

Divorce Jurisdiction

If the people of Quebec and Newfoundland are opposed to the establishment of divorce courts, why do the representatives of the other provinces seek to force this system on them?

Finally, I should like them to understand that they will not succeed in having accepted a divorce court for the province of Quebec, because in my opinion, such a measure is anti-social, anti-Christian, and directed against the family, and the remedy will not be found in the establishment of a court, but in the suppression of divorce itself. That is why I shall vote against any divorce bills presented in this house and against any measure such as this, which tend to condone it.

Mr. P. L. Dube (Restigouche-Madawaska): Mr. Speaker, every session we are faced with a number of divorce bills which we are supposed to pass or to reject.

Mr. Speaker, I am expressing my personal opinion and that of my constituents in congratulating those members who have protested against the institution of a divorce court in those provinces which, up to now, have refused to insert such legislation in their statutes. You have spoken for a logical and sensible cause. Did not our gracious Princess, who has now become our beloved Queen, addressing a group of 3,600 mothers, tell them that divorce has become a dangerous scourge of society?

Here are the words which Princess Elizabeth spoke in London on October 18, 1949:

(Text):

"We live in an age of growing self-indulgence, of hardening materialism and of falling moral standards. I would go so far as to say that some of the very principles on which the family, and therefore the health of the nation, is founded, are in danger.

When we see around us the havoc which has been wrought above all among the children by the break-up of homes, we can have no doubt that divorce and separation are responsible for some of the darkest evils in our society today.

I do not think you can perform any finer service than to help maintain the Christian doctrine that the relationship of husband and wife is a permanent one, not to be lightly broken because of difficulties or quarrels."

The princess urged the mothers to help others give their children that "sound Christian teaching which is essential to us all, but which is sadly lacking in so many homes today."

"As we all know", she said, "a child learns by example and therefore it is not only most important for us to see that our children say their prayers and go to church, but also to practise Christianity in our own lives. We surely cannot expect our children to do what we are too lazy or indifferent to do ourselves."

(Translation):

There we have, Mr. Speaker, the advice given to her subjects by a young mother who

was then 22 years of age and is now our sovereign and Queen of a great empire. Her advice is as sound as it is excellent and it shows great foresight for a person of her age. She wisely unfolds before us the disaster that divorce has in store, not only for those who claim legal separation but also for a whole nation.

It is not surprising that there is so little understanding between nations. In my opinion, if we want peace, we must begin by having it in the family. When we have learned to love one another, to respect one another, man will no longer seek to separate what God has united.

In closing my remarks, I would add that while the world is allowed to go to ruin, we must be strong enough to fight against the current. Let us be the bold defenders of family life. Let us make other people understand the grandeur and beauty of the Christian marriage. We shall thus help ensure, in a constructive way, the prosperity of our country, the happiness of our brethren and the salvation of the whole Canadian nation.

Mr. Armand Dumas (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, several hon. members have repeatedly criticized in the house the manner in which we deal with divorce bills. However, many of those who criticize that procedure believe that it is yet the better way of dealing with them and that we should not change it.

Soon after the opening of this session, as during the previous sessions, a bill was introduced which, according to its mover, would aim to correct a situation that does not please anyone, that several would like to do away with but that many prefer to tolerate. The bill would enable the exchequer court to pass judgment upon applications for divorce from the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland which, according to the law as it now stands, must be dealt with by the upper house.

I have listened to and read with great attention the numerous speeches on the matter. It is only reasonable to expect that the majority of those speeches should be made by members from Quebec and Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, I have yet to hear a representative of those provinces say that he approves the bill as it now stands. That means that the parties concerned do not want it. Have we not there sufficient grounds for insisting that the provinces concerned be given the right to decide for themselves whether they want divorce courts or not.