

On the Front Cover Edward Robert Arthur Edwards

by The Honourable Mr. Justice Donald Clancy

Edward Robert Arthur Edwards, Q.C. is British Columbia's thirteenth Deputy Attorney General, the first having been appointed in 1871. That means the average term in office is ten years. If Bob maintains that average, it will be our good fortune. He is exceptionally well suited for the task.

He was born in Edmonton but moved to Victoria early and graduated from Oak Bay High School. After a Degree in Economics from the University of Victoria and an LL.B. from U.B.C., he articulated with Sullivan, Smith & Bigelow in Victoria. He spent 1972 and 1973 in private practice with that firm and then joined the Ministry of Attorney General. At that time the entire legal staff of the civil and criminal sections of the Ministry could comfortably have coffee together in a small room in their Spartan quarters in the basement of the Legislative Buildings. From that beginning, Bob can trace his career through the Civil Law Section to Director of the Constitutional and Administrative Law Section, General Counsel and Chairman of the Management Committee, Legal Services Branch; Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Legal Services Branch and finally, Deputy Attorney General. He was appointed October 1, 1990. Today he presides over a legal staff of approximately 350, the largest law firm in the province.

Bob has spent the greater part of his legal career grappling with constitutional and administrative law matters and is recognized as one of Canada's leading constitutional lawyers. He has appeared as counsel in more than 150 reported cases. A sampling includes **Air Canada v. R. in Rt. of B.C.** [1989] 59 D.L.R. (4th) 161; **Reference re Canada Assistance Plan**, 58 B.C.L.R. (2d) 1; and **Canada (A.G.) v. B.C. (A.G.)** 59 B.C.L.R. (2d) 280 (the E & N Railway Case).

He has served under seven Attorneys General and is certain he is the only Deputy to have served successive Attorneys who were not legally trained. That and his intention to continue to practise as a litigator despite his administrative burdens may make him unique among Deputies.

His work habits are exemplary. For lesser beings, he sets depressingly high standards for quality of work and hours spent at the office. As counsel and as a manager, he goes quickly to the heart of any problem facing him. He is decisive and confident and expects as much from others. His management style therefore involves the assumption that his staff will perform well, thus ensuring their respect and loyalty.

On the personal side, he hates cold and loves heat. He is a frequent visitor to Hawaii. He is exceptionally well-read and a connoisseur of fine wines.

He is also a prodigious contributor to the work of the bar. He has been a frequent lecturer at Continuing Legal Education programs, a Governor of the Law Foundation, a member of the Provincial Council of the Canadian Bar Association, a Trustee of the International Commercial Arbitration Foundation of British Columbia and a founding Director of the Legal Information Systems and Technologies Foundation. Having been twice defeated as a candidate for Benchers, he has now insinuated himself into their

meetings as the *ex officio* representative of the Attorney General. Observing the workload, he is grateful he was never elected.

Not surprisingly, a number of distinctions have come his way. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in December 1983. In 1988 he received the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for outstanding contribution to the Public Service of British Columbia. The citation reads in part,


"The Lieutenant Governor's Medal is in recognition of Mr. Edwards' unique and significant role as a senior public servant in furthering the interests of the province. As senior legal counsel, he has been extremely responsive to the needs of all Ministries of Government, and has been an advocate of superior quality on behalf of this Province for many years. He has shown leadership by promoting excellence, both within the Legal Services Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General, and his profession as a whole.

"Mr. Edwards stands out amongst his peers in the legal community, in both the private and public sectors. He enjoys the respect and admiration of the 'Bar' and the 'Judiciary'. He is known for his fairness and even-handedness. In court, he is a formidable opponent, not due to an aggressive or combative character, but as a consequence of the thoroughness of his knowledge, the clarity of his thought, and the relentless logic of his argument."

Although Bob is entitled to respect and admiration for his knowledge of the law and dedication to the interests of the profession and the Province, those are not his most memorable attributes. For those who work with him or know him well, he is best known for his ability to turn a phrase. Who else would refer to representatives of the Auditor General as "squints". He has referred to a weak argument by an opponent as, "lobbing a SCUD". Losing a case translates into "winning second prize" and adverse judgments come from "deep space". He once told a C.L.E. session on how to successfully sue the government that he had a certain reluctance to impart his knowledge because, "it was like stepping on your own air hose".

Bob is a runner of great determination, if little renown. He led Legal Services Branch to victory last year in the Vogel Cup competition. The Cup, named for Dick Vogel, the only Deputy Attorney General ever to complete the Boston marathon, is awarded for the best score over a scenic ten kilometer route. Quibblers have been heard to say the point system was invented by and understood only by Bob.

Bob acknowledges a great debt to E. N. (Ted) Hughes, Q.C., who preceded him as Deputy Attorney General and influenced him greatly. There is no doubt he is a worthy successor and will continue the fine tradition of wisdom and fairness established over the past 120 years.



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