

# THE PIONEERS

## Marie Gérin-Lajoie

(1867–1945)

“Certain groups considered us so scandalous that, were it not for the kindness of the bishop and certain members of the clergy, society would have shunned us.” - 1908

## Idola Saint-Jean

(1880–1945)

“Given that we were subject to the same obligations as men, it was only right that we should enjoy the same privileges. “No taxation without representation” is a slogan based on justice.” - 1939

## Thérèse Casgrain

(1896–1981)

“Our real work has just begun. The right to vote is, in and of itself, a means and not an end.” - 1939



## Marie-Claire Kirkland

(1924- )

“These reforms would, in keeping with our traditional way of seeing things, seek to restore married women to their intended role, namely, their husbands’ true collaborators, both spiritually and economically, and full-fledged partners in the family, the ultimate social unit.” - 1962

Photography: BAC, BANQ, Nationale Assembly of Québec.



# LADIES, TO THE POLLS!

# 75<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
OF WOMEN'S RIGHT  
TO VOTE AND RUN  
FOR ELECTION

To learn more,  
visit the virtual exhibition:

[assnat.qc.ca/exposvirtuelles](http://assnat.qc.ca/exposvirtuelles)

### Hours:

From the first Tuesday in September to June 23 - except statutory holidays: Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

From June 24 to Labour Day (first Monday in September) - including statutory holidays: Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Toll-free: 1-866-337-8837

General information and reservations: 418-643-7239

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April 2015

ASSEMBLÉE  
NATIONALE  
DU QUÉBEC

# EXHIBITION

OPENS ON APRIL 22, 2015  
PARLIAMENT BUILDING

En collaboration avec





It has been 75 years since the women of Québec won the right to vote and run for election. The National Assembly of Québec has decided to mark this anniversary with the exhibition

*Ladies, to the polls!*

The exhibition recounts women's long road to obtaining political rights, using newly released archival documents, such as ballots, nomination papers and election posters.

Among other things, you will be introduced to the pioneers of the women's suffrage movement, the suffragettes, who, by asserting their rights, paved the way for the women of today and helped shape Québec's political history.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the contribution of the Cercle des femmes parlementaires (circle of women Members of the National Assembly) and its Chair, Maryse Gaudreault, who were instrumental in the success of this commemoration and who enthusiastically continue the work of these women pioneers.

**Enjoy your visit!**

**Jacques Chagnon**  
President of the National Assembly

# LADIES, TO THE POLLS!

In April 1940, **Marie Gérin-Lajoie**, **Idola Saint-Jean** and **Thérèse Casgrain** saw the

Parliament of Québec grant Québec women the right to vote and run for election.

The beginnings of this women's movement can be traced back to the 19th century, when, elsewhere in the world, other pioneers were rallying to obtain equal rights for women. In Great Britain, the Women's Social and Political Union was created in 1903 to demand that women be granted the right to vote. At the time, the organization's activists, or suffragettes, used particularly flamboyant methods of protest.

## Women's long road to obtaining political rights

In **1918**, the women of Canada won the right to vote in federal elections.

In the **1920s** and **1930s**, the suffragette movement took root in Québec. Year after year, women's delegations made their way to Parliament to witness the tabling of draft legislation introducing women's suffrage. The elected Members rejected such bills on 13 separate occasions.

The women of Québec had to wait until **1940** for Adélard Godbout to pass a bill granting them the right to vote and run for election. In **1944**, for the first time, Québec women voted in a general election, although there were no women candidates in the race

**Three** women stood as candidates in the **1952** general election, seven in **1956** and none in **1960**. None were elected.

Finally, on **December 14, 1961**, **Marie-Claire Kirkland** was elected in a by-election held in the riding of Jacques-Cartier, becoming the first woman to sit in the Legislative Assembly of Québec.

Since then, the number of women Members of the National Assembly has increased slowly but surely.

