



Girl Guides  
of Canada  
Guides  
du Canada



Famous 5  
Foundation

## FAMOUS FIVE CHALLENGE SPARKS



### PROGRAM COMMITTEE

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Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada and the Famous 5 Foundation formed a partnership to support a national tour of a bronze maquette (smaller version of a monument) of Famous 5 'Persons' Case statues in 2000. The monuments are located in Calgary and Ottawa.

**Objective:** To learn the names of the Famous 5 and something about each woman.

**Challenge Questions** (answers follow). Complete the following challenge questions:

1. What was the 'Persons' Case? Name the five women involved in the 'Persons' Case?
2. Where did these women live at the time of the 'Persons' Case?
3. What types of occupations did these women hold at the time of the 'Persons' Case?
4. Where did the term/phrase, Famous 5, originate?

**Activities** Complete at least one of the following:

1. Hat Contest - Make a hat to depict one of the Famous 5 and be able to identify the name of the person they are representing.
2. Tea Party - Make life-size cutouts or stuffed dolls of the Famous 5. Have the girls attend a tea party with the Famous 5 and introduce self or a friend to each of the Famous 5.

### Answers

1. The 'Persons' Case refers to a challenge to the laws of Canada, contained in the British North America (BNA) Act, in which women were not considered 'persons' under the law and, therefore, could not hold "appointed" positions such as being appointed to the Senate of Canada. However, women did have the right, at that time, to vote in federal elections and to vote in some provincial elections and some municipal elections. For example, Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby and Louise McKinney.
2. They all lived in Alberta at the time of the 'Persons' Case.
3. See profile on each woman following the answer sheet.

4. The media coined the term, Famous 5, that was given to the five women who took part in the 'Persons' Case as it was a landmark decision in Canadian Law. In addition, these women were leaders of, or involved in, many of the reforms to laws affecting women and children and in the formation of many of the institutions, which we benefit from today. They truly helped to shape Canada for all of us.

### ***Information on each of the women***

#### **Emily Murphy, 1868-1933**

- Born in Cookstown, Ontario
- Died in Edmonton, Alberta, at age 65
- First woman magistrate in the British Empire
- Writer and journalist; wrote many books about pioneer life in the West; pen name was Janey Canuck
- Wrote books on drug addiction, mental illness, venereal disease and birth control
- Political and legal reformer
- Suffragist
- President, Canadian Press Club, 1913-1920
- Instrumental in the creation of the Dower Act of 1910 - this Act protected a woman's rights to at least one-third of her husband's property
- Member of the National Council of Women

#### **Nellie McClung, 1873-1951**

- Born in Grey County, Ontario
- Died in British Columbia, at age 78
- Suffragist
- Helped to make Manitoba the first province in Canada to give women the right to vote in 1916
- Only female member of the Dominion War Council in 1918
- Political and legal reformer
- Author of 15 books
- Member of WCTU – Women's Christian Temperance Union (to try and prohibit alcohol which was seen as a destroyer of the family)
- Fought for Prohibition (banning the sale of all alcohol)
- Liberal politician, 1921-1926
- Delegate to the League of Nations in 1938
- Founded Winnipeg Women's Rights Reform
- Also campaigned for Dower Rights for Women
- First woman member of the Board of Governors of the CBC
- Member of the Canadian Press Club
- Famous quote "Never retract, never explain, never apologize; get the thing done and let them howl"

### **Henrietta Muir Edwards, 1849-1931**

- Born in Montreal, Quebec
- Died in Fort Macleod, Alberta, at age 82
- Women's Rights Activist
- Political and Legal Reformer
- Founded the Working Girls' Association which provided extra vocational training and support for single, working girls - this became the forerunner of the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association)
- Along with Lady Aberdeen helped to found the VON (Victorian Order of Nurses)
- In 1893 she, along with Lady Aberdeen, helped to found the National Council of Women - the National Council of Women worked (and still works) to improve the conditions for women by reforming laws (examples include the laws granting divorce on equal ground, the introduction of a Mother's allowance, laws concerning equal parental rights to their children after the marriage has ended in divorce, and welfare reform for poor working girls)
- Journalist (she published the first women's magazine)
- Legal Expert
- Artist

### **Irene Parlby, 1868-1965 (pronounced Irene)**

- Born in England
- Died in Edmonton, Alberta, at age 97
- Red Cross worker
- Served on the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta
- First female to receive an honorary degree from the University of Alberta
- Advocate for rural women in Alberta
- Politician, represented Lacombe, Alberta for 14 years
- First female appointed as a cabinet minister in Alberta
- Second female appointed as a cabinet minister in the Commonwealth
- Founded the auxiliary for women of the Farm Workers Union and this evolved into the United Farm Women organization in 1916; she was the first president
- Delegate to the League of Nations in 1930

### **Louise McKinney, 1868-1931**

- Born in Frankville, Ontario
- Died in Edmonton, Alberta, at age 63
- One of the first two women elected to a Legislature in the British Empire
- First woman to sit as a MLA in the Commonwealth in 1917 (which was the first election where women could vote or run for political office)
- Worked towards the formation of the Dower Act
- Women's Rights Activist
- Legislator
- Organizer of the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union)

***Bibliography*** (used to develop Challenge)

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Additional bibliography is listed on the website.

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