

Economic problems of great import, particularly in this period of reconstruction, are discussed daily in this house. But let us not stop to consider only economic values, which are worth much less than moral and spiritual values. Therefore, I do not think I am exceeding my rights as a member of this house in emphasizing, for a few moments, the importance of spiritual values and marriage according to Christian precepts, and the abomination of divorce in a country such as ours.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that any country which accepts divorce is headed for decadence and ruin. I am not setting myself up as an authority. One need only read the great London and New York dailies, or some Canadian newspaper to realize that decadence threatens and disorders are rife in countries where divorces are mounting up. Statesmen gather around tables to pave the way for a just and lasting peace. They would establish a doctrine of love in the world and kill all germs of dissension. Unfortunately, they forget to protect the root of love in the home itself.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MARQUIS: Mr. Speaker, statesmen should in the first place direct their efforts and turn their minds to the upholding of this principle, in order to stabilize the home, to strengthen the family and to foster in our country as in other nations the establishment of a christian society, resting on solid ground and assured of future peace.

When France reached the highest pinnacle of intellectual and spiritual fame, when she filled the pages of her history with glorious conquests did France then draw her strength from divorce? No. When France suffered reverses, the sacred bonds of married love had been broken, the home had been overthrown and disorder had been gnawing at the heart and soul of the nation.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MARQUIS: Great Britain, which had always been a model of discipline, has also allowed divorce to become rampant. What happens today? Ministers of the gospel hold meetings to devise means of uprooting this poisonous plant which is threatening the Christian way of life in that country.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I am not saying anything new—but truths take on a stronger meaning in their application—when I say that divorce is doing an injustice not only to husbands and wives but to children as well. Recently I noticed in a newspaper the picture of a child, her mother and her grandmother. The court had decided that the child should be given out for adoption because her parents

[Mr. Marquis.]

had been divorced; the mother remarried and the father was found unfit to look after the child who was only two years old. The picture showed the grandmother looking sadly at her daughter and her granddaughter, both unfortunate victims of this social evil.

Mr. Speaker, recently I read in a Montreal newspaper, *Le Devoir*, an article which dealt with statistics published by the *Toronto Star*, and I would like to quote a brief excerpt therefrom:

Recently, the *Toronto Star* made a parallel between the United States and Canada from the point of view of divorce.

In 1946, there were 2,300,000 weddings in the United States, which represents an increase of 680,000. On the other hand, divorces numbered 620,000, an increase of 118,000, or four divorces for every ten weddings.

Mr. GAUTHIER (Portneuf): It is unbelievable.

Mr. MARQUIS:

A comparative census shows that in 1932, there were four divorces for every 25 weddings.

In Canada, states the *Toronto Star*, there were about four divorces for every 250 weddings in 1932, as against four divorces for every 85 weddings in 1945.

An hon. MEMBER: A tremendous average.

Mr. MARQUIS:

Of course, the divorce to wedding ratio is not as alarming as in the United States, but divorces were five times as numerous in 1945 than in 1932 and the statistics for 1946 will show a further increase. In other words, the progression takes place at a faster rate here than among our neighbours.

What is the explanation of this tendency in both countries? The gradual forsaking of sound principles . . . is no doubt responsible to a large extent. The war has also been an important factor. Hasty marriages, long separations and war-provoked circumstances have largely contributed to the increase in the divorce rate. The example given by Hollywood, both in real life and the films has been an influence. But, above all, divorce provokes more divorces. The more common it becomes, the less reprehensible it appears and the more frequent it is. What will this lead us to?

Mr. Speaker, one principle should never be forgotten: that marriage is the very foundation of human preservation and that it is a divine institution. I feel it my duty to state in this house that human laws can never supersede the dictates of God, nor abolish the hard-and-fast rules, nor modify them one whit.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARQUIS: What was good long ago for the ancestors of those who advocate divorce, which allowed them to people the earth with sturdy and righteous men, should be equally good for those of their descendants who, at the present time, can no longer differentiate