

which is well known to all of us. I therefore hope that the Minister of Justice will consider this matter. I am sure that this House—I speak for myself at any rate with the greatest assurance—has perfect confidence in that hon. gentleman's legal knowledge, and his position entitles him to be heard in any deliberative assembly. A gentleman occupying his position would, of course, be heard conclusively on a matter of this kind. I make these remarks, I repeat, not in opposition to this Bill: because I do not know anything of the circumstances; it may be one which on every principle of justice and morality should be entertained and passed by this House. I do not oppose it on its merits. I am merely opposed to the irregularity which we are allowing to creep into our proceedings in a matter of the most important character—an irregularity which in the course of time will be cited as a precedent.

HON. SIR ALEX. CAMPBELL—Undoubtedly the point to which the hon. gentleman from Richmond has called attention is of very great importance, and I thoroughly acquiesce in the necessity of adhering to the rules laid down with reference to these divorce bills. The affidavit to which my hon. friend has alluded is one upon which, I think, perjury could not be assigned, for the reasons he has mentioned, and for that stated by my hon. friend behind me, but I think there is a difference between the rule of the House which relates to the evidence which the House is to receive as satisfactory in regard to the proof of service of the petition, and the evidence which the House is to receive with reference to the service of the Bill. The rule which my hon. friend has alluded to says that the proof of service of the petition, or attempts made to effect it, shall be made to the satisfaction of the Senate; it does not say that proof shall be adduced at the bar. On the other hand, the rule which relates to the service of the bill says that that evidence is to be on oath and is to be adduced at the bar of the House. So there is a distinction of the evidence which is to be adduced with reference to the service of the petition, and the character of the evidence which is to be adduced with reference to

the service of the bill and notice. In the one case it is not in so many words required to be given at the bar of the House, and in the other it is in so many words required to be so given. Therefore there is a distinction between what the Senate may consider satisfactory with reference to these two services. With regard to the service of the petition I think it has been the practice of the House to receive other proof than the evidence of a witness at the bar, although I admit that it is open to the serious objection which the hon. gentleman from Richmond takes, that it is doubtful whether perjury could be assigned. But the practice has gone further than my hon. friend from Lunenburg has on this occasion. After an affidavit is read, it is usual to make a motion that it be considered satisfactory by the House. That would testify that, at the moment, the Senate is satisfied that the petition had been served upon the respondent, or that attempts had been made to effect such service. Whether the House, in view of the fact—which I am afraid is the case—that perjury could not be assigned,—whether in future the Senate would require the evidence of the service of the notice to be made on oath at the bar, is a point which, perhaps, we had better consider further before absolutely deciding upon it. The House will see that the service of the notice inaugurates the proceedings, and it may very well be, that if an affidavit, properly drawn and not open to the objection urged against this particular affidavit, were presented, coupled with the admission made by the respondent in the telegram which has been read to the House, that she has been served with the notice, the House would be satisfied with the evidence, and they might pass a resolution to that effect, under the rule which the hon. gentleman from Richmond has read. The object of a petitioner in making proof in that way is to avoid the expense of bringing a witness here to prove the service of the notice. He is obliged under the rules of the House to prove the service of the bill by a witness at the bar of the House, but he is not obliged in so many words to bring a witness to prove the service of the notice. Therefore the House has indulged persons who have come here for those bills by allowing them