

## Newspaper Articles Related to Women's Rights in Manitoba

This section contains four Newspaper Articles from the period 1914-1916 for teachers' use. Accompanying the articles, are four much shorter articles written at Grade 3-5 levels for students' use based on the main information found in the much longer articles. They are meant to assist students with the following outcome.

*Acquire: 4-KH-033 4-VH-008: Using oral, print, and electronic resources, students research people and events (e.g.voyageurs, Louis Riel, Chief Peguis, Lord Selkirk, Nellie McClung, Thanadelthur, bison hunt...) that shaped Manitoba.*

### #1 Topic: Suffragists Meet with Premier Roblin

Student article #1: Manitobans Meet with Premier Roblin  
Winnipeg January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1914

Actual article #1: Suffrage Advocates Waited on Premier Roblin this Morning  
Winnipeg, (Paper – Brandon Daily Sun) January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1914

### #2: Topic: Mock Parliament at the Walker Theatre

Student Article #2: Large Crowd Sees Mock Parliament

This article is based on an article in the appeared in the January 29, 1914 edition of the Manitoba Free Press

Actual Article #2; Women Score in Drama and Debate" An Article in the Winnipeg Free Press on Mock Parliament *January 29, 1914*

### #3 Topic: Women Ask Premier for Vote Again and He Refuses

Student Article #3: Women Ask Premier for Vote, Winnipeg,  
February 19, 1915

Actual Article: Thinks Time for Woman's Suffrage Has Not Yet Arrived  
Winnipeg, February 19, 1915

### #4 Topic: Women in Manitoba Receive the Vote

Student Article #4: Women in Manitoba Gain the Vote, January 27, 1916

Actual Article "Women Of The Province Are Given The Vote"  
Winnipeg Free Press, January 27, 1916

Second Article: Manitoban Women Given Franchise Jan. 27, 1916  
(Brandon Daily Sun)

## **#1 Manitobans Meet with Premier Roblin**

**Winnipeg January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1914**

*Based on an article from the Brandon Sun*

*January 27, 1914*

**A group of people visited the Premier  
at the Legislature in Manitoba.**

**Nellie McClung and the others gave  
the Premier reasons why women  
should be given the vote.**

**Premier Roblin told the group that he  
was against women having the vote.**

**He said that just a few people wanted  
women to vote. He also said that  
women's place was in the home.**

## **SUFFRAGE ADVOCATES WAITED ON PREMIER ROBLIN THIS MORNING**

**Votes for Women Delegation To-  
day to Provincial House Num-  
bered Several Hundred**

### **ROBLIN GIVES LITTLE HOPE**

Winnipeg, Jan. 27.—Advocates of votes for women, who waited upon Premier Roblin this morning in the legislative chambers, received little encouragement in response to their demands for the granting of equal political rights of the women of Manitoba. The delegation that waited on the premier numbered several hundred men and women representing the following organizations:

**The W.C.T.U., Women's Press Club,**

Trades and Labor Council, Y.W.C.A., Political Equality League, Grain Growers' Association of Manitoba and others.

Dr. Mary Crawford introduced the speakers, which were: Rev. R. W. Martinson, Mrs. Kelly, president of the W.C.T.U.; Ald. Rigg, R. McKenzie, secretary of the Grain Growers' Association, and Mrs. Nellie McClung.

All emphasized the fact that the women of the province should have votes in order to better conditions. In reply, Sir Rodmond stated without reserve that he was opposed to extending the franchise to women. He maintained that as yet but a small portion of the citizens of the province were making the demand, and advised them, if they were in earnest, to continue their work. The franchise, he told them, wherever it had been tried, had proved to be a retrograde step. Women's sphere was rightly in the home, said Sir Rodmond, and there they have a much greater influence than on street corners or at the polls.

# 1 The Brandon Daily Sun -- January 27, 1914

## **#2 Large Crowd Sees Mock Parliament**

*This article is based on an article in the appeared in the  
January 29, 1914 of the Manitoba Free Press*

**Women in the Political Equality League put on a play in the Walker Theatre on January 29, 1914.**

**In the play, the women such as Nellie McClung were in power. Men came to them asking for rights. One of the rights was the right to vote.**

**Mrs. McClung acting a Premier made a long speech. She said that maybe someday men would be able to vote but not now. She told them to be of good cheer.**

**The play was very funny and very popular. The women put it on in Winnipeg and then in Brandon.**

**It showed many people how silly it was that one group could vote and not the other.**

## #2 “Women Score in Drama and Debate” An Article in the Winnipeg Free Press on Mock Parliament

### Transcription:

## Women Score in Drama and Debate

### Clever Satire on Provincial Events in Mock Parliament – Bright Sketch Presented.

A sold-out house at the Walker theatre last night testified to the keen interest taken in the activities of the Political Equality league. More than that, however—it testified to the general opinion that the talented women who are its members were due to provide a splendid evening’s entertainment. To say that everyone was delighted is to put it mildly. The program comprised a play, some music and a parliamentary debate, each and all very enjoyable.

The Assiniboine quartette opened the proceedings with some suffragette songs, and, then the curtain rose for “How They Won the Vote.” Originally the locale was London, but the names of streets and so forth were cleverly changed to Winnipeg. It only took about half an hour of determine action on the part of his women relatives to convert Horace Cole, a clerk, to rabid suffragist sentiments. By a concerted movement among all the women the thing was simple enough. They simply struck work. Each woman left her employment and went to live with her nearest male relative until such time as the state should recognize her rights. When Horace arrives home he finds the maid has left, and his wife is conjuring with the steak for supper. The worst was yet to come, however. Before he was able to appreciate the force of the first blow, his sister-in-law turned up, and announced her intention of staying. Molly, his niece, also arrives, also Maudie Spark, his first cousin, and Miss Wilkins, his aunt, and Madame Christine, a very distant relative. All were firm in the intention of staying until man foreswore that plous (Pious?) fraud about woman’s place in the world. Under the circumstances, it was not surprising to find Horace ready to enlist among the “Votes for Women” band, nor even to see him mounted on a chair full of enthusiasm for anything which would once again ensure him the peaceful enjoyment of his home. Miss Betty Cubitt made a dainty wife and Frank Keall a very forceful husband. Mrs. Lipsett-Skinner played the part of the sister-in-law with her usual verve and good nature, and Dorothy was delightful as Maudie Sparks. Miss Phylis-Cameron was amusing in a double role, first as a very woe-begone slavey and then as the niece. Other parts were genially played by Misses Eileen Fallon, M.E. Corwin, Ethel Hayes and John Logan. Staged by Mrs. C.P. Walker, there was no danger of anything but efficient “business.” During the ensuing intermission H.E. Davey gave a couple of violin solos which were enthusiastically applauded.

The piece de resistance was, of course the mock parliament. The legislative hall was fittingly plain and impressive in prevailing gray, and the lady members appeared

charming in black cloaks which failed entirely to conceal some of the beautiful gowns, and did not attempt to hide most effective coiffeurs. The speaker Mrs. Francis Graham, was a gorgeous exception in splendid purple and ermine, Miss Altma Graham made a charming clerk and Misses Ruth Walker and Florence Walker were natty little pages. Before the house was called to order, Mrs. McClung asked the audience to remember that the conditions for the next hour or so were to be reversed. The women enjoyed the suffrage and allied political rights: the men were entirely without them.

### **Facetious Papers**

Petitions were first in order, and some facetious papers were read. One by the society for the prevention of ugliness, prayed that men wearing scarlett neckties, 6-inch collars, and squeaky shoes, be not allowed to enter any public building whatsoever. Mrs. W.C. Perry, leader of the opposition, then read a bill to counter dower rights on married men. In a clear, sympathetic voice she made a strong appeal for poor downtrodden man; but the government was adamant. The attorney-general, Miss Kenneth Haig, with a composure and eloquence which might be envied by many a really statesman, and with the necessary heaven of humor, said she was keen on men. Possibly she kept them on a pedestal. At any rate, she shelved them. They were often so unconsciously funny. She knew why Mrs. John Smith left home. Her husband hadn't made the home attractive. She moved that the bill be withdrawn; and withdrawn it was.

Mrs. Lipsett-Skinner, exuberant to the point of overflowing with pleasant satire, talked down a bill for the introduction of labor-saving devices for manual workers. If men were allowed any leisure, the first thing you know they would be educating themselves, and then they might even be coming around asking for the vote.

Miss Francis Beynon, on the opposition side, asked when the perambulating university site was to become stationary. Dr. Mary Crawford, brilliantly effective, as minister of health and education, said that only five sites had hitherto been used and a letter from the real estate association was in her hands requesting that the site continue to perambulate until every real estate interest had benefitted. About this time Dorothy Milne turns up, carrying a pretty dog, and demands instant consideration, much to everybody's amusement.

### **Truancy Officers**

Asked if she intended to introduced compulsory education in the agricultural college, the minister of agriculture, (Mrs. Skinner), said no, but she had something just as good. She proposed to change the label of the bottle and introduce the best system of truancy officers this country ever saw. The truancy officers would be appointed by the government and responsible only to the government. They would patrol the back-lanes and the road allowances of the province, and she continued, "I venture to promise my friends on the opposition benches that my truancy officers will capture every man in the province of Manitoba who is over 20 years of age and put them in the magnificent agricultural college in St. Vital for a course of two years in economics.

Mrs. A.V. Thomas, a speaker of well-known earnestness and power, seconded for the second time a bill to confer upon fathers the rights of equal guardianship with mothers. Men with their broad shoulders and big feet and hands, had an equal interest in their children with their wives.

### **Delegation of Men**

The climax of interest was reached when a delegation of men, headed by R.C. Skinner, arrived at the legislature to petition for suffrage privileges for their sex. Their slogan was, "We have the brains. Why not let us vote?" Their case was strongly urged by the spokesman, but effectively squelched by the premier (Mrs. McClung). She said, in part: "We like delegations. We have seen a great many, and we pride ourselves on treating these delegations with the greatest courtesy and candor. We assure you that we are just as pleased to see you today as we shall be to see you at any future day. We wish to compliment this delegation on their splendid gentlemanly appearance. If without exercising the vote, such splendid specimens of manhood can be produced, such a system of affairs should not be interfered with. Any system of civilization that can produce such splendid specimens of manhood as Mr. Skinner is good enough for me, and if it is good enough for me it is good enough for anybody."

### **Plenty of Satire**

The premier compared the gentlemanly conduct of the members of the delegation to the rabid courses of suffragists overseas. If all men were as intelligent as the leader of the delegation she would have no hesitation in according them the suffrage. But such was unfortunately not the case. Mr. Skinner with the customary hot headedness of the reformer, had not stopped to think of that. Down to the south, where men had the vote it had been shown that seven-eighths of police court offenders were men and only one-third of church members were women. "Another trouble is that if men start to vote they will vote too much. Politics unsettles men and unsettled men mean unsettled bills – broken furniture, broken vows, and – divorce....it has been charged that politics is corrupt. I don't know how this report got out, but I do most emphatically deny it. Politics are not corrupt. I have been in politics for a long time, and I never knew of any corruption or division of public money among the members of the house, and you may be sure if anything of that kind had been going on I should have been on it. Ladies and gentlemen, what I mean is that I would have known about it. Every time we spend a dollar on the province, we first look at it from every side to see if we could make better use of it for ourselves. We always try to get the greatest number of voters for the smallest sum of money. Our government has always been most generous to its friends with government jobs. Every man who has helped us into power has had reason to test out gratitude. At the present time we pay 14 women for every governmental job, and we are willing to hire the fifteenth if she comes along and shows that she will really work. Perhaps the time will come when men and women will legislate together. I don't know. In the meantime I asked your delegation to be of good cheer. We will try to the best of our ability to conduct the affairs of the province, and prove worthy standard-bearers of the good old flag of our grand old party, which has often gone down to disgrace but never to defeat."



At the end of her splendid address Mrs. McClung was presented with bouquet of red roses. It is reported that two members of the Manitoba opposition had deserted the civic dinner and secreted themselves among the audience. Furthermore, that the beautiful flowers were an earnest of their appreciation of the "premier's" eloquence.

*Description:* This article appeared in the January 29, 1914 of the Manitoba Free Press (now Winnipeg Free Press) profiling the mock parliament. The article is called, "Women Score in Drama and Debate."

*Credit:* Winnipeg Free Press, January 29, 1914; reproduced with permission.

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### **#3 Women Ask Premier for Vote**

**Winnipeg, February 19, 1915**

*Based on an article in The Brandon Sun Feb. 19, 1915*

**Many women in Manitoba want to vote in provincial elections.**

**Nellie McClung and a group of women met with Premier Roblin. They asked him to allow women to vote.**

**Premier Roblin listened to them. Then, he said that the time had not yet come for women in Manitoba to vote.**



## **THINKS TIME FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE HAS NOT ARRIVED**

**Sir Rodmond Roblin Expressed  
This Opinion to Deputation of  
Women in Winnipeg.**

### **MUST EDUCATE PEOPLE**

**Steps Along this Line Must Be  
Taken Before Parliament Will  
Move in the Matter.**

Winnipeg, Feb. 19.— A deputation of women from the Political Equality League, now in convention here, waited upon Sir Rodmond Roblin this morning and asked for an extension of the suffrage to women. The premier, in reply, intimated the time for this had not yet arrived and stated that the people must be schooled and educated in advance of parliamentary action in the matter.

#3 The Brandon Daily Sun -- February 19, 1915

## **#4 Women in Manitoba Gain the Vote**

**January 27, 1916**

*Based on an article*

*In the Winnipeg Free Press, January 28, 1916*

**The Members of the Manitoba Legislature passed a Bill giving the vote to women on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1916. Manitoba is the first Province in Canada to give the vote to women.**

**Almost all the members of the Legislature voted in favour of the Bill. Many of the men made speeches in favour of the Bill. Only one man said he did not believe it was the right thing to do.**

**A group of women from the Political Equality League were at the Legislature watching when the Bill passed.**

**The excited visitors sitting in the Legislature thought it was a great thing to happen.**

**When the Bill was passed, the visitors stood and sang, "O Canada."**

#### #4 "Women Of The Province Are Given The Vote" - A News Article in the Winnipeg Free Press

### Transcription:

## Women of the Province are Given the Vote

### Suffrage Bill Gets Third Reading Amid Scene of Unparalleled Enthusiasm

### Men and Women in Galleries Historic Occasion Singing "O Canada"

### Acting Premier Makes Important Statement Regarding Election of Females to the Legislature

Amid scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm the bill to amend the Manitoba Election act so as to give the suffrage to women of the province on the same terms as men was passed at the legislature yesterday afternoon. When the third reading had been duly and formally given, the men who were also wedged into the galleries and the members on the floor of the house stood up while the fab soprano of hundreds of female throats who sang "O Canada."

After the singing of this anthem the ladies with much fervor, took to the rollicking strain of "They're Jolly Good Fellows." In complement to the members of the house, who modestly sat down. But as soon as the last note had been sounded the members sprang to their feet and not to be outdone in courtesy sang in return "They're (meaning the ladies) Jolly Good Fellows." The vocal harmony emitted by the members of the house was a revelator, and if anything, they had an advantage over the women in the (?) of verve and melody.

### Scene Unparalleled.

No previous scene in the history of the house presents a parallel to that of yesterday. Hon. Valentine Winkler, minister of agriculture, who is the oldest sitting member of the house says that never before was there anything like it. For the first time in the history of the house women were invited to a place on the floor of the chamber during a regular sitting. These women so honored were members of the Political Equality League who were largely instrumental in the more than successful carrying out of the conditions prescribed by the government in the way of securing signatures from the women of the province to a petition praying for the suffrage. They were Dr. Mary Crawford, Miss Frances Beynon, Mrs. F.J. Dixon, Mrs. A.W. Pattee, Mrs. Ireland, Mrs. Luther Holling, and Mrs. James Munroe.

The routine of the third reading was conducted with much dispatch. The waiting women was not subjected to any tedious delay by long procedure. Everything went with a snap (?).

### **Smart Work.**

In the absence of Premier Norris, the minister of public works, Hon. T.H. Johnson, as acting premier moved that the house go into committee of the whole to consider the bill. Speaker Baird promptly asked Col. Clingan, the member for Virden, to take the chair. The latter, clad in his khaki uniform, strode to the table, and in a few crisp sentences asked for the passage by committee of the few clauses of the short yet potent measure. The preamble and the title were passed, and before barely five minutes had elapsed the member for Virden presented the report to the speaker.

"The bill is reported without amendment, Mr. Speaker. God save the king," said Col. Clingan.

The stage of the historic occasion was greeted with cheers on the floor of the house and in the galleries.

On rising to move the third reading, Hon. T. H. Johnson was greeted with applause. He delivered an earnest and eloquent speech, declaring that the ordinary rule of the house to pass third readings without discussion did not seem appropriate on such a momentous occasion. He dealt (?) on the stupendous importance of Manitoba's action in being the first Canadian province to enfranchise women and predicted that other provinces would eventually follow and that at last the principle would be recognized by federal legislation. The minister declared that Jan. 27, 1916 would remain a milestone in the life of the province.

### **Enlightened Legislation.**

Following in the speech of the minister, several speeches were made by members of the house. These were mostly of a happy nature, and in all but one the granting of the suffrage to women was hailed as enlightened legislation bound to react beneficially on the province. The exception was the speech Joseph Hamelin, Conservative member of Ste. Rose, who courageously stood up and declared that while he wished the women well in their sphere he had his doubts of the wisdom of the legislation. Mr. Hamelin declared that holding such views he would feel himself a coward if he did not express them,

*Description:* This article appeared in the January 28, 1916 issue of the Manitoba Free Press (now Winnipeg Free Press) profiling the mock parliament. The article is called "Women Of The Province Are Given The Vote."

*Credit: Winnipeg Free Press, January 28, 1916; reproduced with permission.*

# Manitoba Women Given Franchise

**Struggle Which Has Lasted for  
Quarter of a Century Ends in  
Women's Victory**

## MANITOBA IN THE LEAD

Winnipeg, Jan. 28—The hard fought battle for woman's suffrage which has been waged for exactly a quarter of a century in Manitoba, was won Thursday afternoon when the members of the legislature gave the Suffrage bill its third reading. Hundreds of jubilant women thronged the gallery of the House, for they realized that history was being made not only for Manitoba, but for all Canada.

### Manitoba in the Lead

Manitoba is the first province to grant the franchise to women.

There are many folks, many of them prominently identified with the movement for the enfranchisement of women, who think that the organized agitation in Manitoba only dates back to April, 1912, when the Political Equality League of Manitoba was organized by a few Winnipeg Newspaper men and women and their friends. There is no reason to deny the excellent results accomplished in less than four years by the league, but it is only fair to lay some of the laurels at the feet of the pioneers who laid the foundation stones of 'votes for women.'

The victors of Thursday and those who will reap the benefits for all time to come are prone to forget what they owe to the courageous women who dared to offend public opinion by proclaiming the doctrine of equal rights.

How history repeats itself! Twenty-five years ago, when Hon. Thomas Greenway was in power, a petition signed by hundreds of male voters in the province was presented to the premier and his associates. The late Dr. Amelia Yeomans, who was at the time practicing medicine in Winnipeg, had organized a woman's suffrage society.

Brandon Daily Sun 1916