

Private Bills—Divorce

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The Leader of the Opposition is carrying on the same discussion that I felt called upon to interrupt when another hon. member was speaking, namely the discussion of the evidence that might have been or would have been the justification for a bill being submitted to this committee. At this time that bill is not before this committee. I must say it is my ruling that discussion of a perjury action or what action is to be taken as a result of certain evidence given in this building has not any connection with any of the bills now before the committee, and is not a subject for discussion at a time when we are in committee on certain specific divorce bills.

Mr. Drew: I am not finished yet, Mr. Chairman. I have presented the illustration, and I simply say now that proposition that has been stated in relation to this particular case, that it is not the responsibility of the Department of Justice because these parliament buildings happen to be in the province of Ontario, that the responsibility rests upon the attorney general of Ontario to examine the evidence that is given here and consider whether or not a question of perjury might arise, is one that places before this house a situation that makes it very difficult for us to proceed in this very extraordinary way we have been proceeding. For that reason, and to give conformity to the procedure I have put forward, I propose to vote against this measure.

Mr. McIvor: I should like to ask a question, Mr. Chairman. Where was the perjury committed?

Mr. Knowles: We have before the committee, by a procedure which you have suggested, Mr. Chairman, clause 1 of fifty different divorce bills. I have indicated that there were three or four of them upon which I wish to make a brief comment, and I indicated that it was satisfactory to me if you found some other method rather than calling them one at a time. I now wonder whether we should not have followed the other practice, but at any rate may I indicate, so that you will see how thoroughly in order I am, that my remarks are directed to Bills Nos. 382, 399, 401 and 407.

I do not wish to suggest that I might not have remarks of a similar character to make with respect to the other bills included in this group of fifty, but I am speaking directly to those four bills, the number of which I have given but I have given them without indicating the names of the persons involved. In looking through the evidence concerning these four bills, I find that in every case the evidence was given by one or the other or

both of two detectives. Again, I shall not advertise them by giving their names. But I point out that the committee on miscellaneous private bills, when it considered a batch of these bills the other day, not only rejected the bill to which reference has been made and which Your Honour has suggested should not be further discussed, but rejected another bill.

We will call this other bill a bill dealing with people by the name of Mr. and Mrs. A. This bill was rejected by the committee unanimously. Nobody would defend it at all. The committee was not satisfied with the evidence contained in this other case—that of Mr. and Mrs. A. Their name does not begin with A; I just picked that out of the air.

I draw the committee's attention to the fact that the two detectives who were witnesses in this case which was turned down unanimously by the committee turn up in these four cases, covered by Bills Nos. 382, 399, 401 and 407. I ask the members of this committee: What confidence can you have in the validity of bills based upon evidence from these detectives, and they are names that have been turning up in these cases through most of the years I have been in parliament. Time and time again it has been evident, on the basis of just reading the transcript, that it is evidence that cannot be trusted. On the basis of that, what confidence can we have in the validity of the cases being brought before us? I do not know. It may be that some of these cases covered by the bills to which I have referred are legitimate cases so far as the laws of the land stand at the present time. But when, as I say, one case is turned down unanimously because the members of the committee are not satisfied with the evidence that has been given, what confidence can we have when the same people bring in so-called evidence in other cases?

Hon. members know the kind of evidence they give, such as putting a matchstick at the door or putting scotch tape on the door; that sort of thing. I need not go into it. I believe that in the case that was rejected it was revealed that evidence was given concerning a certain woman who was supposed to have been in Montreal, but our committee was convinced she was not in Montreal at that time at all. Some of us have never had any confidence in this way of dealing with the matter, but what has happened recently surely must shatter the confidence of any who still had confidence in this way of dealing with the business.

My points are two. One is the matter we are not supposed to discuss, the bill that has