

Battles won since WWI

Dear editor:

2014 marks 100 years since the beginning of the 1st World War. In retrospect of this historical event, we can reflect on battles which have been won, both during and because of the great war. To put this into a more specific perspective; at the time the 1st World War began, women in Canada were not permitted to vote and weren't yet recognized as persons. Women were not yet able to control their own reproductive bodies; just a few decades before WW1 women were expected to not speak of reproduction. It may seem like distant history to some, but it is neither distant and not entirely history.

The desperation of war lead to desperate measures, resulting in the roles and experiences of women to change as women were needed to replace men in the work force. This sampling of independence, options and self value inspired even those whom didn't already see themselves as able and deserving to take up the fight for their right to vote, which came in 1919, and to be recognized as persons in 1929.

Women battled to have a say and a place in personal, social and legal issues both at home and nationally. The First World War ignited women on many fronts upon the infectious realization they had made a contribution to the front.

A significant change for women in the past 100 years came with the access to contraception. 2014 is 100 years since the term Birth control was coined, and the term is main stream today (www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com). Prior to its availability women were immensely susceptible to the probabilities which obviously effected men differently, hence the women's role was predictably established. Simply and politely put, married women prior to birth control did not have the freedom of choice women do now and unmarried women were shunned. With the ability to control reproduction a women achieved the opportunity to enter the work force, to gain social and economic independence and therefore develop a confidence and a voice to add to their vote.

With the topic of women's rights at times feeling tired, it is difficult to imagine what immense battles have been won 100 years since a major historical event, what has really happened is a one hundred year battle to get where we are today, and the war is not yet won. Nationally, women are still battling negative gender beliefs and the negative consequences of these. One area that is currently news worthy is pay equity. The provincial government recently has responded with a small increase to minimum wage, since women are 60% of the minimum wage earners and many of these women are single parents.

?Although it has improved, at this rate, women still have to work an additional 13 years to earn the same pay as men earn by age 65? (Mary Cornish, www.thestar.com!news/canada/2013/04/09/antariogenderpavgapinspirescalltoequalpavdav.print.html). There are laws to promote pay equity, but yet there is a pay gap against women of 72%. Poverty is a leading cause of health problems for women, leaves children vulnerable and compounds the impact of domestic violence on women and children. These few social concerns illustrate that although the last 100 years have many battles won for women the war still rages on.

People In Transition Inc., ?My Sister's Place?