

with me that that was not the reason why the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck) was not named to the committee. We felt that his time was so taken up on another important committee that he would hardly be able to spare time for this one.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I hope that my membership on the Divorce Committee will not keep me off other important ones. There are times when one feels it is most unfortunate that the work of that committee prevents attendance at some of the others. I did not intend to make a personal reference. I wanted to point out that the most valuable land in this country is to be found in the towns and cities, not in the country, although the area of land is of course very much greater in the rural areas. You can find a square rod of land in the city of Toronto or the city of Montreal which is as valuable as a whole farm on the outskirts, and I am putting it very conservatively at that. Some of our most valuable resources are the lands of our cities, and the use that is made of the land both in the rural and urban areas is an exceedingly important matter. I am just hoping that what has been said by the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition does not mean that this committee will limit its inquiry to such subjects as conservation and soil fertility and have no regard to the application of law with respect to the use of land in both places.

Let me give an illustration. Back in 1904 I went up to northern Ontario. At that time the mineral resources of our north country were just coming into view, and shortly thereafter an inspiring army of prospectors moved into the area. It was a marvelous thing to see these men with bags on their backs and picks in their hands starting out into the trackless wastes looking for mineral resources. There were scores of these prospectors, and many of them came back with their prizes. Where is that army of prospectors today? They are long since gone and nearly forgotten, but not because the prospecting of the north has been done, for it has only been scratched. The reason they disappeared was that, under the law, when they staked a claim, did the assessment work on it and got the patent, it then became their own. They then had nothing more to perform and almost nothing more to pay. The taxation of a claim in northern Ontario, after one had passed it into a land title in fee simple, was \$2 per annum for 40 acres. Frequently the \$2 was not collected for years, so that gradually the whole of the most accessible and likely land staked was unused and held for speculative purposes in the hope that somebody else would make it

valuable by other developments. If at that time the \$2 fee had been multiplied by four, so that the holder of a title to natural resources of our country paid a more reasonable amount for his privilege, thousands of acres would have been thrown open for further prospecting and development.

Honourable senators, I am not acquainted with the situation now as I was in those days, but it illustrates what can be accomplished through wise legislation by forcing into use, and into the best use, the country's natural resources.

Let me give one more illustration, one that is within my ken now. I live in a great city that is growing and expanding; all around it is a big blanket of farm lands held for speculation, not for use. Now the speculative holding of these lands forestalls the enterprise of my city. Is not that sort of thing to be considered, Mr. Leader, when this committee is in session? I hope the members of the committee will not close their minds to the philosophy of common sense in law as applied to land ownership. We need only look to certain other countries, say in the Middle East, to see the effect of land tenure there on the production of the soil, and its consequent effect on the people. In the Middle East only the poor pay taxes, because emphasis has been laid so strongly on land ownership instead of land use.

When I say that a form of taxation which makes living more expensive and production more costly tends to the ill use of our lands, who could contradict me? Farmers have argued, particularly western farmers, that tariffs have a vital and most influential effect on the use of land and on the profits that can be made therefrom. Surely the committee will not close its mind to considerations of that kind. The committee will not go very far if it shuts out from consideration everything except conservation and fertility of soil, the shifting of people from one locality to another, and so on, and is not prepared to study the fundamentals of the question referred to it.

Honourable senators, no more important committee than this has ever been established here. I wish it all success. However, it is essential that it hew to the line, not close its mind to any arguments pertinent to the question, and bring in a bold and sensible report.

The motion was agreed to.

DIVORCE BILLS THIRD READINGS

Hon. Mr. Roebuck moved the third reading of the following bills:

Bill U, an Act for the relief of Anita Marinier Shaver.