

that six weeks' notice is just as good as seven, since the evidence establishes that the respondent has been served with the proper papers, and that therefore this irregularity is of no consequence ; but you cannot deal with a subject of this kind in that light way. If you can throw off one week why not two, and if two why not three, or four, or five, or the whole notice? The only safe course to take is to require that the rules of the House be rigidly observed. We do not know what dangers the party may have been exposed to, or what may have been the result of the failure to publish during that one week, and therefore as the parties themselves are to blame for this omission, and as they might have taken the necessary precaution, and it is by their own negligence and default that it occurred, it seems to me the House should be clear of all blame in the matter, and should see that their rules, which were laid down after deliberation, and for the express purpose of giving all parties full notice and warning and an opportunity of coming here, are strictly observed. We should take extreme care in granting these divorces. It is one of the most important decisions which can be given affecting the relations between man and wife, and that serious step should not be taken without the utmost precaution, and without seeing that every form is strictly complied with. I hope the day is long distant when there shall be any relaxation of the rules which protect persons in the state of matrimony, and that we shall never reach the condition of affairs which prevails in the United States, where, it has been remarked, in some States the railway trains stop ten minutes for divorces. Let us adhere to the rules which have been laid down for safety and which are necessary. I think in a case of this kind, where the notice is not complete or satisfactory, and where the indentification is not thorough, we should exercise extreme care. I have read those papers again, because I was anxious to facilitate my hon. friend in the matter if I could, and it does not appear to me that this notice, which was served on Mrs. Cox, is a true copy, or a copy at all of the notice which appeared in the *Gazette* ; neither would it be possible, I think, to prefer satisfactorily an accusation of perjury or false declaration against the person who makes the original declaration

of service, because although I dare say he served it, his declaration is made before a notary public in the United States, which is not provided for in the Statute ; so the evidence of notice served on the parties is not satisfactory. That is an additional reason why we should strictly observe the rules of the House, which require full notice, and I think if we depart from them now we shall be establishing a dangerous precedent. Another session a member will have charge of a Bill and the notice may be two weeks short ; he will quote this case and say, in such a session where the notice was one week short it was held to be no serious violation of the rules, and in this case it was only two weeks short, and what is the difference? I hope my hon. friend will agree with the majority of the House, as I believe, in thinking that we should adhere to the rules.

HON. MR. KAULBACH—I fully agree with the Minister of Justice that we should not relax our rules in this case. If we do so now, we cannot say how far we shall go in this direction in the future. I cannot see how any injury can be done to the parties in this case, because there is ample time to apply to the Private Bills Committee again and get justice this session. I do not think this is a case in which the principle *de minimus non curat lex* applies. I do not look upon this omission as a trifle, and I believe that the rules of the House should be strictly adhered to and given full effect to.

HON. MR. OGILVIE—I should like to know whether this petition should be referred back to the Committee on Standing Orders and Private Bills, or whether I should move that the order of the day be discharged, and that it be brought up on Friday next, the 20th instant, when we meet again?

HON. SIR ALEX. CAMPBELL—I think my hon. friend had better move that the order of the day be discharged, and this petition referred back to the Committee on Standing Orders and Private Bills for further consideration.

HON. MR. OGILVIE moved that the order be discharged and the petition referred back to the Committee

The motion was agreed to.