend the books to students. The remaining authorized textbooks are purchased by parents from booksellers.	Depository distributes free textbooks to school districts. Schools give, rather than lend, the books to students.	Depository distributes free textbooks to school districts. Schools give the books to students. System reverts back to "lending" in 1934. The remaining authorized textbooks are purchased by parents from booksellers.	Depository distributes free textbooks to school districts. Schools lend the books to students. Elementary schools continue under existing system. In high schools, students pay a rental fee.

The third factor was political pressure exerted on behalf of parents by the BC School Trustees Association and by the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council acting on behalf of organized labour. The BC School Trustees Association, in particular, made the cause of free textbooks a priority and its efforts paid off.

The provision of free textbooks was not without challenges and conflicts. These stemmed from multiple sources: Department of Education concerns that teachers and school boards were not fulfilling their end of the bargain in terms of record-keeping and proper care of the texts; a level of negligence which was resulting in unnecessary loss and damage to the texts; booksellers' commercial concerns; organized labour's concerns about local employment; and parents' concerns about spread of disease by means of unsanitary used books, under the lending system.

In spite of concerns, challenges, and conflicts, the establishment of the Free Text-Book Branch in British Columbia in 1908, a feat in accordance with liberal notions of schooling realized elsewhere on the North American continent, was received with approval by the general populace of the province. The adoption of a free textbook plan was "a natural outcome"¹⁰⁵ of the system of free public schooling already in place, and a way of acknowledging the public project of schooling all young Canadians to take their places as educated citizens.

Notes

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- 1 We will use the contemporary spelling, "textbook" other than when we are referring to the Free Text-Book Branch or quoting from sources of the period.
- 2 "Parents Resent Extravagance," *Daily Colonist*, August 11, 1903, 6.
- 3 "The Cost of School Books," *Daily Columbian*, January 6, 1908, 4.
- 4 Legislative Assembly of Ontario, *Report of Textbook Commission, 1907* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1907), 15. The findings of this commission received attention in BC. See "Free Text Book System Favoured," *Times Colonist*, n.d. British Columbia Archives (BCA), GR 467, Vol. 1. For a discussion of textbook publication and authorization in Ontario, see Viola E. Parvin, *Authorization of Textbooks for the Schools of Ontario, 1845–1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).
- 5 British Columbia Department of Education, *Annual Reports of the Public Schools* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1875), A37.
- 6 For a discussion of reform in BC in this period, see Jean Barman, "Reform and its Limits, 1871–1929," chap. in *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* 3ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 202–35.
- 7 For a discussion of industrial capitalism and educational reform in Canada in this period, see Paul Axelrod, "Schooling in the Industrial Age," chap. in *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 104–22.

- 8 See Neil Sutherland, "Public Health in the Schools," chap. in *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 39-55.
- 9 For a discussion of the introduction of new subjects into the curriculum in Canada in this period, see George S. Tomkins, "New Subjects for a New Education," chap. in *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press, 2008), 115-54. For discussions of the introduction of vocational courses and the intensification of class differences in the BC context, see Timothy A. Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work: Vocational Education in British Columbia, 1900–1929," in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West*, ed. David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan, and Robert M. Stamp (Calgary: Detselig, 1979), 236-56; and Timothy A. Dunn, "Vocationalism and its Promoters in British Columbia, 1900–1929," *Journal of Educational Thought* 14 (August 1980): 92-107.
- 10 "Free School Books," *Daily Colonist*, February 8, 1903, 12.
- 11 "Free Text-Book Branch," *ARPS*, January 1909, A37.
- 12 Ontario, *Report of Textbook Commission*, 15.
- 13 "Joint Conference of School Boards," *Daily Colonist*, Oct 16, 1904, 6.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 British Columbia School Trustees Association, *Convention Proceedings, 1906* (Vancouver: BCSTA, 1906), 7. For a chronological account of the role of the BCSTA with regard to free textbooks see: Jennifer Gray-Grant, "By the Book: The Struggle for Free Textbooks for All Students," in *BCSTA 100 Years: Leading Public Education Since 1905*, AGM 2004 (Victoria, BC: BCSTA, 2004). The *Convention Proceedings* of the BCSTA are published annually and were examined in the BCSTA offices, Vancouver, BC. For a history of the BCSTA see James B. London, *Public Education Public Pride: The Centennial History of the British Columbia School Trustees Association, 1905–2005* (Vancouver: BCSTA, 2005).
- 16 BCSTA, *Convention Proceedings*, 1907, 14.
- 17 "School Books and Management," *Daily Columbian*, January 7, 1908, 1.
- 18 "Free Text-Books for Schools of Province," *Daily Province*, January 9, 1908, 3.
- 19 "School Books," Letter to the Editor, *Daily Columbian*, January 7, 1908, 8.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 "Letter to Editor, Free School Books," *Daily Province*, February 22, 1908, 7.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 Francis Williams, Secretary Vancouver Trades & Labor Council, to the Premier and Members of the Cabinet of the Government of British Columbia, January 11, 1906, BCA, GR 441, Box 27, File 1. In addition to the Vancouver School Board and the City Council, the letter was endorsed by the Allied Printing Trades Council, Typographical Union #226, and the Printing Pressmen's Union #69.
- 25 H.E. Young, Minister of Education, to Harry Cowan Esq., Trades & Labour Council, March 17, 1908. BCA, GR 450, Vol. 73.
- 26 "In Interests of Education," *Daily Columbian*, February 9, 1907, 1.
- 27 "Trustees for Free Books," *The Daily Colonist*, October 2, 1907, 1.
- 28 For a discussion of the textbook ring and its machinations, see Penney Clark, "'Reckless Extravagance and Utter Incompetence': George Ross and the Toronto Textbook Ring, 1883–1907," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 46 (Fall 2008): 185-235.
- 29 Alexander Robinson, Superintendent of Education to Hon. The Premier, January 29, 1906, BCA GR 441, Box 27, File 1.
- 30 Minister of Education H.E. Young to Phil R. Smith Esq., Manager, Victoria Printing & Publishing Co., March 12, 1908, BCA GR 450. It is interesting to note that this has never occurred.

- 31 "Corrections Needed in School System," *Labour Statesman*, August 22, 1924, 6.
- 32 "Board will Probe Text-Books Cost," *The Daily Province*, Nov. 21, 1928.
- 33 In 1939, P.B. Barr, Officer in Charge of the Text-Book Branch, traveled to Montreal and Toronto to attempt to obtain the cooperation of educational publishers in printing and manufacturing textbooks in BC. As the Toronto publisher Thomas Nelson & Sons put it: "If your Department so wishes we are quite willing to co-operate with the printers in British Columbia. We will get prices from them and then you will be in a position to decide whether you are willing to pay the extra costs involved" (Thomas Nelson & Sons to Hon. G.M. Weir, November 24, 1939, BCA GR 451, Box 23, File 12). Of course, the publisher was well aware that, in the end, the Department would not be willing to pay the extra costs.
- 34 "Free Text Books for British Columbia," *Daily Colonist*, February 26, 1908, 7.
- 35 "How to Secure Free School Books," *Daily Columbian*, May 29, 1908, 1; "Much Business was Transacted," *Daily Colonist*, February 26, 1908, 17.
- 36 "The Fad of Free Books," *Bookseller and Stationer* XVI (October 1900), 4.
- 37 "The Free Text Book Fad," *B&S* XVII (April 1901), 3.
- 38 "School Books," *Daily Colonist*, January 7, 1905, 4.
- 39 "Oppose Free Text Books for Pupils," *London Free Press*, September 11, 1908, 3.
- 40 Superintendent Alexander Robinson to Messrs. J.N. MacKay & Co., New Westminster, BC, April 25, 1908, BCA GR 450; "Free Books will be Supplied Next Term," *Daily Colonist*, April 28, 1908, 7.
- 41 T.H. Forman to the Minister of Education, September 10, 1902, Archives of Ontario RG-2-42-0-7333.
- 42 "Are Free School-Books Desirable," *Books and Notions* VI (June 1890), 10.
- 43 "School Boards Selling Books," *B&S* XVIII (April 1902), 3.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 "Free School Books," *Daily Province*, February 22, 1908, 7.
- 46 *ARPS*, 1913, A35.
- 47 "Free School Books," *Daily Colonist*, February 8, 1903, 12.
- 48 "Gage & Co.'s Slates," *B&S* XXV (June 1909), 39.
- 49 "Free Text-Book Branch Interim Report," *ARPS*, January 1909, A37.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid., A38.
- 53 *ARPS*, 1959, Z70.
- 54 For a discussion of the challenges of BC's rural schools, see Donald J. Wilson and Paul J. Stortz, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You.' The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s," *BC Studies* 79 (Autumn 1988): 24-58.
- 55 *ARPS*, November, 1909, A39-40.
- 56 "Thirty-Seven Tons of Free Books Sent," *Daily Colonist*, September 6, 1908, 7.
- 57 "Free Text-Book Branch Interim Report," *ARPS*, January 1909, A38. Note that the figure provided on p. A37 is 729 requisitions.
- 58 Ibid., A39.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 *ARPS*, 1949, JJ 106.
- 61 In October 1911 the Branch began distributing the *School Magazine* on a monthly basis. It was intended for students from the intermediate grades on up. Total distribution in 1911-12 was 188,390 copies or over 23,000 per month. David Wilson considered this publication to be the first of its kind in Canada (*ARPS* 1912, A54).
- 62 *ARPS*, 1913, A62. Schools included the Provincial Normal School and Provincial Industrial School, as well as high schools, superior schools, night schools and rural and city graded and ungraded schools.

- 63 *ARPS*, January 1909, A37-39; November 1909, A39-42; 1910, A41-43; 1911, A45-47; 1912, A53-55; 1913, A62-67. Note that an Interim Report was published in January 1909 to record details regarding the books distributed beginning in the summer of 1908 for the 1908-09 school year. Following this, the Free Text-Book Branch Reports are found in the *Annual Report of the Department of Education* for each year. For example, the November 1909 report provides details regarding books distributed at the end of the 1908-09 school year in preparation for 1909-10. It is of particular interest to note that Wilson provided two sets of figures each year. The first set included a freight and drayage amount not included in the second set. He used the second set of figures to calculate the difference between the amount he stated as the cost to parents if they had purchased the textbooks from booksellers and the cost of providing the texts through the Branch. This had the effect of increasing the difference (the net profit) between the hypothetical cost to parents and the cost of texts supplied by the Branch.
- 64 *ARPS*, 1912, A54.
- 65 *ARPS*, November 1909, A39.
- 66 "Free Text-Book Branch Interim Report," *ARPS* January 1909, A37.
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 *ARPS*, November 1909, A40-41.
- 69 *ARPS*, January 1909, A39.
- 70 *ARPS*, 1910, A42.
- 71 *Ibid.*, A25.
- 72 *ARPS*, 1910, A37.
- 73 *ARPS*, November 1909, A41.
- 74 *ARPS*, 1910, A25.
- 75 *ARPS*, 1918, D72.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 *Ibid.*
- 78 *ARPS*, January 1909, A38.
- 79 *ARPS*, 1910, A41.
- 80 *ARPS*, 1920, C89.
- 81 *Ibid.*
- 82 *ARPS*, 1910, A33.
- 83 *ARPS*, 1912, A54.
- 84 *ARPS*, 1913, A35.
- 85 See Charles W. Humphries, "The Banning of a Book in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 58 (1968-69): 1-12.
- 86 *ARPS*, 1920, C90.
- 87 *ARPS*, 1929, Q45.
- 88 *ARPS*, 1932, L46.
- 89 *Ibid.*
- 90 *ARPS*, 1935, S66.
- 91 BCA, GR 451, Box 29, File 4.
- 92 *ARPS*, 1909, A38.
- 93 *ARPS*, 1933, M60.
- 94 *ARPS*, 1935, S64.
- 95 "The Decimal Point," *Daily Colonist*, December 2, 1933, 3.
- 96 *Ibid.*
- 97 "Teachers Hear Hon. G.M. Weir," *Daily Colonist*, December 3, 1933, 2.
- 98 *Ibid.*
- 99 *ARPS*, 1934, N58. See "Our Educational System," *Daily Colonist*, Jan 14, 1934, 3rd section, pp. 1-3 for evidence of financial concerns.
- 100 *ARPS*, 1959, Z70. (This was a review of the history of the Branch.)

- 101 Ibid.
- 102 ARPS, 1950, O112.
- 103 ARPS, 1951, K112.
- 104 ARPS, 1959, Z70.
- 105 ARPS, January 1909, A37.