

THE FRANCHISE

When the new Government came into power in 1917 it brought with it the extension of the franchise to women and a full recognition of their rights to citizenship. The Provincial Election Act, Chap. 23, 1917, conferred upon women not only the franchise, but also the right to sit as members of the Legislative Assembly. Thus, with the introduction of a direct Government measure, preceded by the repeal of the Suffrage Referendum Act, the validity of which had been questioned by some legal authorities, ended a long, hard struggle of twenty-five years.

Since then the municipal franchise has been extended and women given the right to sit as mayors, aldermen, reeves and councillors. In certain municipal districts they may qualify as voters upon tendering two dollars in lieu of the "direct tax" required of men similarly placed.

In rural districts husband and wife may qualify on each other's property in school trustee elections. Many rural women have felt keenly that since the farm usually stood in the husband's name they, who were so deeply interested in the education of their children, had no voice in school matters. Now both father and mother may vote.

EQUAL GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS

One of the vexed questions in British Columbia for years has been the inequality of mothers in the matter of guardianship of minor children. This inequality originally existed because of the danger likely to arise from an Indian wife of a white man claiming a right which she was not capable of exercising intelligently.

Although social conditions had changed, making such circumstances unlikely because of the discontinuance of the practice of marriage with Indian women, the laws relating to women's disabilities remained unchanged until May, 1917, when "The Equal Guardianship of Infants Act," Chap. 17, 1917, was enacted by the Liberal administration. By this legislation all disabilities of married women with respect to the guardianship