

Toronto Suffrage Association

HEADQUARTERS  
169 CARLTON STREET  
TORONTO

Women Suffrage  
in Canada

BY  
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## WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE

### IN CANADA

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The history of the Woman's Suffrage movement in Canada dates back less than thirty years, when here in Toronto one of our courageous as well as progressive women, Dr. Emily Stowe, assisted in organizing a club to advance the development of women. She called this club a literary one, only breathing the word suffrage to a trusted few of the inner circle, and these thought themselves very radical.

Later in 1894 public opinion had so broadened that the same organization became incorporated under the name of the Dominion Woman's Enfranchisement Association. Dr. Emily Stowe was the one pioneer to bear the brunt of insult and ostracism, but she fortunately lived to see her work for women recognized internationally. Her faith in the final triumph of enlightened views regarding woman's position in society was never shaken. The opening of Toronto University to women, the extension of municipal suffrage to unmarried women and widows, and the Married Woman's Property Act, are among the results due to her persistent efforts. The women of Canada should revere her memory, for her sacrifices have opened to them many spheres of usefulness.

For a time suffrage interest lapsed in Canada and it was only kept alive by the devotion to the cause of Dr. Stowe-Gullen, who kept Canada associated internationally with the world movement.

In 1906 interest was aroused by Flora MacD. Denison going as delegate from Canada to the International Suffrage Alliance in Copenhagen.

It was in this year that the Militant Suffragettes began drastic operations in England and set the whole world on fire, and there has been a con-

tinual fanning of the flame all over the world ever since, and Canada has certainly caught some of the fire. The past five years has been one of continued activity. Three petitions have been presented to the Ontario Government and two full bills introduced, besides many bills in former years for the extension to married women of the municipal franchise.

A bill almost passed the New Brunswick Legislature, and the Manitoba Legislature has been petitioned.

The last bill introduced in the Ontario House had a full discussion on the floor of the House, and while a division was not asked, a step was gained in that the members were educated as to the progress the movement has made and the success of Woman's Suffrage wherever it has been tried.

Monster meetings in Massey Hall have been addressed by Dr. Anna Shaw, Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Snowdon.

The press of Toronto has been most liberal in support of the movement, and for the past two years the Toronto World has been the official organ for the suffrage news.

The International Council of Women, held here in 1910, was the greatest representative gathering of women the world has seen, and the keynote of the whole proceedings was suffrage, and a resolution was passed unanimously favoring it, and this at the most crowded mass meeting of the whole congress.

This year the National Council, if somewhat late in the day, did pass a resolution favoring Woman's Suffrage.

The Canadian Suffrage Association has now affiliated with it several local organizations from Vancouver to St. John, N.B.

Toronto has been a live centre of work and public headquarters did much propoganda work during the past winter.

The Toronto Suffrage Association is probably the most important local suffrage organization in

the Dominion and its officers deserve all praise.

A few weeks ago the Hydro-Electric celebrated their inaugural opening in Toronto. In Massey Hall, Dec. 28th, 1907, women were asked to speak at a monster mass meeting in favor of this enterprise, and Mrs. Denison responded, which marked an epoch in the history of women. In 1910 Mayor Geary called a protest meeting against the Street Railway Co., and Dr. Stowe-Gullen was asked to speak. This goes to show that many of our best men want the co-operation of women in the settling of public questions.

But Canadian women themselves must wake up. Why, away back in 1850 Ontario gave women the school franchise. Then she was in the lead. Now she is getting in the rear of the progressive procession.

It seems hard to believe that woman herself has clung to her chains of slavery, and instead of assisting and encouraging the brave torch-bearers who have prepared the way for a broader and nobler womanhood to be possible, she has too often drawn her skirts aside and whimpered, "I am perfectly satisfied to be the power behind the throne," "A woman's place is in the home," etc., forgetting that many women would have no homes if they had not got out and hustled to keep themselves and their children. This hustling, this getting out, has opened women's eyes.

She has found herself capable, she has found that she is needed, and she has come to realize that the welfare of the nation is just as much her concern as it is that of men. She has found that she is a human being and needs all human opportunities, the same as men, for development.

Every Canadian woman is needed in this great movement of assisting in the final emancipation of her sex.

Why should this broad, free country be behind Australia and New Zealand, to say nothing of dozens of other places.

FLORA MacD. DENISON.