

and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever." "The Bill was read the third time and passed." Now, that is a precedent. Let me say that if in the Lavallo case, or if in this case, there was evidence of adultery, there would be nothing to talk about either of voidable marriages or consent of parents, for that would have settled the case; but in the Lavallo case they insisted on striking out this clause relating to adultery, and simply declared the marriage null and void, and allowed the parties to marry again.

HON. MR. READ (Quinté).—As a member of the committee who heard the evidence in this case, perhaps it would be well for me to say a few words on this question. I think the committee were all agreed, except the chairman, on their report, and I think they took this ground, that relief should be granted in this case, because it could be obtained by either party committing the crime of adultery. They said: Would it not be better that these people should get relief under this Bill than one should commit a crime by which they could almost demand relief? I think that was the feeling of the committee, as far as I could understand it. If it was not, I stand corrected, but it was my opinion. Is it not a fact that laws are being repealed all the time—that as opinions change in the world other laws are enacted, and if for no cause but adultery can relief be granted by our laws, Parliament is supreme, and can enact just such laws as it thinks proper to meet such cases as this. This Parliament is not bound in its enactments by the laws of any other country; it is only bound by the laws as we enact them ourselves. I may be wrong, for I cannot discuss this question as well as gentlemen learned in the law. There has been a good deal said about this young lady not keeping copies of her own and her husband's letters. Ladies are not like lawyers, accustomed to keep their papers and never destroy them. The respondent in this case never treated the girl as his wife. It was his duty to seek after his bride. It was not her duty to hunt him up. It is not the ordinary state of things that a young woman who has married should hunt up her husband; it is generally the other way. In this case he does not seem to have done anything of the kind; he seems to have deserted her after the marriage ceremony, which was

performed without the consent of the parents, in a secret manner, and intended to be kept secret.

HON. MR. ALMON—I should not have spoken in this case, but I am unwilling to vote against the majority of the committee, which I intend to do, without giving my reasons. If it is established, as pointed out by the hon. member from Toronto, that no divorce can be granted in this House except on the ground of adultery, it is very clear that this is a legal marriage, because it is a mere quibble to say that a girl of twenty and a few months is not twenty-one, and, therefore, does not know her own mind when she is getting married. My impression was that, under the law, a girl of eighteen is competent to give consent to marriage. As this marriage has been proved, and no adultery has been proved, I think the contract cannot be annulled. I was astonished to hear the hon. gentleman from Lunenburg, who is presumed to have a good deal of experience in this matter, say that ladies generally keep copies of their letters. I should say that it is a good thing for the hon. gentlemen if they destroyed all the locks of hair they got from him, let alone the letters. The hon. gentleman from Quinté has told us that the majority of the committee gave as a reason for recommending this divorce, that if they did not do it this girl, driven to despair, might commit adultery, to get a legal divorce. That puts me in the mind of the girl who made application to be admitted to the Magdalen Asylum and was refused. She asked the reason why she was refused, and she was told it was a place only for abandoned women, and was asked if she was not a decent woman: "Yes; I am now" she said, "but there is no reason why I should not qualify." I am afraid that is the way with this committee—they allow their feelings for this petitioner to mislead them into doing what they know is not right. She may be an attractive looking woman, but from her evidence I am strongly prepossessed against her. She married this man against the wishes of her mother, who was then only a widow one fortnight, and against the dying wishes of her father, who had warned her against this man—against her sister's warning, who says he was an idle fellow, and that she was opposed to it. Therefore,