THE BRITISH COLUMBIA WOMAN SUFFRAGE
MOVEMENT 1890 - 1917

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the examination of the motives and tactics of the British Columbia suffragists in their campaign from 1890 to 1917 to secure political equality with men. Also investigated are the nature of the leadership and membership of the movement and the perspectives of the suffragists' allies and opponents. Additionally, the British Columbia woman suffrage movement is studied in the context of the general reform impulse in the province, Canada and other western nations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The British Columbia woman suffrage campaign was closely linked throughout its duration to a general campaign to remedy the subordinate legal status of women in the province. Yet, while united by this common theme, the campaign can be divided into two distinct phases. Prior to 1910 efforts to secure the school board, municipal, provincial and federal franchises were conducted primarily by suffragists who subscribed to the view that women were naturally endowed to exercise a beneficent influence within the home, the local community and the nation as nurturers, preservers of virtue and purifiers. They argued that by participating in government women could activate the moral regeneration of society and thereby combat what they perceived to be the adverse effects of industrialization.
urbanization, immigration and the persistence of frontier social institutions such as the saloon. By 1910, however, the social reformers were joined by a group of new suffragists who emphasized that women should be granted political equality as it was the democratic right of all citizens. Demanding a wider scope for women's activities than the majority of the first generation of suffragists, these women maintained that they should be able to utilize the vote on behalf of their various and sometimes divergent interests as homemakers, consumers, wage-earners, philanthropists and professionals.

Despite these differences of perspective, all the suffragists maintained that the problem of women's subordinate status could be solved by legislative means. They believed that an equal partnership between men and women in public and private life would occur automatically following the winning of the ballot. Similarly, the suffragists principally interested in social reforms thought that they could be most effectively enacted by legislation. The suffragists also viewed state intervention in the form of legislation as necessary to preserve the liberty of the individual, either by granting him specific rights such as the ballot or by restricting the social behaviour of persons not conforming to the general norm. In this respect the British Columbia woman suffrage movement can be characterized as a liberal movement.
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Preface

This study of the British Columbia woman suffrage movement was largely prompted by the growing interest of historians and students in Canadian social history. Particularly relevant to this project is the expanding body of new literature addressing various aspects of the activities of Canadian women and their position in society.\(^1\) This thesis is most directly linked to those studies investigating the motives of the Canadian suffragists,\(^2\) but it is also closely related to other areas of historical research concerning women. The examination of British Columbia women's organizations undertaken here was facilitated by the forays of several authors into the previously unexplored areas of the national women's club movement and women's philanthropic activities.\(^3\) Similarly, the investigation of the attitudes of British Columbia feminists towards the family, the workplace and community life is connected to the recent work of several scholars.\(^4\) In its concern with leadership, as well, this paper participates, to some extent, in the current inquiry into the nature of the leadership of the Canadian women's movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\(^5\)

While the history of the British Columbia woman suffrage movement can be viewed within the context of women's history, this classification is insufficient as it overlooks the fact that the campaign to extend the franchise vii
to women was an integral part of a more general social reform movement. As a result of this relationship, the literature exploring various aspects of the other reform movements suggests why their members often supported the suffragists and why all the reformers frequently confronted similar opponents. The literature on the social gospel movement, the prohibitionists and the urban reformers\(^6\) is particularly valuable in this regard. The reverse process applies as well, for the study of the woman suffrage movement contributes to the comprehension of other reform movements and to an interpretation of the nature of the general reform sentiment.

Broadening the perspective offered by research in Canadian social history is the larger body of literature which examines the corresponding British and American social reform movements which influenced, in varying degrees, their Canadian counterparts. Useful for comparative purposes are the numerous works which evaluate the British and American woman suffrage campaigns.\(^7\) In addition, more general studies of the contemporary reform persuasion clearly indicate that the coalition of reformers found in British Columbia was found elsewhere.\(^8\) This body of literature also demonstrates the pervasiveness of the traditional stereotype of women confronted by British Columbia feminists and the variety of feminists' and their opponents' responses to these attitudes.\(^9\)
Footnotes

1. With the exception of some biographies of prominent women, the interest of historians in Canadian history has only recently been directed towards women's history. As a result of this situation, most of the literature currently available is in the form of articles, unpublished papers, theses and reprints of early feminist authors. For discussions of why the activities and attitudes of women have been largely neglected by Canadian historians see S. Mann Trofimenkoff and A. Prentice, eds., The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1977), 7-13; G. R. Cook, "Introduction," to The Canadian Woman Suffrage Movement by C. Cleverdon (1950 rpt: Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), viii-ix and J. Acton et al., eds., Women at Work: Ontario 1850-1930 (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), 1-4.

2. Considerable interest has recently been expressed by several authors in various aspects of the Canadian woman suffrage movement. Few, however, are primarily concerned with the motivations of the suffragists. The most effective study in this group is C. L. Bacchi-Ferraro, "The Ideas of the Canadian Woman Suffragists, 1890-1920" (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1970). She focuses primarily on the Ontario situation.


4. See, for example, T. Morrison, "Their Proper Spheres: Feminism, the Family and Child-Centered Social Reform in Ontario, 1875-1900," Pt. I Ontario History LXVIII (March 1976): 45-64; N. Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Trofimenkoff and Prentice, ibid. and Acton et al., ibid.

5. See, for example, V. Strong-Boag, ibid.; Mitchinson, ibid.; W. L. Thorpe, "Lady Aberdeen and the National Council of Women of Canada" (M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1973) and R. Stamp, "Adelaide Hoodless, Champion of Women's Rights" in Profiles of Canadian Educators, eds. R. S. Patterson et al. (n. pl.: D. C. Heath Canada Ltd.,


Introduction

The British Columbia woman suffrage movement formed an integral part of the general reform impulse in Canada and other western nations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This reform impulse or progressive movement was motivated by a desire on the part of numerous groups and individuals to correct what they perceived to be social problems created by industrialization, urbanization and immigration. In order to achieve their proposed ends the reformers, including the suffragists, launched a variety of campaigns designed to tackle specific problems such as drunkenness, gambling, overcrowded housing, political corruption, prostitution, contagious diseases and crime. Linking many participants in these diverse activities was the notion of a Christian social conscience as expressed through the social gospel movement. As a result of its influence the various reform campaigns were frequently interconnected by shared aspirations and personnel.

Within the context of the various forms of reform activity during that period, the British Columbia woman suffrage movement was most closely connected to the international campaign to enfranchise women.¹ This campaign was at the forefront of a general attempt in several western nations to secure equal rights for women in social, economic and political affairs.² The British Columbia
suffragists were comparative latecomers to this arena as American, English and other European feminists had been fighting for equal access to the ballot and other rights for at least the previous sixty years. Some feminist agitation had also occurred in Canada prior to 1890, although it had been confined primarily to expanding the educational opportunities for women and guaranteeing married women access to their property. Thus, as a result of the efforts of other women, the British Columbia suffragists became heirs to a tradition of women's activism and debate concerning the appropriate social role for women, particularly as it was expressed in English-speaking countries. The knowledge that they were participants in both a national and an international women's movement also provided an important support for their morale in the long struggle for political equality.

Yet, while the British Columbia woman suffrage movement was linked to the national and international drive for social reform and shared many of the concerns of suffragists elsewhere, the British Columbia campaign for the enfranchisement of women was generated largely by conditions within the province. Women residing in British Columbia addressed the problems of the social, legal, economic and political status of women and children in their home province because they were dissatisfied with these conditions, not because they were artificially attempting to emulate the activities.
of others. Similarly, the social reforms proposed by the suffragists were necessitated, in their view, by local circumstances including widespread drunkenness, to choose only one example. As a result of this situation the British Columbia drive for women's political equality was characterized by an amalgamation of local and imported concepts and tactics.

The woman suffrage movement became the central focus of reform energy for early women activists in British Columbia primarily because they believed that the social reforms they envisioned could be most effectively achieved by legislative action. They also recognized that the legal inequalities which restricted women's rights in several areas including the family, the workplace and government could only be rectified by legislation. As a result of this perspective they thought it imperative that women participate directly in the political process as voters and candidates in order to influence the nature of the laws adopted. In addition, the campaign for access to the franchise at all levels assumed central significance because feminists regarded the right to vote as the most important symbol of equality and citizenship.

The British Columbia suffragists' concentration on a provincial rather than a national campaign to secure the enfranchisement of women derived from the allocation of legislative powers in the British North America Act.
Under this act the provincial governments obtained jurisdiction in most of the areas directly affecting the civil status of its residents. Thus, women desiring the revision of laws relating to areas such as the care and guardianship of children, the solemnization of marriage, property rights, estate procedures, municipal affairs, working conditions, education, the treatment of provincial prisoners, or the provision for the care of the sick necessarily addressed themselves to the provincial government. Consequently, the suffragists viewed access to the provincial ballot as especially valuable. This emphasis was reinforced by the 1898 Revision of the Dominion Elections Act which abolished the uniform national franchise for federal elections and proclaimed that henceforth the provincial electorate would also be the federal electorate within the boundaries of that province. As a result of this situation the British Columbia suffragists, like their counterparts in the other provinces, campaigned principally within one province. Because of this focus the various woman suffrage campaigns in Canada reflected to a considerable extent the social, economic and political characteristics of the area in which they were conducted.

As well as being an integral part of the impulse for social reform, the woman suffrage movement in each of the Canadian provinces constituted the last phase of the nineteenth century trend in Great Britain and her former
colonies to expand the franchise to include the majority of the adult population. Like many other developments in Canada, the expansion of the male franchise was a product of Canada's colonial relationship to Great Britain and her proximity to the United States. The original British definition of the franchise as "a privilege bestowed on the citizen by the state in its wisdom and magnanimity" was moderated in British North America by a more democratic American interpretation of the suffrage as a "right inherent in each man from his very nature". The amalgam of these two interpretations resulted in a view that the right of access to the franchise should be tempered by "an emphasis on the worthiness of the individual as demonstrated through property -- visual indications of the self-reliance of their possessors". The initial availability of land in British North America meant that the great majority of men in the nineteenth century were able to qualify as freehold electors, if not as candidates (which required greater holdings). The precedent of virtual manhood suffrage was not reversed as inexpensive or free land became less available. Rather, "in every case where this happened the franchise was extended" to meet new occupation and residency patterns. Reflecting these attitudes, the British Columbia legislative assembly enacted manhood suffrage in 1872 but retained property-based municipal and school board franchises. Under the 1873 Municipal
Elections Act women were permitted to qualify as *feme sole* voters in municipal elections provided they possessed the required property in their own name. Women householders were granted the urban school board franchise in 1889, but this right was revoked in 1892. The suffragists challenged the basis of the franchise insofar as they demanded the termination of the exclusion of women from the provincial and, after 1892, the school board franchises. In addition, they requested the expansion of the interpretation of the property qualification in municipal and school board elections to include the wives of propertied men. They also objected to the exclusion of women from contesting any elections. Their motives and methods for securing woman suffrage form the central focus of this investigation.
Footnotes


5. See, for example, E. Phillips Edge, "Report of the Vancouver Local Council," *National Council of Women of Canada Report* (1904): xv. "Here in Vancouver, we may have been looked upon in the past, as a somewhat insignificant, and overambitious band of women, but those of us, who understand even in a small degree, the importance of this work at the present time, and still more the possibilities of its future, are already conscious, that in all civilized countries, some of the greatest women of the age are with us, or rather we should say we are honoured in feeling that we are with them and through the National and International Councils, are associated with the true aristocracy of Womanhood, whether of noble birth, as many of them are, or of more humble origin."


8. Canada, Revised Statutes, 6 Ed. 7, c. 6, s. 6 and 10.

9. The British Columbia woman suffrage movement has been characterized as the most insular or self-contained one in Canada. See Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 84 and Bacchi-Ferraro, "The Ideas of the Canadian Suffragists, 1890-1920," 27.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 3. For a discussion of the preconfederation British Columbia and Vancouver Island franchises see ibid., 118-126.

13. For the provincial franchise see British Columbia, Statutes, 35 Vict., c. 39. The major groups of men prohibited from voting were Native Indians and Asians. See ibid., 58 Vict., c. 20, s. 2 and ibid., 7 Ed. 7, c. 16, s. 3. For the municipal electorate and women's voting rights see ibid., 36 Vict., c. 5, s. 1, 2 and 6. For the school board franchise see ibid., 49 Vict., c. 30, s. 23.

Chapter 1  The British Columbia Woman Suffrage Movement 1890 - 1909

Prior to 1910 efforts to secure woman suffrage in British Columbia were conducted primarily by women's organizations whose objectives were broader than that of simply achieving woman suffrage. For each of these organizations, access to the franchise was viewed as necessary to achieve the reformed society it envisioned. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) initially championed the cause of woman suffrage in the hope of strengthening the prohibition cause by adding large numbers of temperance women to the electorate. Augmenting the franchise efforts of the WCTU, the local branches of the National Council of Women of Canada in Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster began to advocate the enfranchisement of women as part of their overall program to alter the economic, legal and social status of women in the province. After the turn of the century women supporters of the Socialist Party of British Columbia endorsed woman suffrage as a recognition of women's equality with men. Sharing many of the goals of the local councils, the University Women's Club also investigated the links between woman suffrage and legislation regarding women's lives. For the three most active of
these groups, the WCTU, the local councils of the National Council of Women and the University Women's Club, woman suffrage constituted "not only a reform in itself but an instrument for further reform within the prevailing political conception of social goals."¹ For the far less influential socialist women, woman suffrage was regarded as a tool to help overthrow the prevailing political order.

The ongoing WCTU support for woman suffrage, from the Union's inception in the 1880s until 1918, derived from its membership's essentially conservative and partially defensive reaction to the rapid alterations occurring within society at both the provincial and national levels during this period. WCTU members were intensely concerned about the ramifications for family life and women's position in society occasioned by urbanization, industrialization, immigration and, in some cases, by the persistence of frontier social institutions such as the saloon. Fear of the ill-effects of these influences recurred throughout the literature of the WCTU. The imminent moral decay of society rapidly emerged as a dominant theme which is constantly reinforced by references to the prevalence of alcoholism, prostitution, venereal disease, gambling, drug addiction and a host of lesser 'evils' including cigarette smoking, swearing, distribution of obscene literature and lack of curfew laws.² Operating from the
premise that "the power next to prayer is the ballot" several
WCTU women decided in 1888 that woman suffrage would be the
most effective way to grapple with the "strongholds of
Satan" generally and alcohol particularly. The WCTU suffragists' faith in the power of woman suffrage to activate the moral regeneration of society derived directly from their belief that women were the natural moral superiors of men. Working from this supposition, they claimed that women's participation in government would exert a "beneficent influence . . . in the uplifting of humanity." Initially, the WCTU suffragists did not aspire to exert women's purifying influence by holding office but rather sought to ensure the election of "men who are not only intellectually, but morally capable to fill their office. Men whose principles are pure, whose lives are upright and whose word is sacred." With the securing of the right for women to contest urban school board elections in 1895 the WCTU suffragists altered this attitude to include the sponsorship of women candidates wherever qualified women could be found. Laudatory descriptions of the beneficial effect of woman suffrage in jurisdictions outside Canada encouraged an idealistic attitude regarding the potential of enfranchising women. Residents of Wyoming, for example, were portrayed as living in a reformed community as changes proposed by women voters allegedly resulted in the elimination of
poverty and crime, "except by strangers." Implicit in the suffragists' argument that the standards of conduct in public life required raising was the contention that the all male provincial electorate had either deliberately lowered them or simply acquiesced in their decline. These suffragists saw women's enfranchisement as a way to correct the imbalance of moral forces in politics and therefore in the community.

A direct corollary of the WCTU suffragists' position regarding women's moral superiority was their endorsement of the notion of divinely ordained separate spheres of activity for men and women. Cecilia Spofford, a long-time executive member of the Victoria and Provincial WCTU and an active suffragists, clearly summarized their shared perspective, "to subdue the physical was man's work, to subdue the moral and spiritual was women's work." According to this division of labour, women's work should focus on domestic affairs to create harmonious, moral and pleasant homes for their husbands and children. By the late nineteenth century, however, several WCTU suffragists felt that their efforts to nurture and educate their children to become "intelligent and enterprising" with "right principles and pure thoughts in their hearts" were being increasingly subverted by the environment outside the home, over which women had little control.

This perception that the home or family, "the
important institution in the country"\textsuperscript{11} and women's rightful domain, was being threatened by sinister forces formed the basis for the WCTU women's defensive reaction which has been characterized, in connection with another women's group, as "maternalistic activism".\textsuperscript{12} WCTU suffragists demanded the vote so that "the home and the domestic side of things could count for more in politics and in the administration of public affairs than they do at present."\textsuperscript{13} Thus women needed the vote, not because they saw themselves as the peers of men in all aspects, but because of fundamental differences between the sexes.

If men and women were exactly alike, the representation of men would represent us; but not being alike, that wherein we differ\textsuperscript{14} is unrepresented under the present system.\textsuperscript{14}

These differences, however, were confined to the moral sphere as women were constantly asserted to possess "as much refinement, education and wealth, as many of the sterner sex".\textsuperscript{15}

As guardians of domestic life, WCTU suffragists considered themselves well-qualified to enter public life. Skills developed while managing the home economy, adjudicating family disputes, raising children and creating a healthy environment were regarded as readily transferable to the public arena.\textsuperscript{16} Federal, provincial and municipal affairs, they contended, could be far more efficiently managed by the application of 'good housekeeping' techniques which would eliminate corruption, waste, the
setting of false priorities and mismanagement. In this way, any negative side effects of industrialization and urbanization could be removed by appropriate legislative action. Anti-social behavior was, in their estimation, due to personal failure and not symptomatic of a larger malaise in the overall organization of society. Accordingly, drunkenness could be largely eliminated by the strict control of liquor licensing and the eventual securing of prohibition. Prostitution, gambling and drug addiction could be stopped by the active enforcement of laws prohibiting these practices. Similarly, the activities of juveniles could be controlled by restrictions. By applying their standards for domestic life to the community through political action, the WCTU suffragists hoped to remove what they regarded as moral blights.

The WCTU suffragists' attempts to extend the influence of women from the home into the community was motivated by a desire to exert a form of social control over others. They sought to impose their way of life upon what they regarded as the increasingly heterogeneous population of the province by enshrining their viewpoints in law. By systematically banning activities such as the sale of liquor, Sunday sports and gambling they hoped to force residents and newly arrived immigrants to accept their pattern of life which focused on the prohibitionist, self-supporting, English-speaking, Protestant, Anglo-Canadian
family. Anyone who did not conform to this norm was regarded by the women as a potential threat to the nation, the institution of the family and subsequently to themselves since they defined their own identities in terms of family roles -- as wife, mother, sister and daughter. In defence of their position, WCTU suffragists launched nativist and racist attacks at the most vulnerable member of society, the new immigrant who perhaps can neither read or write, but who by residing on Canadian soil one year and taking the oath of allegiance, though he may know nothing of our laws, nothing of the men who aspire to office, perhaps he cannot speak one word of English, and yet he can say, who shall be our legislators, while we women are placed side by side with idiots, lunatics and children.17

Woman suffrage, by enfranchising family women, would help to minimize or control the influence of 'undesirable' persons, particularly single non-temperance men.18

While concerned about the moral qualities of other persons, the WCTU suffragists expressed no doubts about the morality of their aspiration for social control. Dedicated to "God and Home and Native Land",19 these women saw themselves as Christian patriots charged with the task of injecting Christian standards into everyday life. Drawing from the nineteenth century evangelical sentiment which emphasized "a restrictive personal and social morality"20 they viewed as religious reforms those secular changes which coincided with their moral proscriptions. Thus, they
defined as Christian laws measures which prohibited the consumption of alcoholic beverages, gambling, prostitution and cigarette smoking. As a result of this perspective, they viewed the ballot as their weapon in a holy crusade which they optimistically argued could not fail since it was divinely authorized.\textsuperscript{21}

The WCTU suffragists' endeavour to inject their version of Christianity into the secular world was closely allied to the social gospel movement in some Protestant churches in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The temperance women shared with social gospel ministers the belief that "Christianity was a social religion concerned ... with the quality of human relations on this earth."\textsuperscript{22}

As a result of the common perspective of the social gospellers and the WCTU suffragists, the efforts of the two groups to seek solutions within the context of Christianity to the urban and industrial problems confronting the province were often mutually supportive. They shared with the proponents of social gospel "a generalized sense of progress" and were influenced by "evolutionary concepts"\textsuperscript{23} which they interpreted as jointly indicating the eventual triumph of their world view. Also commonly held with the social gospellers was the "belief in the possibility of personal perfection beyond the temptation of sin",\textsuperscript{24} particularly if the environment in which people lived was improved. Consequently the WCTU suffragists did not strive to alter
fundamentally the role of women in society but rather sought to modify and enlarge the environment within which women performed their functions as mothers and wives. They argued that as the activities of the home moved into the community so too must the activities of women, the guardians of the home and public morality. This interpretation of the function of women was supported by social gospel ministers.25

During the mid 1890s the reform efforts of the WCTU were greatly strengthened by the formation of local councils of women in Victoria (1894), Vancouver (1894), New Westminster (1898), Vernon (1895) and Nelson (1900). The local councils attempted to attract all organizations of women within their communities to join together in a loose federation which could speak authoritatively, on behalf of women, on local issues. The local councils were in turn affiliated to the National Council of Women of Canada and through this body to the International Council of Women. The National Council of Women of Canada, founded in 1893, strove to represent the consensus of opinion of the majority of Canadian women on issues affecting their lives.26 The favorable reception accorded the formation of the National Council of Women of Canada and the local councils reflects one aspect of the increasingly public role of women in Canada in the late nineteenth century as numerous clubs were formed by women for social, philanthropic and economic
purposes. Seeking solutions to the problems confronting them, activist women, like many other groups, adopted an increasingly collectivist approach in the hope of maximizing their influence on legislators. The founding of the National Council of Women of Canada and its locals is also indicative of the advancing secularization of Canadian society and, correspondingly, of Canadian women's groups. The women's councils strove to eliminate factionalism by welcoming all women irrespective of faith, occupation, class, age, marital status, racial or ethnic origins and political viewpoint. Their policy of nondenominationalism was particularly important as it attracted large numbers of Canadian women not closely aligned with the once predominant, religiously-based reform groups such as the WCTU or the women's missionary societies of the various Christian churches. Encouraged by the possibilities of joint action British Columbia women activists responded enthusiastically to the National Council of Women of Canada recruiting campaigns for local councils in several locations throughout the province.

Although the women in the small local councils in Vernon and Nelson confined their activities primarily to volunteer work for their local hospital or library, members of the larger Victoria and Vancouver Island Local Council of Women, Vancouver Local Council of Women and New Westminster Local Council of Women submitted to no such
restrictions. Sharing the WCTU women's belief that social improvement could best be brought about by legislated social controls, the councils began to undertake a re-evaluation of numerous laws, particularly those relating to women and to children. Echoing Maria Grant's 1888 plea for "protection" for women, children and the home, each council established a Committee on Laws for the Protection of Women and Children. Under the auspices of this committee, ongoing investigations were conducted in four general areas: the legal status of women as individuals and as family members, the situation of women in the workforce, the care and custody of children and the treatment of women and juvenile criminal offenders. Having thus accumulated evidence which they interpreted as indicating that the interests of women and children were insufficiently represented in the province, the local councils initiated a series of campaigns to alter some aspects of family law, factory regulations and the treatment of juvenile and women offenders.

On the whole, the members of the local councils of women in British Columbia shared the WCTU women's conviction that the quality of family life closely affected the fate of the nation. As an affiliate of the National Council of Women of Canada, each local council of women pledged itself to defend the home and the family. This position was stated in the constitutional preamble which declared:
We, Women of Canada, sincerely believing that the best good of our homes and nation will be advanced by our own greater unity of thought, sympathy, and purpose, and that an organized movement of women will best conserve the greatest good of the Family and the State, do hereby band ourselves together to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law.\textsuperscript{33}

Thus, in common with the earlier religiously-based women's reform organizations the National Council of Women of Canada and the local councils accepted the prevailing notion that women were naturally (although not necessarily divinely) endowed to exercise a beneficent influence within the home, community and nation as preservers of virtue and purifiers. As a result of this general coincidence of perspective, the WCTU and the local councils of women in British Columbia frequently joined forces in pursuit of common goals.

One of the first manifestations of this point of view was the campaign undertaken by the Victoria Local Council of Women to expand women's influence in government at the most elementary level, the school board. In January 1895, only two months after the formation of the Victoria Local Council of Women, its executive "on behalf of twenty ladies' societies" successfully petitioned the provincial government "to allow women to become members of the School Board of Trustees" in urban areas. Their subsequent nominee, Maria Grant (chosen in conjunction with the WCTU which had petitioned the government on this matter in 1894),\textsuperscript{35}
and her successors secured one and sometimes two of the four seats on the Victoria School Board for the next quarter century. Similarly, the Vancouver Local Council of Women and the New Westminster Local Council of Women successfully fielded candidates for their respective school boards. This act also granted women householders and freeholders the right to vote in school board elections.

Although the local councils of women in the province frequently collaborated with the WCTU in the advocacy of specific legislation, the two organizations differed considerably in the priority each accorded the attainment of provincial and consequently federal woman suffrage. While the provincial WCTU organized a large petition favouring woman suffrage in 1885 and passed a woman suffrage resolution at its annual convention as early as 1889, none of the local councils of women actively advocated a provincial woman suffrage platform prior to 1908, when the Victoria Local Council of Women first passed such a resolution. This discrepancy can be partially attributed to differences in the motivation and goals of the two organizations. Having designated woman suffrage as a probable prerequisite for achieving prohibition, their primary goal, the WCTU consistently lobbied for the women's franchise. The local councils of women, however, were not dedicated to achieving one specific goal but rather sought to improve women's economic, legal and social position.
through a variety of legislative changes. This generalist approach and the passage of some women's legislation delayed for a time an awareness on the part of some local council of women members of the political impotence of nonvoters. Political activism on the part of the local councils of women was also retarded by the lack of unanimity on this subject since some members held religious and political beliefs which did not sanction women's involvement in politics. The coincidência between the revocation of the municipal franchise from women in Victoria in 1908, only two years after it had been inadvertently enlarged to include most women, and the local council's official endorsement of provincial woman suffrage suggests that the government's action prompted the Victoria Local Council of Women to adopt the WCTU's contention that political pressure was more effective when exerted within the political system. By June 1908 the local councils of women in the lower mainland and on Vancouver Island agreed with the WCTU that women's position in the province was insecure as long as they remained disfranchised.40

The difference in timing between the WCTU and the local councils of women also derived from the dissimilarity of their parent organizations' viewpoints on woman suffrage. Both the Dominion WCTU and the American WCTU worked for woman suffrage in conjunction with their prohibition efforts.41 Conversely, the National Councils of Women of
Canada consistently refused to sponsor a prohibition platform and therefore never linked woman suffrage and prohibition. From its inception under the leadership of Lady Aberdeen, the National Council of Women of Canada clearly disassociated itself from the advocacy of specific causes such as woman suffrage and only gradually adopted a supportive position with respect to certain demands for women's rights such as equal access to educational institutions. Dominated by a conservative hierarchy and composed of a larger heterogeneous membership, the National Council of Women of Canada attempted to avoid issues as controversial as woman suffrage. As a result of this reticence to tackle disputed issues, the disparity between the positions of the National Council of Women of Canada and the three main British Columbia locals was occasionally considerable. Their involvement in school board elections remained unrecognized for seven years until the National Council of Women's formation in 1902 of a Standing Committee on Women on School Boards. The efforts of the Victoria and Vancouver local councils to secure the municipal franchise for women on the same basis as that granted to men remained unsanctioned by the National Council of Women until the narrow passage of a woman suffrage resolution by the National Council of Women in 1910. Thus, although the British Columbia local councils of women were slower to engage actively in woman suffrage campaigns than the WCTU in the province, they were
considerably in advance of the National Council of Women of Canada's policy.

Closely allied with the women's reform groups were the professional women's clubs which began to appear in the province in 1908. The first of these organizations, the University Women's Club with branches in Victoria and Vancouver, immediately undertook a joint study with the local councils on the legal status of women and children in the province. Like the local councils of women, the members of the University Women's Club interested themselves in the campaigns to secure better working conditions for women and sponsored the first debate in the province on a minimum wage for women. The club also organized itself as a gathering and clearing house for information on legislation in the United States, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand regarding the treatment of women offenders. According to Helen Gregory MacGill, a founding member of the Vancouver University Women's Club, the "backward state of the local legislation brought home to most university women the need of woman suffrage." Although the University Women's Club did not become a suffrage society, its efforts lent an aura of respectability to the cause. Many of its members became important leaders in the second phase of the woman suffrage campaign in the province.
The fourth group of women interested in the British Columbia woman suffrage movement prior to 1909 was the women members of the Socialist Party of British Columbia. Unlike the other suffragists, these women expressed a desire for political equality with men in order to overthrow rather than reform the government. Despite this revolutionary orientation, however, many of the claims and complaints made by these women were very similar to those uttered by the more orthodox WCTU, local councils of women and University Women's Club suffragists. They subscribed to the notion that women as mothers had particular talents to offer government. Like the WCTU and the local councils of women members, their spokeswoman asserted:

> Only a mother can properly sympathize with the 'growing pains' of developing youth, and women should have an equal voice with men in the management of all our educational institutions. To that end they should be interested and informed on world events as well as on city or village happenings; on foreign affairs as well as domestic tattletale; on matters of state as well as on matters of stewing... in cleaning the dooryards of civilization as well as in brushing the litter from her own little premises.

Just as the woman suffragist reformers chaffed at their exclusion from politics, the woman socialist suffragists worried about the ramifications for socialism and for women socialists of the male domination of their party. The women socialists' insecurity about the possible result...
of woman suffrage, however, found no parallel among the woman suffrage reformers. Sure of their cause and goals, the reformers were convinced that woman suffrage would bring about their desired reforms. Socialist women, on the other hand, expressed qualms that woman suffrage could merely multiply the number of opponents of socialism. These doubts combined with the small number of women socialists, their loose organization, their limited access to persons of power and the lack of public receptivity to socialism to render the socialist women peripheral to the main woman suffrage movement.

Leadership in the woman suffrage movement in British Columbia prior to 1910 was exercised by a small relatively homogeneous group of nine women. Each of these women, working under the auspices of either the WCTU or a branch of the local council of women, actively campaigned for woman suffrage in a variety of ways including circulating petitions, lecturing, contesting school board elections and forming delegations to confront government authorities. All of the suffragist leaders were members of the local councils of women in their communities, frequently serving as executive officers or chairmen of the Committee on Laws for the Protection of Women and Children. In addition, seven of the nine women were also active WCTU members working in various capacities including management,
recruiting, operating the WCTU Refuge Home and superintending the Department of Legislation, Petition and Franchise. Reflective of their organizations' activities and their own outlooks, all of these women pursued the goal of woman suffrage while simultaneously working for other reforms.

Since the suffragist leaders were all dealing in similar ways with the problem of women's secondary status as epitomized by their restricted access to various franchises, it is not surprising that they shared, to some extent, similar ways of life. All of these women were urban residents, cognizant of the problems of city life in Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster. Most of the suffragists conducted their lives within a family context, either as wives, sisters, or daughters. Of the five married leaders at least four were mothers. Maria Grant and Margaret Jenkins, long-time suffragist campaigners, had particularly large families of seven and sixteen children respectively. Of the four unmarried suffragist leaders, at least two resided with their relatives, Edith Perrin managed the household of her brother, Bishop Perrin, while Susan Crease lived with her sister and brother at her family's home, Pentrelew. With the exception of Agnes Deans Cameron, school principal and journalist, none of the suffragist leaders engaged in paid employment outside of their homes during the period of their personal suffrage activism. Rather they lived on private personal incomes or
relied on their male relatives for support in spite of the fact that four of them were qualified teachers. Thus, most of these women lived in circumstances sufficiently affluent to exempt them from the need to participate in the work-force. Their freedom from the need to work outside the home allowed them to devote more time to philanthropic and volunteer activity than otherwise would have been possible. In addition, their strong links to family life conditioned the nature of their approach to the status of women.

This similarity of experience in British Columbia was reinforced by a shared cultural heritage. At least five of the suffragist leaders were born of British parents in Canada while another three were born in England. All of the suffragists leaders underwent public or private education in Canada or England and shared similar cultural values. Eight of the leaders were residents of British Columbia by the late 1880s while the other one arrived in the 1890s. As a result, most of these leaders had first-hand experience with British Columbian conditions and attitudes prior to their involvement in suffrage activities and therefore addressed themselves directly to British Columbian problems.

While these facts indicate points of shared experience amongst the suffragist leaders and suggest some prerequisites for activism such as available leisure time, the question of why these particular women became the
leaders of the woman suffrage movement remains unanswered. The relatively recent arrival of white women in the province combined with the previously private nature of 'respectable' women's lives to prevent the formation of a tradition of women's leadership in the public life of the province. As a result, the leadership of the various facets of the woman suffrage movement was open to anyone who had a considerable interest in woman suffrage, the personal freedom to engage in such activities, the talent required to become a public figure and sufficient tenacity to persist despite numerous defeats. All of the woman suffrage leaders in the province seem to have possessed a heightened sense of personal responsibility towards society generally and women and children particularly. This may in part have derived from family traditions of public leadership. Most of these women, either before or after marriage, were connected with families which undertook religious, economic, social and political leadership roles in various communities in Canada and Great Britain. Five of the suffragist leaders were closely linked through family ties to religious leaders or were themselves lay church administrators. In addition, six of the leaders were affiliated with social gospel denominations. This close connection to persons with strong religious convictions possibly accounts for the zeal with which some of the suffragist leaders pursued their goal and partially explains why they initially
became involved in woman suffrage. Both Helen Grant and Agnes Hill were members of politically prominent families in the Maritimes, while Agnes Hill enjoyed the further distinction of being the second cousin of a former British Columbia premier, Amor de Cosmos. The political activism of their families may have spurred them to advocate political careers for women, setting the example themselves by becoming school trustees. Susan Crease and Edith Perrin, as female members of the social elite, had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with community leaders and perhaps subsequently to chafe at the restrictions placed on them because of their sex. Thus it is possible that these nine women assumed the leadership of the first phase of the woman suffrage movement not so much because they were intensely interested in woman suffrage, as because they possessed the necessary personal attributes and were familiar with male leadership. The continuity of their leadership suggests that woman suffrage supporters on the whole found these women to be acceptable public spokesmen for their cause.  

The absence of suffrage societies in the province prior to 1910 complicates the task of determining the composition of the membership of the woman suffrage movement. Although the WCTU as an organization clearly supported the various woman suffrage campaigns, no precise indication can
be gained from the annual reports of the number of members working for woman suffrage. One possible indicator is the presence or absence of a Department of Legislation, Petition and Franchise in a local union. By 1888 Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster and Chilliwack WCTUs all had franchise departments and with the exception of Chilliwack, maintained them until woman suffrage was fully secured. However, as the WCTU gradually expanded on Vancouver Island and into the Okanagan, Kootenays and Cariboo, there is little evidence that the new unions undertook sustained woman suffrage activity prior to 1910. The small membership of the provincial WCTU and the even smaller number of dedicated suffragists within the organizations did not, however, prevent the organization from mustering considerable support throughout the province for woman suffrage on various occasions. As Weppler points out, the WCTU's "superb organizational skills particularly their use of the press, allowed the group to wield much more influence than their numbers warranted."

The other major bodies of suffragists in the province during this period were those local council of women members not affiliated with the WCTU. Unlike the WCTU, the local councils of women did not compile membership figures in terms of individuals but rather in terms of affiliated societies. Consequently, it is not possible to estimate either the number of members in each local
council or the number of suffragist members. Similar to the situation which pertained in the WCTU, the interior local councils of women in Vernon and Nelson did not initiate a Committee on Laws for the Protection of Women, the committee responsible for franchise work. Nevertheless, the frequent demonstrations of active support for woman suffrage on the part of the three main local councils of women suggests that many of their members endorsed woman suffrage. The wider perspective of the local councils of women as compared to the WCTU also contributed to the gradual process of expanding the woman suffrage movement to include working and career women.

The tactics utilized by the suffragists reflected their desire to alter some aspects of the status of women "without simultaneously appearing to demand a more fundamental modification of values" which would have precipitated an even more adverse reaction to their cause on the part of anti-suffragists. Indeed, most of the suffragists of this period did not envision an extensive reorganization of society and would not have supported any cause advocating that position. Operating from their premise that the inequities of women's position in society could be corrected by legislative action, the suffragists developed an arsenal of tactics to educate, persuade, pressure, cajole or humiliate politicians into granting woman suffrage. They
reinforced their attacks on hostile politicians by simultaneously engaging in various activities designed to attract more support for their cause from the public.

One of the first and most consistently practised techniques employed by the suffragists was the recruitment of sympathetic private members to introduce woman suffrage as a private member's bill in the legislative assembly. Since no government prior to Brewster's administration was willing to introduce a bill granting provincial woman suffrage as a government measure, this was the only option available to the suffragists wanting to force a vote on the issue. The debates on the nine private member's suffrage bills from 1890 to 1909 sparked lively exchanges on the alleged effects of woman suffrage in the province and thereby helped to keep the issue in public view. As the urban newspapers published either verbatim or summarized accounts of the debates, readers had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the controversy. The suffragists wrote letters to the editors of the local papers to explain further their position and refute the arguments of their opponents. Since a major goal of the suffragists was to familiarize the public with their point of view and thereby win converts to their cause, this technique was viewed as particularly valuable. The defeat of provincial woman suffrage in 1899 by a margin of only one vote reinforced the suffragists' perception of
private member's bills as an appropriate tactic for their campaign.

The content of the debate provoked by the private member's bills was similar to that occurring simultaneously in eastern Canada. The mental competence of women to vote was roundly contested as some opponents of woman suffrage contended that women were the intellectual inferiors of men, too emotional to judge the issues rationally and incapable of making decisions. In addition, women were alleged to be encumbered by an innate physical weakness which could possibly hinder them at the ballot box and prevent them from defending their country in wartime. These allegations were countered with flat denials and sarcasm.

More fundamental and therefore more difficult to refute were allegations that the participation of women in public life ran counter to the natural order of the world. Numerous politicians argued that women's participation in politics would result in the destruction of the home, the desertion of helpless children and domestic quarrels. According to this point of view, women's attendance at public meetings and the polls would culminate in women becoming "amazons" who had "change[d] their lovely and bewitching nature, unsex[ed] themselves and embrace[d] malthusianism ..." The suffragists rebutted these claims by insisting that the married women's
vote would represent the interests of the home and children and that families could function despite possible political differences between spouses since women in civilized countries should have the right to think for themselves. Considerable effort was also expended to reassure the public that the act of voting was in no way unfeminine.

Reflecting the diverse motivations of the suffragists, demands for suffrage based on the moral superiority of women were sometimes accompanied by requests for the female franchise framed in terms of the justice due white British citizens. Suffragists objected to being bound by laws which they did not help to formulate and could not revise. They also expressed resentment at their lack of representation despite the fact that some women were taxpayers either as land owners or business managers. They argued that it was inconsistent and unjust to grant women the municipal and school board franchise but not the provincial vote. To reinforce their appeals variously based on justice, recognition of special talents and class privilege some suffragists attempted to attract persons sharing a common interest with them by suggesting that the enfranchisement of women would expedite the securing of their common goals.

In order to strengthen their position, the suffragists frequently organized petitions and delegations to accompany the introduction of private member's bills for woman
suffrage or to bring their campaign to the attention of the legislative assembly. This tactic attempted to exert pressure on the politicians to respond to the requests for the extension of the franchise expressed by the numerous signators, frequently including enfranchised men. It was hoped that petitions containing the signatures of a large number of women would help to refute the constantly reasserted charge that the majority of women were either opposed or apathetic towards woman suffrage.  

In addition to the publicity generated by their dealings with politicians, the suffragists simultaneously undertook several other activities to enlist the support of the community and defuse allegations that woman suffrage was a revolutionary measure. They organized parlour socials and booths at agricultural fairs to familiarize women with their motivation for seeking the vote and to acquaint them with women's activities elsewhere. They wrote women's editions of the Victoria Daily Colonist and Victoria Daily Times which clearly illustrated their assessment of women's position in British Columbia and the remedies available. Personal interviews and letters planned by suffragists encouraged those women eligible to vote for school board and municipal elections to exercise their franchise rights and thereby vindicate the claims that women would vote if they had the opportunity. Public meetings, sometimes featuring foreign feminist speakers,
drew large crowds and provided a forum to present their case, to denounce opponents and to reassert the inevitability of woman suffrage since, they argued, the suffrage movement constituted the vanguard of a world wide movement to free women. 87

Not content with propagandistic activities, the WCTU suffragists also intervened directly in election campaigns. The first tentative step of encouraging those women eligible to vote to select reformist candidates was supplemented in 1897 by interviewing members of the legislative assembly to obtain their views on woman suffrage and notify the electorate of their positions. 88 This tactic was designed to increase the political pressure on candidates as some members of the male electorate supported the suffragist position. By 1908 this tactic was expanded to include sending letters to all candidates requesting their positions on "the enfranchisement of women," "the manufacture and sale of cigarettes," "the raising of the age of protection for girls in Canada" and the "further curtailment of the liquor traffic." The women promised to "use their influence" for or against candidates on the basis of their replies. 89 By directly intervening in election campaigns, the suffragists also aspired to deflate the jocularity which typified the response of some politicians. 90

During the first period of concerted campaigning
British Columbia suffragists secured only small legislative advances. By 1896 adult women householders or freeholders in urban areas or resident householders, freeholders or their wives in rural areas were eligible to contest and vote in school board elections in the province. This relative success on the school board level possibly reflects the pervasiveness of the notion that children were rightly the concern of women (most school districts offered only elementary schooling). By the late 1890s women were also beginning to dominate elementary school teaching in the province, thereby reinforcing the connection between women and the education of young children. Another possible influential factor was the relatively low priority accorded education in the province. Compulsory school attendance legislation remained frequently unheeded as less than 60% of children aged seven to twelve were enrolled in school prior to 1892. The position of school board trustee was also the least desirable public office as it commanded little prestige due to the limited power it conferred, as well as its unpaid status. Men were thus perhaps more willing to surrender their monopoly in this area than in others since women's participation in school board elections as voters or candidates did not seriously impinge on the 'male' world of politics and business.

Much less progress was achieved in the more contentious area of the municipal franchise. The difficulty of making
inroads into the municipal electorate was further exacerbated by the fact that some municipalities including Vancouver and New Westminster were constituted under their own charters and consequently were exempt from provincial acts governing municipal electorates. Nevertheless, by 1890 a few women qualified to exercise a municipal vote although no women were permitted to contest municipal elections until 1917.

In Vancouver and New Westminster, single women were permitted to vote providing they could meet the residency and property qualifications imposed on men. In Victoria, Nanaimo and other districts and municipalities affected by the municipalities acts, women qualified as electors on the same basis as men irrespective of their marital status. The effect of this apparent gain, however, was small as few women possessed sufficient property, paid enough rent or owned business licences in their own names. This situation was radically altered in 1906 by an amendment to the Municipal Elections Act. The term "householder" was redefined to include any person of the full age of twenty-one years who occupies a dwelling, tenement, hotel or boarding-house, or any part or portion of a dwelling, tenement, hotel or boarding-house, and who shall, unless exempt by a Statute or Municipal By-law, have paid directly to the Municipality rates, taxes or fees of not less than two dollars for the current year.

This alteration meant that married women could qualify for the municipal franchise upon payment of a two dollar tax, including a dog licence fee. The provincial politicians
had not, however, intended to extend an almost unqualified municipal franchise to women but merely to include again those militia-men inadvertently excluded by a 1905 amendment.

The resulting rush of women to register for the municipal franchise provoked an intense struggle between the opponents and proponents of woman suffrage including petitions, public rallies, letters to the editors of the local newspapers and two court battles. The woman suffragists and their allies including the Mayor of Victoria and the majority of his council were, however, defeated by the combined opposition of the Licensed Victualler's Association, the Property Owner's Association and the Conservative government of Richard McBride. The 1908 session of the legislature re-enacted the pre-1906 qualifications for electors which excluded the vast majority of women.

The failure of the suffragists to expand the municipal franchise from a property or professional basis to include most women is reflective of their weak position in the community. As a political pressure group, the suffragists possessed few direct weapons with which to threaten the intransigent McBride government. As women they enjoyed no influence in the Conservative party, nor had they the wealth to affect the development of the provincial economy and thereby influence the party in power. Personal access
to politicians was formal and ineffective as none of the leading suffragists were close female relatives of current government members. In this period, as well, the suffragists were not accorded intensive, sustained support by any strong men's pressure groups, either provincial or national, but rather gradually won converts among men interested in various reforms or in seeking potential allies. The suffragists were also unable to overcome the allegation that they represented only a lunatic fringe of women. Despite the thousands of signatures accumulated on petitions and the 1,161 women who registered to vote in Victoria in one day in 1906, the government continued to dismiss their demands as unrepresentative of a general sentiment. This attitude reflected the McBride administration's determination to exclude women from municipal and provincial decision-making. The government was confirmed in its stand by the political impotence of the suffragists and entrenched notions of women's position. Women negotiating with municipal governments such as the city of Vancouver fared no better.

Although the suffragists encountered repeated defeat during this period of campaigning, this problem was insufficient to deter them. They accomplished their goal of arousing public awareness on the issue while simultaneously refining their own skills as advocates. Buoyed by legislative successes in other areas affecting women, the
suffragists remained convinced that their basic premises need not be altered. By the end of this period, however, some suffragists had begun to re-evaluate the utility of their various tactics and to search for more effective means to approach the government. Their cumulative experiences constituted an important element in determining the future course of the woman suffrage movement in the province.
Footnotes


2. As the membership and activities of the provincial WCTU gradually expanded during the 1890s, specific committees were appointed to assume responsibility for eliminating each of these 'blights'.


4. The WCTU was not the only temperance organization in British Columbia at this time but it was the only temperance organization with a predominantly female membership, an exclusively female executive and a considerable interest in women's activities. For a discussion of the other temperance organizations and brief references to the WCTU see J. A. Hiebert, "Prohibition in British Columbia" (M.A. thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1969).


14. Ibid.


16. A particularly clear exposition of this viewpoint
can be found in Spain, ibid., 63. Also see "The Mother in Public Life," Daily Colonist, 6 November 1909.


18. While women, especially women whose cultural backgrounds varied from that of the WCTU suffragists, could pose a threat to the WCTU's world order, this was usually discounted on the grounds of common sisterhood. All women were presumed to vote for the family and therefore 'naturally' oppose liquor.


21. For a direct reference to the ballot as a weapon see, for example, M. Grant, "Franchise," WCTU Report (1888): 34.

22. Allen, ibid., 381-382.

23. Ibid., 384.

24. Ibid. For a discussion of the connection between social gospel and reform darwinism see ibid., 387.


26. The National Council of Women of Canada never achieved its proposed goal of representing all Canadian women since membership in the organization was contingent on belonging to a club or a women's group. This criterion automatically excluded all women who either did not have the opportunity or the inclination to join a group affiliated with the national council. The leadership of the organization represented an even narrower group of Canadian women, those who were by birth or marriage members of the Canadian social and political elite. For a discussion of the leadership of the national council see V. Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women, 1-7 and 134-168. Strong-Boag's detailed findings were anticipated in Bacchi-Ferraro's more cursory study "The Ideas of the Canadian Suffragists, 1890-1920," 14-21.

27. Examples of other collectivist attempts at reform in Canada at this time include the grain growers' associations, trade unions and the Social Service Congress.
of Canada.

28. For a discussion of the religiously based reform groups see V. Strong-Boag, ibid., 56-79.

29. The narrow scope of activities undertaken in Vernon and Nelson probably reflects the small population of the towns, the limited time available to women for activities outside the home and the restricted scope of the secular club movement in small communities prior to 1910. See the "Report of the Vernon Local Council of Women," National Council of Women of Canada Report (1896): 61 (hereafter cited as NCWC Report); ibid., (1904): xv and ibid., (1907): xv and the "Report of the Nelson Local Council of Women," ibid., (1899-1900): 83. The Nelson chapter seems to have lapsed shortly thereafter as no further reports were received by the National Council of Women of Canada until 1908.


Although the Committee on Laws for the Protection of Women and Children was formed in response to a request from the national council, the coincidence of approach between the British Columbia WCTU and the national council on this issue suggests that this point of view may have been held by many women reformers throughout Canada. The WCTU's declarations certainly helped to create a receptive atmosphere for this proposal. It is noteworthy that the first co-ordinators of this committee in both the Victoria and Vancouver local councils of women were also active WCTU workers. For an account of the directive to form the committee see the "Report of the Victoria Local Council of Women," NCWC Report (1895): 56.


34. British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1895), lxxxix.

35. Ibid., (1894), xxiii.

36. The women School Trustees in the three major urban centres prior to 1918 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
<th>New Westminster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria Grant</td>
<td>Mrs. D. Reid</td>
<td>Agnes Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1896 and 1899-1900</td>
<td>1897-1898</td>
<td>1900-1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Grant</td>
<td>Marie McNaughton</td>
<td>Mrs. J.R. Gilley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-1903</td>
<td>1912-1914</td>
<td>1912-1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Jenkins</td>
<td>Irene Moody</td>
<td>Mrs. G.B. Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-1898 and</td>
<td>1915-1916 and</td>
<td>1912-1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-1919</td>
<td>1917-1920</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnes Deans Cameron</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these women, with the exception of Agnes Deans
Cameron, was sponsored by the local council of women in her community. In addition, several women served on rural or town school boards after 1896. For example, in 1905 five women were serving on rural school boards on Vancouver Island, see "Women on School Boards," NCWC Report (1905): 94.

37. British Columbia, Sessional Papers (1885), 323-327. The petition was signed by 1,268 persons from Victoria, New Westminster, Wellington, Comox, Sumas, Chilliwack and Maple Ridge.

38. WCTU Report (1889): 34.


42. See, for example, the NCWC Report (1894): 172 or ibid., (1895): 253. Bacchi-Ferraro suggests that the disassociation of the National Council of Women of Canada from the American suffragists in the International Council of Women was undertaken to ensure "respectability" for the Canadian organization. See Bacchi-Ferraro, ibid., 14.

43. NCWC Report (1907): 78 and 80.

44. Although justified by a traditional view of women's aptitude for child care, the participation of women on school boards was by no means a generally accepted policy of all national council members. For examples of the nature of the debate see "Women on School Boards," ibid., (1904): 58-63 and ibid., (1905): 93-99. None of the dissenters were British Columbia delegates.

45. "Report of the Committee on Citizenship," ibid., (1910): 94-104. Although no local council of women was committed by the favorable passage of the resolution to work for woman suffrage, considerable opposition was expressed by the delegates from Hamilton, Halifax, St. John, Ottawa and East Pictou. The resolution passed by a margin of 71 to 51.

47. Ibid., 32.

48. Ibid., 30.

49. The Western Clarion, 20 August 1904.

50. Ibid., 5 November 1903.

51. See, for example, ibid., 28 September 1903.

52. Miss Sarah Bowes, Vancouver; Miss Agnes Deans Cameron, Victoria; Miss Susan Crease, Victoria; Mrs. Helen (William) Grant, Victoria; Mrs. Maria (Gordon) Grant, Victoria; Mrs. Agnes (Albert) Hill, New Westminster; Mrs. Margaret (David) Jenkins, Victoria; Miss Edith Perrin, Victoria; Mrs. Cecilia (William) Spofford, Victoria. See Appendix I for a brief biography of each of these women. These women were designated leaders because they fulfilled at least 3 of the following 4 criteria: held the position of head of a committee responsible for woman suffrage in a woman's organization; frequent and prominent campaigner; leader of suffrage delegations; elected to public office.

53. The problem of exploring the personal motivations of these women to become leaders is seriously complicated by the fact that only Susan Crease's diary is accessible. Unfortunately, the remnants of their correspondence on woman suffrage represents only their contacts with government officials, not family or friends. The following analysis is therefore tentative.

54. For example, Cecilia Spofford, Maria Grant, Margaret Jenkins, Sarah Bowes and Susan Crease became thirty year veterans of the woman suffrage campaign in the province.

55. In spite of the WCTU's expansion into the interior of the province in 1899 and 1900, the group's membership remained relatively constant from 1890 to 1906, fluctuating between approximately 325 and 450 members. The doubling of membership from approximately 517 people in 1907 to 1,016 in 1908 reflects the surge of activity in the local option campaign rather than interest in woman suffrage. See the WCTU Report (1890): 36; ibid., (1906): 14-18; ibid., (1907): 11-14 and ibid., (1908): 37-51.

56. For example, a membership of approximately 280 women managed to secure the signatures of 2,408 adult women
throughout the province for the provincial woman suffrage petition in 1897. See the WCTU Report (1897): 36-40 and 49 and British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1897): cix-cxvii.


58. These findings vary considerably from Weppler's claim that "the close interrelationship between suffrage and prohibition was never questioned in British Columbia, primarily because no suffrage force independent from the prohibition movement existed." Ibid., 47.

59. One possible way of circumventing this difficulty would be to consult the membership records of the affiliated societies. Unfortunately, very few of them have been preserved for this period. Also problematic is the tendency of the women to belong to more than one organization.


61. Woman suffrage bills were presented in 1891, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1902, 1904, 1906 and 1909.

62. British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1899), 92.


64. Daily Colonist, 22 April 1898. Major Mutter, the member for Cowichan-Albernie suggested that women were unfit to be voters because of the "scientific fact... that the brain of woman was two ounces lighter than that of man."

65. Ibid., 24 April 1897.

66. This frequently repeated charge appeared as early as 1871. See Daily British Colonist, 26 October 1871.

68. See, for example, M. Grant, "Should Men Vote?" *Victoria Daily Times*, 27 May 1895, Women's Edition.


70. Ibid., 10 February 1893.

71. Ibid., 24 April 1897.

72. Ibid., these remarks echoed sentiments expressed 25 years earlier, see the *Daily British Colonist*, 23 June 1872.

73. *Daily Colonist*, 21 March 1897; ibid., 25 April 1897 and ibid., 29 April 1897.

74. Ibid., 4 November 1897 and ibid., 25 April 1897.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.


78. *Daily Colonist*, 21 March 1897 and ibid., 4 November 1897.

79. Ibid., 2 February 1906.

80. Ibid., 16 March 1897 and ibid., 4 November 1897.

81. These appeals were directed primarily towards men's temperance groups but also towards nativists. See ibid., 24 April 1897 and ibid., 21 March 1897.


84. See, for example, *Province*, 28 October 1909.


87. Susan Anthony spoke in Victoria as early as 1871. See the Daily British Colonist, 26 October 1871. For later instances see, for example, WCTU Report (1904): 12 for the visit of Mrs. Pettigrew from Australia and the Daily Colonist, 31 January 1906 for the speech of Mrs. Irene Smith from Washington state.

88. See, for example, WCTU Report (1897): 50.

89. The text of the letter sent to E. T. Kingsley, the socialist candidate in Vancouver, was reproduced in The Western Clarion, 17 October 1908.

90. Typical of this style was Henderson's remark in the legislature that he "did not believe there was a single lady in this province over the age of twenty-one years." Daily Colonist, 25 February 1899.

91. British Columbia, Statutes, 58 Victoria, c. 48, s. 9.

92. Ibid., 59 Vict., c. 42, s. 5. These rights were gained only after several reversals, see ibid., 47 Victoria, c. 27, s. 10 and ibid., 55 Vict., c. 40, s. 4 and 9. Weppler incorrectly states that rural women did not achieve the right to become trustees until 1911. See Weppler, ibid., 54. Rural women were inadvertently deprived of the right to become school trustees in 1913. This mistake was rectified in the following session. See, British Columbia, Statutes, 3 George 5, c. 67, s. 3 and ibid., 4 George 5, c. 68, s. 3.


94. British Columbia, Statutes, 49 Victoria, c. 32 s. 5 and 6 and ibid., 51 Victoria, c. 42, s. 6 and 7.

95. Ibid., 52 Victoria, c. 18, s. 33 and 34.

96. Ibid., 6 Edward 7, c. 18, s. 2.

97. For a detailed narrative of these events see Weppler, ibid., 55-68.

Chapter 2

The British Columbia Woman Suffrage Movement 1910 - 1917

The formation in December 1910 of the first Political Equality League, an organization devoted solely to securing woman suffrage, marked the commencement of the second and final phase of the woman suffrage movement in British Columbia. During this stage of the campaign the efforts of the WCTU, the local councils of women and the University Women's Club to obtain equal access to the ballot for women were augmented and frequently surpassed by those of the Political Equality League and other new franchise organizations. Frustrated at the failure of the legislative committees or departments within existing women's organizations to improve women's access to the municipal and provincial franchises, several suffragists decided in 1910 to revitalize the movement by forming organizations specifically designed to lobby for political equality for women. This concept appealed to numerous women throughout the province. As a result, branches of the Political Equality League and other new woman's franchise organizations such as the Women's Freedom Union, the Equal Franchise Association and the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League began to appear in various provincial cities and
towns during the next six years. Collectively, these societies attracted the necessary membership, fresh leadership and powerful allies to secure the provincial franchise for women in 1917.

The impetus to seek new means to approach the government for political equality for women derived from several sources both inside and outside of the province. For Maria Grant and Cecilia Spofford, Victoria's most active temperance suffragists, disappointment at the withdrawal of the municipal franchise from the majority of Victoria women by the provincial government was compounded by the McBride government's handling of the local option referendum in November 1909. Throughout 1908 and 1909 energy and funds which the WCTU would normally have directed towards suffrage agitation were diverted to the local option law campaign. McBride's refusal to recognize the resulting majority vote, on the grounds that the local option law did not receive a majority of all the votes in the general election, embittered the temperance suffragists. In addition, Maria Grant's experience as superintendent of the Legislation, Petition and Franchise department of the WCTU during the local option law campaign indicated to her the difficulty of simultaneously pursuing active suffrage and temperance campaigns within an organization whose first goal was not suffrage but temperance and whose
membership was not entirely united behind the suffrage cause.²

Vancouver suffragists and women activists were also encountering direct opposition from the McBride government at this time. As a result of their joint investigations in 1909 the Vancouver Local Council of Women and the recently formed University Women's Club of Vancouver concluded that "domestic legislation was more antiquated in British Columbia than anywhere else in Canada, in Great Britain or the United States."³ Resolved to remedy the situation, the two organizations petitioned the attorney-general to revise the inheritance laws to guarantee widows one-half of marital property. They also requested that he sponsor legislation to accord mothers equal guardianship rights with the fathers of their legitimate children and to allow deserted wives access to the earnings of their minor children without a court order.⁴ With the exception of some of their suggestions for a change in the dower law, all of the requests of the women were flatly rejected by the government. The indignation of the women at this response was further compounded by the government's refusal to sponsor a modified dower bill which subsequently floundered. According to Alice Ashworth Townley, the first president of the Vancouver Political Equality League, the government's indifference to the perceived injustice of the current dower act prompted
Yet, while influential, these factors are insufficient to account for the decision to form groups specifically designed to secure woman suffrage. For the previous twenty years the suffragists had met the problems of government rebuffs and operating within general organizations with renewed resolve to continue the campaign through the same channels. The suffragists' decision to create a more effective pressure group separate from other affiliations was directly linked to important changes in the membership of the suffrage movement in the province. Unlike the majority of the earlier suffragists, several of the new suffragists were career women. As novelists, journalists, trade union organizers, doctors and business women, these women determined to further women's influence in economic, social and political fields. To this end they lobbied to remove legislation prohibiting women from practicing in professions such as law and formed clubs to promote specific career goals — for example, the Canadian Women's Press Club. They also organized clubs to sanction activities not generally associated with women such as the Alpine Club for women mountain climbers. Aware of the value of pursuing economic and social goals through pressure groups specifically designed to achieve such ends, several of these women decided to apply the
same technique to the political sphere by forming suffrage societies.  

The stimuli generated within the province to experiment with suffrage societies was reinforced by the upsurge of suffrage activity in other areas. In November 1910 the women of Washington state regained the vote after campaigning through suffrage societies. Since Washington was the first American state to grant the franchise to women since 1896, its tactics were carefully scrutinized by British Columbia suffragists. This victory inspired an intensification of suffrage activity in 1910 by the National American Woman Suffrage Association and other suffrage groups throughout the United States. In England the Women's Social and Political Union and the Women's Freedom Union accelerated their campaign in the hope of influencing the 1909 general election. This upsurge of activity through various suffrage organizations encouraged the local suffragists to redouble their labours through suffrage societies.

Responding to these circumstances, the Citizenship Committee of the Victoria and Vancouver Island Local Council of Women invited all interested persons to attend a meeting on December 14, 1910 to co-operate in organizing a Political Equality League the aim of which shall be to secure the removal in British Columbia of the disabilities which rest on women as a voter and citizen and to secure her political enfranchisement. Seventy-two persons including Harlan Brewster, the future
Liberal premier of the province, responded to the local council of women's invitation. Unlike the suffrage committees of the WCTU and the local councils of women, the Political Equality League welcomed men as members since these suffragists maintained, "it is only by working side by side that we can build most effectively and successfully in the interests of our children, our homes and our Province." The successful formation of the Victoria Political Equality League was duplicated the following month in Vancouver. Four months later, in May, 1911, the executives of the Victoria and Vancouver Political Equality Leagues jointly decided that the goal of woman suffrage could be more effectively sought under the auspices of one large suffrage organization. The resulting British Columbia Political Equality League assumed responsibility for determining general policies and tactics and co-ordinating the activities of the various local leagues.

The constitution of the British Columbia Political Equality League declared its fundamental principle to be "the establishment of the Political, Social and Industrial Rights of Women and Men." To this end the members pledged to expose in every way possible to us, the dual standard existing for men and women, to demonstrate the evil resulting therefrom, and to force public recognition to (sic) the direct connection between this dual standard and the political disability of women.

Sharing the attitudes of the earlier suffragists, the
League's constitution further proclaimed "that the causes of individual cases of injustice can only be satisfactorily dealt with by legislation in which women have a direct share." Unlike the earlier suffragists, however, the League suffragists declared themselves devoted to "working primarily for Woman Suffrage" rather than attempting to influence the government regarding other legislation affecting women before they secured the vote.

The declarations of the League's constitution indicate that dissatisfaction with the unequal treatment of women in the province remained a primary motive for suffragists. They continued to champion the suffrage cause in terms of safeguarding the interests of women and children. Similarly, the proposed necessity of presenting the distinctive women's point of view on all public issues still found staunch supporters among the League suffragists. The old theme of demanding equal justice for female and male British citizens was also frequently reiterated in the League's literature and rhetoric. Appeals for woman suffrage based on controlling the 'foreign element' in the province by enfranchising Anglo-Saxon women also recurred, albeit infrequently. These similarities, however, should not be allowed to obscure the important changes which occurred in the emphasis and complexity of the suffragists' arguments after 1910.

The League's interest in safeguarding the legal rights
of women and children in industry introduced a new facet of the suffrage movement. Prior to 1910 suffragists had lobbied to ameliorate conditions for women and children in the workplace through campaigns for half-day holidays, women factory inspectors and the limitation of working hours. In the second phase of suffrage activity, this emphasis on securing legislation to regulate employers was gradually replaced by demands that women workers directly "regulate the conditions under which they work" by utilizing the ballot. This view of working women as active participants in the suffrage campaign rather than passive recipients of the philanthropic endeavours of others laid the foundation for co-operation between the primarily middle class suffrage societies and working class suffrage groups.

Changes also occurred in the priorities accorded previous pro-suffrage arguments. The plea of Dora Kerr, secretary of the Kelowna Political Equality League, that "the woman's point of view should be directly represented in the control of Legislation and all affairs of the Nation" was favourably received by many suffragists. However, agreement on what constituted the "woman's point of view" was no longer almost unanimous. In line with the WCTU position, some League suffragists continued to assert "Woman's sphere is the Home and it is time she had a voice in making the Laws which interfere with it."
While not denying that women should have a voice in matters affecting home life, other League suffragists pointed out that many women either by force or by choice worked outside of the home. In addition, they reminded the more traditional suffragists that some women were voluntarily choosing careers other than motherhood. As a result of these developments, they argued, woman's sphere could no longer be completely defined in terms of the home.

Closely related to the reinterpretation by some suffragists of women's role in society was the more vigorous demand for suffrage based on demands for the just treatment of all persons. Proponents of this point of view claimed women's right to "recognition as human beings, with full and responsible citizenship." Rather than claiming the ballot as morally superior or special individuals, these suffragists emphatically declared that "women are people" and therefore should have a direct influence on "a government of the people; by the people and for the people." More extreme proponents of this school of thought warned the government that "slavery must lead to rebellion and war, and sex-slavery must eventually lead to sex-rebellion and sex-war." This "disaster" would be prevented only by the "enfranchisement of the sex-slaves." Thus, in the view of these suffragists, the recognition of women's equality and the termination of women's political subjugation would be
achieved by the granting of woman suffrage. They explicitly postulated that this action would eliminate the dual standard for men and women in politics, society and industry by giving women equal access with men to the legislative process. As enfranchised persons, women would utilize the vote on behalf of their various and sometimes divergent interests as homemakers, parents, consumers, wage-earners, philanthropists, professionals or business persons.

Intertwined with the plea for the just recognition of women's equality was a renewed and more vigorous demand than that made previously for full citizenship for women. Asserting that the woman "bears her share of the burdens of life", these suffragists requested that women be allowed to enjoy the privileges of citizenship rather than merely be subject to the law. As members of the community they insisted that government rest on the "consent of the governed". Conscious of the powerlessness of women as a result of the contemporary franchise laws, the suffragists demanded redress. They asserted that women were as capable as men of making responsible decisions affecting the welfare of their communities, the province and the nation. Reflecting this spirit, a writer in the League's official magazine, The Champion, declared that the right of access to the ballot "spells citizenship, liberty, self-respect and the power to help share the nation's destiny."
The members of the League made no attempt to resolve the inconsistencies between the newly proposed arguments for woman suffrage and those already popular in suffrage circles in British Columbia prior to 1910. Rather, the league presented an amalgam of all positions advocating woman suffrage to the public in order to attract as wide an audience as possible. The suffragists displayed no concern that potential supporters might be offended by the inconsistency of their appeals. Similarly, in an attempt to minimize internal dissension and draw as many persons as possible, members were permitted to interpret the League's mandate to eliminate the dual standard between men and women in the province within their own frames of reference. This attitude reflected the suffragists' attempt to create a broadly based coalition in order to maximize its influence as a political lobby. Consequently, devotion to the goal of achieving woman suffrage constituted the prime qualification for membership and participation.

The contradictory points of view within the League readily became apparent in the group's publications, proclamations and correspondence. For example, the editors of The Champion accorded claims for woman suffrage on the basis of women's roles as mothers and guardians of the home an important status. Nevertheless, they did not allow motherhood and homemaking to become as predominant an issue as it was in the first twenty years of the campaign. On
the other hand, proclamations issued by the League such as "Why Women Ought to Have the Vote in B. C." stressed the role of women as the "mothers of the race" and totally ignored any mention of working women. Similarly, the suffrage movement's previous emphasis on the alleged moral superiority of women was less frequently mentioned by The Champion than by the broadsheets and letters to the premier issued by the League. Conflict also existed between the temperance and nontemperance suffragists within the League. Although the British Columbia Political Equality League never officially advocated prohibition, occasional references to a direct connection between woman suffrage and prohibition appeared in its publications such as "The Experince of Australia" and in letters to the premier from local Leagues.

The willingness of the majority of the members of the British Columbia Political Equality League to accept the diversity of views expressed by the organization was not shared by all. A minority of conservative women seceded from the Vancouver League in 1912 to form the British Columbia Equal Franchise Association. The initial members of this group, while supporting woman suffrage, disapproved of overtly public roles for women. They maintained that educational meetings conducted in private homes constituted more appropriate behavior for women than the
League's practice of actively campaigning for the suffrage in public forums. It is possible that as a result of their viewpoint on this matter, the majority of the founding members also supported the contention of their leader, Alice Ashworth Townley, that women desired only the vote and not access to public office. However, the presence of activist women such as Helen Gregory MacGill in the group indicated that, like the League, this organization was unable to achieve total uniformity of opinion and approach to the suffrage. Although the British Columbia Equal Franchise Association eventually established small branches in Nelson and Kelowna, its insistence on working "quietly" precluded it from assuming as prominent a role in the British Columbia woman suffrage movement as several other organizations.

Dissension also arose among League members residing in Victoria. In December 1913 Dorothy Davis, the former provincial political organizer of the British Columbia Political Equality League and co-editor with Maria Grant of The Champion, announced the formation of the Women's Freedom Union. This group, also known as the Go-Aheads, stated a willingness to compromise on the issue of granting women the franchise on the same basis as men. The Women's Freedom Union indicated that it would accept an extension of the franchise to include married women 21 years and over.
and single women over 25 years. The implied rejection of the suffragists' arguments for the vote on the basis of women's humanity, women's contribution to the nation and women's claims to the full benefits of British citizenship was not popular with Victoria suffragists and consequently the Women's Freedom Union soon floundered.

While the Equal Franchise Association and the Women's Freedom Union members found the British Columbia Political Equality League objectionably radical, at least one member of the Vancouver based Pioneer Political Equality League found the League's stance too conservative. Although some Political Equality League suffragists adopted a more cordial policy towards working-class women than their predecessors and the Pioneer branch formed an Evening Work Committee to reach a larger cross-section of the public, the League remained primarily a middle-class organization. Dissatisfied with the League's inability to recruit working-class women, Helena Gutteridge, trade union organizer and secretary of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Congress, decided to form a new suffrage society, the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League. Like the British Columbia Political Equality League, the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League was advertised as "an organization formed for the purpose of obtaining votes for women on the same terms as it is granted to men." Unlike the already established
suffrage societies, however, this group "proposed to deal not only with votes for women but all matters connected with the interests of women, particularly with those things that affect the woman out in the labour market."  

The British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League distinguished itself from the other suffrage organizations principally by this emphasis on the necessity of forming a connection between the woman suffrage movement and working women in British Columbia. To further this end, Helena Gutteridge edited a woman suffrage page in the B. C. Federationist to explain the basis of her claim that "the need of political power for the working woman is greater than that of any other class," because "only when she is able to influence industrial legislation will she cease to be exploited and forced into starvation or shame."  

Gutteridge argued that the political organization of women in the suffrage movement and the economic organization of women into trade unions were complementary activities necessary to create politically active women conscious of their position as workers. According to this point of view, these women would become a "collective political voting force" capable of securing significant changes in industrial legislation governing working conditions and pay rates, thereby eliminating sweated labour, the undervaluing of women's work and poverty-induced prostitution.

The theme of using the ballot to right inequities
perceived in society was common to all of the British Columbia suffragists. Differences of opinion arose more frequently over the priority to be accorded a specific reform than over whether a specific measure constituted a reform. Like the other suffragists, the members of the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League firmly expressed the conviction that women would utilize the franchise to ameliorate the negative aspects of industrialization, urbanization and immigration. In addition to their special interest in the situation of working women, members of this group voiced the concerns of many other suffragists regarding unsanitary living conditions, the marketing of impure foods, the legalization of "crime and vice", prohibition and the alleged moral turpitude of Asian immigrants. 44

In line with their conviction that the granting of woman suffrage would lead directly to improvements in the quality of family and community life in the province, the members of the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League expressed considerable interest in the legal status of women in the province. Their interest in this area, however, was limited to topics of particular relevance to the experiences of working-class women. As a result, the group concentrated its attention on the legal rights of women as service and industrial workers, wives and mothers. While lobbying for alterations in legislation affecting
working women, these suffragists realized that their chances of success were poor, particularly on those issues not fully backed by male trade unionists or other suffragists. They were more optimistic, however, about improving the legal status of wives and mothers since their position on this topic closely corresponded to the one generally adopted by suffragists in the province. They staunchly supported the appeals of other women's groups to amend the laws regarding inheritance and dower, the guardianship of children, the maintenance of deserted and destitute women and children, the age of eligibility for marriage, mother's pensions, and numerous other similar issues. The failure of the 1913 amendment to the Infant's Act to grant mothers equal guardianship with fathers of their legitimate children strengthened the resolve of these women to secure the franchise in order to gain appropriate recognition as wives and mothers.

The spokesmen of this organization also periodically mentioned the standard points included in demands for woman suffrage based on recognizing women's innate equality with men and securing the consent of the governed. The relatively infrequent use of these arguments as compared to those mentioned above reflected the group's intention to attract the attention of working-class women through specific pragmatic appeals clearly relevant to their lives. This may also explain the general lack of socialist
analysis of the situation in the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League's publications.

Although these suffrage organizations dominated the woman suffrage movement in the province after 1910, the local councils of women and the WCTU also continued to campaign. As a result of the pressure exerted by the Vancouver Local Council of Women, the Vancouver city council unanimously voted in November 1910 to amend the city charter to allow married women the same voting privileges as men and to permit single women to qualify for the franchise on the same basis as men. The New Westminster, Vancouver and Victoria local councils of women also successfully continued to sponsor women candidates for their respective school boards. The Vancouver and New Westminster local councils of women did not, however, take part in the campaign to secure provincial woman suffrage other than passing supportive resolutions and occasionally inviting speakers on the subject. Under the perennial leadership of Susan Crease, the Victoria Local Council of Women remained somewhat more active in the quest for the provincial franchise than the mainland councils by endorsing woman suffrage resolutions, writing to the government and sporadically participating in suffrage delegations to the premier. The failure of the local councils to undertake a prominent role in the campaign to
secure the provincial franchise derived from their membership's lack of unanimity regarding woman suffrage and a determination on the part of several members to avoid all issues which could be construed as political. Rather than engaging in constant disagreements, the majority of the suffragist members of the local councils of women simply conducted their public campaign for the suffrage through one of the suffrage societies.

The WCTU continued its agitation for woman suffrage as it had over the previous twenty years. Under the leadership of Maria Grant until 1915, the Department of Legislation, Petition and Franchise advanced those arguments in favour of the cause developed during the first phase of the movement. Cognizant of the necessity of amassing as strong a pressure group for woman suffrage as possible, Grant constantly urged the WCTU to co-operate with the British Columbia Political Equality League. Reassuring the temperance women that the League's "work has been our work," Grant was able to arrange several joint endeavours between the two organizations. The WCTU, however, maintained its autonomy and did not affiliate with any specific suffrage society.

The leadership of the second phase of the woman suffrage movement in British Columbia was exercised by thirteen women. All of them campaigned frequently and prominently
for their cause and were executive members either of suffrage societies or of those women's organizations which participated in the campaign. One woman, Marie McNaughton, also held a seat on the Vancouver School Board, the only public office open to women. Only two of these women, Susan Crease and Maria Grant, had held positions of leadership in the previous twenty years of the campaign. Further, only a few of these women participated in woman suffrage activities in the province prior to 1909 and therefore most did not come up through the ranks of suffragists. Rather, the majority quickly assumed positions of influence in the movement through their initiative in forming and directing various new woman suffrage societies.

The question of why these thirteen women became the most prominent spokesmen of the movement remains difficult to answer. The lack of biographical information on them precludes all but the most cursory analysis of the personal characteristics which motivated them to become leaders. Elsie MacGill characterized her mother, Helen Gregory MacGill, as "clearly marked by temperament to be the leader of mutineers." The careers of several of the suffrage leaders suggest that this assessment might also be applied to them. However, while the area of personality remains to be examined, it is clear that these women possessed the skills necessary for leadership, a fact which distinguished them from the majority of women.
of their era. All of these women were effective public speakers. Townley, Smith, Hall, Gutteridge, Clark and MacGill were part-time journalists and authors adept at using their training to lead campaigns to expand the public roles available to women. The post-secondary education undertaken by McConkey, MacGill, Jamieson, Gutteridge and Clark was also not a typical experience for women at that time and may have assisted them in articulating their case.

The skill demonstrated by these women in forcefully representing the position of their groups may also have derived from their previous leadership experience. Crease, Grant, Smith, MacGill, Clark- and Gutteridge had held positions of leadership or prominence in the woman suffrage movement, although not necessarily in British Columbia. All of the suffragist leaders were actively engaged in other reform groups and women's clubs and frequently occupied key positions in these organizations.

As in the case of the pre-1910 leaders, a family tradition of public leadership may also have been instrumental in promoting several of these women to positions of leadership. As the wives and daughters of lawyers, judges, politicians, business executives, ministers, doctors and military officers, most of these women were aware of the value and sometimes the necessity of assuming leadership positions. Family connections also
linked some of the suffrage leaders to male reformers, including trade unionists, temperance advocates and social gospellers. Their familiarity with these persons strengthened their ability to lead women sympathetic to the various causes represented by the male reformers. As members of prominent families, several of these women were part of the social elite in Vancouver and Victoria, a position which further enhanced their ability to lead some segments of the woman suffrage movement.

The membership of the second phase of the woman suffrage movement differed from that of the first phase in several important ways. Most obvious were the quantitative changes evident by 1913. As a result of the efforts of the British Columbia Political Equality League\(^58\) and to a lesser extent those of the WCTU,\(^59\) the suffrage movement expanded to include men and women from numerous areas in the province including the Okanagan, the Cariboo and the Kootenays. In addition to the growth of the movement in non-urban areas, the participation of men and women in Victoria and Vancouver also grew in response to the recruiting efforts of the various suffrage societies and the increasing awareness of the suffrage issue generated by newspaper accounts of the movement elsewhere. While the determination of the actual number of members of the woman suffrage organizations in the province is precluded by the
absence of complete records, an estimate can be made for 1914. The 1914 membership list of the Vancouver based Pioneer Political Equality League included the names of 142 persons. To this can be added the 21 persons designated as either executive members or committee chairmen by the Mount Pleasant Woman's Suffrage League as well as a portion of its average turnout of 40 members. Since the Victoria Political Equality League grew from 72 members at its formation in December 1910 to 100 members in August 1911, it is quite possible that it had maintained or expanded this number by 1914. These figures provide a rough total of 300 persons. This number is inadequate however, as it does not include any of the province's suffrage societies for which no data is available. Excluded are the 36 branches of the British Columbia Political Equality League registered by February 1913, the British Columbia Equal Franchise Association and its branches in Kelowna and Nelson, the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League and its Fraserview branch and the Women's Freedom Union. Also not counted in this assessment were those suffragists who worked solely through the local councils of women, the WCTU or the University Women's Club. An estimate of between 500 and 800 active members of the suffrage campaign may not be excessive for 1914.

The membership of the movement also became represent-
previously. The 1914 membership list of the Pioneer Political Equality League included persons employed in numerous occupations ranging from seamstress to mayor and residing throughout Vancouver. The British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League and its small branches in Mount Pleasant and South Vancouver catered to working-class women as did the Cedar Cottage and South Vancouver branches of the British Columbia Political Equality League. Persons with professional or business backgrounds were well-represented in various branches of the Equal Franchise Association and the British Columbia Political Equality League.

Aware of previous failures, the majority of the post 1910 suffragists adopted a more aggressive approach towards securing general and political support for the further enfranchisement of women. Under the auspices of the various suffrage societies, they undertook to raise public awareness of their position through the extensive use of all available media. The most ambitious of these projects was the publication of the monthly suffrage magazine, The Champion, by the British Columbia Political Equality League from 1912 to 1914. In addition to covering British Columbia suffrage news, The Champion featured excerpts from Votes for Women, articles by prominent British suffragists including Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst and Emmeline and Frederick William.
Pethick-Lawrence and reports of suffrage victories around the world. The editors of The Champion also regularly included accounts of women pioneering in professions previously barred to women and indictments of conditions confronting women industrial workers in various countries. Each month 650 copies of the magazine were distributed throughout the province. The League also issued a variety of broadsides and leaflets. The Pioneer Political Equality League in Vancouver began a suffrage newsletter, Pioneer Woman, in March 1913. The British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League's page in the B. C. Federationist reported the local suffrage campaign from its perspective and featured extensive articles on the legislative reforms enacted in Australia and New Zealand following the granting of woman suffrage and as well as reports supporting the activities of the militant British suffragists. The suffragists also sought to increase their public visibility by participating in parades and local fairs, performing suffrage plays and encouraging theatre managers to screen pro-suffrage films and boycott anti-suffrage ones.

Assuming that more women would join the suffrage cause if they became aware of their legal position, the suffragists also undertook an extensive informational campaign. Lectures on the legal status of women were delivered by suffragists and sympathetic lawyers in all available forums. More important, however, was the compilation for
the first time of the laws regarding women in a readily available and comprehensible form. The first movement in this direction was the pamphlet *Points in the Laws of British Columbia Regarding the Legal Status of Women*\(^1\) issued in 1911 by the Vancouver branch of the British Columbia Political Equality League. This effort was succeeded by suffragist Helen Gregory MacGill's authoritative pamphlet, *Daughters, Wives and Mothers in British Columbia*\(^2\) first published in 1913. The professionalism evident in MacGill's work indicated the capabilities and approach of the new generation of suffragists.

Another important facet of the attempt to secure more support was an extensive campaign to address directly as many residents of the province as possible. In her position as provincial organizer for the British Columbia Political Equality League, Dorothy Davis held successful suffrage rallies throughout the Okanagan and Kootenay districts in the autumn and winter of 1912-1913\(^3\) Florence Hall and Mary Ellen Smith received similarly enthusiastic receptions at suffrage meetings they conducted on behalf of the League in the Fraser Valley and Cariboo district\(^4\). Suffragists from all groups organized extensive programs of speaking to men's and women's clubs, trade unions, church groups and general meetings on the lower mainland and on Vancouver Island in order to recruit supporters from as wide a cross-section of the population as possible. They
also held public and private meetings featuring prominent suffragists including Emmeline Pankhurst, Barbara Wylie, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, Nellie McClung and several women from Washington state, thereby connecting themselves directly with the suffrage movement elsewhere.

The differences of perspective expressed by the various organizations supporting woman suffrage did not deter the suffragists from undertaking joint campaigns or from forming coalitions of suffrage organizations. The suffragists' ability to suppress their differences temporarily and thus present a united front to the anti-suffragists, derived not only from the political pragmatism inherent in this tactic. Equally important for many suffragists was their consciousness of being participants in an international woman suffrage movement directed by persons dedicated to improving the political, legal, social and economic status of women in their respective countries. Viewed from this perspective, local disputes over priorities and tactics assumed smaller proportions since they all agreed on the common goal of extending the franchise to women.

The expansion of programs to engage the interest of the public in woman suffrage was accompanied throughout this period by an escalation of pressure on politicians, particularly Premier Richard McBride. Determined to demonstrate a widespread demand for their cause, the
suffragists and their supporters deluged the government throughout the legislative sessions of 1913 and 1914 with resolutions and telegrams demanding the enfranchisement of women. The attention of politicians was directed to the affirmative result of a woman suffrage referendum conducted in conjunction with the Victoria municipal election of 1914. In a further attempt to inform each politician of the strength of support for woman suffrage in his constituency, annual delegations of suffragists presented large petitions to the legislative assembly during the 1913 and 1914 sessions of the legislature.

McBride's continued refusal to make woman suffrage a government policy in spite of these large demonstrations of support caused numerous suffragists to adopt a belligerent attitude towards the McBride government and the Conservative Party. In February 1913 Dorothy Davis warned the premier that a continued refusal to extend the vote to women might cause the "fluid political feeling" of men and women in the province to move towards the Socialist Party which had frequently introduced woman suffrage bills. Infuriated by McBride's dismissal of a 10,000 signature petition supporting political equality for women and the defeat of the private member's bill on the issue, Grant informed McBride that the suffragists "propose now to deal with political questions by political methods." Subscribers to The Champion were regularly
reminded that the Liberal Party had adopted woman suffrage as a party plank at its convention in 1912 while the Conservative Party had engaged in numerous tactics to prevent the question from being discussed at its 1914 convention. Members of the WCTU were also reminded of the respective positions of the Liberal and Conservative parties on the matter. The British Columbia Woman’s Suffrage League reported that the Liberals of ward five in Vancouver were conducting debates favouring the measure. By 1914 the editors of The Champion were sufficiently frustrated with the McBride government to muse publicly "we understand better why some of the English women became militants."

The suffragists' opposition to McBride was temporarily weakened by the outbreak of the first world war. The pre-session campaigning typical of other years was drastically curtailed in the autumn and winter of 1914-1915. Instead, many of the suffragists directed their attention to personal matters and patriotic work under the auspices of the Red Cross, the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire, the WCTU and numerous other organizations. None of the province's woman suffrage societies or women's organizations approached the government on behalf of woman suffrage during the 1915 session.

Although the suffrage movement remained largely dormant throughout 1915, one important change occurred
during the year which affected its future course. Attracted by the Liberal Party's endorsement of woman suffrage and its increased political activity, several women decided to form a Women's Liberal Club in the spring of 1915. The inclusion of several prominent suffragists in its membership and executive directly introduced an element of partisanship into the woman suffrage campaign. Although an alliance between the Liberal Party and the woman suffrage movement was not welcomed by all suffragists, it was to be instrumental in obtaining their enfranchisement.

Agitation for woman suffrage recommenced along familiar lines in December 1915 with a request from the United Suffrage Societies of Vancouver that the new premier, William Bowser, meet with them and the representatives of the local councils of women, the Women's Forum, the Trades and Labour Council, the University Women's Club and the King's Daughters to discuss his position on woman suffrage. Bowser declined the invitation. As a representative of the British Columbia Political Equality League, Grant also renewed the demand for woman suffrage by requesting a government bill like the ones recently passed in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan. This pattern of interaction between the suffragists and the Conservative government was abruptly altered, however, by Bowser's announcement that a referendum
on woman suffrage would be held in conjunction with the next general election in the province.96

The Bowser government's decision to hold a woman suffrage referendum coincided with changing political conditions in the province. The security enjoyed by the Conservative Party following its overwhelming victory in the 1912 provincial election was gradually eroded throughout 1915. Serious allegations about gross mishandling of lands, resources and contracts by the government,97 a strong prohibition lobby, continued high unemployment and an enormous provincial debt98 plagued the government throughout the year. The major beneficiaries of these developments were the Liberals who succeeded in winning two of three seats contested in bye-elections in February and March, 1916.99 Aware of these events, the Conservative Party urged Bowser to adopt woman suffrage as a government policy in order to divert some of the reformers from the Liberal Party.100 Rather than completely reverse the government's previous stand, Bowser offered a referendum to placate the suffragists just as McBride had offered a referendum to appease the prohibitionists.101

The suffragists reacted to the announcement of a referendum with unanimous disapproval and indignation.102 A large delegation of suffragists from throughout the province urged the government to recognize women's right to the franchise and pass a bill accordingly,103 but the
Bowser government remained firm. Unable to secure the preferred measure of a government bill or passage of the private member's woman suffrage bill before the house, the majority of the suffragists resolved to campaign actively for the successful passage of the referendum. Only the British Columbia Equal Franchise Association refused to participate in the "hazard of a referendum vote." 104

Throughout the summer of 1916 the suffragists worked to present their case to as large a portion of the male electorate as possible prior to the September 14 election and referendum. To facilitate their campaign and fund-raising the suffragists formed coalitions, the Woman's Suffrage Referendum Campaign Association in Vancouver and the Woman's Suffrage Referendum League in Victoria. They spoke at suffrage rallies and at political meetings held by the Liberal and Conservative parties, they campaigned door to door, wrote letters to the editors of the local press, published broadsides stating their position and urged sympathetic ministers to endorse woman suffrage. In addition to the arguments developed by the suffragists prior to the war, they now pleaded that women should receive the vote as recognition of their contribution to the war effort. 105

The passage of the woman suffrage referendum by an overall two to one margin gratified the suffragists. The leading veteran suffragist, Maria Grant, attributed
this victory to the men's desire to acknowledge women's citizenship as a result of their war work. While this factor was influential and in some cases allowed formerly staunch opponents to reverse their stand without incurring adverse comment, other factors were more decisive. The second phase of the woman suffrage movement succeeded in arousing considerable interest in the cause throughout the province, particularly among persons sympathetic to the activities of the province's reform community, including social gospellers, prohibitionists, trade unionists and other secular social reformers. In addition to the support offered by these special interest groups, the suffragists received help for their cause from many Liberal candidates. Similarly, suffragists, prohibitionists and other reformers frequently worked for the Liberal Party since the Conservatives had consistently expressed hostility toward them prior to 1916. In this respect the passage of the woman suffrage referendum was part of the general rise of reform sentiment in politics in British Columbia and other parts of English-speaking Canada. Some voters may also have been convinced to vote for woman suffrage as a result of the reception given the suffragists on the prairies where they had won provincial political equality the previous year.

The successful passage of the woman suffrage referendum did not, however, result in the enfranchisement of women
on January 1, 1917 as promised.\textsuperscript{110} Delays in counting the overseas soldiers' vote on the referendum prevented the compilation of an official total. Eager to register for the upcoming bye-elections for cabinet ministers and for a possible federal election, a large delegation of suffragists prevailed upon the new Liberal government to overrule the referendum legislation by introducing a woman suffrage bill as a government measure. The government complied and the Provincial Elections Act was amended on April 5, 1917 to grant women the provincial franchise on the same basis as men.\textsuperscript{111} The act also empowered women to contest elections, subject to the same restrictions which applied to men. The Municipal Elections Act was also amended to allow women who qualified for the municipal franchise as property or business owners to contest municipal elections.\textsuperscript{112}

But the British Columbia suffragists were soon chagrined to discover in 1917 that access to the provincial franchise no longer simultaneously secured the federal franchise for them. They had not previously taken an active part in attempting to influence the federal government in this matter because they had not thought such action necessary. The announcement that the War-Times Election Act would supercede the Dominion Elections Act for the duration of the war and demobilization\textsuperscript{113} was greeted with a mixed response from the suffragists. In the atmosphere
of the war, some suffragists accepted the terms of the new act which stated that only "the wives, the widows, the mothers, the sisters, and the daughters of members past or present of the actual overseas force shall have the right to vote in the war-time election."\textsuperscript{114} However, several other British Columbia suffragists protested to Prime Minister Borden that women were persons in their own right, not merely relatives of men and therefore all adult women citizens should be fully enfranchised.\textsuperscript{115} Borden replied that women were enfranchised under his bill solely to speak for the men overseas and the dead.\textsuperscript{116} Powerless to reverse this decision, the suffragists awaited further opportunities to approach the federal government for the enfranchisement of all adult women citizens.\textsuperscript{117}

Thus, the suffragists enjoyed considerably more success in realizing their goal during the second phase of the movement. To the rights secured in connection with the school board franchise during the first phase of the movement were added equal access with men to the provincial and Vancouver municipal franchise. No progress was made in enlarging the interpretation of the property qualifications of the Municipal Elections Act to include the wives of qualified men so the number of women eligible to vote in Victoria and other municipalities under the jurisdiction of the act remained small. Women also
gained the right to become candidates in provincial and municipal elections provided they qualified as voters and possessed any necessary property requirements. The suffragists' failure to expand the interpretation of the property qualification to include wives reflected the strength of the Property Owners' Association lobby which was opposed to any compromise on the issue. Ironically, it also accorded with the views of those suffragists who argued that women should receive the same treatment as men. The restricted access to the ballot in federal elections, while disappointing many, still represented a qualified victory in that area. Thereafter, the suffragists turned their attention primarily to securing those alterations in women's legal status and those social reforms which had initially prompted many of them to join the movement.
Footnotes

1. For an account of the irregularities in connection with the referendum and McBride's attitude throughout see A. Adams, "A Study of the Use of Plebiscites and Referendums By the Province of British Columbia" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1958), 24-37.

2. Grant, "Legislation, Petition and Franchise," WCTU Report (1910), 62-63. In addition to working "eight hours each day" for "four months" Maria Grant loaned the suffrage campaign almost one third of its budget. Ibid., 63.

3. E. MacGill, My Mother The Judge, 119.


5. Townley, ibid., 10.

6. E. MacGill, ibid., 123.

7. Daily Colonist, 3 August 1911 and ibid., 2 August 1911.

8. Woman Suffrage File, British Columbia Public Archives, Victoria, British Columbia (hereafter city as BCPA). The idea of a Political Equality League was first suggested at the annual meeting of the NCWC in 1910, although the NCWC did not endorse the idea. Victoria was the first local council to try the experiment.


10. Ibid.


12. Province, 5 May 1911 and Vancouver World, 6 May 1911.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

17. See, for example, Janet Kemp to Richard McBride. n.d. McBride Papers, Official, Correspondence Inward, 1913, File 97, BCPA.


20. [British Columbia Political Equality League], "Why Women Ought to Have the Vote in B. C.," McBride Papers, 1913, File 97. For examples of this sentiment see Province, 15 February 1913; Victoria Daily Times, 18 February 1913 and Sun, 19 March 1913, Women's Edition.

21. See, for example, "The Referendum," The Champion II (February 1914): 4.


25. Ibid.


32. E. MacGill, ibid., 125.

33. Townley, ibid., 11.

34. Sun, 19 March 1913, Women's Edition.
35. The Champion I (December 1913): 5.

36. Ibid., 4.

37. Weppler, "Early Forms of Political Activity Among White Women in British Columbia, 1880-1925," 84 claims that the Vancouver Political Equality League "severed connections with the provincial group and became the Pioneer Political Equality League." I can find no trace of such a division.


39. B. C. Federationist, 3 October 1913.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., 17 October 1913.

43. See, for example, ibid., 10 October 1913; ibid., 5 December 1913; ibid., 12 December 1913.

44. See, for example, ibid., 7 January 1916; ibid., 10 July 1914; ibid., 7 November 1913; ibid., 17 October 1913; ibid., 31 July 1914.

45. See, for example, ibid., 21 November 1913.

46. For example, the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League's support of the Domestic Workers' Union was not necessarily shared by those suffragists employing servants.

47. See, for example, B. C. Federationist, 10 October 1915; ibid., 24 October 1913; ibid., 7 November 1913; ibid., 3 October 1913; Vancouver Local Council of Women, Minutes, 5 October 1914, Special Collections, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia.

48. See, for example, B. C. Federationist, 21 November 1913.

49. British Columbia, Statutes, 1 Geo. 5, c. 75, s. 1 and 4.

50. For a list of those elected see Chapter 1, footnote 36.

51. See, for example, The Champion II (February 1914): 6.

52. See, for example, Vancouver Local Council of Women,
Minutes, 7 August 1916.


54. Mrs. Susie Lane (James) Clark, Vancouver; Miss Susan Crease, Victoria; Miss Dorothy Davis, Victoria; Mrs. Maria (Gordon) Grant, Victoria; Miss Helena Gutteridge, Vancouver; Mrs. Florence (William Lashley) Hall, Vancouver; Mrs. Laura (John) Jamieson, Vancouver; Mrs. Janet Kemp, Vancouver; Mrs. Elizabeth (William) McConkey, Vancouver; Mrs. Helen Gregory (James) MacGill, Vancouver; Mrs. Marie (Peter) McNaughton, Vancouver; Mrs. Mary Ellen (Ralph) Smith, Vancouver; Mrs. Alice Ashworth (Charles) Townley, Vancouver. See Appendix I for a brief biography of each of these women. These women were designated leaders because they fulfilled at least three of the following four criteria: executive member of a suffrage society or woman's organization campaigning for woman suffrage; frequent and prominent campaigner; leader of suffrage delegations; elected to public office.

55. Eight of the eleven new leaders resided in British Columbia for several years prior to 1909. Of these, three worked for suffrage within the Vancouver Local Council of Women. The failure of the remaining five to become extensively involved can be attributed to domestic obligations including childbirth, childcare and travelling with their husbands in the course of their husbands' occupations.

56. E. MacGill, ibid., 118.

57. See, for example, British Columbia Pictoral and Biographical (Vancouver, Winnipeg, etc. S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914), 536.

58. See, for example, The Champion I (January 1913): 6-14 for an account of Davis' and Hall's recruitment activities.


61. B. C. Federationist, 3 July 1914; ibid., 31 July 1914; ibid., 17 October 1913.

Colonist, 2 February 1911.

63. The Champion I (May 1913): 5.


65. Based on the occupations or spouses' occupations of known members as listed in Henderson's Directories (variously titled) 1910-1915.

66. Surviving copies of The Champion cover the period from August 1912 to April 1914.


68. Daily News-Advertiser, 21 March 1913. Since no copies of Pioneer Woman are held in public repositories, its subsequent fate is unknown. The B. C. Federationist, 4 April 1913 reprinted a section of the first edition.

69. See, for example, B. C. Federationist, 24 October 1913; ibid., 7 November 1913; ibid., 23 November 1914; ibid., 17 October 1913.

70. See, for example, The Champion I (August 1913): 4; ibid., (March 1913): 18.

71. Townley, ibid.


74. Ibid., 13 and B. C. Federationist, 21 August 1914.

75. Victoria Daily Times, 21 December 1911 and Daily Colonist, 22 December 1911.

76. The Champion I (February 1913): 9

77. E. MacGill, ibid., 124.

78. Vancouver World, 30 August 1915.

79. See, for example, The Champion I (March 1913): 8; ibid., (August 1913): 9; WCTU Report (1912): 23; Daily Colonist, 2 August 1911; Daily News-Advertiser, 5 June 1913.
80. McBride Papers, 1913, File 97 and McBride Papers, Official, Correspondence Inward, 1914, File 77, BCPA.


82. See McBride Papers, 1913, File 97. A small woman suffrage petition was also submitted by the residents of Greenwood Electoral District the previous year. See McBride Papers, Official, Correspondence Inward, 1912, File 173, 14 March 1912, BCPA.

83. British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1914), 42.

84. Dorothy Davis to Premier of British Columbia. 13 February 1913. McBride Papers, 1913, File 97.


86. See, for example, "Liberal Convention," The Champion II (March 1914): 7-8.


89. B. C. Federationist, 24 July 1914.

90. The Champion II (March 1914): 7.

91. See, for example, B. C. Federationist, 11 June 1915.

92. A loose coalition of the British Columbia Woman's Suffrage League, the Mount Pleasant Woman's Suffrage League, the Pioneer Political Equality League, the South Vancouver Political Equality League and the Equal Franchise Association formed as a result of Gutteridge's efforts in 1913. Its activities were restricted to sending delegations to the government.

93. The Women's Forum was organized in 1912 to unite and inform the women ratepayers of Vancouver. Its executive included Kemp, MacGill, McConkey and Smith. See Sun, 19 March 1913, Women's Edition.

94. United Suffrage Societies to Bowser. 15 December 1915. Bowser Papers, Official, Correspondence Inward, 1916, File 293, BCPA.


102. See, for example, *Bowser Papers*, 15 April 1916 to 15 May 1916, File 293; *Victoria Daily Times*, 17 April 1916; *Province*, 19 April 1916.

103. See, for example, *Victoria Daily Times*, 26 April 1916 and *Daily Colonist*, 27 April 1916.


105. *Daily Colonist*, 14 July 1916. The civilian vote for woman suffrage was 43,619 for and 18,604 against. The soldiers' vote was 8,273 for and 6,002 against. *Canadian Annual Review 1916*, 781.


107. See, for example, *Victoria Daily Times*, 12 July 1916.

108. This co-operation with the Liberals on the part of some suffragists prevented the Vancouver Local Council of Women from entering the suffrage referendum campaign. See, *Vancouver Local Council of Women, Minutes*, 8 January 1917.

109. This point was raised in *Vancouver City Central Woman's Suffrage Referendum Campaign Association. Broadside*. City Archives of Vancouver, Vancouver, British Columbia.

111. Ibid., 7 and 8 Geo. 5, c. 23.

112. Ibid., c. 23, s. 2. Most women, however remained excluded from the property based municipal franchise until 1920. See ibid., 10 Geo. 5, c.26, s. 2.

113. Canada, Commons Debates, 1917, vol. 6, 5415.

114. Ibid., 5416.

115. Province, 20 September 1917.

116. Ibid.

117. Women were granted the federal franchise on the same basis as men by the federal parliament in 1918, to be effective January 1, 1919. Canada, Statutes, 8 Geo. 5, c. 20. According to Cleverdon "with no appreciable amount of pressure from any source, either inside or outside parliament, the right of women to be elected to the federal House was quietly inserted into the Dominion By-Elections Act of July 1919." See Cleverdon, ibid., 136 and Canada, Statutes, 9 Geo. 5, c. 48.
Chapter 3  Community Reaction to the British Columbia  
Woman Suffrage Movement 1890 - 1917

The reaction of the residents of British Columbia to the woman suffrage movement can be most effectively determined by examining the positions of those groups claiming to speak in the public interest on the issue. Throughout the campaign opposition to the women's demands for political equality was voiced primarily by politicians and those newspapers which shared their perspective. Roman Catholic clergymen occasionally denounced the measure but did not otherwise publicly oppose the movement.1 No group of women or men organized an anti-suffrage society. In sharp contrast to the basically static group opposed to the extension of the franchise to women, the number and diversity of the movement's supporters increased considerably throughout the campaign. Apart from drawing aid from numerous women's groups, the suffragists also attracted the favourable attention of politicians, socialists, clergymen, newspaper editors, trade unionists and members of the general public. The decision of members of the British Columbia community to support, oppose or ignore the British Columbia woman suffrage movement was determined

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by the degree of coincidence between their world view and the goals of the suffragists. The number and diversity of the suffragists' supporters indicated the breadth of the progressive sentiment in British Columbia of which the suffragists formed an integral part. It also testified to the suffragists' growing skill in forming a broad-based coalition to confront entrenched government opposition. The failure of the campaign to achieve its major goals prior to 1917 indicated the strength of its opposition.

The major opponents of the British Columbia suffragists were the province's successive governments. All governments prior to the Brewster administration refused to sponsor the extension of municipal and provincial voting privileges to women on the same basis as men. This intransigent attitude can be attributed primarily to a reluctance on the part of government members to alter the electorate which placed them in positions of power. Particularly worrisome to politicians in this regard were the declarations of some of the movement's leaders that women would not be swayed by party loyalty or patronage but would cast their vote for the most appropriate candidate, man or woman, available in their constituency. Some of these men may have feared that their personal conduct would not be acceptable to women who
claimed to judge candidates in terms of their personal morality and temperance rather than their position, wealth and power. Unable to predict what percentage of the female vote they could attract, most government and some opposition members preferred the electoral status quo.

The disinclination of various British Columbia governments to involve women in the political process was heightened during the McBride years by the acrimony between many of the suffragists and some Conservative party supporters. Amongst those potentially endangered by the suffragists' moral reform programs were the province's brewers and saloon proprietors whose interests were protected by the Conservative government. During the 1907-1908 controversy regarding the provincial government's inadvertent extension of the municipal franchise to most women, one of the principal complainants was the Licensed Victuallers Association which represented the tavern owners of Victoria. These men objected to the enfranchisement of women because they feared that the majority of women would favour the closer restriction of the liquor trade, if not its abolition. In view of the alliance between the Conservative government and the liquor interests it is not surprising that the McBride government assiduously ignored all further agitation to accord women full municipal and provincial voting privileges following the revocation of the women's
municipal franchise by a court decision.

Government opposition to political equality for women also stemmed from the divergence of interests between the two groups. On the one hand, the suffragists' attention focused on issues directly related to women's lives and the quality of community life. They tendered proposals for improving the legal status of women, altering the moral standards of the community, regulating conditions in the workplace and providing more adequate social services. Government politicians, on the other hand, concentrated on constructing railways, dispensing timber, mineral, fishing and land rights, attracting industry and commerce and demanding better terms from the federal government. As a result of these priorities, government members frequently deemed most of the suffragists' demands irrelevant, inappropriate or undesirable. Neither side in this dispute expressed interest in the other's priorities and consequently successive provincial governments had no incentive to include women in the electorate.

In addition to these pragmatic considerations, some politicians resisted attempts to enfranchise women because they believed that woman's nature and role in society precluded her from active involvement in politics. Representative of this group was Albert McPhillips, a member of McBride's cabinet, who argued that it was "incompatible with womanhood to be responsible for civil
government since womanhood is constituted not to debate or reason, but to influence and persuade." Others maintained that woman suffrage was contrary to the divine order of relations between the sexes and consequently would, at the very least, destroy family harmony and defile the purity of women by entangling them in the mire of politics. Some parliamentarians proclaimed that women should be excluded because they would not fight on behalf of their country or because they were allegedly biologically inferior to men. The number of politicians sincerely subscribing to any of these claims is difficult to determine however, since these positions may have been voiced by members attempting to disguise more pragmatic considerations. The impression that some politicians were disguising their actual motives in this manner is strengthened by the repetitive and trite character of such statements as these. During the Conservative regime the tendency of members not to state their objections in the legislature before registering a negative vote adds to the problem of determining the motives of opposing politicians.

In conjunction with the parliamentary opposition to political equality for women several of the province's newspapers, at various times, expressed hostility toward woman suffrage. The most frequent opponents were those
newspapers which supported the Conservative party, particularly the Victoria *Daily Colonist* after 1906, the Vancouver *Province* and, to a lesser extent, the Vancouver *Daily News-Advertiser*. However, Liberal newspapers such as the *Victoria Daily Times* also periodically displayed similar sentiments prior to the Liberal party's adoption of a woman suffrage plank. The close relationship between the political affiliation of each paper and its point of view on this issue suggests that the editors' stands were motivated primarily by partisan considerations.

Press hostility to the extension of the franchise to women usually assumed one of three forms. The most direct method used was the printing of editorials which announced that women were not yet ready to vote and therefore it was in the best interests of all concerned not to pass enabling legislation. This type of editorial usually conceded that women eventually would be prepared (by an undefined process) and therefore would vote at an unidentified time in the future. However, the majority of editors shunned this technique, possibly because they wanted to avoid offending subscribers and advertisers sympathetic to the women's cause.

Far more popular with newspaper editors was the subtler and possibly more effective tactic of attempting to discredit the reputation of the province's suffragists by puporting to report objectively the anti-social behaviour
of women seeking the vote elsewhere. Sensationalized accounts of the activities of the suffragettes in Great Britian appeared regularly on the front pages of the *Victoria Daily Times*, the *Province* and the *Daily News-Advertiser* from 1908 to 1913. No explanation of the motives of the suffragettes nor reports of their imprison-ment were printed. The readers were not informed that the local supporters of political equality for women disapproved of these violent tactics; rather they were left with the impression that similar social disruption could occur in British Columbia. This impression was reinforced by the publication of warnings to British mil-litants travelling in Canada that their tactics would not be tolerated. The lawful conduct of these women in Canada was ignored. In addition to this attempt to discredit the local suffrage movement, these opposing papers also reprinted articles from the American and British press which characterized women who were interested in participating in the governmental process as unfeminine and infertile.

Some papers also undertook to minimize the effect of the local campaign by publishing only brief notices of major suffrage events in the province and in Canada. This tactic was particularly popular with the editor of the *Daily Colonist* from 1909 until the Conservative government's announcement of a woman suffrage referendum
in 1916. The Vancouver *Province* also frequently adopted this procedure. The editor of the New Westminster *British Columbian*, a pro-Conservative newspaper, extended this tactic even further by allowing only one reference to this issue during the month prior to the referendum.

The effect of the opposing press campaign on the efforts of the campaigners is difficult to ascertain, just as the influence of newspapers on all readers remains unclear. The suffragists, however, viewed the enmity of this section of the press as particularly vexatious since they were to a considerable extent dependent upon the goodwill of the various editors to publicize their point of view. It is possible that the refusal of these editors to print the suffragists' point of view restricted their audience and subsequently the number of converts to their cause. The suffragists' frequent assertions that they did not advocate the violence of the English militants suggests that they feared that many women were sufficiently alarmed by the press coverage of the English situation to refrain from joining the movement in British Columbia. The hostile press campaign also served to reinforce the opinions of those persons already opposed to political equality for women. It may also have attracted the allegiance of some some persons previously undecided on the issue. Thus, the editors of the opposing newspapers were able to counter public sentiment in favour of woman
suffrage.

Fear and apathy combined to create a type of opposition to political equality for women which the suffragists found difficult to combat. Their inability to involve the majority of the province's women in their movement remained, in their view, an extremely serious obstacle to securing full franchise rights. Their failure in this regard stemmed partially from their inability to dissuade women from the notion that they would be severely criticized for opposing the status quo of political and social relations between men and women. Some women feared the negative reaction of relatives and friends if they publicly expressed interest in woman suffrage by attending a meeting or signing a petition. Others remained reticent lest their involvement jeopardized their husband's business or social connections. These considerations may have been reinforced by the religious training received by many women which stressed the necessity of women's submission to the will of men. For some women these factors were sufficient either to prevent them from participating in the campaign or from accepting the validity of the suffragists' claims.

Problems in building the numerical strength of the movement also derived from more mundane, yet pressing, difficulties. Many women were largely occupied with matters
centered in the home and had little time or opportunity to pursue matters other than those of immediate importance. This was particularly true of women with large families and women who had insufficient funds to purchase labour saving commodities. Country women were, on the whole, precluded from active involvement or sometimes from an awareness of the campaign by the number of their tasks and their geographical isolation. The suffragists' attempts to overcome these obstacles confronting women by various means, including increased publicity and welcoming children at meetings, remained inadequate to recruit the majority of women.

The apathetic response presented by some residents of the province to the woman suffrage campaign may also have reflected a more generalized notion that the political process was remote from daily life and therefore unworthy of sustained interest. The suffragists, like the trade unionists, were unable to overcome totally this point of view.

Despite the considerable opposition to the woman suffrage movement, several sections of the community not directly connected with women's organizations gradually offered their support. The continued refusal of successive British Columbia governments to extend the provincial and a full municipal franchise to women failed to deter
politicians from acting on behalf of the campaigners. From 1891 to 1916 seven men sponsored twelve private member's bills designed to grant provincial woman suffrage. The actions of Ralph Smith (1899), Smith Curtis (1902), James Hawthornthwaite (1906 and 1909) and John Place (1913, 1914 and 1916) in this matter derived from their affiliations with British Columbia labour and socialist groups which backed equal political rights for women. John Cunningham Brown (1891 and 1893), Harry D. Helmcken (1897 and 1898) and Richard Hall (1904) acted as individuals sympathetic to the cause.

The divisions in the legislative assembly on these bills indicate that politicians of differing political perspectives from various regions of the province voted in favour of provincial woman suffrage.15 Before the introduction of party government in 1903, members of both the opposition and government factions endorsed this change according to their personal preferences since none of the factions officially adopted a position on the issue. The vote in the first three divisions after the election of the McBride government indicated that Liberals and Socialists were clearly more inclined to support the measure than Conservatives.16 The favourable response expressed by the majority of the Liberals reflected a variety of motivations including a desire to oppose the Conservative government wherever possible and the
association of woman suffrage with liberal attitudes in England, the United States of America and Canada. Following the complete defeat of the Liberals in the 1912 election, the bills were supported by the Socialists and nine Conservatives who disagreed with the majority of their colleagues.¹⁷

The identification of the Liberal party with the extension of the franchise to women was further strengthened by its adoption of a woman suffrage plank in its 1912 platform. While this action could be construed as the logical outcome of the voting record of Liberal members in the legislature, it is significant that official recognition of the women's demand was forthcoming only when the party had reached the nadir of its political influence in the province. The possibility of attracting a large number of women as campaign workers who would later become voters may have been influential in this decision. However, the growing alliance between various reform groups and the Liberal party was likely as important as pragmatic considerations in creating a majority opinion in favour of promoting political equality for women. The endeavours and statements of Liberal politicians in this regard were fully reported by the Victoria Daily Times from 1914 to 1917 and to a lesser extent by the Vancouver Sun and the Vancouver World from 1913 to 1917.

Nominal and sometimes active backing for the
suffragists was also forthcoming from several small parties with labour and socialist backing. The Nationalist Party resolved in 1894 "that all citizens, irrespective of sex, over the age of 21 years, be enfranchised, and that no other qualification be required for any election, municipal, provincial, or federal." The Nanaimo Workingman's Platform of 1894 also advocated the extension of the franchise to women on the same basis as men. While the motivation of these two groups in adopting this stance is unclear, such a change would have expanded the number of voters from the working-class, a matter in which they were vitally interested. Furthermore, this position accorded with their professed democratic ideology. The United Socialist Labour Party of British Columbia furthered this trend by including the "universal and equal right of suffrage" in its platform for 1900. The Provincial Progressive Party meeting in Kamloops in 1902 also decided to recommend the inclusion of women in the province's electorate in spite of opposition from some socialist delegates. E. T. Kingsley, the delegate from Nanaimo, argued that woman suffrage was "irrelevant" since the "class struggle was the real issue." Delegate Bulmer of Rossland voiced the fear that women were intrinsically conservative and therefore should be left politically powerless. These men, however, represented a minority opinion among socialists as the advocacy of adult suffrage...
remained a permanent policy of the British Columbia Socialist Party. The socialists' stand on this issue derived from their nominally egalitarian ethic and their desire to maximize the number of their electoral supporters. The fact that numerous European socialist parties demanded full voting rights for all citizens may also have been influential.

Local politicians gradually began to lobby for the extension of the franchise to women at all levels. The British Columbia School Trustees Association notified Premier McBride that they supported the 1913 suffrage delegation to the legislature and warned him that public opinion was "strongly settling in this behalf". In February 1909 Mayor Hall of Victoria presented the provincial government with a resolution unanimously passed by the Victoria city council which declared that the municipal franchise should be accessible to all adult women citizens upon the payment of a $2.00 tax. The Victoria city council reiterated its backing for an expanded female franchise by petitioning the 1914 session of the provincial legislature to alter the restrictions placed on women in municipal elections. Some Vancouver municipal politicians also championed woman suffrage. They recommended the revision of the city's charter to include women on the voters' list and took an interest in the provincial campaign by joining suffrage organizations.
and addressing meetings on the topic. The interest of local politicians in this issue may have reflected the strength of the movement in these cities. Also influential was the fact that some women qualified for the municipal and school board franchises and therefore possessed a degree of political power at these levels.

The suffragists found additional allies in various sections of the reform community primarily identified with men. The most longstanding support from this area was that tendered by clergymen of various Protestant denominations in the province. During the first two decades of the campaign, individual ministers endorsed political equality for women as a change conducive to the moral improvement of the community. Bishop Perrin, head of the Anglican Church in British Columbia, championed woman suffrage by claiming "if society is to be purged, it must be by women . . . we need women directors." Expanding on this theme, Congregationalist Reverend John Simpson exorted the eligible women in his church to vote in the upcoming municipal election "with Christ in mind . . . for the welfare of their homes and the city." Several social gospel ministers defended the suffragists in the Victoria municipal franchise controversy by arguing that property ownership and payment of taxes were not necessary prerequisites for creating a moral electorate and consequently
women should be eligible to vote. In 1913 the Methodist Conference of British Columbia officially endorsed political equality for women as "it would greatly aid in the moral uplift of social and political affairs for which we are all working." The following year the favourable attitude on this issue previously demonstrated by individual ministers and the British Columbia Methodist Conference was officially endorsed by all the major protestant denominations in the province and Canada.

Ministerial interest in the extension of the franchise to women was frequently prompted by the association of several suffragists with temperance endeavours. Reverend J. C. Speer, pastor of Victoria Metropolitan Methodist Church, presented a woman suffrage petition to the legislature in his capacity as president of the B. C. Alliance, a men's prohibition organization. Clergymen informed the annual meetings of the WCTU of their simultaneous support of the women's temperance and political campaigns and argued publicly that women should share equal franchise rights with men in order to express an opinion on the liquor traffic.

From 1913 to 1916 the strongest support for the suffragists came from those denominations most closely associated with the social gospel and prohibitionist movements. The Western Methodist Recorder published the "Suffrage Sermonette" from February 1914 until October 1915.
in which Florence Hall argued that political equality was not a violation of the divine order but a step towards establishing "the Kingdom of God right here and now," the major goal of the social gospel ministers. She assured her readers that enfranchised women would strive to eliminate the influence of the bartender and "every evil that would produce moral pollution." Reflecting a similar point of view, the editor of the Presbyterian Westminster Hall Magazine and Farthest West Review lamented "there has been too much tendency . . . to forget that national as well as domestic life is a partnership between the sexes." He predicted that after the granting of woman suffrage "the race would at once take the big step forward which must inevitably ensue when woman has a direct political influence in the social and moral conditions of the country and people." Ministers of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregationalist churches regularly continued to notify their parishioners, the public and the government of their position on the issue and request their support in the campaign and the referendum. The majority of the suffragists viewed the sanctioning of their efforts by the various Protestant denominations in the province as particularly valuable in influencing those members of the public opposed to changes in traditional relationships between men and women.
Some secular reformers, most notably the trade unionists, expressed their support for the extension of the franchise to women. In accordance with the earlier labour-socialist sponsorship of woman suffrage bills, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council endorsed "adult suffrage including the franchise for women" in 1910.\textsuperscript{42} The following year the first annual meeting of the British Columbia Provincial Federation of Labour passed a similar resolution introduced by a Victoria delegate.\textsuperscript{43} The position of organized labour in the province in this regard was well in advance of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada which did not issue a directive to assist in the woman suffrage campaign until 1913.\textsuperscript{44} Prior to the 1914 session of the legislature, sixteen Vancouver trade unions notified the provincial government that their membership of over 1,100 men and women unanimously backed full political equality for women.\textsuperscript{45} The 1914 convention of the British Columbia Federation of Labour ratified its earlier stand on the matter on the grounds that women voters would "support and expand working class pressure", particularly as women increasingly entered the work force.\textsuperscript{46}

Although organized labour officially upheld the goal of woman suffrage, its support was not unqualified. The extension of the franchise to women was never a vital concern of the province's trade unions and consequently
their support waned whenever they perceived a possible conflict of interest between trade unionists and suffragists. The strengthening of ties between some suffragists and the Liberal Party during 1915 reaffirmed the contention of some trade unionists that enfranchised women would not support labour candidates and issues.47 Thereafter, their involvement in the campaign was drastically curtailed. The 1916 and 1917 conventions of the British Columbia Federation of Labour did not discuss woman suffrage. Reflecting this attitude, the B. C. Federationist terminated its considerable and sympathetic coverage of suffrage events with a hostile editorial which declared that the capitalists would enfranchise women in order to gain their support against union men, particularly returned veterans.48 With the exception of a brief notice in April 1917 that working-class women should register to vote in provincial elections, organized labour's silence was not revoked until the announcement of a restricted federal female franchise under the terms of the War-Times Elections Act. On the recommendation of Helena Gutteridge, the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council passed a resolution condemning the act and demanding equal access to the ballot for all adult women citizens.49 Apart from Helena Gutteridge, the Council members expressed interest in this issue primarily because they feared that the federal government was deliberately manipulating the electorate to strengthen
its position on conscription which was unpopular with organized labour.\textsuperscript{50}

Throughout the campaign to secure political equality for women, the suffragists also received demonstrations of support from members of the public not necessarily connected with special interest or political groups. This backing usually took the form of signing petitions. In 1891 1,008 residents of Victoria\textsuperscript{51} and 549 residents of New Westminster\textsuperscript{52} signed a petition to extend the provincial franchise to women. By 1897 2,411 women in the lower mainland were willing to endorse the measure.\textsuperscript{53} The following year 2,577 men and women indicated their approval in this manner.\textsuperscript{54} Much larger petitions were presented by the suffragists in the final stages of the campaign to refute McBride's charge that there was no general interest in the issue. In 1913\textsuperscript{55} and 1914\textsuperscript{56} the British Columbia Political Equality League presented petitions containing 10,000 and 7,000 signatures respectively. While the petitions were never signed by a majority of the electorate, they did show that large numbers of men and women in the province were neither opposed nor indifferent to the cause.\textsuperscript{57} The suffragists' claims in this regard were confirmed by the overwhelmingly affirmative endorsement of the woman suffrage referendum in 1916.
The residents of British Columbia initially exhibited a mixed reaction to the British Columbia woman suffrage movement which ranged from outright hostility to active support. The ability of the suffragists to expand their active supporters from a small group of women in 1890 to a large percentage of the male electorate in 1916 indicated the success of their campaign to alter the attitude that politics was rightfully the concern only of men. The favourable response of a large segment of the British Columbia population also reflected the growing popularity of the progressive movement in the province, particularly amongst groups and individuals which did not have a vested interest in the status quo.
Footnotes

1. See, for example, *The Champion I* (July 1913): 4.


4. Ibid., 12 December 1913.


7. See, for example, *Province*, 7 March 1913, *Daily News-Advertiser*, 25 May 1913.

8. See, for example, *Daily News-Advertiser*, 13 January 1912 and ibid., 28 October 1912.

9. See, for example, *Victoria Daily Times*, 10 January 1908 and *Province*, 2 November 1910.

10. See, for example, the *Daily Colonist*'s brief coverage of Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst's Victoria visit, 22 December 1911.

11. See, for example, *The Champion II* (February 1914): 5.

12. See, for example, *B. C. Federationist* 11 June 1915.


15. The divisions, all against woman suffrage, were:
16. The Liberals voted 1904, 9 yea-4 nay; 1906 9 yea-6 nay; 1909 9 yea-2 nay while the Conservatives voted 1904 1 yea-15 nay; 1906 0 yea-18 nay; 1909 1 yea-21 nay. The Socialists voted solidly affirmative.

17. The absence of a provincial hansard and poor newspaper coverage of woman suffrage debates severely complicates the task of determining why individual members supported or rejected the measure. The fact that 3 of the 9 Conservative dissidents represented constituencies in which the previous members had voted for the bills may have influenced their voting record. Four of the Conservative suffrage advocates reversed their previous opposition to the measure either in response to the demands of their constituents or to their own change of attitude.


20. The Independent, 26 May 1900.

21. Ibid., 9 April 1902. This decision was reaffirmed the following year. See Minutes of the Provincial Progressive Party, New Denver, August 1903 as cited in Loosmore, ibid., xxix.

22. The Independent, 4 April 1902. For later examples of this sentiment see The Western Clarion, 10 December 1910; ibid., 27 September 1913; ibid., February 1916 and ibid., June 1917.

23. The Independent, 4 April 1902.

24. See, for example, The Western Clarion, 12 January 1907.


27. British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1914), 45.

28. See, for example, Province, 5 May 1911; Vancouver World, 6 May 1911, Vancouver Social Register and Club
29. Daily Colonist, 5 February 1899.

30. Province, 8 January 1906.

31. See, for example, Daily Colonist, 24 March 1907.


34. British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1899), xxxiii.

35. See, for examples, WCTU Report (1908): 16-17 and Victoria Daily Times, 9 November 1909. Secular temperance organizations with religious connections such as the Sons of Temperance and the Local Option League later endorsed woman suffrage but did not work on the suffragists' behalf. See E. MacGill, My Mother the Judge, 125 and C. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 90.

36. See, for example, Western Methodist Recorder (September 1914): 19-21.


38. Ibid.


40. Ibid., 22.

42. Vancouver World, 30 April 1910.

43. Ibid., 25 March 1911.


46. B. C. Federationist, 6 February 1914.

47. See, for example, ibid., 2 April 1915.

48. Ibid., 14 April 1916.

49. Ibid., 9 July 1917 and Province 17 September 1917.

50. Ibid.


52. Ibid., 417.

53. British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1897), cix-cxvii and 71.

54. Ibid., (1898), lix and 76.


56. British Columbia, Journals of the Legislative Assembly (1914), 52 and 54.

57. Tacit recognition of the growing strength of the suffragist cause also came inadvertently from some merchants in Victoria and Vancouver. Hoping to elicit a favorable response from their clientele, they placed commercial advertisements based on woman suffrage themes in the daily press. See, for example, Daily Colonist, 21 December 1911; Province, 15 December 1915 and ibid., 7 January 1916.
Conclusion

Women in British Columbia were motivated to seek woman suffrage for two primary reasons. Some suffragists -- a minority prior to 1910 but one which increased in strength thereafter -- demanded equal access to the franchise as the democratic right of all adult citizens. This position derived from English and American traditions of liberal individualism. The majority of the suffragists, however, sought equal political rights not only as a recognition of their political equality with men but as a means to enable them to promote specific social reforms and to secure equal rights for women within family law. This group drew on the liberal tradition insofar as it maintained that the arbitrary standard which automatically accorded women a secondary status was unjust. In their emphasis on laws for the protection of women and children, however, the reformers tacitly conceded that women and children constituted a specific group which was particularly vulnerable to exploitation unless protected by specific legislation. Similarly, they argued that family and community life required protection from such adverse influences as alcohol abuse and political corruption. Consequently they held that the state should intervene
in areas of social behaviour where individual interests had become collective ones. In this sense the British Columbia woman suffrage movement could be characterized as a campaign to preserve and extend the individual liberty of those members of the community who shared the suffragists' world view.

All of the suffragists believed that the problem of the subordinate status of women would be solved by legislative action. The majority of the campaigners failed to realize that the basis of their subordination to men had more fundamental causes than those created by legal restrictions. On the whole they did not regard marriage and the family as obstacles to women's equality. Rather, they argued that both private and public life should represent an equal partnership between the sexes, a situation which, they alleged, would occur automatically once women were accorded equal political rights with men. Indicative of their faith in legislative solutions, several Vancouver suffragists formed the Women's New Era League shortly after the successful passage of the woman suffrage referendum in order to lobby for the revision of laws which they deemed unfair to women and children.

The suffragists attempted to apply similarly shallow solutions to other social problems confronting their society. In conjunction with many other reformers of their era, they advocated a campaign of persuasion backed by
restrictive legislation to force their standards upon the increasingly heterogeneous population of the province. The naiveté of the suffragists' and their fellow reformers' belief in the efficacy of legislation derived from their overly optimistic view of the possibility of human perfection and their "social Christian's confidence in the force of good." This easy acceptance of the legislative remedy was characteristic of the progressive movement in general.

In common with other sections of the Canadian progressive movement, some British Columbia suffragists, while seeking legislative solutions to their problems, renounced the party system in government. They maintained that women could best participate in government as voters and politicians by remaining nonpartisan and judging each issue on its merits. The first women to contest provincial elections in British Columbia demonstrated the strength of their commitment of this ideal. Cecilia Spofford, a thirty year veteran of the province's woman suffrage campaign ran as a candidate of the Women's Independent Political Association in the Victoria riding vacated by the death of Premier Brewster in 1918. Despite her defeat, the group also sponsored women in the 1919 Victoria municipal and school board elections. Spofford enjoyed more success in these elections as she was elected a trustee on the Victoria school board.
the first woman elected to the provincial legislature, initially campaigned as an independent in Vancouver in 1918. Although she subsequently joined the Liberal Party and was re-elected as a Liberal in 1920, she continued to rebel against party discipline. In 1921 she resigned her cabinet position in the John Oliver government on the grounds that

I have been in the unfortunate position of having to assume the responsibility of (sic) acts of the government without being in a position to criticize or advise; I am after all primarily interested in women and children and no matter what government has the power, as long as I can serve the people who I have the honour to represent, then I shall find the happiness that public life gives.

This insistence on remaining outside of the regular political process paradoxically increased the obstacles which prevented women from participating more fully in government. As the progressive movement declined in the 1920s, women subscribing to this point of view were increasingly isolated in political affairs.

The possibility of a more equitable and public role for women as a result of securing equal access to the ballot was also hindered by the tendency of many suffragists to demand greater autonomy for women in politics in order that women might defend more effectively traditional institutions such as the family. By arguing that women must enter the political process solely because many of the former concerns of the family had moved into the
public sphere, these suffragists reinforced the traditional notion that women were 'naturally' concerned only with domestic affairs. As a result of this perspective they failed to recognize that campaigning for the vote or any other measure represented a distinct departure from the behavior traditionally designated appropriate for women. As Jill Conway points out in reference to the American reformers, "the consequence of this failure to question traditional views of femininity meant that the genuine changes of behavior and the impact of women's social criticism were short-lived." During the 1920s British Columbia women, in common with most women in Canada, remained primarily identified with the home.

The British Columbia woman suffrage movement accomplished little change in the political activities of women aside from securing for them the right to vote. The Women's Independent Political Association collapsed as the reform impulse which supported the woman suffrage movement declined. Women candidates remained exceptional in elections for all levels of government. Many of the reforms envisioned by the suffragists failed to materialize. Despite these shortcomings, however, the movement was successful in its immediate goal of securing the vote and with it the recognition of women's equal citizenship. The suffragists were also instrumental in promoting the passage of legislation which granted women new rights in
family law and in the workplace, thereby ameliorating many problems. The limited scope of the suffragists' reform vision prevented them from undertaking more fundamental changes.
Footnotes


2. V. Strong-Boag, Introduction to *In Times Like These* by Nellie McClung (rpt. 1915; Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972).


8. For a discussion of this trend see "... 'And Things Were Going Wrong at Home'," *Atlantis* I (Fall 1975): 38-44.

9. For example, only 16 women had been elected to the British Columbia legislature by March 1968, 51 years after women won that right. See *Vancouver News Herald*, 5 October 1946 and *Sun*, 19 March 1968. No British Columbia city has elected a woman mayor.
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IV. Papers


Appendix I  Biographies of the British Columbia Woman Suffrage Leaders, 1890 - 1917

Bowes, Sarah  organizer for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union; single.


Cameron, Agnes Deans  author, lecturer, educationalist and politician; b. Victoria, British Columbia, 1863, fa. Duncan Cameron, miner and contractor, mo. b. Jessie Anderson; single; d. Victoria, British Columbia, 1912.

School teacher in Victoria, Vancouver and Comox during the 1880s. First woman teacher at Victoria High School, 1890-1894. First woman school principal in British Columbia at South Park School, Victoria, 1894-1905. Resigned over a discipline dispute. Elected to the Victoria School Board 1906. Articles published in the local press, Century, Atlantic Monthly, Saturday Evening Post and other journals, 1893-1912. Travelled extensively in the North West Territories in 1908, published The New North (1909) and The Outer Trail (1910). Lecturer and writer for the federal government in Canada and in Europe to encourage immigration, 1909-1911. Vice-president of the Canadian Women's Press Club 1911. Member of the Victoria Local Council of Women, the Society to Prevent Cruelty to Animals, the British Columbia Historical Society, the Ladies of the Macabees, the Young Women's Christian Association and the British Agricultural Association. Presbyterian.

Clark, Susan Lane  teacher, journalist, politician and housewife; b. San Francisco, California, 1880s, fa. Nathaniel Lane, supervisor, City of San Francisco; hus. James Allan Clark, printer, 1 daughter and 3 sons; d. Vancouver, British Columbia, 1956.

Taught in elementary, secondary and business schools in the United States after completing a university extension course for teachers. Secretary of the first suffrage organization in San Francisco formed by Susan Anthony. Emigrated to Canada in 1907 with her Canadian husband, President of the Mount Pleasant Woman's Suffrage League 1913-1917. Co-editor of the B. C. Federationist suffrage page, 1913-1914. Chairman of the Vancouver City Central Woman's Suffrage Referendum Campaign Committee, 1916. President of the New Era League, 1916-1917 and vice-president 1925. Member of the Mother's Pensions Board, the Vancouver Local Council of Women, the Parent-Teacher Association, the Federated Labour Party, the Socialist Party of Canada and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. During World War I British Columbia representative on the Canada Food Board. Advocate of a minimum wage for women, women probation officers, women factory inspectors, women judges and better conditions for orphans. Elected to the Vancouver Park Board 1938-1939. Socialist.

McBride Papers, 1914-1917 (BCPA); NCWC Report (1915); Vancouver Women's Building Diary 1925 (Vancouver, 1925); B. C. Federationist, 1913-1914; Province, 28 November 1956; Sun., 10 May 1941; Ibid., 28 November 1956.


Active member of Christ Church, Victoria and the Scripture Union. Anglican.

S. Crease, Letters and Diaries 1865-1943 (BCPA).

Davis, Dorothy author and housewife; b. England; hus. Capt. R. P. Bishop, surveyor.


The Champion 1912-1913; Correspondence, City Archives, Victoria, British Columbia; McBride Papers, 1913-1914 (BCPA); NCWC Report (1913).

Grant, Helen Maria politician and housewife; b. Maitland, Nova Scotia, 1853, fa. George Smith; hus. William Grant, captain, trader and sealer, 2 sons; d. Victoria, British Columbia, 1943.


NCWC Report (1895-1917, 1921-1927); Daily Colonist, 24 May 1929; ibid., 10 December 1933; Victoria Daily Times, 27 October 1943.
Grant, Maria Heathfield, politician, journalist, minister and housewife; b. Quebec City, Quebec, 1854, fa. Reverend William Pollard, District Supervisor of the Methodist Church in British Columbia; hus. Gordon Grant, engineer, 5 daughters and 2 sons; d. Victoria, British Columbia, 1937.


Mrs. M. Cunningham, "The History of the Organization [WCTU]." (BCPA, 1925); Forbes, Wild Roses At Their Feet; NCWC Report (1895-1917); Ross Bay Cemetery Records, Victoria, British Columbia; WCTU Report (1885-1917); Daily Colonist, 31 March 1937; ibid., 1 April 1937; Sun, 31 March 1937; Victoria Daily Times 22 February 1919; ibid., 15 December 1908; ibid., 14 December 1909; ibid., 30 March 1937; Western Methodist Recorder (May 1937).


McBride Papers, 1915-1916 (BCPA); Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, Minutes of Regular Meetings, 1912-1920; B. C. Federationist 1913-1920; Pacific Tribune 8 March 1957; Province, 3 October 1960; Sun, 31 March 1937; ibid., 3 October 1960; Vancouver News Herald, 15 October 1941.

Hall, Florence journalist, educationalist and housewife; b. United States; hus. Reverend William Lashley Hall, Methodist Minister.


The Champion 1912-1914; McBride Papers 1914 (BCPA); WCTU Report (1909-1916); Western Methodist Recorder 1914-1915; British Columbian 23 January 1960; Province 19 December 1942.
Hill, Agnes, politician and housewife; b. St. John, New Brunswick, 1840s, fa. Alexander Lawrence; hus. Albert J. Hill, geological surveyor and city engineer New Westminster, British Columbia, 2 daughters and 2 sons.


Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1940; ibid., 1953; L. Jamieson, Correspondence and Personal Documents, 1921-1964 (BCPA); Vancouver Women's Building Diary 1925; Who's Who.

Indentured as a pupil teacher in England at age 14. Travelled to Columbo, Chile in 1866 to teach. Married Fox in Chile, widowed 1876 with 4 young children. Married David Jenkins in 1879, cared for their 16 children. Emigrated to Victoria in 1882. Founding member of the Victoria WCTU in 1883 and was the first provincial corresponding secretary. Vice-president of the provincial WCTU 1887-1888. President of the Victoria WCTU 1900. Charter and life member of the Victoria Local Council of Women, recording secretary 1904-1910, vice-president 1911-1914. Elected to the Victoria School Board 1897-1898 and 1902-1919, sponsored by the Victoria Local Council of Women and the WCTU. Member of the Victoria Women's Canadian Club, the Cymrodian Society, the Metropolitan Methodist Church Ladies Aid, the Home Nursing Society, the Ladies Auxiliary to the Young Men's Christian Association and the Victoria Women's Conservative Club. Conservative. Methodist.

Kemp, Janet housewife; b. 1864; hus. Kemp, 2 sons and 1 daughter; d. Vancouver, British Columbia, 1960.


McBride Papers 1913 (BCPA); NCWC Report (1905-1915); Vancouver Local Council of Women, Minutes, 1910-1917; Province 24 March 1947; ibid., 28 January 1960; Sun 18 March 1947.

McConkey, Mary Elizabeth  housewife; b. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1880s, fa. Sibbald, homesteader, mo. b. Black; hus. William McConkey, teacher and physician, 1 daughter and 1 son.

Honor graduate in Arts, University of Manitoba. Married in 1908 and moved to Vancouver 1908-1909. President of the Pioneer Political Equality League, 1914. Member of the Vancouver Local Council of Women, the Vancouver University Women's Club and the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Liberal. Presbyterian.

British Columbia Pictoral and Biographical (Vancouver, 1914); McBride Papers 1913 (BCPA); Vancouver Social Register and Club Directory 1914 (Vancouver, 1914); Sun, 3 December 1966.

MacGill, Helen Gregory  journalist, judge, author and housewife; b. Hamilton, Ontario, 1864, fa. Silas Gregory, businessman, mo. b. Emma O'Rielly; first hus. Lee Flesher, physician, second hus. James MacGill, lawyer, 2 daughters (MacGill) and 2 sons (Flesher); d. Chicago, United States of America, 1947.

First woman granted a Bac. Mus. (1886 first class), B. A. (1888) and M. A. (1890) by Trinity College, University of Toronto. Contributed articles on the Canadian West, Japan and other topics to the Toronto Globe, Cosmopolitan, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's and other magazines. 1892 moved to San Francisco with her husband Flesher and her mother. Reporter for the San Francisco Morning Call. Co-editor with her mother of the San Francisco suffrage newspaper The Searchlight. Moved to Minnesota and continued suffrage activities there. Reporter for the St. Paul Globe. Widowed 1901. Married J. MacGill in 1902 and moved to Vancouver, British Columbia. Founding member of the Vancouver University Women's Club 1908, the Vancouver Women's Press Club 1909, the Vancouver Creche 1909-1910 and the Vancouver Business and Professional Women's Club 1922. The major promoter of the Vancouver Women's Building Limited 1911 and member of the Board of Directors until the 1930s. Member of the Quebec Press Association 1887,

McBride Papers, 1912-1917 (BCPA); E. MacGill, My Mother the Judge; H. MacGill, "The Story of Vancouver Social Service"; Vancouver Local Council of Women, Minutes 1910-1914; Vancouver Women's Building Diary 1925.

McNaughton, Marie Henerietta politician and housewife; b. Glengarry, Ontario, 1860; hus. Peter McNaughton, 1 daughter and 2 sons; d. Victoria, British Columbia, 1946.


NCWC Report 1905-1914; Vancouver Local Council of Women, Minutes, 1910-1914; ibid, Membership Lists, 1904-1914; Daily Colonist, 9 January 1946; Province, 9 January 1946; Victoria Daily Times, 9 January 1946.


the British Columbia legislature, February 1928. Closely associated with legislation for old age pensions, minimum wages, appointment of women juvenile court judges, maintenance of deserted wives, abolition of illegitimacy, family maintenance, mother's allowance, widow's inheritance, protection of neglected and delinquent children and regulation of night employment. Member of the Dominion Board of Mental Hygiene, Federal Tariff Commission 1925, and the select commission to inquire into the practice of the Workmen's Compensation Act (1926). Tourd Europe on behalf of the federal government to encourage emigration to Canada, 1923. Canadian delegate to the League of Nations April 1929. Author of *Is It Just?* (1912).

Husband president of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada for five years, member of the British Columbia legislature 1898-1900 and 1916-1917 (Minister of Finance), Member of Parliament 1900-1911. Liberal. Methodist.


Spofford, Anne Cecilia teacher, politician and housewife; b. Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1859, fa. Duncan McNaughton; hus. William Spofford, contractor, 1 daughter and at least 1 son; d. Victoria, British Columbia, 1938.

bye-election 1918, defeated. Mother charter member of the New Westminster WCTU, initiator of the Band of Good Hope School and the WCTU Provincial District organizer for the 1880s. Politically non-partisan. Baptist.

C. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada; Cunningham, "The History of the Organization[WCTU]"; J. Gordon, "History of the Women's Canadian Club" (BCPA, 1959); L. MacPherson, "Historical Sketch of the WCTU of B. C." (BCPA, 1953); NCWC Report (1895-1936); C. Spofford, Miscellaneous Papers, 1877, 1879, 1880 (BCPA); Daily Colonist, 18 February 1938; Province, 18 February 1938; Victoria Daily Times, 14 December 1909; ibid., 18 February 1938.

Townley, Alice Ashworth author, politician and housewife; b. Quebec City, Quebec, 1870, fa. William Henry Ashworth, mo. b. Jane Moray; hus. C. R. Townley, realtor; d. Vancouver, British Columbia, 1941


Mrs. J. Macaulay, Women's Canadian Club, Vancouver, B. C., 1909-1930 (City Archives of Vancouver, 1930); C. Parker, Who's Who and Why 1912 (Vancouver, 1912); E. Stoddard, "The Feminine Side of the Western West," Man to Man Magazine VI; Vancouver Local Council of Women, Minutes 1910-1917; V. Vectis, "Women Writers of the West," British Columbia Magazine V II; Province, 6 January 1941; Sun 6 January 1941.