

the hearing of divorce cases but that the cases were assigned to any of the judges.

Honourable senators, I am against taking divorce out of the Senate. I took that stand earlier, and I think I would do so again, unless someone could show me a better way. I think it is a matter of the spirit. After all, in this country no man should be challenged for the way he wishes to walk humbly before his God. If the people of Quebec do not want a divorce court, we should not force one upon them; but I do think that they should regard what we are doing as a duty, as a service, and should not wash their hands altogether of the work of the Divorce Committee in the Senate. Also, the Divorce Committee should not have to face unfair or erroneous suggestions, perhaps based on lack of information. The committee itself is not complaining; it is getting along splendidly; it is doing a good work and is following a path that has existed for a long time. So I say, unless you can replace it with something that has more merit, that will not disturb the people of this country, and that will not make divorces more numerous, we had better go along as we are.

Hon. Cyrille Vaillancourt: Honourable senators, I have only a few words to say and they will be confined to a question of principle.

We are against divorce in the province of Quebec, not only because we are Catholics but because we want to preserve the family, and we know that the basis of a nation is the family. If we increase the facilities for getting a divorce the family will quickly be destroyed.

Moreover, immediately divorce courts were organized in Ontario and other provinces the number of divorces increased—they doubled, trebled and in some cases, even increased to four and five times what they were before. According to the figures given by the honourable senator who preceded me, (Hon. Mr. Kinley) Quebec divorces, except for the period immediately following the last war, have been decreasing, and this year there has been a definite decrease. There are no more than 303 divorce petitions before us this year, while in previous years there were something of the order of 500. So I am safe in saying that the divorce rate in Quebec is decreasing.

Now, if we were to organize divorce courts in the province of Quebec we would open the door, and I am sure we would find that the number of divorces would be doubled, and might even run to five and ten times the present number.

Honourable senators, let me relate an experience that I had two or three months ago. In a certain locality in the province of Quebec the people asked the Government to license more liquor outlets in the locality in order to

throttle the activities of blind pigs. The government did what they asked. As a result of that, now you can get liquor everywhere in this locality, and the people are consuming more liquor.

You know, when we open a door we invite people to enter. If you have only one door in a house everybody is obliged to use that door, but if you have five or six doors in the house many people can come in at the same time and do what they want.

I put that forward as a question of principle and, as I said, it is based on protection of the family. The family is the basis, the foundation, of the nation, and in trying to preserve the spirit of the family we are doing a very splendid work for our country. That is an expression of our principles.

Hon. W. Ross Macdonald: Honourable senators, I do not intend to take much of the time of the house. I will not add to what has been said by honourable members respecting their feelings toward the Chairman of the Divorce Committee and his committee, all of whom are doing excellent work. I have expressed my views in that respect on other occasions. My respect and admiration for them has increased, if that is possible, rather than decreased.

I cannot agree entirely with the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) when he suggests that this discussion is a waste of time. I think it has been a very helpful discussion and I am sure some good will come of it. He referred to the fact that when he presented a bill before this house a number of years ago these suggestions were brought forward, but I remind him—and this was mentioned earlier tonight—that at that time a woman in the province of Quebec had a great deal of difficulty in obtaining a separation as to bed and board. It was almost impossible for her to get it. But as we have heard here tonight, the law of Quebec in that respect has been changed.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: The law had been changed before I brought in my bill dealing with divorce.

Hon. Mr. Bouffard: Not before your bill was brought in.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: It had been changed before I brought in my bill to amend the Exchequer Court Act. My honourable friend told me so.

Hon. Mr. Bouffard: That is quite right.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: My recollection is to the contrary.

Many points of view have been brought forward in the discussion tonight. One matter