

Stories from the Archives — ‘A Letter from W. Norman Bole’

Researched and written by Ralph Drew, Belcarra, BC, September 2013.

William Norman Bole (1846–1923) arrived in North America *en route* from Ireland to Queensland, Australia, in 1877. At San Francisco he found that his ship had already left so the young man changed his plans, coming to Victoria early in 1877. He still had intentions of going to Australia but was persuaded, there being no other lawyer in New Westminster, to commence practice there. The temporary arrangement became permanent, and Bole soon became the senior member of the New Westminster bar. He married Florence Blanchard Coulthard (1860–1928), daughter of Major John Haning Coulthard (1832–1906), J.P., on February 26th, 1881. They had two sons, Garnet Seymour, who died in childhood and John Percy Hampton Bole (1882–1966). In 1884 Bole became New Westminster's first police magistrate, and in 1886 he was elected as New Westminster's representative in the BC Legislature where he “manfully stood-up for the rights of his constituency”. He was appointed a Q.C. in 1887, became a Bencher of the Law Society in 1888, and a year later County Judge of the Supreme Court.

In 1882 Bole defended John Hall against a charge of murdering his mother-in-law, and consequently acquired title to District Lot 229 (today's 'Belcarra') in 1883 *in lieu* of his fees for services rendered. Bole gave 'Belcarra' its Celtic name that means “fair land on which the sun shines”, and also named the point immediately south of the picnic grounds 'Mayo Point'; most likely naming these areas after the village of 'Belcarra' in County Mayo, Ireland, which is close to Castlebar where Bole was born.

From the Mainland Guardian, Saturday, July 3rd, 1886.

Gentlemen — In obedience to a largely signed requisition, addressed to me by my fellow-citizens, I have allowed myself to be nominated a candidate to represent our city in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

As I have already publicly stated I am in opposition to the present Government, in as much as I consider they have not satisfactorily discharged the trust reposed in them by the people of this Province.

I am opposed to monopoly of all kinds, especially in land.

Being in entire sympathy with the wants and requirements of the workingman as I regard those who sustain themselves by manual labour as the basis on which all civilized society is built — every measure calculated to advance the condition and protect the interests of the toiling masses shall have my hearty support.

I am in favour of the restriction of Chinese immigration.

I am opposed to reckless and lavish expenditure of the public revenue, as such a course must heavily increase the burden of taxation on the taxpayer.

I think the time has come that we should expect to find good roads in other parts of the Province as well as around Victoria; and the people of this City and District have a right to expect a great improvement in this direction.

The fishing, agriculture, lumber and mineral resources of the Province should be encouraged and developed — more especially as the completion of the C.P.R. must give a great impetus to trade and add largely to our population.

There are other matters not strictly in the jurisdiction of the Local Legislature, but in respect of which an expression of opinion by that body might effect some good:

Namely — The question of mail service to this city, which should not be interfered with except to increase the present facilities, as any other change would be an outrage on the City, the District, and Province; as, also, the important and necessary step of dredging the Fraser channel, thus rendering New Westminster and ocean port.

In conclusion, I beg to say that if returned as your Representative, your interests, which are mine, shall be guarded and furthered to the best of my ability.

W. Norman Bole,
New Westminster, 24th June 1886.