

tion; appealing to those who believe that under certain circumstances divorce ought to be allowed, it seems to me that the argument is overwhelming that there is no necessity for the establishment of such a court, and I hope that will be the view taken by this House.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

House resumed at eight o'clock.

Hon. WM. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.) Mr. Speaker, evidently the spirit of reform is dead in this House. The representatives from Ontario used to pride themselves on being great reformers, and yet, on a question of so much importance as this they appear to be indifferent, and to be willing to leave on the records of this Dominion such a crude, I was going to say savage, way of dealing with a subject of this kind as we have at present. Why the savages do better in this manner than we do. They confine their divorces to the same cause as our Saviour did, and when they find any unfaithfulness on the part of one side or the other, particularly if the squaw is unfaithful, the Indian takes her to the camp where her people reside, and there the divorce is completed. I think there is some decency in that, compared with the way in which we deal with the matter. Let us look at it. A man may come here from the farthest part of New Ontario. He has to pay \$200; he has to pay all the expenses of his witnesses; he goes before a Committee of the Senate, composed of men who perhaps have no experience or training in legal matters, they take the evidence, and that evidence is submitted to both Houses. I need not say anything about the nature of the evidence itself. It is often so filthy that the pigs would not sleep on it if it were placed before them as a bed. The charwomen who go to clean the Senate in the morning will get piles and piles of printed paper; they take it home, they scatter it among their families, and it is read there to their moral injury. Why should not the Dominion of Canada copy the reform that has been in existence in New Brunswick, in British Columbia, and in Nova Scotia, on this matter? In Nova Scotia the case is tried before a judge of the Supreme Court, and not a trace of the evidence is copied or goes into any of the papers. The only statement is that such and such a case has been tried before Judge Graham, and he has granted or refused the divorce, as the case may be. That is all that the world knows of the proceedings in the case. When the maritime provinces came to be united with the Dominion, we forced certain reforms on the people of Canada. At that time dual representation existed in Ontario and Quebec, but by the good example which we brought to this House, that system was abolished. Then you had elections on differ-

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ent dates, and the strongest seats, those most likely to return men favourable to the government of the day, were contested first. We abolished that system, and induced the Dominion of Canada to accept a simultaneous polling day, which was in force in the maritime provinces. Now, I think the Dominion should go a step further and copy our method of dealing with divorces, which is the only rational one, and which does justice to the poor as well as the rich. The law as you have it now is only for rich people, and does the grossest injustice to the poor, who cannot afford to avail themselves of it. In the maritime provinces we have no distinction of that kind, and I am happy to say that I believe the number of divorces which take place in those provinces is as limited as the number in the Dominion. We can speak with pride of the high moral character of our people in that respect, although the law as it exists makes it easy for them to obtain divorces. Now, I think that a sense of justice should lead this House to see that equal justice is done to the poor as to the rich. If that were done, there are people now in the Dominion of Canada who would avail themselves of the law; but, being poor, they cannot avail themselves of it as it exists. I am not going to say much more on this subject, but I think it is time that people who claim to be reformers should take this subject up and abolish the present system, which is crude and is certainly not found in any other civilized country in the world. The premier said there were no petitions for this change. I do not remember that there were any petitions for these other reforms which I have mentioned. I do not know that there was a single petition for the abolition of dual representation or for simultaneous polling when these measures were adopted. I do not think that is any reason at all. If my hon. friends the Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Fielding) and the Minister of Railways and Canals (Hon. Mr. Blair) were free to speak their minds, they would speak boldly and logically and effectively on this question. They do not want to offend their master who presides over them, but they know very well that the law that exists at present in Canada is one we would never think of adopting in the enlightened maritime provinces. I do not expect that anything I say on this subject will have the least influence on this House; but I think the country will in time see the necessity of making such a change in the method of dealing with this matter as will bring about something like equal justice for the poor as well as the rich in the Dominion of Canada.

Hon. DAVID TISDALE (South Norfolk). Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the motion proposed by the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) is one involving much more important considerations than have