

tone and quality of the institute. Second, the Government has agreed to immediate consultation with national organizations and interested Canadians with respect to receiving nominations for the board of directors. It is our expectation, as I know it to be the Prime Minister's, that there will be full agreement on the composition of the board of directors prior to the end of committee consideration of the Bill. Third, concurrent with this consultation, the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence will be examining the Bill and recommending a formal list of national organizations which, once the Bill is passed, will become the pool from which nominees for the board of directors will be selected.

The Leader of the Opposition believes that this process will ensure that the consultations will be meaningful, that Canadians will participate fully in the selection of candidates for the board of directors, and that the process itself will underscore the independence and integrity of the institute. I commend the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition for their diligence in pursuing these major improvements to this Bill. These amendments and deletions have enhanced the integrity and independence of the institute. We now await in committee the full and detailed amendments to which there has been agreement. Given the changes suggested by and agreed to between the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister, we will see a far better Bill coming from the committee.

I would like to make one final point, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the exchange of correspondence that has taken place between the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister. We would like to see that correspondence made available to all members of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. In this way, members of the committee will have available to them the entire exchange reflecting the agreements that have been reached between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition for guidance in their deliberations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): The question is on the following motion: Mr. MacEachen, seconded by Mr. Pinard, moves that Bill C-32, an Act to establish the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, be now read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.

Divorce Act

[English]

DIVORCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, April 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacGuigan that Bill C-10, an Act to amend the Divorce Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): When the House adjourned on the last day of debate on Bill C-10, the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) had the floor. As that Hon. Member is not present, another Hon. Member may rise to speak in the debate.

Mrs. Jennifer Cossitt (Leeds-Grenville): Mr. Speaker, today I join in this debate on Bill C-10, an Act to amend the Divorce Act, with both hopes and reservations. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that our deliberations will lead to a greater humanizing of a process which is, for the majority of those who go through it, the most difficult and traumatic experience they are likely to face in their lifetimes. I have reservations, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill is far from complete with its present proposals and that it is far from perfect as a vehicle which will provide that humanizing effect to the Canadian divorce procedure.

There can be no question that the divorce law needs to be revised and amended. The Divorce Act of 1968 has become subject to changing attitudes and social mores. Today, the Act is very definitely out of date. There is no question that change is due and that the principles of the original Act need to be rethought. The Act needs a change that will reflect that, no matter how regrettable and no matter how sad, divorce is indeed a very unfortunate fact of life.

Divorce is so much a fact of life that 40 per cent of marriages will end in divorce. However, recognition of those figures does not make the experience any easier to face. The rationale behind this Bill, and indeed the initiative taken on behalf of the Government in this area, seem to suggest that we can make divorce an easier experience without trivializing marriage in the process. I know that during his remarks at second reading, the Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan) denied emphatically that this Bill would make divorce easier.

It is because there appear to be confusing signals between what the Minister has said and what appears to be the rationale for bringing forth this Bill, that I question which objectives are really being addressed. I must also question whether we will not see as a result of this Bill a new and sudden upsurge in the divorce rate as we did in the aftermath of the 1968 Act. Such an upsurge would only serve to undermine the institution of marriage further. Before the 1968 Act was passed, the rate of divorce per 100,000 of population was just over 50. In 1969, it was up to 124.2, and that figure has more than doubled in the years since then.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker. When a marriage is over and done with, I agree with those who say that it is in the best interests of all to end it. Ending it is especially in the best