

Mr. Lesage, with a twinkle in his eye, said here he never comments on what Sen. Pouliot says.

The Senate committee deferred action on Bill SD-32 until it could hear the testimony of constitutional experts.

A constitutional authority here says the type of provincial amendments Sen. Pouliot has branded illegal are presumed valid until declared otherwise by a court decision. Some of the sections the senator is disputing relate not only to marriage but also to other fields such as civil and property rights which are provincial matters under the B.N.A. Act.

Senators from both parties have said privately they wish Sen. Pouliot wouldn't keep raising the topic. They felt Ottawa already has enough problems making confederation work without digging up new bones of contention.

One long-time observer of Parliament, a lawyer, said Canadian lawmakers had been managing happily for years before the senator began his constitutional fight.

"He's going to stir up a clear pond and make it muddy," said this French-Canadian lawyer. He felt the senator's stand wouldn't be popular in Quebec. And even if his rights-for-married-women bill passed the Senate, it would probably die for lack of a sponsor in the Commons.

It would cause a lot of trouble, the observer said, if our many provincial laws relating to marriage reverted back to what existed in 1867.