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THE new arrangement made by the Senate for the trial of divorce cases by a committee of its own members is a step in the right direction. It will facilitate proceedings in such cases without in any degree relaxing the rigidity of the safeguard against improper divorce. The committee will constitute in some respects a permanent divorce court, though it must still lack in essential qualifications for the prompt and safe despatch of what must be treated as judicial investigations, pure and simple. In all probability a few years' trial will bring out the weak points in the present system, and lead to the establishment of a proper court for the discharge of the delicate functions involved in such trials.

THE second reading of the Government Bill for the ratification of the New Fisheries Treaty was moved last week in the Commons by Sir Charles Tupper in an able and comprehensive speech. This was followed by a debate extending over several days. In the main those members of the Opposition who spoke did not oppose the second reading, which they regard as the best thing under the circumstances, but contented themselves with describing it as one-sided, by reason of Canadian concessions, and severely criticising the previous policy of the Government. Some of them enlarged forcibly upon the radical defect which was pointed out in a previous number of THE WEEK, that, while the chief recommendation of the Treaty to England and Canada is that it purports to be a settlement of the dispute, it does not really settle it, but leaves the door open for fresh causes of irritation, and even puts increased opportunities and temptations to trespass on the inshore fisheries in the way of American fishermen. A singularly weak point in Sir Charles Tupper's argument was his appeal to the Opposition to refrain from pushing the Government too hard lest they should be compelled in self-defence to say something which might be used against ratification by Congress. The assumption that the United States Senators and Representatives would be likely to overlook important points in the Treaty to the disadvantage of their country hardly comports with the prevailing opinion of the shrewdness and penetration of American politicians. But were it otherwise would not such an appeal by Sir Charles Tupper, mysteriously hinting, as it might be understood to do, at

some powerful considerations he could adduce but does not wish to, tell more powerfully upon the minds of any of our neighbours who may be listening to his words than the strongest direct defence of its provisions he could effect? *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*

THE strongest point made against the Government in the Treaty debate—and the Opposition artillery was directed more against the Government than against the Treaty—was the wide inconsistency between the positions maintained in former correspondence, and, to a considerable extent, in the measures taken for the protection of the fisheries, and in the concessions made in the Treaty itself. It is impossible to deny that there is force in the contention that either the course of the Government in the former respects must have been unreasonable and needlessly irritating, or its surrender of Canada's just claims injurious and humiliating. Here again the Government speakers were unfortunate in their line of defence. To say in effect that as a matter of course Governments, in diplomatic correspondence, are expected to put forth untenable claims and support them with invalid arguments, in order to make large concessions possible in actual settlement, is, to say the least, sadly derogatory to our notions of the dignity and candour which should characterize international negotiations. We might be prepared for such methods in the swapping of horses, but should scarcely expect them in the framing of treaties. And yet the only view that can reconcile Canadians to any cheerful acquiescence in the terms of the Treaty in question, is the view thus indicated, that the claims hitherto put forward on their behalf were extravagant and unreasonable, and their withdrawal an act of simple justice between nation and nation.

THE Hon. Mr. Laurier, if correctly reported in the *Globe*, made the other day a singularly frank admission, and one conveying a very severe reflection in regard to the character of the debates in the Canadian Commons. He is reported as having said, in the course of the discussion on his motion censuring the act of the Speaker in dismissing the French translators, that "these men were engaged for three or four months in translating the debates of the House, and thus became saturated with abusive language," and that "when you permit a man to talk politics, abusive language is the legitimate consequence of that permission." It is to be hoped that the leader of the Liberal Party used the word "legitimate" in some narrow, technical sense, and not in its more general meaning. To the credit of Mr. Laurier it may be said that he himself seldom or never sins in the matter referred to, and that he was, therefore, in a position—quoting again his own words, though with an application which he is quite too modest to have thought of—"to throw the first stone." It may be hoped that the reproof thus indirectly, and, we presume, jocularly given, will not be without effect on both sides of the House. It may be added, we think, with truthfulness, that there has been thus far in the current session a decided improvement in the tone of debate—so far as the tendency to the use of abusive language is concerned.

WITH regard to the debate on Mr. Laurier's motion, it is not hard to see that there were principles involved of sufficient importance to redeem it from the limbo of merely personal and trivial partisan squabbles to which some would consign it. The prime contention that in dismissing employes who were engaged by a Committee of the House and acting under its direction, the Speaker was guilty of an invasion of the privileges and rights of Parliament, loses its chief force morally, if not technically, in view of the fact that the Committee in question had, during the previous session, left the matter in the hands of the Speaker. Whether the Committee was justified in thus throwing the onus of a decision upon the Speaker, or the Speaker wise in accepting it from their hands, need not be here discussed. The broader question underlying the debate is that of the right of members of the Civil Service to take active part in political campaigns. The leaders of both parties seem to be agreed that this must not be permitted in opposition to the Ministry of the day—unless that happens to be the Ministry of the other party. There may, perhaps, be some good cause, not apparent on the surface, for this view, but there is certainly no obvious reason why the accident of a man's being in Government employ