

DISCUSSION GUIDE: Votes for Women Centennial Poster



- 2022 -



1922



- 1930s -

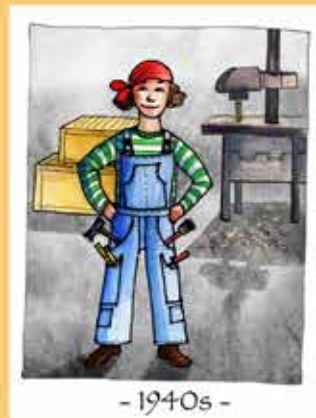


2005

Votes pour les Femmes

1922-2022

Votes for Women



- 1940s -



- 1993 -



1951



- 1989 -



1970s



- 1963 -

DISCUSSION GUIDE: Votes for Women Centennial Poster



On the left, the title "1922-2022 ~ VOTES FOR WOMEN" in graphic style. On the right, image of a poster with a gold background and title text in the centre, in French and English, encircled by 10 colourful, hand-painted vignette images from each of ten decades of women's equality.

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Slides available at

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/15gxmG3LzbVX6DbnUCkzjwSDpc9esQ-yqQb6QxrpLbLw/edit?usp=sharing>

or find the link through

<https://peistatusofwomen.ca/community-events/womens-history-month/>



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
CONSEIL CONSULTATIF SUR LA SITUATION DE LA FEMME DE
L'ÎLE-DU-PRINCE-ÉDOUARD

PRINCE
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GOVERNMENT

1922-2022 Votes for Women

BACKGROUND NOTES

The year 2022 marks the centenary of gender being removed as a barrier to voting in Prince Edward Island. In other words, it has been 100 years since most women in PEI gained the right to vote! Some women had gained the right before 1922; only Indigenous women would need to continue the fight for voting rights in PEI for an additional 41 years, until 1963.

The "Votes for Women" poster was created by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the PEI Coalition for Women in Government, in partnership with the artists and designers Mari Basiletti and JoDee Samuelson of Canoe Cove, PEI.

The poster depicts the story of gender being removed as a barrier to voting, but not as though 1922 marked the ending to a finished story. The poster includes many waystations on the pathway to inclusion and democracy for women, systemically excluded groups, and women from systemically excluded groups.

The poster features an image for each of the ten decades of the last hundred years, including some individual figures and recognizable milestones, but also alluding to ordinary women in the community and ongoing struggles.

TIMELINE NOTES: BEFORE 1922

- 1758-1866: With few exceptions in the colonies that would later form Canada, the vote is a privilege reserved for a limited segment of the population — mainly affluent white men.
- 1867-1884: Canadian Confederation. In all provinces, there are three basic conditions for becoming an elector: being male, having reached the age of 21, and being a British subject by birth or naturalization.
- 1888: Unmarried women in Charlottetown gain the right to vote in municipal elections.
- 1892: Unmarried women in Summerside gain the right to vote in municipal elections.
- 1899: Women gain the right to sit on school boards in Charlottetown and Summerside.
- 1918: Women over the age of 21 who are Canadian citizens gain the right to vote in federal elections, with the exception of First Nations women.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why is it more accurate to say that "gender was removed as a barrier to voting" in 1922 than to say "PEI women gained the right to vote"?
 - Consider that other barriers remained in place, including exclusion of Indigenous people (women and men) who wanted to maintain their "Indian status"; exclusion of children and youth under 18; exclusion of residents who are not Canadian citizens.
- What people and groups continue to face barriers to voting in PEI elections? What kinds of barriers do they face?
 - For example, children and youth under 18 and residents who are not Canadian citizens continue to lack voting rights.
 - Less obvious barriers might prevent some people with the right to vote from exercising their right or disempower them from voting: inadequate accommodation of disability, literacy challenges, lack of information, lack of transportation, and so on.

McRae, Matthew. "The Chaotic Story of the Right to Vote in Canada." Canadian Museum of Human Rights. <https://humanrights.ca/story/the-chaotic-story-of-the-right-to-vote-in-canada>

"Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island: Our History and Timeline." Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island. <https://www.assembly.pe.ca/about/our-history-and-timeline>

"History of Elections on PEI." Elections PEI. <https://www.electionspei.ca/resources/history-of-elections-on-pe> [Please note this source erroneously lists 1921 as the year women gained voting rights.]

"Significant Dates in the History of Women and Politics in PEI." PEI Coalition for Women in Government. <https://www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/significant-dates-in-history>

The 1920s

A hand-painted image in brown tones of a stooped, grey-haired woman in a long coat wearing a hat, old-fashioned glasses, and high-heeled boots, walking with a stick for support, approaching an open yellow door. To the left of the door is a sign marked with an "X."

1922:
Prince Edward Island women gain the right to vote in provincial elections, with the exception of First Nations women.



BACKGROUND NOTES

The image for 1922, the year most women in PEI gained the right to vote in provincial elections, depicts a senior woman and a sombre tone, even if there is a hint of celebration and a spring in the woman's step. What a life she might have led before gaining the right to vote! How many years she might have fought for her political rights!

If we imagine the woman in the image is 82 years old, born in 1840 in Prince Edward Island, she was born into a colony where women were specifically barred from voting, by reason of their gender, due to legislation passed in 1836.

Consider the many political decisions and historical events that could have affected her life, before she gained the right to vote in provincial elections:

- Prince Edward Island was still a colony of Great Britain when she was born. Peace and Friendship Treaties affecting the Island territory of Epekwitk were just over 40 years old.
- Representatives first sat in what is now Province House in 1847, when she was 7 years old.
- PEI gained responsible government in 1851, when she was 11.

- The Free Education Act passed in 1852 in PEI, the first piece of legislation in British North America to make school attendance free. As a 12-year-old, she may still have been in school to benefit from this legislation; if she had children later in her life, she would not have to pay tuition for their education.
- The Charlottetown Conference of 1864 would have taken place when she was 24.
- Prince Edward Island joined Canadian Confederation in 1873, when she was 33.
- If she were a married woman in 1896, when she was 56, she gained the right to own property and enter into contracts.
- Canada sent soldiers and nurses to the South African War, then known as the Boer War, between 1899 and 1902, when she was almost 60. Her children or grandchildren might have participated in Canada's first foreign war.
- Canada sent soldiers and nurses to the First World War, then known as the Great War, from 1914 to 1919, when she was in her 70s. Her grandchildren may have volunteered or been conscripted.

The 1920s, continued

The woman depicted may have been involved in the suffrage movement in PEI. In her mid-50s, she may have been part of 1894 or 1895 petitions for women to gain the right to vote. She may have been a member of women's organizations in her community such as the IODE (Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire) or the Women's Institutes across PEI or women-led temperance unions that pressed for a political voice for women. Since its first branch was established in 1911, the PEI Women's Institute has been a powerful force for bettering the situation of women, families, and communities in rural PEI. Since suffrage, Women's Institutes have championed roadside clean-up and environmental activities and pioneered "buy local" campaigns for PEI foods and products.

Not a great deal is written about individual women who contributed to the suffrage movement in PEI. Find out more about Elsie Inman under the "Background Notes" for the next slide. Another name to know is that of Bessie Carruthers. In 2019, local writers imagined her place in PEI history and PEI's place in the international suffrage movement in a Fringe theatre show, *The Bessie Carruthers Study Club*, performed by Jennifer King and Suzanne Campbell. Without these struggles and efforts of ordinary women, she may never have had the right to vote in her lifetime.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1920s

- 1922: Island women gain the right to vote in provincial elections, with the exception of First Nations women.
- 1923: The first provincial election takes place after gender being removed as a barrier to voting.
- 1929: After the famous "Persons Case" was heard before the British Privy Council (at that time the court of appeal for the Supreme Court of Canada), Canadian women were declared "persons" eligible to serve in the Senate of Canada.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What difference might voting rights for women have made in legislation and decision-making from 1840 to 1922? What topics might have come up in debate with more diverse representation in the colonial or provincial government?
- What people and groups were excluded from women's organizations that pressed for women's suffrage?

"Timeline: Women's Suffrage in Atlantic Canada."

The Canadian Encyclopedia. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/womens-suffrage-in-atlantic-canada>

Davis, Tony. "Island Fringe Show Focuses on Women's Right to Vote." [About The Bessie Carruthers Study Club.] CBC.ca. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-fringe-women-vote-play-2019-1.5235766>

Yarr, Kevin "Women mark 100 years of voting on P.E.I." CBC.ca. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-women-100-years-vote-1.6441176>

The 1930s

Just in 1929, the “Persons Case” had been heard before the court of appeal for the Supreme Court of Canada. Canadian women were declared “persons” eligible to serve in the Senate of Canada. Throughout the 1930s, and despite the Great Depression, women’s autonomy grows.



A smiling light-skinned woman with red hair, wearing a jaunty cap and a dark dress with broad sleeves, a tailored bodice, and a full skirt, pedals a red bicycle through pine woods amid low green hills.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Just prior to the 1930s, in 1929, women were declared “persons” under the law in Canada and were deemed eligible to serve in the Senate of Canada.

The woman who would become PEI’s first woman Senator, Elsie Inman (appointed to the Senate in 1955), was already 38 years old when she was deemed a “person” under the law. Inman had been a co-founder of the Women’s Liberal Club with Margaret Stewart. In 1918, the club presented a petition to the legislature in favour of voting rights for women. It gained unanimous support, helping pave the way for the 1922 decision to lift the restriction on women voting.

Prince Edward Island women were very affected by the Great Depression of the 1930s, especially those women who were responsible for caring for and procuring and preparing food for children and seniors during a time of terrible economic hardship.

Nevertheless, it was a time of expanding freedoms for women. The image of the bicycle is a symbol of women’s growing autonomy, as they were insisting on their rights to move about freely, with new vehicles to travel independently in their communities.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1930s

- See 1929 re: the Persons Case.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Women became eligible to serve as Senators when they were deemed to be “persons” under the law in 1929. In Canada, Senators (federal) are appointed, while Members of Parliament (federal) and Members of the Legislative Assembly (provincial) are elected. What are the pros and cons of an appointment process, as opposed to an election process, for women and under-represented groups?
- What barriers persisted for women and under-represented groups to be appointed to the Senate after gender was removed as a barrier? What barriers seem to persist into today?

de Bruin, Tabitha, and David A. Cruickshank. “Persons Case.” The Canadian Encyclopedia. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/persons-case>
“The ‘Persons’ Case.” Famous 5 Foundation. <https://www.famous5.ca/the-persons-case>

The 1940s

A determined-looking light-skinned woman with brown curly hair stands with her hands on her hips. She wears a red bandana, green-and-white striped shirt, and blue overalls with carpentry tools in the pockets. Behind her are wooden boxes and a band saw.

In the 1940s, women's roles in the public life of PEI increase.

With many men overseas fighting in the Second World War, and many dying, women fill jobs outside the home and take on community responsibilities that had usually been reserved for men.



BACKGROUND NOTES

Democracy and public life in PEI and Canada in the 1940s were dominated by the effects of the Second World War, fought from 1939 to 1945. Conscription of young men, and the deaths of many in the war, altered gender roles and gender relations forever. Women's labour, traditionally more in the private (domestic) sphere and often unpaid, was needed in the public sphere and was in many cases paid work. Women worked in factories and offices. They planted Victory Gardens and sent food and clothing to soldiers, in addition to caring for their homes and families.

That being said, no women's names appeared on PEI ballots in the 1940s.

One interesting development in PEI law in the 1940s was that in 1948, a provincial plebiscite vote was held to end the prohibition of alcohol and replace it with government-controlled liquor sales. There is some irony in women being part of this plebiscite, given the shared history of women's suffrage and the temperance movement: women organizing to advance their circumstances and improve communities. The change in liquor laws also illustrates women's involvement in shifting social values.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1940s

- 1939-1945: At least 715 Prince Edward Island women participated directly in the Second World War, mostly as nurses.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why might PEI women's names still not be appearing on ballots in the 1940s, almost twenty years after gaining the right to vote?

Dewar, Katherine. *We'll Meet Again: Prince Edward Island Women of the Second World War*. Island Studies Press, 2021.

The 1950s

1951: Hilda Ramsay (running for the CCF, a predecessor to the NDP) is the first woman candidate to campaign for a seat in the Legislative Assembly of PEI.

For the first time, voting Islanders can cast a ballot for a woman.



Hilda Ramsay

A portrait of a light-skinned, round-faced woman in a fancy round brown crushed-velvet hat and a red V-necked top gazes out of an oval tortoise-shell frame with ornate gold decorations on the top and sides.

BACKGROUND NOTES

While gender was removed as a barrier to voting in 1922, it would be almost 30 years before a PEI woman's name appeared on a ballot. In 1951, Hilda Ramsay of Indian River ran in the electoral district of 3rd Prince. She did not win, but her candidature provided the first opportunity for Islanders to mark an "X" on a ballot with a woman's name on it.

While women were declared "persons" under the law in 1929, it took more than 25 years for the federal government to appoint a Prince Edward Island woman to the Senate of Canada. Elsie Inman was appointed in 1955.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1950s

- 1951: Hilda Ramsay (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) is the first woman candidate to campaign for a seat in the Legislative Assembly of PEI.
- 1955: Elsie Inman is the first Island woman appointed to the Senate of Canada.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- A common expression about representation is "You have to see it to be it" (often attributed to pioneering tennis player Billie Jean King). How important do you think past role models of representation are to the world of today?
- What are the pros and cons of having a few highly visible role models in political representation?

PEI Coalition for Women in Government. "PEI Women in Government Timeline." [Infographic/poster.] <https://www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/projects-and-resources>

The 1960s

A brown-skinned woman with long black braids wearing a blue shirt, a medallion, and a ribbon skirt, holds up an eagle feather in front of an open red door. A large yellow sign with a black "X" is to the right of the door. The shadow of the woman and her feather falls on the open door.

1963:
First Nations people of all genders living on reserve gain the right to vote in PEI provincial elections without losing their status.

By 1960, Lennox Island First Nation had elected Mary Bernard their first elected woman chief.



BACKGROUND NOTES

It is appalling how late in Canada and PEI's history First Nations gained equitable rights to vote across their ancestral territories now called "Canada."

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls found:

The significant, persistent, and deliberate pattern of systemic racial and gendered human rights and Indigenous rights violations and abuses – perpetuated historically and maintained today by the Canadian state, designed to displace Indigenous Peoples from their land, social structures, and governance and to eradicate their existence as Nations, communities, families, and individuals – is the cause of the disappearances, murders, and violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and is genocide. This colonialism, discrimination, and genocide explains the high rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

"Indian status" conferred through the 1876 Indian Act was created as part of colonial practices of assimilation, underpinning cultural and actual genocide and systemic theft of Indigenous land. The few benefits First Nations negotiated through treaties and on reserves were accessible only through having

"status." However, a First Nations person who chose to pursue university education had their "status" automatically terminated. With termination, they gained the right to vote in elections but lost access to other benefits, communities, resources, cultural spaces, and homelands. During the First World War, Indigenous people who served in the military were allowed to vote in federal elections, until they were demobilized, at which time they lost voting rights. After the Second World War, the injustice of Indigenous suffrage began to be recognized. Indigenous groups led a movement to ensure voting rights for all Indigenous people. This movement successfully fought for suffrage to include all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people by 1960 for federal elections, and by 1963 for PEI provincial elections. Some off-reserve Mi'kmaq, led by Mi'kmaw women, continued to fight for additional voting rights into the 2010s. Women from Abegweit First Nation launched a constitutional challenge in order to ensure off-reserve members of the Abegweit First Nation could vote in band elections. Off-reserve members cast their first ballots for Abegweit First Nation's chief in 2019. In the 1960s, Prince Edward Island women witnessed a number of "firsts": the first elections in which First

The 1960s, continued

BACKGROUND: THE 1960s, continued

Nations people could vote without losing their status; the first woman elected chief of a First Nation; the first PEI woman elected as a Member of Parliament; the first woman elected as a Mayor of Charlottetown.

While these “firsts” held promise, only Lennox Island First Nation set a rising trend in gender representation. In the decades that have followed the 1960s, Lennox Island First Nation has elected at least two more women chiefs (Darlene Bernard and Matilda Ramjattan) – and after one band election in the 2010s had all women on their Band Council.

However, since the first PEI woman was elected an MP, only two more PEI women have ever been elected as Members of Parliament (Catherine Callbeck, Liberal, in 1988, and Gail Shea, Conservative Party of Canada, in 2008). Charlottetown has never again elected a woman mayor.

PEI has never had an Indigenous person of any gender elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly or Member of Parliament.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1960s

- 1960: First Nations people living on reserve gain the right to vote in federal elections without losing their registered status.
- 1960: Mary Bernard is the first woman elected chief of the Lennox Island First Nation.
- 1961: Mary Margaret Smith MacDonald (Progressive Conservative) is the first Island woman, as well as the first woman east of Ottawa, elected to the House of Commons.
- 1963: First Nations people living on reserve gain the right to vote in PEI provincial elections without losing their registered status.
- 1968: Dorothy Corrigan is the first woman elected mayor of Charlottetown.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- The history of women’s suffrage has treated “enfranchisement” as a positive term. The history of suffrage is imagined as a narrative of the “franchise” expanding and over time becoming more inclusive of excluded groups, including women. However, the history of “enfranchisement” for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people is a history of disempowerment and oppression. The “franchise” has enormous power to include and exclude. What societal values do we express through who has voting rights today?
- For what groups is attaining voting rights still problematic? For whom does voting continue to require loss, labour, sacrifices, or trade-offs?
- What did Mi’kmaq governance look like before colonization? What was the role of people of different genders?

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Calls for Justice*.

2019. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf

Leslie, John F. “Indigenous suffrage.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indigenous-suffrage>

Johnston, A.J.B., and Jesse Francis. *Ni’n na L’nu: The Mi’kmaq of Prince Edward Island*. Acorn Press, 2013.

Higgins, Brian. “Cheers, tears as off-reserve Abegweit members vote for first time.” CBC.ca. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-abegweit-election-1.5175944>

The 1970s

A long-haired, light-skinned woman in a flowery dress and tall boots plays a guitar at a microphone in front of a green curtain with a red banner that reads "Women's Festival des Femmes." A woman with long red hair, a yellow shirt, and a colourful bandana sits in a wheelchair in front of a microphone and a snare drum. She holds two drumsticks.

PEI feminist activism gives rise to local women's shelters and rape crisis centres. Events like the Women's Festival celebrate women's power, autonomy, and voices, especially lesbian women.



BACKGROUND NOTES

The highlight of women's political history in PEI in the 1970s was the election of Jean Canfield as the first PEI woman MLA, fully 49 years after most women in PEI gained the right to vote.

The image on the slide for this decade highlights the spirit of solidarity and celebration in the growing PEI feminist movement. Throughout the 1970s, PEI women came together to make change in the community, including establishing an emergency women's shelter now known as Anderson House, the hub of what would become today's Family Violence Prevention Services; and a rape crisis centre that would become today's PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre. They also established an annual Women's Festival, with empowering workshops and music and performance, that drew together women from across PEI and from near and far outside PEI.

The struggle for legislative changes to improve women's lives continued with little representation of women in legislative decision-making. It was challenging to convince legislators, who were overwhelmingly men, that gender-based violence was rooted in sexism and misogyny, or of the need for publicly supported childcare.

In May 2022, during a panel celebrating the centennial of women gaining the right to vote, panel member Cheryl Simon, an *I'nu* lawyer and educator, expressed her hope that in the next 100 years, we

would "exhaust the firsts" in politics in Epekwitk. In other words, she hoped we would reach a level of representation in which we didn't hear a news story about the "first Indigenous woman elected as an MLA" or identify the "first Black woman appointed to the Senate to represent PEI."

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1970s

- 1970: The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada is tabled.
- 1971: Jean Canfield (Liberal) is the first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of PEI.
- 1972: Margaret Bernard is elected first chief of the newly formed Abegweit First Nation.
- 1975: The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women is established.
- 1979: Frances Perry is the first woman elected mayor of Summerside.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are some of the "firsts" in PEI political history that we are still waiting for today?

"Panel Discussion: Centennial Celebration of Women Getting the Vote." PEI Coalition for Women in Government. 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/peiwomeningov/videos/5554369291260331>

The 1980s

1989: As gender-based violence and inequality persist, women come together in grief and protest after the Montreal Massacre of December 6.



Four figures wearing winter clothes hold lit candles. Flames trail towards the right. A youth wears a yellow coat; a small person wears a tailored black coat; a tall central figure wears a blue coat and knotted scarf; a shorter person with long, curly hair wears a brown coat. They all look sombre. Behind them are outlines of many figures, not painted in detail. Above them, a starry blue-black sky.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The community-based feminist activism of the 1970s continued in PEI in the 1980s, despite slow gains in political representation. Much protest in the 1980s centred on access to reproductive health in PEI. The last abortion approved by a committee at a hospital in PEI took place in 1982. The Canada Health Act in 1985 required provinces and territories to provide access to reproductive healthcare. In 1988, Canada's laws limiting abortion access were struck down in the Morgentaler decision. And yet, it would be 35 years before abortion care would be repatriated to a Prince Edward Island hospital in 2017.

Tremendous activist and lobbying work by feminists across Canada led to Section 15, Equality Rights, coming into force as part of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1985. This section enshrines in the Canadian Constitution that "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law." Equality Rights provisions led to political and legal challenges and changes that have increased sex- and gender-based equality.

At the end of the 1980s, on December 6, in Montreal, a gunman who declared he "hated feminists" entered the École Polytechnique, separated the women and men engineering students from each other, and murdered 14 women because they were

women. Only a few weeks earlier in PEI, a woman, Carrie Ellen Crossman (married name McMurrer), had been murdered by her partner. Prince Edward Island women and community members ended the decade in mourning, but ready to protest and address gender-based violence and femicide.

Pioneering Canadian feminist writer and publisher Doris Anderson (1921-2007) was strongly connected to PEI (Anderson House in Charlottetown is named for her). In the 1980s, she wondered why Canada did not have a national program for early childhood care and education, despite women's decades-long grassroots lobbying. In the late 1980s, when she compared countries with national child care programs to those without, she found a pattern. Countries with strong representation of women in government had national child care programs. Countries, like Canada, with weak representation of women in government did not. She saw a connection between women in government and policies to support the status of women.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1980s

- 1982: Leone Bagnall (Progressive Conservative) is appointed as the first female Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.
- 1983: Marion Reid (Progressive Conservative) is the first woman in PEI to hold the office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of PEI.

The 1980s, continued

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What changes in Canadian law have improved gender equality by using the equality section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms? (Check out LEAF.ca for examples.)
- What are the links between voting rights, reproductive rights, and gender-based violence?
- When women or excluded groups are not at the decision-making table, what policies, programs, and legislations might not be considered or discussed?

Government of Canada. "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." Department of Justice Canada. ENGLISH: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/> FRENCH: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/fra/sjc-csj/dlc-rfc/ccdl-ccrf/>

Kome, Penny. "What Section 15 Has Achieved." https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantia/article/download/3347/pdf_47/7003

Anderson, Doris. "Lack of Women Real Deficit." <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/04/05/lack-women-real-deficit-ca>

Anderson, Doris. *The Unfinished Revolution: The Status of Women in Twelve Countries*. Doubleday, 1991

The 1990s

1993: PEI's Famous Five

For the first time, five women occupy the highest levels of PEI government: Speaker of the House Nancy Guphill, Premier Catherine Callbeck, Leader of the Opposition Pat Mella, Lieutenant Governor Marion Reid, and Deputy Speaker Libbe Hubley.



In the foreground, five female-appearing figures look towards a neo-Classical stone building (Province House). A short woman wears a black gown and tri-corne hat; a blonde woman wears a red dress; a brown-haired woman wears a blue suit; a white-haired woman wears a green blazer and skirt; and a tall woman wears a black gown with a white ruff.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Prince Edward Island saw its most significant moments of women's political history in the 1990s, with five women occupying five of the most influential and powerful roles in the Province in 1993, a first anywhere in Canada – and also the last time this has occurred in PEI or any other province.

The “firsts” for women in politics remain too often “onlies.” In federal politics, 1993 also saw Kim Campbell (Progressive Conservative) become the first, and still only, woman Prime Minister of Canada. In September 2022, only two (2/14) federal, provincial, or territorial first ministers were women.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 1990s

- 1990: Pat Mella (Progressive Conservative) is the first woman in PEI to be elected Leader of a provincial political party in a leadership convention.
- 1990: Marion Reid is appointed the first woman Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island.
- 1993: Catherine Callbeck (Liberal) is the first woman in PEI and Canada to be elected Premier in a general election.

TIMELINE NOTES, continued

- 1993: For the first time in history five women occupy the highest levels of government in PEI. PEI's Famous Five: Speaker of the House Nancy Guphill, Premier Catherine Callbeck, Leader of the Opposition Pat Mella, Lieutenant Governor Marion Reid, and Deputy Speaker Libbe Hubley.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What has been the lasting legacy of PEI's Famous Five?
 - *Resource available: PEI Famous Five website resources for educators, from the Interministerial Women's Secretariat, <https://www.peifamousfive.ca/educator-resources>*

Interministerial Women's Secretariat. *PEI Famous Five.* <https://www.peifamousfive.ca/>

Prince Edward Island Interministerial Women's Secretariat. *Prince Edward Island's Famous Five: In Their Own Words.* Province of Prince Edward Island, 2020.

The 2000s

On a yellow background, two women stand together in a marital pose under a rainbow umbrella, surrounded by colourful hearts. One woman is light-skinned and wears a red hat, a dark suit, and a bow tie. The other is dark-skinned and wears a long white gown. She holds a bouquet of red-and-white flowers.

2005:
Same-sex partners gain the right to equal marriage in PEI and across Canada.

2006: In PEI politics, the percentage of women elected to the Legislative Assembly of PEI peaks at 26%.



BACKGROUND NOTES

Political party leadership has been elusive for women in PEI, especially when provincial parties are in power or poised to form government. Sharon Labchuk founded and led the PEI Green Party years before their first electoral successes, but it is notable that in one election (2011) more than half (10/16, 62.5%) of the candidates she recruited and promoted as leader were women. As a woman leader, she was a champion for women candidates, and she set targets and goals for representation.

In 2006, the percentage of women elected to the Legislative Assembly reached its highest proportion in history, at just 26% – still a very far cry from women’s percentage as a slight majority of the population. This percentage has not been exceeded even today, in 2022. Research around the world has indicated that when women make up 33% of a decision-making body, that represents enough “critical mass” to begin to change what gets debated and how, resulting in positive policy change for equity. There is staggering evidence that when decision-making bodies (public and corporate boards as well as legislatures) get closer to gender parity, they make better decisions and return better results. The federal cabinet achieved gender parity since 2015. The federal Senate of

Canada achieved gender parity in 2020. PEI remains far from receiving these benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Meanwhile, the idea of “gender parity” does not match our emerging understanding of gender as a spectrum, not a binary.

And yet, through grassroots and legislative organizing, women-identifying and non-binary people are leading change for more gender equality and better lives for PEI residents of all genders!

Throughout the 2000s, PEI women’s equality-seeking organizations (including the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the PEI Coalition for Women in Government) were among the leaders in the movement for electoral reform, advocating for proportional representation throughout plebiscites on electoral reform in 2006 and 2015 and during a referendum on mixed-member proportional representation in 2019. The Advisory Council and the Coalition collaborated on gender and diversity analysis, demonstrating evidence that proportional representation electoral systems are linked with higher representation of women and systemically excluded groups. This discussion continues. To date, electoral systems in PEI or Canada have not been reformed to proportional representation models.

The 2000s, continued

BACKGROUND NOTES, continued

Something that makes the “Votes for Women” poster project special is that the artists, Mari Basiletti and JoDee Samuelson, have been involved and present for many of the events depicted from the 1970s on. Equal marriage in 2005 affected them personally, as they were able to legally marry after almost thirty years of love and commitment and raising two children together.

TIMELINE NOTES: THE 2000s

- 2003: The PEI Coalition for Women in Government is formed.
- 2005: Sharon Labchuk becomes the first Island woman to found a political party (PEI Green Party).
- 2006: The percentage of women elected to the Legislative Assembly of PEI peaks at 26%.
- 2006, 2015, and 2019: PEI holds two plebiscite votes and one referendum on electoral reform but does not significantly change its electoral system.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are some of the reasons that the percentage of women elected to the Legislative Assembly of PEI has peaked at just 26%?
 - *Resource available: PEI Women in Government timeline poster with key dates in the history of women in PEI politics. <https://www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/projects-and-resources> (available in English and French)*
- Do you see yourself represented in the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island? In what ways do you feel represented? In what ways do you feel unrepresented?
- Is representation of the population in elected bodies important? Why or why not?

PEI Coalition for Women in Government. “Equity in Governance” project resources: <https://www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/equity-in-governance>

Today and the Future

A fair-haired, light-skinned child in a yellow dress and a brown-skinned, dark-haired child in a purple shirt sit on grass by a shore sharing an open, oversized red book on their laps. Text on the book reads "1922 to/a 2022" "Our Story ~ Notre histoire."

After 100 years since many PEI women gained voting rights, what is your part in the story of gender equality?

What will the next 100 years bring?



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Thinking about the past 100 years since gender was removed as a barrier to voting, what stands out to you?
- Thinking of the 100 years to come, what do you hope will be the milestone moments and signature achievements of the next 10 decades?

Resource available: Blank poster with white spaces for words or images for the coming 100 years. <https://peistatusofwomen.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Centennial-Poster-Blank.pdf>

Resource available: "Commemorating Island Women's Political History," PEI Coalition for Women in Government colouring pages (in English and French) of diverse PEI women leaders. <https://www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/commemorating-island-women-s-political-history>

Credits

PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women

PEI Coalition for Women in Government

Poster art and design by Mari Basiletti and JoDee Samuelson

With thanks to the PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation and the PEI Interministerial Women's Secretariat

For more information and resources:

<https://peistatusofwomen.ca/community-events/womens-history-month/>



- 2122 -



2022



- 2030s -



2100s

Votes pour les FEMMES



- 2040s -

2022-2122



- 2090s -

Votes for Women



2050



- 2080s -



2070s



- 2060s -