

A Focus on Women Parliamentarians

One hundred years ago, on June 7, 1917, voters in Alberta elected Louise McKinney to the provincial legislature. McKinney, who was sworn in the following year, was not only recognized as the first woman elected to a Canadian legislature, but also the first woman elected as a parliamentarian anywhere in the British Empire.

To mark this anniversary, the Canadian Parliamentary Review is pleased to present a theme issue focusing on the women who have followed (and hope to follow) in her footsteps.

In this issue, Manitoba Speaker Myrna Driedger writes about the early suffrage campaigns that paved the way for women like McKinney to vote in provincial, territorial and federal elections and stand for elected public office. She explains how her province – the first to extend the franchise to some women – honoured suffragist Nellie McClung (a member of the Famous Five, alongside McKinney) on the legislature’s grounds.

Elsewhere, Equal Voice Canada’s Grace Lore surveys the current state of women’s representation in elected office across Canada. Amanda Bittner and Melanee Thomas explore current research into issues women face in political workplaces with a particular focus on mothers (and fathers) who face unique challenges balancing work and family responsibilities in a job like no other. Amanda LeBlanc recounts the interesting history of gendered honorifics, naming women in legislatures, and the trend towards gender neutral address.

We also present an interview and two roundtables with past, present, and potentially future women parliamentarians. Kim Campbell reflects on her career and the state of women in politics as she approaches the 25th anniversary of her time as Canada’s first, and so far only, woman prime minister. MHA Cathy Bennett, MLA Rochelle Squires, and former MLA Joanne Bernard share their experiences as targets of vicious, hateful and misogynistic social media harassment. And, on an optimistic note, several delegates from the Daughters of the Vote

express how this event has inspired them, and how they have inspired each other, to continue the work of breaking down barriers that women face when engaging in formal and informal politics.

Finally, our recurring “Sketches” feature, tells the story of Bettie Duff, the first woman to serve as Clerk of a legislature in Canada and one of the trailblazing women working within parliamentary institutions who support all parliamentarians to fulfill democratic responsibilities.

Throughout this issue you will also see many women parliamentarians offering a message with words of advice, warning, and encouragement to their younger selves based on what they have learned in their political careers. We had a tremendous response to our call for these submissions, and any messages we could not fit into the print edition of the magazine will appear on our new website: <http://www.revparlcan.ca/>

On behalf of the editorial board, I hope you agree that this theme issue is as strong and compelling as the women we profile in its pages.

Will Stos, Editor

