

THE IMPORTANCE of THE PERSONS CASE

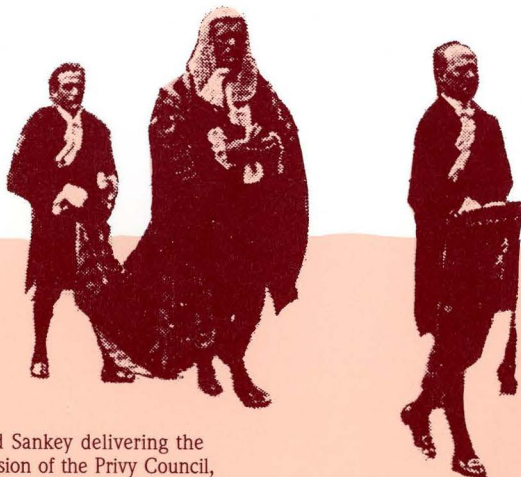
On October 18, 1929, the efforts of five Alberta women to ensure women's eligibility to sit on the Canadian Senate were at last successful. Their actions had brought about a new interpretation of the BNA Act in regard to the word 'persons.' Before this, only men could be appointed to the Senate. This case had influence across the British Empire.

The five women: Emily Murphy, police magistrate and the driving force in bringing the case forward; Irene Parlby, MLA and Minister without Portfolio; Nellie McClung, former MLA, writer and journalist; Henrietta Muir Edwards, provincial president of the National Council of Women of Canada; and Louise McKinney, former MLA and provincial president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, had all been working on women's issues in Alberta for many years.

They were part of a vibrant community and their initiative resulted in their taking on politicians, the Supreme Court and finally the Privy Council in England over the question of women in the Senate.

The Privy Council heard an appeal of the negative decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. Their judgment stated that "The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours...the word 'persons' includes members of the male and female sex...and that women are eligible to be summoned to and become members of the Senate of Canada."

This celebration has been organized to underline the achievements of these Alberta women and to give a perspective to women's actions of today.



Lord Sankey delivering the decision of the Privy Council, October 18, 1929.

EVENTS

Sunday, October 15: Opening of the exhibition **Now That We Are Persons** by the Friends of the University of Alberta Museums
2 pm, Rutherford South Library foyer
Exhibition continues: October 16 - 28. See inside for details.

Weekdays, October 16 - October 27 **Festival of Women's Films** presented by the Women's Program, NFB
noon - 1 pm, Room 1-17B, next to exhibition

Wednesday, October 18: **Public Forum on the Persons Case**
noon - 5 pm, Humanities Centre L-3
7:30 - 9:30 pm, Tory Building L-11
See inside for details.

Friday, October 20: **LEAF Gala Reception**
5 - 7 pm, University House, 11515 Sask. Drive
*Hosted by the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund.
Phone Louise McNamee for advance tickets: 488-9777*

RELATED EVENTS

September 16 - November 5: **Work by Women Artists from the Permanent Collection**
Edmonton Art Gallery, 102A Ave & 99 St

Sept 22 - Dec 1: **The Class of 9 with a special exhibit of garments from 1929**
Historic Costume and Textile Collection, lower hallway, Home Economics Building, 82 Ave & 112 St

October 12: **Women for a Meaningful Summit**
7:30 pm, Unitarian Church, 12530 - 110 Avenue
Film and presentation by Madeleine Gilchrist, Toronto Voice of Women for Peace. Phone Diana Chown: 433-1525.

October 14 - 31: **Documents and books related to the Persons Case**
Law Library, second floor, 88 Ave & 111 St

October 15 - continuing: **The 80th Anniversary of the Victorian Order of Nurses in Edmonton**
Provincial Museum of Alberta, 12845 - 102 Ave

October 20: **Gala opening of IN-Sight, Edmonton Women's Film and Video Festival**
8 pm, Provincial Museum of Alberta, 12845 - 102 Ave
Continues October 21-22:
9 am - 11 pm, NFB Theatre, Canada Place, 97 St & Jasper Ave

THE PERSONS CASE a sixtieth anniversary CELEBRATION



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WOMEN ARE "PERSONS"

Privy Council Holds They Can Sit In Senate

Exclusion is Relic of Days More Barbarous Than This, States Judgment in Famous Case Brought by Five Women of Alberta

The appellate were then the first of Alberta. The London decision of the Privy Council, the women's struggle for the right to sit on the Senate of Canada. The decision was a landmark in the history of the Dominion of Canada. It was a victory for the women of Alberta and for the women of the Dominion. It was a victory for the women of the Dominion and for the women of the Empire. It was a victory for the women of the Empire and for the women of the world.

LONDON, Oct. 15.—Women are eligible to be summoned as members of the senate of Canada. Their legal committee of the privy council has ruled on the appeal of five representatives on the appeal of a diverse decision of the privy council today.



PUBLIC FORUM on THE PERSONS CASE

Everyone is invited to attend this one day *Celebration of the Persons Case* at the University of Alberta:

Wednesday, October 18

noon-5 pm, L-3, Humanities Building

noon-1 pm: Barbara Evans, Director, will introduce her award-winning film, **Prairie Women.**

1-3 pm: **Biographical Sketches of the Famous Five or The Trials and Tribulations of Feminist Research**

Emily Murphy: Susan Jackel, Canadian Studies
Nellie McClung: Randi Warne, St. Stephen's College
Irene Parlbly: Cathy Cavanaugh, Athabasca University
Louise McKinney: Nanci Langford, Doctoral Student
Henrietta Edwards: Diana Chown, Researcher

3:30-5 pm: **Legal and Political Dimensions of the Persons Case**

Anne McLellan, Faculty of Law
Linda Trimble, Dept of Political Science

7:30-9:30 pm, L11, Tory Turtle:

The Persons Case — and Feminist Struggles Today

This presentation will show why the Persons Case is still important to us. It will discuss recent struggles in relation to the work of the Famous Five and other women working over sixty years ago. The panel will address issues for all women including native women, immigrant women, disabled women, lesbians and farm women, and legal issues affecting them. The panelists include:

Tanis Doe, Womanshine, a group for disabled women
Susheila Sami, activist in women's groups
Mary Newton, Alberta Farm Women's Network
Nellie Carlson, Indian Rights for Indian Women
Helen Greaves, lawyer

OUR THANKS

The organizers of this Celebration wish to thank the following for their generous assistance:

University/Community Special Projects Fund
Friends of the University of Alberta Museums
The Winspear Foundation
The Government of Alberta Women's Secretariat
The Centre for Constitutional Studies, University of Alberta

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Women's Studies Program,
Women's Program and Resource Centre,
Canadian Studies Department,
of the University of Alberta;
Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues;
Women's Law Association;
The Emily Murphy House Historical Society.

THE EMILY MURPHY HOUSE

The sixtieth anniversary of the Persons Case has brought about the formation of an exciting new group: the Emily Murphy House Historical Society. The purpose of this group is the full restoration of Emily Murphy's house at 11011-88 Avenue for use as a study museum and meeting place for Edmonton women's organizations.

Murphy's contributions to the history of the province are far too little known and this facility will be an appropriate tribute to her. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Society or helping with the restoration, please contact Peg Bonar: 426-6489.

NOW that WE ARE PERSONS

an exhibition on the Persons Case and the Five Women who Instigated It

Rutherford South Library foyer
Monday, October 16 - Saturday, October 28
10 am - 5 pm daily

This exhibition has been mounted by the Friends of the University of Alberta Museums in honour of the sixtieth anniversary of the Persons Case.

The exhibition explains the Persons Case and its significance. It also provides a unique opportunity to meet the five women who initiated the Case and to become more aware of the time in which they lived.

The exhibition is accompanied by a video which will present the particulars of the Case through archival images and through the writings of the women themselves.

"Now that we are persons, and the secular authorities have removed the last barrier, it behooves us all to play the game fairly, cheerfully, honorably...remembering that the world (meaning the world of men) is disposed to accept us at our own rating."

Nellie McClung
1929

This exhibition has been made possible through the generous support of the University/Community Special Projects Fund and the Winspear Foundation.

