

judicial and like public functions, gives preference to the reason that their exemption was founded upon motives of decorum and was a privilege of the sex. Now-a-days, in view of the aggressive posture, the clamorous pleas for equality of the new woman, this explanation of her sex's denial of a part in the management of the country's affairs would hardly be satisfactory to all parties. She, at all events, would not hesitate to replace the word "privilege" by "penalty." Our own province is not left wholly without aid to the settlement of the problem. In the *South Renfrew Election Case*, 1 H.E.C. 705, Mr. Justice Adam Wilson says: "I am of opinion that the returning officer is both a ministerial and a judicial officer. He has not now, as formerly, to hold an inquisition into the capacity or qualification of a candidate or voter; but I feel assured that if a person appeared and was nominated, and such candidate were a woman or mere child that the returning officer could decline to receive such a nomination."

There is in our statute no prohibition against a woman's aspiring to, or enjoying, a seat in Parliament. Even during the period of union of the two Provinces (the writer did not believe that investigation could be pursued with advantage beyond that point) exclusion was brought about only by reason of her inability to satisfy the property qualification then hampering competitors. It is singular, too,—the questions of suffrage and title to share in the councils of the nation being placed on the same footing—that the legislature should have been so unusually careful to debar women from taking any step toward choosing a representative, and yet have said nothing as to their capacity for attaining the office itself. Long before the departure from venerated custom, when liberty was given unmarried women and widows in possession of landed estate to exercise the franchise at municipal contests, they were not satisfied to confine themselves to the bestowal of the gift affirmatively on males. The very first statute dealing with elections passed after Confederation, 32 Vict., c. 21, provides by sec. 4 that "no woman shall be entitled to vote at any election." And the intimation of her disability is carried through each consolidation of the laws up to the present time.

It has been noticed in one of the old books that the sole instance of a woman's filling a public office in the earlier history of Great Britain was that of Ann, Countess of Pembroke, who was sheriff of Westmoreland, a post falling to her by descent. There