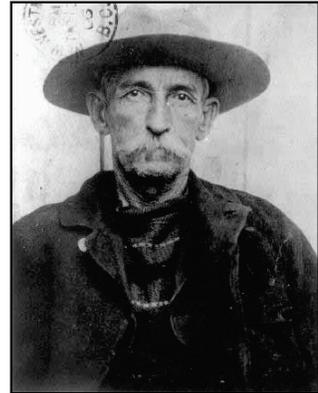


Stories from the Archives —
“Judge Bole Was Hero of Holdup”

Source: Daily Columbian, New Westminster, BC, September 15th, 1904.

**A Warm Reception was planned for the Bandits —
Interesting Story in Connection with Last Saturday Night’s Robbery —**

When Conductor Ward of the C.P.R. express was told on Saturday night at Silverdale siding, west of Mission City, to get back into the passenger coaches and mind his own business or it would go hard with him, the order being accompanied by an ominous pointing of revolvers and rifles in the hands of the desperate men who were holding up and robbing the express and mail cars of the train, he immediately obeyed the injunction. He entered the first passenger car and passed on through the train warning all the passengers that a hold-up was in progress [by the infamous Billy Miner], and to hide all their valuables, as the robbers would be upon them in a few minutes.



Billy Miner – 1906

When he reached the Pullman, Mr. Justice W. Norman Bole of New Westminster, sprang to his feet, and addressing all the passengers assembled in the ear, said: “Is there any gentlemen present who has a weapon about him?”

Not a man in the car had a weapon of any kind in his possession.

“Then,” said the judge, drawing a revolver from his pocket, “I find that I am the only person here who is in a state to defend this car from those wretches. How many of you gentlemen are willing to stand by me and fight this gang, prevent them from entering this car?”

Every man in the car stepped to the judge’s side.

“Good,” said he, “we can give those fellows a surprise if this thing is managed coolly. Now, gentlemen, my plan of defence is this. First of all we shall send the porter back over the track with a lot of torpedoes to warn the freight train which we passed on the siding this side of Mission City, and which is likely to be down on us at any minute, and then we should not need any defence. So, Mr. Porter, you just run up the track and attend to this and we will be getting things ready here for the reception.”

The porter said he for one was willing to stand by the judge till he was riddled to pieces; but the judge told him the placing of the torpedoes was quite as valuable service as he could then render. The porter sped out into the blackness in the rear of the train and placed the torpedoes so that the oncoming freight should be properly signalled, and got back to the Pullman and inside just as the finishing touches were being put to the defences.

The Judge handled his men like a general. Everything movable was piled against the doors at each end of the car so that it would be impossible to open them. All the

valuables having been stowed away in all sorts of odd corners, the lights were put out in the centre of the car, leaving it black as the night outside.

The lights in the corridors were left lighted, throwing a brilliant illumination over the very spots where the robbers would be sure to stand in their attempt to effect an entrance into the car. Judge Bole took his post behind a heavy armchair, revolver in hand; ready to kill the first man that showed himself in the corridors. All the other passengers concealed themselves at the sides and ends of the car. Undoubtedly had any of the robbers attempted to enter that car he would have been shot. It was felt that if there was any part of the passenger train the robbers would be sure to investigate in the search for plunder it would be the Pullman with its possibilities of portly wads, costly chronometers, gold Alberts [gold pocket watches] and precious trinkets. Fortunately for themselves the bandits were satisfied with the rifling of the express end mail cars.

The Pullman with its darkened interior and brilliantly illuminated corridors, presented an eerie appearance, and the uncanny look of the car was enhanced by the knowledge of the fact that a determined man crouched in the darkness ready to seed deadly missiles into the first bandit that set foot within those fatal paths of light. Had the robbers come they would have been shot down without a chance of returning the fire.

Not until the return of the engine from Whonnock Creek did the defenders of the Pullman release the tension of waiting for the onset of the armed gang of ruffians.

After the train resumed its journey to Vancouver the passengers in the Pullman expressed in very warm terms their appreciation not only of the judge's courageous action, but also of his cleverly-planned scheme of defence for the car. A military man could not have beaten it for effectiveness. In the event of an attack, it would have been found practically impregnable, and with the Judge pumping lead from his deadly Smith and Wesson into the scoundrels in the passages, it would have been a bloody and fatal attempt on their part.

Gentlemen who had the pleasure of hearing of the incident from passengers of the Pullman, say that if Judge Bole had not chosen the law for his profession, he would have made a most decided success as a soldier and strategist. His plan was made and put into effect so quickly, so precisely in all its details that one could not refrain from expressions of admiration for the clear-headed and masterly grasp of the situation displayed by the Judge. — *Victoria Colonist*.

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Captain, His Honour W. Norman Bole, New Westminster, circa 1893. Port. P974

City of Vancouver Archives (CVA Port P974).

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