

Irene Parlby Readings

What Business Have Women in Politics?

I never realized until my first campaign in 1921 what miserable incompetent creatures women were in the eyes of the public. I ought to have developed a terrible inferiority complex by the time it was over, for practically the only issue that seemed to concern the electorate or the opposition, was that I was a woman and worse an English woman. . . .

A Letter to Violet McNaughton

It has been the dirtiest possible fight, but
we won out with about 1,000 majority. . . .

I feel that if I can help to smash this hideous
party machine and free people from its yoke
it will have been worth it. I feel as if I had
been through rivers of mud and could never
be clean again, or trust anyone again—

Some who had been pretending most to be
our friends we found were traitors—and the
venom of the Alix women—you could not
believe—they were literally mad with spite!
And the whole masonic bunch and the Institute
worked like the devil against me, and no lie
was to Famous 5 heritage Edukit - Heritage
Community Foundation vile to be used. . .

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Because the work of the married woman, in caring for her household, was supposed to be a labor of love, and of no economic value . . . women were at first content to sell their work at far below its real value, and thus depress the wage scale for all workers. Today women have proved themselves capable of entering many fields of labor, manual and intellectual, in which men work, and their demand for equal opportunity, and equal pay for equal work is being more and more recognised. Until it is fully recognised, women's work will always have a tendency to hold down the standard of wages, and displace men . . . Perhaps no group of women have suffered more from this condition of affairs than the Farm women. Certainly no group of women has labored so hard so ungrudgingly and so unselfishly. And yet we know for a fact that in many instances, not even the produce that they raise by their own labor, can be sold and claimed as their own. Can such a humiliating condition be conducive to a happy married life, or a right environment in which to bring up children? And it is not so uncommon a condition as might be supposed. Our law is little or no protection to the married women; the Dower Act is of little value. The Community Property Act introduced at the last session was the embryo from which some satisfactory legislation may result. Modern conditions must be faced, and the wife must not be placed in an inferior economic position to the unmarried woman, because she gives herself to the valuable and important work of caring for home and family.

Bill No. 54 of 1925: An Act Establishing
Community Property as between
Husband and Wife. . . .

3. All property of the husband (or wife) owned by him (or her) before marriage and that acquired afterward by gift . . . shall be his (or her) separate property . . .

5. All other property acquired by either husband or wife, or both, during the marriage, including the rents and profits of the separate property of the husband and wife, shall be community property. . . .

8. The husband shall have the management and control of the community property with the like absolute power of disposition, other than testamentary, over community personal property as he has of his separate estate; but he shall not sell, convey or encumber the community real estate unless the wife joins with him in executing the instrument of conveyance. . . .

—from a bill introduced into the Alberta Legislature in 1925, but never passed into law.