

proposition has never been submitted to parliament. If a man or a woman has lived honestly and virtuously, and fulfilled all the marriage vows, and has suffered from the infidelity of his or her partner, why should the punishment upon him or her be just as great as upon the guilty party? I cannot see how any person can defend that, although apparently there are some members on both sides of the House who are able to do it. But even a life partially ruined by the infidelity of the partner, under the amendment of my hon. friend opposite, would be wholly ruined by the law. There would be no chance of securing any degree of happiness under any other relation. I do not think that justice is to be found in the course where the innocent are made to suffer.

I am one who deploras the prevalence of divorce. I think it is one of the most destructive things in the social life of this continent, and of the other continent as well. But I do not think the remedy is to be found in preventing the legal separation and subsequent marriage of those who find it impossible to live happily together. Take a case such as many we have had in the reports from the Senate. I have looked over a number of them, and I think that in at least a dozen instances the evidence goes to prove that a woman has left her husband and taken up with another man. She is living with him and they have several children. When the innocent party secures a divorce that couple can marry. They can in that way legitimize their children, and any further issue from that union would be legitimate. But leave them where they are, and what is the case? Why, the children are illegitimate, and they carry that stigma to the grave. They not only carry it themselves but they pass it on to those who happen to be their children. Now reverse the case. A man leaves his wife and goes with another woman, and they live together. Is it better to have those two people living in that illicit way than to offer them some means by which they can live honestly together, and the issue of their union as they grow up to be men and women who can hold up their heads, and nobody point the finger of shame at them. You may say this thing is all undesirable. Of course it is, but you cannot stop that condition; you cannot stop it as long as the primal passions of mankind exist, and if that dies out the divorce courts will not be necessary. But let me ask my hon. friends, is it better for a woman to live in concubinage with a man than to make it possible for them to marry? Now consider the effect of

marriage upon them? Here are a man and a woman living under circumstances of which they are ashamed whether they will acknowledge it or not. They are carrying with them all the time a sense of shame and of dissatisfaction with their lives. They cannot be useful citizens to the degree that nature has possibly endowed them. Well, back in their minds there exists the thought that they are living in this way. But if they were legally separated from their former partners and they could be legally married, there would be a change in their mental outlook that I venture to say would make them very different people socially, and as citizens of the country.

But to my mind, Sir, that is not the worst aspect of it. Consider the position of their children, the innocent issue of an illicit union. You make that illicit union permanent, and give no hope to those little ones born out of it to take their places as the legitimate offspring of a married couple, and they will carry that stigma to the grave. They will be pointed out at school; they will be pointed to as they grow up; they will carry a burden on their minds that is more destructive to their mental and spiritual development than anything else that can happen to them. I think it would be a mistake for this parliament to put even a hundred or a thousand people in such a position as that. If you could stop all vice, if you could stop all impropriety it would be different. But you cannot, and that fact might as well be recognized. That being so, let us make the best of the situation as we find it to-day, and apply such remedies as would be useful in the interests of society as a whole. I can imagine, Mr. Speaker, a boy or a girl born of such a union growing up to a marriageable age and, perhaps, marrying some person who is not aware of the bar sinister, but who afterwards discovers it. There would creep into that home, and between that couple something that could never be eradicated; there would be a loss of confidence and a loss of that happiness that might otherwise have been secured if the bar had not been there. Happiness to a couple under such circumstances is impossible. And you know, Mr. Speaker, and every man in this House knows, that that kind of thing is carried on from generation to generation. There are men in important places in the public life of the world who are still pointed to as having ancestors whose lineage was not regular.

I submit, Sir, that to take any action that would increase illegitimacy in the country is about the last thing that this parliament ought to do. There is an old saying "that marriages