

colony of France. In 1866 these laws were codified into the Civil Code of the Province of Quebec. In the following year, the British North America Act gave exclusive jurisdiction of property and civil rights to the provinces.

Under the Quebec Code, a married woman suffered under legal incapacities which made it necessary for her to get her husband's signature in order to appear in judicial proceedings, give, accept, sell or dispose of property during her lifetime (though she could dispose of it by will without authorization or consent), and enter into contracts or obligations.

In 1964, these and other antiquated incapacities were removed, thanks to a bill passed by the Quebec Legislature. This bill was introduced by a woman, a Minister-without-Portfolio, Madame Claire Kirkland-Casgrain, a young lawyer with three small children, who in 1961 became the first woman ever to be elected to the Quebec Legislature. In her maiden speech, she promised to fight until married women in the French province received the same rights as those enjoyed for so long by women in the other nine provinces. When she was elevated to Cabinet rank, she spent many months getting public support for her bill before successfully steering it through the all-male Legislature.

Politics

Canadian women have had the right to vote and hold public office since 1919. (The Province of Quebec did not give women the franchise until 1940, though the Federal Government and the other nine provinces had done so 21 years before.)

In 1964, there were six women in the Senate (Senators are appointed by the Prime Minister). Four women were elected to the 265-Member House of Commons in 1962. Three of them belong to the Liberal Party: Miss Judy LaMarsh, a lawyer, Dr. Pauline Jewett, a professor of political science; and Mrs. Gordon Konantz, a volunteer social worker. One is a member of the Progressive-Conservative Party - Mrs. Jean Casselman, the daughter of a former Cabinet Minister and the widow of a Member of Parliament whose former constituency she represents.

Many Canadian women serve on school boards and city councils. A number are reeves and mayors. The best known is Miss Charlotte Whitton, three times elected Mayor of Ottawa, the National Capital.

Canadian women have also distinguished themselves in the Armed Services, the Civil Service and as members of Canadian delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and to other international conferences.

Canadian women make a great social and cultural contribution through the voluntary work they do in a wide variety of organizations.

The National Council of Women, the Women's Institutes, the Federation of Professional and Business Women's Clubs, the Federation of University Women and the Consumers Association of Canada have over the years made Governments aware of the needs of women. They are in large part responsible for the present high status and equality enjoyed today by women in every part of Canada.