



From the Archives...

Empire Club Foundation Newsletter

March 2024

Honouring International Women's Day

As the Empire Club of Canada celebrates International Women's Day on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, with their event ***Getting It Done: The Women Who Have Thrived Against All Odds***, The Empire Club Foundation is excited to showcase just a few of the remarkable women who have addressed the Empire Club of Canada over the years.

Although women were not formally invited to join the Empire Club of Canada until 1972, women were invited to speak at events from the beginning. All these speeches are available in our digital library.

Don't miss out! Register for this year's event ***Getting It Done: The Women Who Have Thrived Against All Odds*** [here](#). This year's event features women who have careers in some of the most important sectors driving Canada's growth and future economic prosperity: Mining, Real Estate and Construction. They are also industries that consistently struggle to attract diverse talent at all levels, particularly women.

As Canada faces a labour supply shortage, now more than ever, we need competent women leaders to be empowered to drive Canada's growth. We are seeing positive changes and that's no accident. Meet the women who are rewriting the script in these traditionally male-dominated core sectors.

This conversation will be moderated by **Dr. Deborah Rosati**, Founder & CEO, of Women Get On Board Inc. Come and hear the inspiring stories of **Arlene Dedier**, Principal & Executive Vice President, Canadian Practice Leader, Project Management Services, Avison Young; **Julie Di Lorenzo**, President, Mirabella Development Corporation and **Chantal Gosselin**, Director, Canadian Mineral Industry Education Foundation, who have overcome challenges and shattered barriers.

Should you be unable to attend this event on March 6, a recording of the event will be available on the [Empire Club of Canada](#) website after that date as are all the past events.

History of Women at the Empire Club of Canada

By Gordon McIvor

It is almost impossible to state how much Canada and the world have changed since the Empire Club opened its doors 120 years ago. In 1903, there was very little diversity and even less inclusion in Canada and everywhere else in the world for that matter, and many of society's grand institutions were as rigid as they were unavailable to most people. This was in no way an Empire Club issue, as the Club was a fairly accurate mirror of Canada's values and norms at the time.

Fortunately, the Empire Club kept pace with and sometimes outpaced the changes introduced over the years into Canadian society, and this was never truer than the role of women at the Club. It was inevitable as early as the First World War that women needed a larger voice, and they had "proven" their worth as partners as early as 1918 helping the War effort in countless ways both at home and even on the front lines as nurses and medical aids. At the end of the War, the Club invited the very famous leader of the Women's Party of Great Britain, Ms. Emmeline Pankhurst, to make a case for a larger role for women in society. It was a gentle argument by today's standards but made a lot of men sit up and listen. Here is an extract from that memorable speech:



<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp03440/em>

"A few years ago, when women were fighting for their enfranchisement, one of the arguments against them was that women should not have power of citizenship because they could not understand Imperial questions, and their coming into citizenship would be very dangerous for the integrity of the Empire. Is it not strange that, now that that question is settled, I should be here today as the guest of an Empire Club? Whether women are competent to deal with the vital questions of Empire as citizens, remains to be seen; we are still young in citizenship; but the women of the Empire have shown that whether their brains can deal with those complicated questions or not, their hearts and their hands have been ready to take up the burden of Empire and to sustain it equally with the men. "

Although women sometimes spoke at the Empire Club of Canada, it took another 54 years for the Empire Club of Canada and the other Bay Street Clubs to allow women into their ranks. And it was not a big event marked with fanfare, but rather a slow process. The Empire Club of Canada had a membership-based system, capped at 500 people, and, back then, for new members to be considered someone had to resign. As

a result, women appeared gradually at the Club, going on waiting lists to become members along with their male counterparts. It was in 1972, under the presidency of Hal Jackman, that the very first women appeared in the weekly events at the Royal York Hotel. It is believed that Madam Justice Marie Corbett, originally from Newfoundland, became the first female member of the Club after she moved to Toronto to become a justice on the Ontario Court.



Little is written about the introduction of women at the Club, possibly due to the slow but steady rate of growth of women members related to the membership-based system referenced above. Margaret Atwood made a rather comical reference to this new category of member when she addressed the Club in 1973 while Joseph H. Potts was President of the Club...

"(...) Mr. Potts proudly informed me that The Empire Club had just let women in last year. And this reminded me of when I used to be a student at Harvard. There was a kind of somber hall where they all used to eat dinner and before they let women in there if a woman ever showed her nose during the luncheon proceeding, they would all throw buns at her. So, I thought you know that there might be a danger that some of these bun-throwing tendencies had lingered on at The Empire Club. But then I thought about that, and I thought well if they're going to throw anything I would rather that it be buns rather than plates or forks."

MADAM PRESIDENT

Two Once All-Male Clubs Open Up

This year, Catherine Charlton (right) and Mary Alice Stuart (below) of Toronto become, respectively, president of the Empire Club and president of the Canadian Club, the first women to take over the reins in these venerable lunch clubs By Pat Ohlendorf

Dear to the hearts of the Establishment are two venerable institutions, vestiges of Canada's colonial past but still vital since their turn-of-the-century beginnings. Toronto's Empire Club and Canadian Club—the granddaddies of North American business-people's luncheon clubs—have long attracted speakers as well as members whose names enliven *Who? Who?* and the social columns. For an annual membership fee of only \$25 and a cost of \$12 for each luncheon, members of the Canadian Club can, every Monday at noon—after the procession of head-table guests, after grace and a toast to the Queen, and after a bland lunch over pleasant conversation—settle in for 30 minutes of edification by a leader in government, business, education or the arts in a spacious dining room at the Royal York Hotel. And every Thursday (same time, same place) Empire Club members can enjoy all of that and sing O Canada as well.

That two such similar organizations exist in Toronto—with about 4,500 members between them—testifies, in this age of the quick media fix, to the enduring tradition of live speakers and to the steadfast core of Loyalist and patriotic sentiment in Toronto's business and professional community. At both clubs,

Eleven years later, Catherine Charleton became the first female President of the Empire Club of Canada in 1984-1985, and since then there have been several remarkable women who have taken the reigns and helped to grow the Empire Club into the diverse and inclusive institution it is today. Because of this ongoing and continuous evolution, the Empire Club is stronger today than it has ever been in its history. Its Board of Directors, its speakers and its audiences reflect the reality of Toronto and Canada as one of the most open, tolerant, diverse, and inclusive societies in the world.

We should not forget that the move toward openness began with introducing women to

the Club, and it was the first chapter in the modern history of our organization. It began a series of events and trends that moved the Club, and indeed the country, away from the male-dominated, British-centric origins of yesteryear into the extremely diverse and inclusive organization that mirrors the City and the Country that gave birth to Canada's most historic speaker's podium.

Effie Bantham and the Barnardo's Homes

– Well-meaning at the time...

By Silas Le Blanc

In November of 1922, Effie Bantham spoke to The Empire Club of Canada regarding the Barnardo Homes, highlighting how Canada was a land of opportunity for poor British children. Bantham, who was known to have dedicated her life to the welfare of poor children in England spoke extremely highly of Thomas John Barnardo, a philanthropist back in England who provided housing for orphaned and underprivileged children. She was introduced: *Miss Batham, whose work on behalf of the Barnardo Homes is so favourably known, has devoted her life and her wealth to the welfare of poor children in England. She believes that for them Dominions are the lands of opportunity and that every effort should be made to bring them over and train them into self-supporting, useful British subjects.*

Barnardo's Homes took in nearly 60,000 children during his lifetime, many of whom were sent to Canada, known as the British Home Children, to provide labour. According to Bantham, children were never refused from these homes. "I know of no other such homes in the wide world from whose door no single destitute child has ever been refused admittance for nearly sixty years," she said.



Barnardo children arriving from Britain in St. John's, New Brunswick, c. 1920. Courtesy Library and Archives, license expired.

Bantham also highlighted the importance of religion in these homes and saw the children they took in as carrying out the will of God. "It was my greatest pleasure to be able to testify that it was the dream and prayer and longing, as well as the firm conviction of Dr. Barnardo that these homes should become schools of the prophets and that from them should go out hundreds of boys and girls to live for God and do work for Him," she said. She also emphasized the success of this program saying "God has been wonderfully good to Canada in regard to the children sent out here from the Barnardo Homes; only one and a half percent of them do not do well, and that is plainly not the fault always of the children, but of the Canadian citizens who have sheltered them."

The Barnardo Homes were not without controversy, however. During his lifetime, Dr. Barnardo went to court 88 times for charges related to his practices. He was often accused of kidnapping children from their parents, a charge to which he admitted, referring to the practice as philanthropic abduction.' He was also accused of using falsified photos in adverts for fundraising, staging images to show the children in an over-dramatized state of neglect before they were rescued. This legacy carried on far beyond his death, as in 2000 the Barnardo charity was accused of digitally altering images of children in their advertising campaigns. It was also alleged that children were abused in his homes and that he used fundraising money to enrich himself.

Despite Bantham's insistence that most of the children who came to Canada fared well, many of them have since come forward to claim that they suffered abuse and were misled only to be used as cheap labour. 30,000 children were sent from Barnardo's to Canada, most of whom according to CBC were treated more as workers than as family members. Many of them were whipped and beaten, and some of the girls were sexually abused. 75 of these children were found in two unmarked graves in Etobicoke's Park Lawn Cemetery. In 2017, a monument was put up in the cemetery honouring the British Home Children. It is estimated that around 4 million Canadians are their descendants.

According to Bantham however, more than 80% of the children who came from the Bernardo homes went on to own their own farm. She emphasized the contributions that many of these children ended up making to Canada, highlighting those who became ministers, clergymen, and lay workers. "I cannot tell you how joyful I am that I can go into the homes in this country and find boys and girls not only in wonderful positions, mentally, physically and materially, but leaving a mark and a spiritual stamp on your vast country," Bantham said.

Bantham's account provides a unique insight into the legacy of the Barnardo Homes and the British Home Children, an aspect of history that few Canadians are aware of but has had a major impact on its society. While we are still searching for the most ideal practices to care for neglected children, Bantham's speech provides a chance to look at history and create more compassionate and effective frameworks going forward.



The Hon. Iva Campbell Fallis

1939 - Changing Rights of Women

By Mackenzie MacDonald

The Honourable Senator Iva Campbell Fallis was an active participant in Canadian politics since girlhood. Born on June 23, 1883, in Castleton, Ontario, she worked as a homemaker and teacher before becoming the first President of the Peterborough, Ontario, Conservative Women's Association in 1923.

In 1927, she was distinguished as the first woman speaker on the agenda of the National Conventions. She later served as the Vice President of the Canadian Conservative Party Association and was a key campaign team member who helped elect Richard Bedford Bennett to the office of Prime Minister of Canada in 1930.

Her keen appreciation of women's place in the government of Canada contributed to her call to the Upper House of the Parliament of Canada in 1935. She was only the second woman to be thus honoured, the first being Cairine Reay Mackay Wilson, who was appointed by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie in 1930. Fallis had taken an active part in encouraging and securing the loyal support of the women of Canada in the national welfare. Fallis is the National Chairman of the Committee for the Voluntary Registration of Women for service to their country in times of emergency.

On November 9, 1939, Fallis addressed the Empire Club of Canada, discussing "The Part We Play." Throughout her speech, she highlights the traditional role of women, the history of women's emerging rights, and the role of women in politics. She also emphasizes the change of attitude on the part of the general public during the last few decades concerning the role of women, confessing, "In the realm of government,

whether it be municipal, provincial or federal, we are not yet looked upon as a necessity.”

Known for her notable stance on women’s rights, she believed that to seek change, both men and women had the responsibility to join the government. During Fallis’ time in the Senate, it was rare for this position to be occupied by a woman. However, Fallis never thought of herself as discriminated against. She believed that “[women] stand on [their] merits” and that she had “never seen a particle of discrimination.”

Fallis believed that it was up to both men and women to come together for the combined good of the country. She also pointed out that women were needed in public affairs and that it was their duty as women and citizens to take a greater interest in politics. Fallis maintained that it was especially “important that women realize they are not living in the same world their grandmothers lived in. Their vote is needed both in the international and national field.”

Canada has faced a new era in the development of its young nationhood. Generations of women have come together to fight barriers and stigmas. They have created changes in the most democratic ways: by participating in meetings, petitions, lobbying, public speaking, and nonviolent resistance. They have worked very deliberately to create a better world and succeeded hugely.

Women of the Canadian population, continue today to be underrepresented in political and professional leadership positions. They face numerous barriers and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as sexism, racism, colonialism, ableism, and homophobia. Increasing women's representation in leadership can be a crucial component to advancing gender justice in Canada. Fallis brought all that to the podium in 1939!



Hon. Iva Campbell Fallis, 1949.
Library and Archives, copyright

According to Fallis, the essential thing for Canadian development and the building of a greater nationhood is to do our share toward seeing the foundations upon which that larger nationhood is built on our traditions and British heritage. This starts with the power of women, as they have played crucial roles in war times, as in peace times.

With more women in political roles, there is greater opportunity for advancing gender equity and participation in the decision-making and policy-making processes that impact our future. These positions will influence the next generation of girls and young women who will contribute to the sustainable change and growth of the nation.

Ellen Fairclough

1957 - Canadian Women as Citizens

by Mackenzie MacDonald

The Honourable Ellen Louks Fairclough, born on January 28, 1905, in Hamilton, Ontario, was involved in numerous community organizations and grew to become a respected political figure. She was a chartered accountant by profession until she became secretary of state and Canada's first woman to join the federal cabinet as minister in John Diefenbaker's 1957 Conservative government. Here, Mrs. Fairclough was instrumental as head of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in pushing for fewer racist immigration policies. She also pushed for granting "Status Indians" the right to vote.

Widely respected and admired, Mrs. Fairclough served as President of the Zonta Club of Hamilton and District Governor of Zonta International. She worked as Dominion Secretary of the United Empire Loyalists Association and as an executive officer in several capacities to both the Provincial and National Chapters of the I.O.D.E., a national women's charitable organization.

During her service in the Commons as a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, she was Chairman of the Labour Committee of the official opposition caucus and was the official voice for the opposition on all labour matters.



Hon. Ellen Fairclough, 1957.
Library and Archives, copyright
expired.

Mrs. Fairclough held several portfolios and was a Canadian delegate to the United Nations. In October 1950, she served as a member of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations as an Adviser, and in July 1955, she was a delegate to the Conference of Parliamentarians from NATO countries, which was held in Paris.

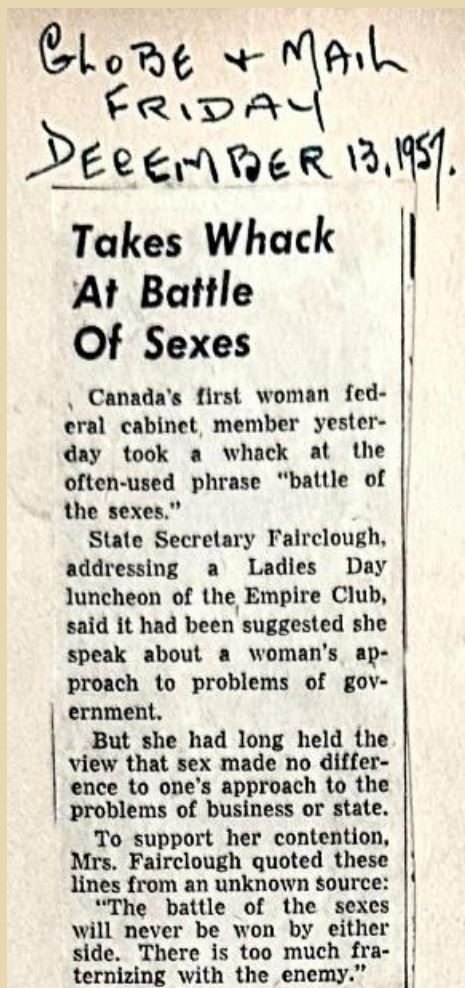
On December 12, 1957, Mrs. Fairclough addressed the Empire Club of Canada to discuss a woman's role in Canadian society and governance while sharing her personal experience.

"I have long held the view that there is no difference in one's approach to the problems of business or state because of one's sex," said Mrs. Fairclough.

She begins with the days of the early settlers, paying tribute to the first women who arrived on the continent. Mrs. Fairclough painted a picture for the audience, explaining how women came to Canada in many capacities. Some came to join their husbands;

some came as domestics; some came as poor relations to act as unpaid domestics; and some came to be the wives of men they had never seen. These women worked side by side with their men, clearing the land, planting the crops and even, on occasion, shouldered the musket to defend their families and their lives against hostile forces.

Women held great responsibility, feeding their families; they doctored and nursed the sick and the aged. They spun, wove, and clothed their families with their own hands. Using their ingenuity to retrieve the necessary articles needed by their households, were also the expectations of women. This included the gathering of candles and soap, garments and furs, and the medicines needed to treat the various diseases.



From ECF archives.

Things have never been easy for women; however, change and progress can be seen in the new world. Domestic work was the main means of earning a livelihood open to women. A mere handful of women were clerks in stores, and there were openings for women in the needle trades. In 1873, the University of Mount Allison College at Sackville, New Brunswick, became the first university in Canada to open its doors to women, signifying its willingness to accept women.

Mrs. Fairclough detailed several events that brought women to realize their citizen responsibilities. The First World War brought women out of their homes to work in the industry and commerce industries, taking the places of the men who had joined the armed forces. The Second World War brought them out in greater numbers, and there became evident reluctance to return to domestic duties. Women had then gained access to working full-time or part-time in the world of business, politics, and community affairs.

There has been a revolutionary change in the status of women, especially in the part they play in the labour force. Women are prominent in many professions which were once dominated by men. In

science and engineering, women biologists and chemists are particularly numerous, but there are also women employed as geologists, physicists, electrical engineers, and aeronautical engineers on the rise. Today, women continue to significantly contribute to Canadian life and economic development.

EXPLORE PAST PANELS CELEBRATING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN TODAY'S CANADA

[2015 Women Who Lead Panel: featuring Andrea Stairs, Ilse Treurnicht and Shelley Martin In Conversation With Amber Kanwar](#) September 22, 2015

[Women Who Lead Panel: Teresa Resch, Caroline Riseboro, Phillip Grosch in conversation with Nicole Foster](#) March 7, 2018

[Annual Women Who Lead Panel: Jake Stika, Jessica Johnson, Minister Mary Ng, Farah Qasemi, Vicki Saunders](#) March 5, 2019

[Women Who Build Barriers and Opportunities for Women in the Building Economy Panel](#) June 13, 2019

[The Collective Wisdom of High-Performing Women Panel: Leadership Lessons from the Judy Project](#) October 8, 2019

[International Women's Day 2020 Panel: An Equal World is an Enabled World](#)
March 9, 2020

[Covid-19 and Canadian Women: Mental Health, Money and Societal Shifts](#) July 29, 2020

[The Impact of the Pandemic on Women's Advancement during Recovery](#)
September 29, 2020

[Women Who Lead: Celebrating International Women's Day: Rania Llewellyn, Jennifer Reynolds](#) March 8, 2021

[Women Who Lead: Acquisitions, Transformations and IPOs, the Women Behind Canada's Biggest Moves](#) March 8, 2022

[Remembrance Day Reflection: Canadian Women in War](#) November 10, 2022

[Women Who Lead: Celebrating Our Progress Toward Gender Parity on Boards and Charting the Path Forward](#) March 9, 2023 June

[Indigenous Women in Business](#) June 12, 2023

MARGARET ATWOOD: ON BEING “A THING” AND CANADIAN IDENTITY IN 1973

By Silas LeBlanc

As arguably the most famous Canadian author of all time Margaret Atwood has spent a great deal of time talking about the characteristics of Canadian Literature, and the place it occupies in national identity. Her 1972 book *Survival* served as an introduction to Canadian Literature and surveyed several works to provide an understanding of the characteristics that grounded them in something distinctly Canadian. She posited that works of Canadian literature focused on the theme of survival, with the central character often being portrayed as a victim. Many of her fictional works also explore themes of Canadian national identity.

Portrait 1970 by Harold Town,
Bibliothèque et Archives Canada / No
d'acquisition R5740-20 / e010933037



In 1973, Atwood spoke to the Empire Club of Canada and expanded on this exploration of Canadian Literature and national identity. “The assumptions are that the literature that a society creates and the society itself are not separable. That is they don't exist in water-tight compartments—there is some kind of relationship between them and that writers, especially novelists, are influenced to an extent by this relationship,” she said. “I see no reason why Canada should be any exception to this general literary rule. If this weren't true in Canada we would, indeed, be unique among nations and that would be our unique Canadian identity.”

She spoke about the relationship between the reception to her book and its themes, and what it means for her to now be famous in Canada — or as she calls it, “a thing.” This was prompted by her American editor asking her if she was considered a big deal in Canada, asking “are you a thing?” She confirmed that yes, she was probably a thing, and explained that being a thing was different than being distinguished. To Atwood, being distinguished meant always being asked for your opinion on a topic, but never being listened to. The role is simply to be distinguished, and what you actually say doesn't matter. To be a thing however is to be considered an icon, something that people both worship and target. “So when you're distinguished they ask but don't bother listening to the answers,” she said. “And when you're a thing people make up what you are supposed to think without asking you about it and then they either praise or attack you for what they have in fact made up. This can be aggravating.”

Her words were almost prophetic for what was to come in the digital age, a time where almost anyone can have access to a large audience through their phones. Although the “influencer” did not exist at the time Atwood gave this speech, her analysis on what makes someone “a thing” strongly mirrors the internet celebrities of today. Aided by the decrease of social interaction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms gave rise to an increasing number of parasocial relationships, where a media user develops a sense of closeness or friendship with a media persona. As a result, the media persona becomes a reflection of the user’s own expectations, and the actual thoughts and opinions of the persona become unimportant. Simultaneously, the voices of those who are “distinguished” have become drowned out due to the rise in misinformation, populism, and political extremism. While the voices of academics and experts are always being sourced in news media, and referenced as an authority on any given subject, their actual opinions rarely persuade those who have already made up their minds.



April 5, 1973
MARGARET ATWOOD
Writer in Residence
University of Toronto
“Getting Out from Under”
Margaret Atwood speaking at
Empire Club, 1973. ECF
archives.

Atwood has since distanced herself from the idea of herself as a celebrity. In a 2015 interview with *The Guardian*, she said “being a famous writer is different to being a famous rock star. With a writer, people bond to the books. Nobody wants my shoelaces.” She has also since commented on the relationship between her fame and her national identity. “I’m Canadian, so we take a dubious view of fame,” she said in an AARP interview. “We think it’s in slightly bad taste. If I were American, it would be different. Americans love fame. I just soft-pedal it here because it would be considered in slightly bad taste to go around acting as if you’re famous.”

Despite her shifting views, Atwood’s words remain relevant today. Her analysis of Canadian identity in literature can be applied to several modern texts, and her views on fame are more true now than they were at the time. She remains an important voice in Canada’s national conversation, and her words from early in her career are an important resource in learning about its society and culture.

EMPIRE CLUB OF CANADA DOESN’T SHY AWAY FROM ABORTION IN 1975: BETTE STEPHENSON

By Silas Leblanc

Access to abortion and contraceptive care has long been a divisive issue in Canada, and prior to 1969 inducing abortion at any stage was a crime under the Criminal Code. The maximum penalty for a doctor assisting someone in an abortion was life imprisonment. The 1969 amendment to the Criminal Code allowed doctors to perform

an abortion in accredited hospitals, but only if it was deemed to threaten the life or health of the pregnant person and was approved by a committee of doctors. In all other cases, it was still illegal.



Bette Stephenson, c.
1975 Legislative
Assembly of Ontario

This was the context in which Bette Stephenson gave her 1975 speech to the Empire Club of Canada on, among other things, the topic of abortion and contraceptive care. Stephenson was the first female board member of the Ontario Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Association and was the first woman to be president of either. However, she did not see this as a noteworthy milestone, simply stating “I know who I am — a woman, a wife and a mother. I am also a doctor, a general practitioner, or family physician if you prefer, who happens to be the president of my profession's national association, and as far as my profession is concerned, the fact that I am a female is totally irrelevant.”

Stephenson documented her efforts on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association to lobby for safe and accessible contraceptive care. She called for major changes to the 1969 amendment which reflected rapidly shifting public attitudes at the time regarding abortion. Stephenson believed that a more holistic and comprehensive approach should be taken to prevent unwanted pregnancies from happening in the first place. “As with many medical, social and socio-medical problems, the key to the door of solutions is prevention; in this case, prevention of unwanted pregnancies by responsible family planning,” she said. “It is patently obvious that family planning-conception control programmes in Canada are far from adequate. It is my opinion that the guilt for the impotence of such programmes as we have must be shared by many, including the medical profession of this country.”

Stephenson saw that outright banning abortions would not reduce the demand for them, as she claims over 43,000 abortions were carried out in 1973. Instead, she saw ignorance among the general public as the problem, with responsibility shared by the home, school, and church to provide more education on contraceptive control. By 1975 the combined oral contraceptive pill was known to be 100% safe and effective, yet lack of awareness and inadequate methods of distribution made it difficult to administer to everyone who needed it.



January 9, 1975
Dr. BETTE STEPHENSON
President, Canadian Medical Association
"The Doctor's Dilemma — Circa 1973"

Speaking at Empire Club.

ECF Archives

It wasn't until 13 years after Stephenson gave her speech that the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the abortion provision in the Criminal Code in the R v Morgentaler decision of 1988, making abortion legal at any stage of pregnancy. Henry Morgentaler, the physician who challenged the constitutionality of the federal abortion law, spoke to The Empire Club of Canada about the continuing abortion debate, questioning why it was such a controversial topic. "The abortion debate has made a positive contribution to the changing of public perceptions about the rights of women to self-determination, about what is responsible or irresponsible and what is moral or immoral," he said.



Morgentaler 1975 Gazette / Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Morgentaler gave an account of the history of the struggle for abortion rights in Canada, comparing it to the U.S. landmark Roe v. Wade case, and sharing his experience of opening an abortion clinic in Montreal in 1969. His clinics were often raided by police, but he saw it as his moral duty to continue to provide abortion care to everyone who came to him. However, despite his eventual legal victory, Morgentaler knew that Canada still had a long way to go when it came to providing care.

"While it seemed the judgement could not be clearer, and the struggle for dignity and autonomy for women was given a considerable boost, the reality remains that access to abortion in this land is still far from satisfactory. It is indeed a major problem in Canada at this point in many parts of the country. Thousands of women have to travel long distances to reach the limited number of institutions that provide abortion services."

In 1990, then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney introduced Bill C-43, which would sentence doctors to two years in jail for providing abortions where the health of the patient was not at risk. Morgentaler vehemently disagreed with this, highlighting how much safer the 1988 decision made seeking an abortion in Canada. "Let us put the abortion controversy into some kind of perspective. Abortions have moved out of the back alleys and into the best of care that medical science can offer. This is a reflection of a caring society. It is time that laws for a mature country be enacted that are rational and respect the lifestyles and individual conscience of all citizens in a pluralistic society," he said.

Both Stephenson and Morgentaler were crucial figures in the struggle for safe and accessible abortion services in Canada, and their speeches to the Empire Club of Canada provide a window into the many roadblocks they faced in the process.

Just Some of the Notable Women Who Spoke at the Empire Club

Indira Gandhi	June Callwood	Sheila Copps	Beverley McLachlin
Audrey Hepburn	Rosalie Abella	Adrienne Clarkson	Kathleen Wynne
Flora McDonald	Margaret Thatcher	Roberta Bondar	Cecelia Franca
Jeanne Suave	Rose Kennedy	Catherine Graham	Elizabeth, Queen Mother

Lisa Laflamme and Sally Armstrong 2018 - Fake News

By Mackenzie Macdonald

Women remain significantly underrepresented as subjects and sources in the Canadian media, a traditionally male-dominated industry. It's important for Canada to fully represent both men and women in the media, as young girls cannot aspire to be the women they cannot see.

Canadian journalists like Lisa LaFlamme and Sally Armstrong are prime examples of women who have helped pave the way for a feminine presence on television and social media platforms.

Lisa LaFlamme is recognized as being at the forefront of journalism. LaFlamme spent a decade on the road as the National Affairs Correspondent for CTV National News, covering everything from wars and elections to natural disasters in some of the world's most dangerous locations. From 2011 to 2022, she led the country's number-one newscast as the Chief News Anchor and Senior Editor of CTV National News. She is well-known for landing exclusive interviews with leading global figures and delivering live coverage of the inauguration of Donald Trump from Washington, D.C.

Sally Armstrong is a human rights activist, a journalist, and an award-winning author. She has covered numerous stories concerning women and girls in zones of conflict all over the world. From Bosnia and Somalia to the Middle East and Rwanda and to the Congo and Afghanistan and Iraq, her eye-witness reports have earned her awards, including the Gold Award from the National Magazine Awards Foundation and the Author's Award from the Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Letters. She also received numerous Amnesty International Canada Media Awards throughout the years in recognition of Canadian-based journalists' best human rights reporting.



On [January 25, 2018](#), Barbara Jesson, the former President of the Empire Club of Canada, sat down with LaFlamme and Armstrong, two of the most credible journalists working in the Canadian media landscape, to discuss the topic of “Fake News.”

Given the general public’s concern and quick accusations of Fake News, LaFlamme and Armstrong discuss the anatomy of a breaking news story and how to ensure whether or not the news presented to the public is false and inaccurate.

“The public does not realize how much work goes into these stories, so that we are absolutely rock solid,” says LaFlamme. “That is what makes us not fake news. That is the difference right there.”

LaFlamme defines Fake News as the deliberate effort to mislead people. The misinformation that is spread is a rumour designed to discredit a company, person, or thing to smear a reputation with a snippet of information. This has become a societal issue, as citizens have trouble trusting or believing what other people have to say, hence a damaging contributor to our democracy.



“A lot of what we are looking at today has to do with public awareness, public education, informing ourselves, so that we have better decisions and opinions to share. Fake news seems to be a pretty easy thing,” says Armstrong.

The goal is for reporters to find the truth. According to LaFlamme, “Algorithms are dictating what people read and what they watch.” Fake News’s emergence has changed how people view the world, which has developed increasingly complex and difficult ways to navigate their lives with certainty. This has caused people to hate each other based on falsehoods, lies and innuendos.

Because Fake News has become a prevalent issue, LaFlamme and Armstrong believe the public needs to take into consideration the source that is spreading information. It has now become the public’s responsibility to do their own research by clicking on the site and finding out who owns that site. Additionally, they need to consider what the point of such a site is, who is trying to convince whom of something and why. Checking

the source is the best way to ensure whether the news being presented on social media platforms is true or not.

Examining this hugely important societal development calls into question the harm Fake News produces on citizens, specifically the confusion and misunderstanding it creates regarding important social and political issues.

It is imperative to consider the perspectives of LaFlamme and Armstrong, both trailblazers for women in Canadian news broadcasting. They have covered some of our biggest stories and created public trust in the news media. As leaders in their field, they have been transparent, set standards, and provided markers along the media consumption pathway so that viewers are confident in the news being shared.



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