

## ‘Famous Five’s’ Nellie McClung top, but not majority choice as female face to appear on new Canadian bill

*Strong regional preferences dominate ‘long list’ of women proposed for new banknotes*

**May 19 2016** – Come 2018, Canadians will be seeing a new face in their wallets, and the latest public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute indicates Canadian preference tilts towards Nellie McClung’s.

The ‘Famous Five’ activist is the most popular choice to become the first Canadian woman to be featured on a banknote, though she’s far from a majority pick.

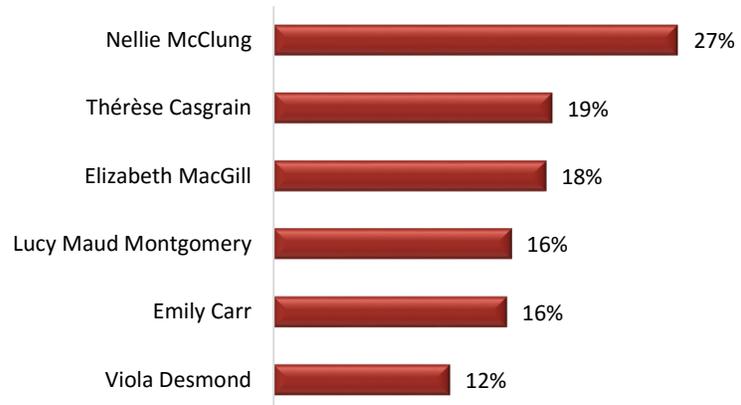
Indeed, Canadians are divided – particularly along regional lines – as to which woman should be featured on the new bill, even as they voice strong support for the idea of putting more female figures on the country’s currency.

Four-in-five Canadians (80%) agree that at least one woman, other than Queen Elizabeth, should appear on the front of a Canadian banknote.

### Key Findings

- McClung is the pick of 27 per cent of Canadians, followed by Thérèse Casgrain (19%) – the first woman to lead a Canadian political party – and Elizabeth MacGill (18%) – the world’s first female aircraft designer – among others
- Regionally, Quebeckers and British Columbians are most enthusiastic about a woman’s placement on new bill, 86 per cent and 83 per cent agree with this venture respectively

### Which one or two would you most like to see on a Canadian banknote? (Choices receiving 10% or more shown)



### METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from May 10 - 13 among a representative randomized sample of 1517 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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- Women are more likely than men to view the issue of representation of women on currency as important (46% rate it a 4 or a 5 on a 5-point scale, compared to 37% of men who do the same)

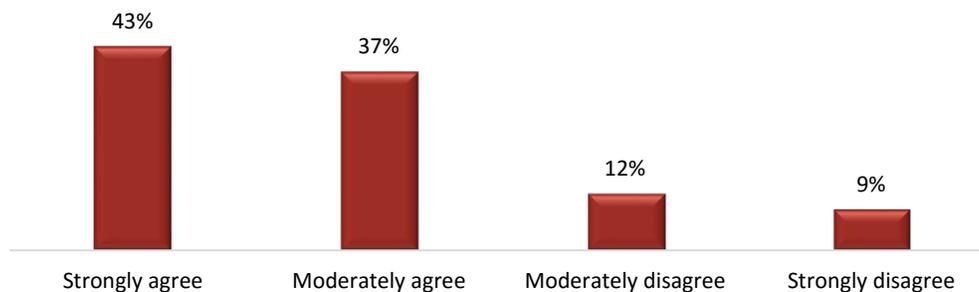
## A woman featured on Canadian currency, finally

The topic of women on money vaulted into the Canadian consciousness [on International Women's Day](#), when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the Bank of Canada would be convening a committee to name a female Canadian icon to grace the next series of banknotes in 2018. Canadians were asked to send in their nominations.

And while there's plenty of debate ongoing over who should appear on the new bill, Canadians are in agreement in their view that it is indeed a worthwhile undertaking.

Asked whether or not a woman should appear on the front of a Canadian banknote, four-in-five respondents (80%) say they agree. Moreover, a higher number of Canadians choose "strongly agree" (43%) in response to this question than any of the other options provided:

**Would you say you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
There should be at least one woman (other than the Queen)  
featured on the front of a Canadian banknote**



Interestingly, there are no significant differences on this question between genders – men are just three per cent less likely to agree with this statement than women, 78 per cent versus 81 per cent. The same trend appears to hold for age ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

There is, however, a notable regional gap in enthusiasm on this issue. This is found particularly in Quebec where 55 per cent say they strongly agree that a woman should be on a bank note – eleven per cent higher than in the next closest province, Manitoba.

Overall, only 14 per cent of Quebeckers disagree, less than half as many as disagree in the province most opposed to this statement – Saskatchewan (31%).

British Columbia residents show similarly high total support – here 83 per cent say they agree that now is the time to put a woman on the nation's money.

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**Would you say you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
There should be at least one woman (other than the Queen)  
featured on the front of a Canadian banknote:  
(those saying "agree" shown)**



### Who are Canadians' top choices?

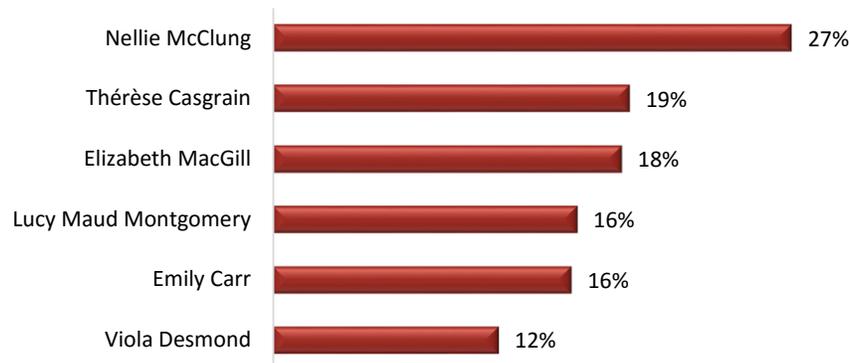
The Bank of Canada solicited nominations throughout March and early April for who should be featured on the forthcoming banknote. There were four criteria a nominee must satisfy to be considered. She must:

- be Canadian, "by birth or naturalization,"
- have demonstrated outstanding leadership, achievement or distinction in any field that has benefited the people of Canada, or in the service of Canada,
- not be fictional,
- and be historical – she must have been deceased for at least 25 years.

Ultimately, 461 women were nominated before being trimmed to a long-list of twelve. An [independent advisory committee](#) evaluated the choices based on the principles that they should "have broken or overcome barriers, be inspirational, have made a significant change and have left a lasting legacy".

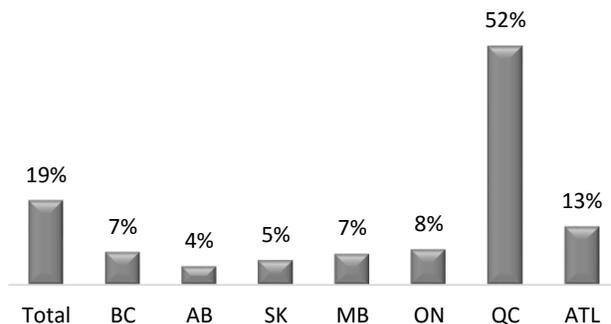
Canadians show interest in many of the women presented as options, but vote **Nellie McClung** – member of the 'Famous Five' who won recognition of women's legal status as 'persons,' who could by extension be appointed to the Senate – as their top choice. Slightly more than one-in-four (27%) choose her as one of the two women they would most like to see on the new bill.

**Which one or two would you most like to see on a Canadian banknote?  
(Showing those who received more than 10 per cent)**



Notably, McClung is chosen by one-in-three (32%) female respondents, more than 10 per cent higher than the next choice among women. ([See comprehensive tables](#))

**Support for Thérèse Casgrain by province**



**Thérèse Casgrain**, a suffrage campaigner in Quebec, a Senator, and the first woman to head a Canadian political party is the second choice for Canadians. Naturally, she receives strong support in Quebec. Here half of respondents (52%) say she should grace the bill.

Canadians over 55 also show high levels of support for Casgrain – one-in-four (25%) choose her, compared to 15 per cent among younger generations.

Canadians' next choice is **Elsie MacGill**. Born in Vancouver, MacGill was the first female aircraft designer in the world and first Canadian woman to earn an engineering degree. She worked as an aeronautical engineer in the Second World War. Slightly fewer than one-in-five (18%) would like to see her as Canada's new currency icon.

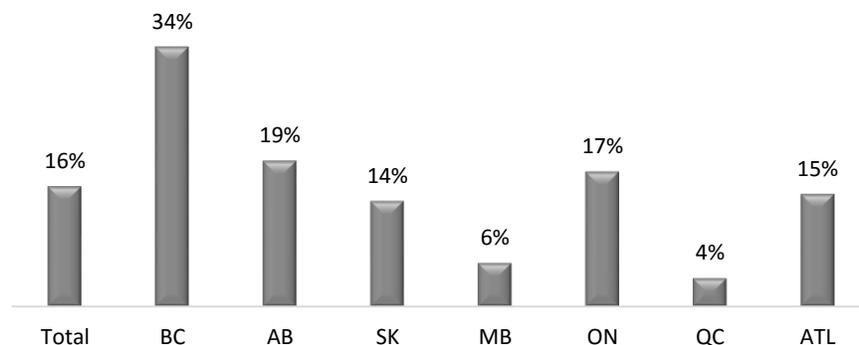
Author of the acclaimed 'Anne of Green Gables' series, **Lucy Maud Montgomery**, and renowned artist **Emily Carr** are both chosen by 16 per cent of Canadians, though their support comes from opposite coastlines.

Montgomery is beloved across the country but particularly in Atlantic Canada. Green Gables farm, the setting of her iconic series in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island, was named a national heritage site in

1985. Unsurprisingly, she receives the most support from this region – 21 per cent of respondents in Atlantic Canada select her.

Carr, whose art was inspired by both Indigenous culture in B.C., and the vast beauty of Canada's western landscapes, is chosen by one-in-three (34%) British Columbians:

#### Support for Emily Carr by province:



**Viola Desmond** is the final woman who is chosen by more than one-in-ten Canadians. She famously challenged racial segregation when she chose to sit in the 'whites-only' section of a Nova Scotia theatre. This incident helped to ignite the modern civil rights movement in Canada. She is the top choice among Atlantic Canadians at 37 per cent, and receives support from 12 per cent overall.

There are six additional choices, all of whom receive less than 10 per cent support from Canadians.

- **E. Pauline Johnson**, known in Mohawk as Tekahionwake, a poet whose work celebrated Aboriginal heritage, receives eight per cent
- **Gabrielle Roy**, a French Canadian author who won the Governor General's award for fiction three times, receives six per cent (20 per cent in Quebec)
- **Pitseolak Ashoona**, an Inuit graphic artist known for depictions of traditional Inuit life, receives four per cent
- **Idola Saint-Jean**, the first woman from Quebec to run for federal office, receives four per cent
- **Lotta Hitschmanova**, founder of one of Canada's first international development agencies (USC Canada), receives four per cent
- **Fanny (Bobbie) Rosenfeld**, Olympic track and field athlete and sports columnist for the Globe and Mail, receives two per cent

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## The scarcity of female figures on currency

The prevalence of prominent female figures on money globally is much lower than their male counterparts. Canada is, however, one of the 19 nations that present Queen Elizabeth on their respective banknotes.



Princess Elizabeth, 1935

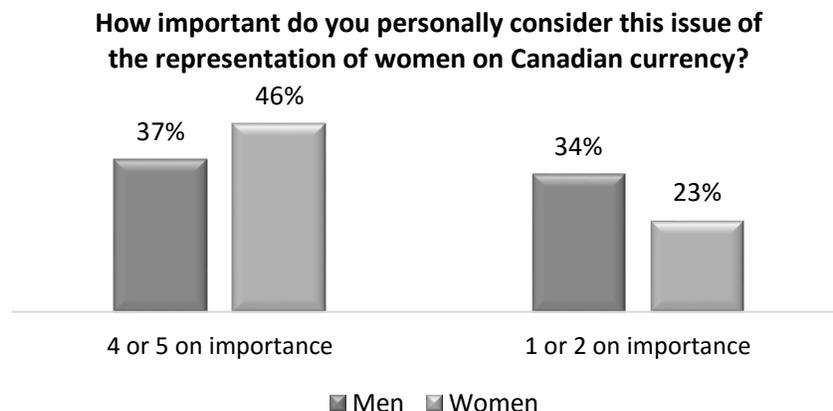
In fact, the first series of notes released by the Bank of Canada in 1935 featured three women, all of whom were members of the royal family. Queen Mary graced the two-dollar bill, her daughter Princess Mary the \$10, and then-Princess Elizabeth, just eight years old, was featured on the \$20 – a place she still holds today.

The current discussion points to the lack of a *Canadian* female icon on our nation's currency. For comparison globally, 45 women other than Queen Elizabeth appear on paper currencies, from [Frida Kahlo](#) in Mexico, to [Elizabeth Fry](#) in the United Kingdom. Australia and Sweden have paved the way on this file - both nations feature women on four of their paper denominations.

Although these are undoubtedly seen as successes for gender equality, bear in mind one figure - of the roughly 1,300 official bank notes in circulation globally, women appear on approximately nine per cent of them.

Canadians appear to be relatively enthusiastic about the need to move toward more equal gender representation on their money. When asked to rank this issue of women on money on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is very important and 1 is not important at all, more than two-in-five (42%) choose one of the top two numbers. Another one-third (30%) choose a 3.

The significance of this issue is perceived differently by gender. Men are just as likely to choose a 4 or a 5 (37%) as they are a 1 or a 2 (34%), whereas women are twice as likely to view this issue in the top tier (46%) of importance versus the bottom (23%):



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Public Interest Research

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*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

**For detailed results by region, age, gender, education, and other demographics, [click here](#)**

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