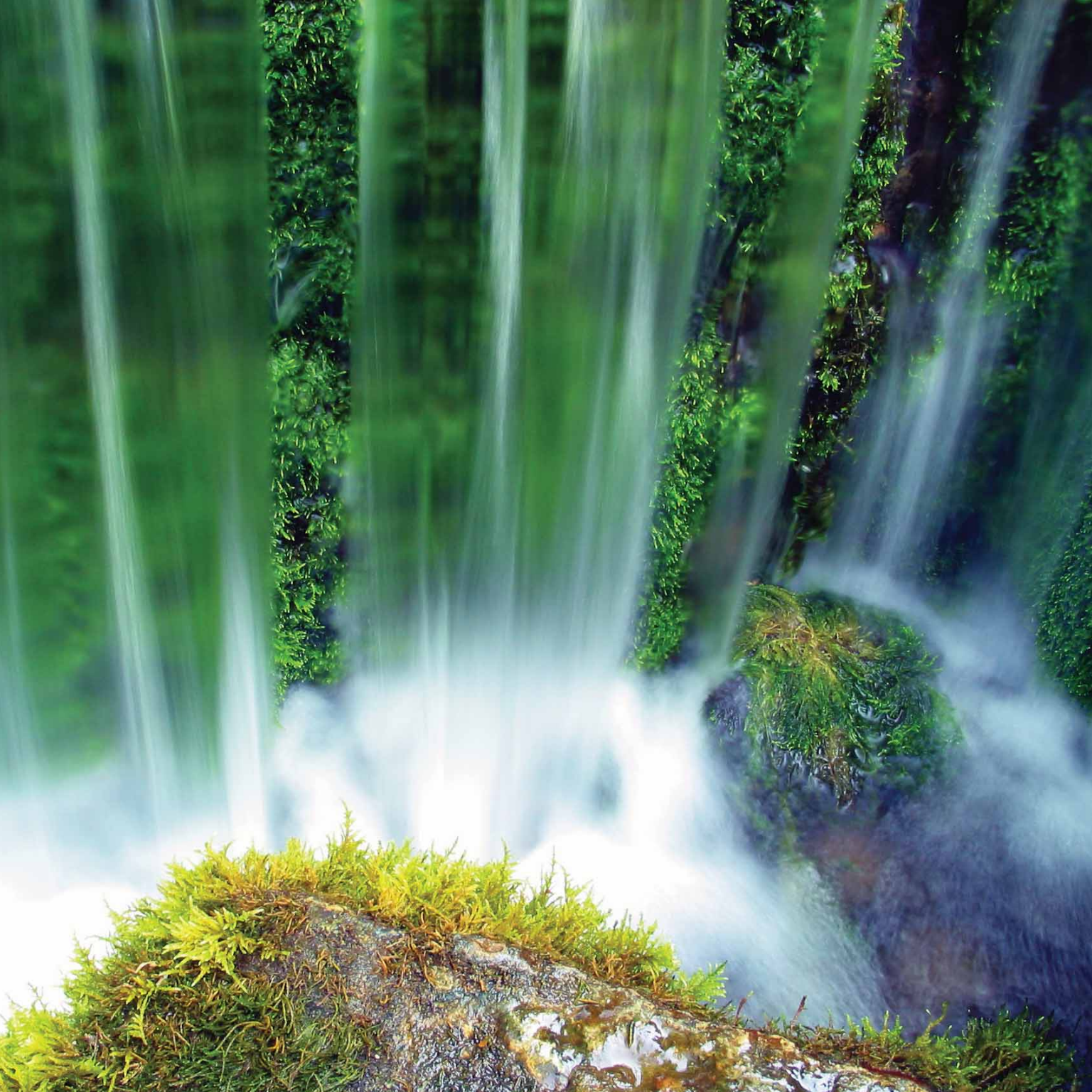





**COURTHOUSE
LIBRARIES | BC**

Annual Report 2008



Message from the Chair

This past year, the Library centred its efforts on several key initiatives in furtherance of its goal of making legal information accessible to all, regardless of geographic location.

Lawyers in communities served by our regional libraries in Prince George, Kelowna, Kamloops, New Westminster and Nanaimo (in mid 2009) may now check the availability of material in their library online from the convenience of their home or office. The Library has made a number of improvements to its catalogue, most notably with the purchase of an alternative search platform similar to Google, providing researchers with a more user friendly search option.

LawMatters and *Clicklaw* are initiatives funded by the Law Foundation of BC in support of the Library's commitment to make the law more accessible to the public. *LawMatters* is a collaborative project with public libraries developed to place legal materials written for the general public in every public library in the province. Staff have worked with public libraries throughout BC to assess material, make recommendations for purchase and assist with training in using legal resources.

Clicklaw is a legal information portal created with the participation of 24 public legal education and information organizations. The Library has acted as project lead and will be responsible for maintaining the portal upon completion of the project, which is scheduled for public launch in 2009. In the future, both *Clicklaw* and *LawMatters* will continue as key elements of the Library's community outreach efforts. After 2010, *LawMatters* funding to assist public libraries with purchasing legal materials

will expire, however Courthouse Library staff will continue to provide advice on available resources and support in answering legal questions.

In tandem with its public-facing projects, the Library is embarking on a number of projects that involve considerable consultation with the legal profession. A new, revitalized website will be unveiled in 2009, along with an online legal research course that will focus initially on skills for lawyers. It will be constructed on a modular basis facilitating the addition of new topics on demand. Both undertakings demonstrate the Library's commitment to its users and the ability to adapt its services to meet the needs of a rapidly changing legal practice.

None of these ventures would be possible without the generous support of the Law Foundation and the Law Society of B.C. or the facilities provided by the Ministry of the Attorney General. I must also gratefully acknowledge the invaluable input we have received from the legal profession and law related groups, as well as our hard working and dedicated Board of Directors and staff. The combined expertise of all parties has made these initiatives truly collaborative endeavours that reflect the talent of all members of the BC legal community.

CLBC WEBSITE: TOP PAGES VIEWED

Page Title	Page Views
<i>A-Z Knowledgebase</i>	<i>16,721</i>
<i>Cases</i>	<i>13,773</i>
<i>Unreported Decisions Index</i>	<i>10,687</i>
<i>B.C. Court Rules</i>	<i>10,340</i>
<i>Family Law Resource Guide</i>	<i>9,629</i>
<i>Site Search</i>	<i>9,119</i>
<i>B.C. Legal Literature Index</i>	<i>8,382</i>
<i>Legislation</i>	<i>7,278</i>

“The B.C. Courthouse Library Society also provides a great legal resource — rules, cases, all kinds of information...”

Ian Mulgrew

(Vancouver Sun, August 11, 2008: The Internet Has Become Indispensable to the Legal World)

“Your internet site is an essential must-have in any Canadian law librarian’s list of ‘favorites.’”

Pete Lambly

Research Coordinator, Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Client Services

Courthouse Libraries BC (CLBC) staff handled over 39,000 research requests in 2008, an increase over the previous year, and the number of unique visits to the Library's website grew by 37%. This upward trend is a testament to the Library's ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to its clients.

In 2008, CLBC purchased AquaBrowser Library, an alternative search platform for its online catalogue. AquaBrowser provides users with the option of a more Google-like search experience, with relevancy ranked search results and automatic spelling variations. Other features include a visual word cloud of related terms generated with each search and the ability to narrow results quickly and easily with one click of the mouse. Initial feedback has been positive, with 18 of 20 users surveyed reporting they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the new interface. Expansion of the current platform to enable RSS feeds of new material and integrated searches of both the catalogue and the CLBC website is in progress.

Library catalogue records have been further enhanced by the addition of tables of contents and links to online sources. In December, the Library acquired the LLMC Digital Worldcat Collection which will allow users to access LLMC Digital's database of historical material, including statutes and ordinances of Canada, BC acts and proclamations and U.S. and Canadian case law, directly through the library catalogue. This new feature provides quick and easy access to digital content, helping researchers to connect to all available resources.

Connectivity for lawyers in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna and New Westminster in particular has also improved. The libraries in these four locations were fully automated in 2008, joining Vancouver and Victoria in an online circulation system which has proved efficient and convenient for both borrowers and staff. Lawyers may now check the availability of material in their own regional library and renew books from the comfort of their own homes or offices. A customized self-checkout system was also installed in Vancouver, Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George and New Westminster. The Nanaimo library will be automated in 2009.

Many queries lead researchers to the Courthouse Libraries website. "BC rules", "BC bill of costs" "BC court cases" and "BC Court of Appeal forms" are among the top keywords bringing searchers to the site. In 2008, the site acquired a fresh, new look with new brand colours, a new logo and a new domain: courthouselibrary.ca

As evidenced by current usage statistics, many consider the Courthouse Libraries website a primary source for legal information. Sites from which referrals most frequently originate include the Ministry of the Attorney General (Family Justice), the Courts of British Columbia and the Supreme Court Self Help Centre.



Community Outreach

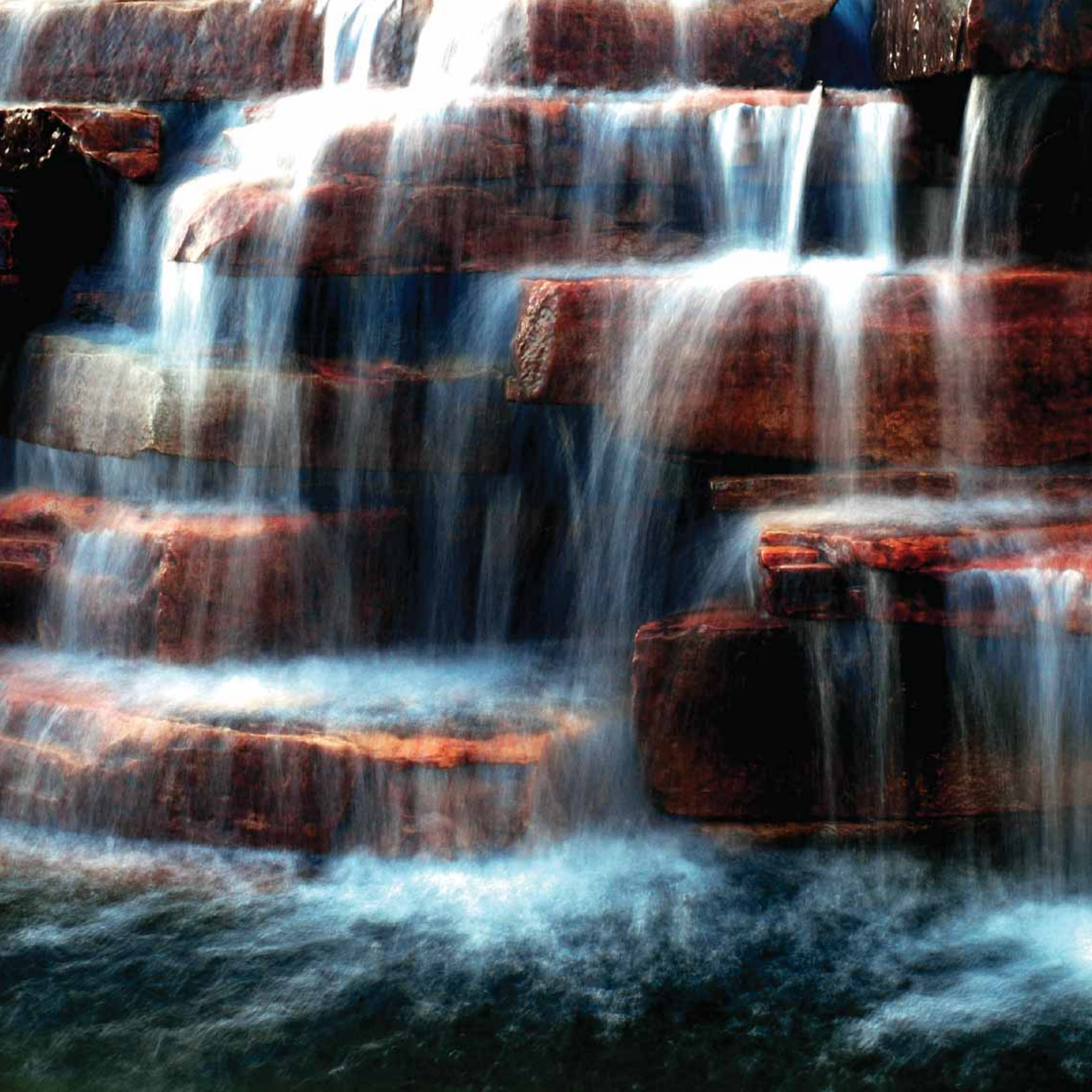
Courthouse Libraries BC has actively pursued opportunities to forge close ties with both the legal and public library communities. Through a number of outreach initiatives, the Library has successfully raised awareness of its services and continues to work collaboratively to improve access to legal information for all citizens.

One such collaboration has been the Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) portal project. Spearheaded by Courthouse Libraries BC, twenty-four organizations have worked together to develop *Clicklaw*, a portal website designed to guide the general public to the best legal information and educational resources available. Currently on target for launch in April 2009, plans for expansion are already in place. With funding approved in 2008, a searchable mapping feature will be extended to connect British Columbians with those who provide help to people with legal problems, providing users with seamless access to both information resources and aid services.

LawMatters is a joint project with the public library system conceived as a means to provide all BC residents with access to basic legal material through local public libraries. After a successful pilot phase, the project was fully implemented in 2008. With funding from the Law Foundation of BC, 70 public libraries representing 240 branches received *LawMatters* grants to purchase legal information resources recommended by Courthouse Libraries staff. CLBC staff also provided legal reference training to over 260 public librarians and assistants throughout the province. Sessions were

offered in a variety of formats, including webinars, in-house workshops and an eight-week online course.

The Library has also been active within the legal community. Staff members were invited to speak at a meeting of the Research Lawyers sub-section of the Canadian Bar Association-BC, a Continuing Legal Education of BC course on legal research and an advanced legal research course at the University of British Columbia law school. Staff also provided training sessions for law students and clerks and led a screencasting workshop for local law librarians. In Victoria, the Library enjoyed close to 100% participation in its orientation sessions for articulated or co-op students and newly arrived lawyers. All of these initiatives are designed to enhance lawyers' research skills and have contributed to increased use of library services.



Infrastructure and Technology

Past investment in overall technology as well as the development of system monitoring and alerting tools continues to pay dividends in terms of system reliability.

Aging PCs were replaced early in the year. New furniture for Vancouver's public access computers has created space for a wheelchair accessible workstation and more computers: there are now 15 computers available for public use, with room for another row of 5 if required. Wheelchair workstations will be installed throughout the province as needed and as funding allows.

In June 2008, the Library expanded its virtual technology platform with implementation of new software. CLBC is now well positioned to respond to future demands on its servers. The Library's two physical server "hosts" may now accommodate over 30 virtual servers, thus eliminating the need to purchase more physical boxes, incurring fewer costs with respect to support and maintenance contracts and promoting a "greener", more energy efficient work environment.

Internally, an intranet site was developed for use by CLBC staff throughout the province. Though still in an early design stage, the potential for greater collaboration and streamlined work processes is clear.



Collections

Old, utilitarian shelving in the Victoria Courthouse Library was replaced to comply with current library standards. The new shelving has improved access to the collection, provided room to expand and given the library a fresh, new look.

Enhancements were also made to the collection itself. Second copies of popular texts were purchased for all CLBC regional libraries as well as for Vancouver. Two hundred forty two new titles were added to the system. Various looseleaf services were updated and a new electronic product, *Estates&Trusts Source*, was made available for a one year trial to lawyers in branch libraries around the province.

For a library to be sustainable in today's economy though, it must reconcile the high cost of maintaining a collection with frequency of use and the needs of its clientele. In 2008, issues of sustainability together with the steady growth of internet resources for reliable, authoritative legal material prompted CLBC to re-evaluate its collections in rural branches. As a result,

a number of ongoing subscriptions for print material were cancelled, including the print consolidation of BC statutes and regulations (now readily available in electronic format) and certain looseleaf texts for which new contents will instead be purchased once per year. CLBC will implement a library credit program for rural lawyers in 2009 to enhance their ability to utilize the Library's system-wide collection and services regardless of geographic location.

In 2008....

*17,120 books were borrowed from the
Vancouver Library and regional branches*

7,882 books were used in the Victoria Library

41,122 books were used in the Vancouver Library

	OPERATIONS	PROJECTS	TOTAL
FUNDING SOURCES			
<i>Law Foundation of BC</i>	2,737,750	857,433	3,595,183
<i>Law Society of BC</i>	1,604,600	—	1,604,600
<i>Operating revenue</i>	445,823	—	445,823
<i>Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets</i>	—	52,996	52,996
Total	4,788,173	910,429	5,698,602

EXPENDITURES

<i>Staff</i>	2,366,698	—	2,366,698
<i>Information sources</i>	1,778,633	325,646	2,104,279
<i>Operations</i>	531,518	531,787	1,063,305
<i>Amortization of capital assets</i>	121,311	52,996	174,307
Total	4,798,160	910,429	5,708,589

INFORMATION SOURCES EXPENDITURES

<i>Print subscriptions</i>	1,143,890	—	1,143,890
<i>New information materials</i>	268,645	320,424	589,069
<i>Electronic subscriptions</i>	310,803	—	310,803
<i>Other expenditures</i>	55,295	5,222	60,517
Total	1,778,633	325,646	2,104,279

Financial Highlights 2008

The complete audited financial statements for 2008 are available on the Courthouse Libraries BC website: *www.courthouselibrary.ca*. Courthouse Libraries BC is funded by the Law Foundation of BC, the Law Society of BC through contributions by its members and the Ministry of the Attorney General for British Columbia through the provision of facilities and maintenance support.



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