

reflection will show that in this matter we are dealing with one of the institutions of our civilization which is inseparable from it, and one which ought to be most carefully controlled. An avenue ought to be opened up through which escape may be had from the conditions of married life when they become intolerable, and at the same time every condition of secrecy, every condition of solemnity, every condition that would prevent anything like shock to the sensitiveness of the public on matters which ought to be concealed from them, ought to be attached to the process by which divorce may be procured in our country. That I believe unquestionably, to any one who gives the matter consideration, will be found to be, by applying to this parliament, not for a Bill of relief, but rather by some quiet and orderly resort to the judges of the land in whose hands we may safely leave the administration of this matter. The statistics of the provinces go to show, that where divorce courts are in operation, they have not been largely availed of. In Nova Scotia the average will be about three cases in a year, and it is quite possible that several of these cases are not of native Nova Scotians, because it is naturally to be expected that in provinces in which no divorce courts are existent, persons who desire to procure divorce may migrate there for the time-being. It seems to me quite probable, that either in New Brunswick or Nova Scotia it may turn out to be the case, that many of the actions for divorce that have been commenced and concluded there, have been set up by those who really were not citizens of the province. That being the case, it is very evident that the number of divorce actions is not encouraged by the fact that courts in which such actions may be taken have been set up in the province, but that this is a remedy which the parliament of Canada may to a certain extent permit without any fear that it is all going to weaken the strength of the marriage bond among the citizens of our country.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Hon. W. S. Fielding). My own views on this question are naturally influenced by the experience of my own province, which has been referred to by my hon. friend from Victoria, N.S. (Mr. Ross), and if it were necessary to come to a decision I would express the hope that the other provinces might adopt the method which is employed in Nova Scotia, with, as I think, success. I think, however, that I am correct in stating from the tendency of the discussion here to-day, that there is no great zeal on the part of members generally to deal with this question. The right hon. Prime Minister suggested, just before six o'clock, that perhaps the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) had served his purpose for the time being by a discussion of the question, and might withdraw his motion. If he is disposed to do that, my own judgment is

Mr. BELL.

that that would be the course most satisfactory to the House. I merely make the suggestion to the hon. gentleman, but I am quite prepared to vote if the division takes place.

Mr. CHARLTON. Mr. Speaker, of course I did not introduce this motion for the mere purpose of taking the time of the House or leading to an inconsequential result. Still, the discussion of the motion has probably accomplished all that can be reasonably expected at the present time. It is very true, as the right hon. Prime Minister says, that the House at large does not appear to take a deep and active interest in this question. It is a matter which, I presume, will require a good deal of discussion in the country before legislative action can be secured upon it, and one which we ought to approach with due deliberation and some degree of caution. While my own wish, of course, would be to have this motion go to a vote, and have an expression of this House favourable to it, yet I am in the judgment of the House, and if it is the opinion of the House that it would be better under the circumstances to accede to the desire expressed by the leader of the government, as a matter of etiquette, I would feel disposed to do so. If I have the concurrence of the seconder of the motion, and if no objection is made by any member of the House, I am quite willing that the motion, having been discussed in so agreeable, proper and instructive a manner, should be withdrawn.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.) As the seconder of the motion, I think the end we have in view has been served to a large extent. We have listened with a good deal of pleasure to the very excellent speeches which have been made by gentlemen on the other side of the House. Those speeches will go to the country, and in this observing age the country will by and by begin to see the necessity of adopting a different method of divorce from that which exists at present in the Dominion of Canada. I know what the law is in Nova Scotia, and I know that there is no publicity given to the evidence. The only thing stated is that the case has been tried and the judgment has been given. When the excellent speeches which have been made on the other side are sent to the country, they will perhaps effect the first change in public opinion on this subject. This is perhaps a small beginning to a great reform, but all reforms in the past commenced with small beginnings, and we must not despise the day of small things, because great things will be the result at some future day.

Motion withdrawn.

GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDINGS.

Mr. T. S. SPROULE (East Grey) moved for :