

Timeline - Status of Canadian Women

- 1813** - On 21 June, Laura Secord, driving a cow, walks 32 km through dense bush to warn the outpost of Beaver Dams, Ontario of a planned American attack.
- 1859** - An Upper Canada law allows married women to own property.
- 1875** - Grace Annie Lockhart graduates from Mount Allison University and is awarded the first university degree to a woman.
- 1880** - Emily Stowe becomes the first woman licensed to practice medicine in Canada.
- 1883** - The Canadian Women's Suffrage Association is the outcome of a meeting of the Toronto Women's Literary and Social Progress Club in the city council chamber organized to discuss the question of woman suffrage.
- 1885** - In Alberta, unmarried women property owners gain the right to vote and hold office in school matters.
- 1909** - In Newfoundland, the Ladies' Reading Room was created and was crucial in the development of the suffrage movement, providing a social space where women could hold debates, hear lectures on women's rights and access a selection of papers and magazines.
- 1909** - The Criminal Code is amended to criminalize the abduction of women.
- 1912** - The United Farmers of Alberta endorse women's suffrage.
- 1916** - Manitoba becomes the first province to give women the right to vote and hold provincial office.
- 1916** - Women gain the right to vote and run for office in Saskatchewan provincial elections.
- 1916** - The Alberta Equal Suffrage Act gives women 'absolute equality' with men in provincial, municipal, and school affairs, and thus permits women to vote and run for office in all Alberta-based elections.
- 1917** - Alberta becomes the first province to adopt a minimum wage law for women.
- 1917** - B.C. becomes the first province to give mothers the same rights over their children as fathers.
- 1918** - The Canada Elections Act gives all women over 21 the federal vote (May 24). 1921 - Agnes McPhail of Ontario becomes the first woman elected to the House of Commons. 1925 - Women gain the right to vote and run for office in Newfoundland elections.
- 1925** - The federal divorce law in changes, allowing women for the first time to obtain a divorce on the same grounds as men.
- 1927** - The 'Famous Five' - Irene Parlby, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards and Louise Crummy McKinney - petition for a Supreme Court of Canada interpretation on whether the term 'qualified persons' in section 24 of the British North America Act, 1867, includes women as persons eligible for appointment to the Senate.
- 1929** - The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England overturns the decision of the Supreme Court "Persons" case, and women were 'eligible to be summoned to and become members of the Senate of Canada' (October 18). 1934 - The Department of Justice decides that women can hold this position, but the first such appointment did not come until 1974 when the Honourable Pauline McGibbon became Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.
- 1940** - Women gain the right to vote and run for office in Quebec provincial elections.
- 1947** - Chinese- and Indo-Canadians are granted the right to vote.
- 1948** - Japanese-Canadians are granted to right to vote.
- 1952** - Ontario becomes the first province to put equal pay legislation into effect.
- 1957** - Prime Minister John Diefenbaker names Ellen Fairclough Secretary of State, the first woman cabinet minister in Canadian history.

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1960 - Canada's Aboriginal Peoples - including Aboriginal women - are finally granted a 'no-strings-attached' right to vote.

1964 - Bill 16 is passed in Quebec's National Assembly giving married women the same rights as their husbands.

1967 - Prime Minister Lester Pearson establishes a Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

1969 - Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government decriminalizes contraception and allows abortion under certain circumstances.

1970 - Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommends changes to the military to create equal conditions for all.

1971 - The federal government creates the cabinet portfolio of Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

1972 - British Columbia NDP MLA Rosemary Brown becomes the first Black woman in Canada to be elected to a legislature.

1974 - The first female RCMP recruits begin training at Regina. 1974 - The Native Women's Association of Canada is established.

1982 - The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is adopted, including Section 15, the Equality Clause.

1983 - Criminal Code changes replace rape with three categories of sexual assault, giving equal protection to men and women under the law, and allowing spouses to charge each other with sexual assault.

1984 - The Right Honourable Jeanne Sauvé becomes the first woman to hold the office of the Governor General.

1985 - The Indian Act is amended giving aboriginal women the right to retain their Native status, and to pass that status on to their children, if they marry non - native men.

1988 - The Supreme Court of Canada strikes down Canada's abortion law as unconstitutional. (The law is found to violate Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because it infringes upon a woman's right to 'life, liberty and security of person.' Chief Justice Brian Dickson writes: 'Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of her security of the person.' Canada is now one of a small number of countries without a law restricting abortion. Abortion is now treated like any other medical procedure and is governed by provincial and medical regulations.)

1989 - Audrey McLaughlin, Member of Parliament from the Yukon, is elected as the leader of the federal New Democratic Party and becomes the first woman ever to lead a national political party in Canada.

1989 - Decision of Canadian Human Rights Commission tribunal The Commission appoints a tribunal to investigate the complaints of four women and one man, all members of the military. On February 20, 1989, the tribunal rules that all obstacles to women's access to any military job must be removed, with two exceptions: service aboard submarines and Catholic chaplains.

1991 - British Columbia's Rita Johnston becomes Canada's first non-elected female premier.

1993 - Catherine Callbeck, Premier of Prince Edward Island, becomes the first female Premier elected in Canada.

1993 - Kim Campbell is chosen leader of the governing Progressive Conservative Party (13 June), and sworn in as Canada's first female Prime Minister (25 June).

2001 - Lieutenant Governors in seven Canadian provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) and the Governor General of Canada are women.