

lection is correct, in that country to-day there is one divorce for every six or seven marriages. Undoubtedly future generations of the United States will suffer for this state of affairs, and I would sooner see a few of our people unhappy than allow a similar evil to afflict this Dominion.

The hon. gentleman who has introduced this bill (Mr. Shaw) says that it applies only to the four western provinces. Well, a perusal of the bill will prove that he is not correct; the legislation would apply to all the provinces. I would prefer to be a silent dissident on this matter if its scope were restricted to the four western provinces; but it is not.

Mr. BOYS: Will my hon. friend tell me how the bill applies to the province of Ontario?

Mr. VIEN: I do not say that it does now; but nobody can tell us that to-morrow it may not apply to Ontario and Quebec.

Mr. BOYS: I understood my hon. friend to say that this bill would apply to all the provinces.

Mr. VIEN: And it does.

Mr. BOYS: I ask him, how could it apply to the province of Ontario when we have no divorce law in that province?

Mr. VIEN: It does not to-day; it may to-morrow. It introduces on our statute books the law of divorce, a law which does not exist there to-day. My hon. friend may look at the federal statutes and he will not find among them any law of divorce. This bill, if enacted, would be an acknowledgment of what we consider to be a wrong principle.

Mr. BOYS: I do not contend for a moment that there is any divorce law governing the Parliament of Canada; it is wide open; but I have made the assertion that according to our practices there is substantially only one ground on which divorce is granted in Canada, and that is adultery. Does my hon. friend disagree with me in that?

Mr. VIEN: No, I do not disagree with my hon. friend on that point, and I do not disagree with him that for the time being this proposed legislation would apply only to the four western provinces,—and indirectly to the Maritime provinces; but I do contend that by enacting this bill we would be accepting a principle against which we feel it is our duty to protest; and I am now protesting against the introduction of any legislation in this House which would increase the facilities for

divorce. And that is in answer to those who favour this bill on the ground of sympathy for unfortunate couples who cannot live together happily, and for whom it would be a hardship not to grant divorce.

Mr. BROWN: The hon. gentleman says the House by accepting the bill will accept the principle. Will he just clearly define the principle of the bill?

Mr. VIEN: The principle is given there.

Mr. BROWN: What is it?

Mr. VIEN: That a woman will be able to obtain divorce on all the grounds for which a man can obtain divorce.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): Does not the hon. member who put forward the principle of caveat emptor in respect to those contemplating marriage, also believe in that doctrine of equality?

Mr. VIEN: No, I do not. I say women should not obtain divorce on those grounds; and men should not either.

Mr. BROWN: Is not the hon. gentleman confusing the principle of the bill with his own personal principles in regard to divorce?

Mr. VIEN: No, I am not confusing anything. I may not possess that mastery of the English language which would enable me to clearly express my views.

Mr. FORKE: You are doing very well.

Mr. VIEN: This is the only excuse I can offer for not having expressed myself sufficiently clearly to be understood on the other side.

Mr. BROWN: You are doing very well.

Mr. CARMICHAEL: If the husband were required to prove, in addition to adultery, cruelty or desertion, the same as the wife, would not that principle be shown forth as at present embodied in the bill?

Mr. VIEN: Surely; but that is not the principle of the bill. Instead of reducing the grounds on which a husband can claim divorce, it increases the grounds on which a wife can claim it. Therefore the enactment of this bill would in my opinion tend to increase the number of divorces in future, and it is against that that I protest. I protest also against any addition to our statute books of legislation which would enable anyone in Canada to obtain divorce. There is no such legislation to-day.