

were granted in that time. In the case of Prince Edward Island there is evidently a state of conjugal felicity which can scarcely be paralleled in any other portion of His Majesty's dominions. In that little island, the garden of the gulf, the most highly civilized, prosperous and happy under the flag of His Majesty in North America, not one single divorce has been granted in these thirty-four years. Evidently, in the province of Prince Edward Island there is an understanding of the advantages, the benefits and blessings of union that the other provinces fail to realize to the same extent as they do in that happy country. The result is that in Canada 300 divorces have been granted in thirty-four years, or almost an average of nine divorces per annum. We are told that if there were greater facilities for divorce there might be more divorces granted, and therefore, it might be argued by some that by furnishing divorce courts in the several provinces and by doing away with the present tedious, cumbersome, expensive and odious system of coming before the Senate of Canada and substituting a more convenient, more cheap and less public process of hearing applications before a judge of the Supreme Court of a province, divorces might be multiplied in number. We have no evidence of this to show this would be the case, and I do not know that any strong presumption exists that it would be. One thing that is established as a fact is, that in Canada for the last thirty-four years, three hundred divorces have been granted—six hundred married persons have secured release from the marital tie, and that is sufficient to show that there is a want of civilization and of social life as organized, which cannot be winked out of sight. Marriages are necessary to our civilization, and everything that tends to heighten and elevate and improve the condition of woman amongst us, is something that ought to receive our most anxious support. And concurrent with the institution of marriage; apparently inevitably associated with it, must be some reasonable provision by which in certain cases one party or the other who is bound by the marriage bond may secure a release when its conditions become intolerable or too irksome for them to bear. I find on further reference to the Canadian Year-book, that according to the census of 1901 there were in Canada 661 divorced persons—339 men and 322 women. That is almost exactly the number that would be supplied by our divorce courts since 1867, the year of confederation, were all the parties to these divorces still living. But manifestly a comparatively large percentage of the divorced persons who are presently living in Canada must have procured divorces elsewhere. It is utterly impossible that the 600 persons who have been divorced in Canada since 1867 could now be alive. The great probability is that at least one-third of these persons

are dead. As a product of our own divorce courts and of divorce proceedings taken in the parliament of Canada, there are possibly 300 divorcees in this country, and the other 361 who are in Canada at present must have procured divorces somewhere else, or must have been divorced before they came to Canada. It is quite well known that in certain cases, in all the provinces of Canada, persons who are determined to procure divorce do go to the states of the neighbouring union and seek separation from their married partners in the courts of that country. The result is unsatisfactory, because those persons who being Canadians go to the United States and there secure a divorce, are only divorced so far as they continue residents of the United States, and they cannot return to Canada, and they cannot resume the marriage tie with another person, without practically bringing themselves within the operation of the law against bigamy, or making themselves liable to action for adulterous living. If, as I think we must grant; if there be an absolute certainty that to a certain extent—not at all to encourage, but on the other hand to be repressed and to be controlled by making the conditions onerous and the reasons for granting divorces of the most grave and serious character, limiting it so that there would be, no flying with flippant ease to this court for relief; to make the conditions so that it would be only under circumstances absolutely in the eyes and known to the neighbours and fellow-citizens of the parties concerned justifying the divorce that such a thing could be obtained—with these conditions it seems to me that it is the duty of the people of Canada not to lose sight of this question, but to consider whether or not there be not a number of fellow-citizens in our country who are entitled to receive at our hands a strictly limited opportunity to secure release from the marriage tie when circumstances render it impossible for them longer to bear it with comfort. It is very evident that this is a question which will not have many advocates in parliament. It is not a matter in respect to which any person who is personally interested could easily make himself or herself heard. It would be only on a personal appeal, and that of a very strong character, that any member of parliament could be induced to advocate such a matter. Therefore, it is all the more important that this being a question which to the most of us is absolutely impersonal, that we should not on that account lose sight of its importance, but should rather devote ourselves to a fair and earnest consideration of it, the more so on account of the fact that it is a thing that can scarcely count on very hearty support on the part of any of the representatives of the people in this parliament. There must be to a very great extent, a large feeling of indifference in the minds of most of us here, and yet a little