

*Private Bills—Divorce*

Q. Would you mind saying what kind of treatment—

The Chairman (Senator Roebuck): Now, what is the significance?

Mr. Pager: Well, I will have to give testimony myself, I will have to say what I know right away. She had a child.

Mr. Riel: That should have been alleged in the petition.

Mr. Pager: We have a witness here.

Senator Barbour: Is it in connection with this child?

Mr. Pager: Not directly, but maybe indirectly. She may have some sort of a debt to Dr. Ferron.

Then later:

By Mr. Pager:

Q. Would you mind saying what kind of treatment you were given by Dr. Ferron?

A. I am still being treated for my nerves.

Q. You had a child, did you?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Did you not testify in court that you had a child?

A. I never said any such thing.

Q. Why did you leave the Ferron home?

A. Because I was constantly fighting with Mrs. Ferron.

Then the lawyer for the petitioner realized that this was very serious evidence, and he asked her:

Q. Witness, I don't know if you heard the question asked by Mr. Pager. He asked you if you had a child and if you had been treated by Dr. Ferron: Is that what you meant?

The Chairman (Senator Roebuck): She denied it; I don't think there is any necessity of going over it.

Mr. Riel: I want to know if she understood the question.

The Chairman (Senator Roebuck): She thoroughly understood it and answered it very emphatically. As far as this committee is concerned you don't need to go further into that matter with this witness.

By the Chairman (Senator Roebuck):

Q. Witness, I would like to be perfectly clear about what you told Dr. Ferron about the incident you have described to us. You said this was after the separation, but can you not fix it a little more definitely than that?

A. I don't remember when it was, I know he had already started a separation.

Q. But had the separation gone through?

A. It was going through.

Later on Mr. Riel, counsel for the petitioner, said:

Before the witness leaves the stand, I should like to make a statement. The doctor is here. It is possible the question asked by Mr. Pager took her by surprise, and she is bashful about it. But the doctor treated her for a child that she had, so I think there must be some misunderstanding.

The Chairman (Senator Roebuck): Go ahead and clear it up.

Mr. Riel: I want to ask this girl if she correctly understood what Mr. Pager asked her. I understand that she denied about the child. I put my question to her, and she has not answered it.

The Chairman (Senator Roebuck): She did not answer it because I stopped her. Go ahead and clear the matter up.

By Mr. Riel:

Q. You have to state the truth even if it affects your own feelings.

A. All right, yes, I had a child, but it had nothing to do with Dr. Ferron, if that is what they are getting at.

By the Chairman (Senator Roebuck):

Q. How long since did that happen?

A. Three years last January.

Q. Was that prior to your going to the Ferrons?

A. That I had the child?

Q. Yes.

A. I had the child after I left the Ferrons.

By Senator Barbour:

Q. That is shortly after you left?

A. Yes; I left in December and I had the child in January.

By Mr. Riel:

Q. You were pregnant when you were at the Ferrons?

A. Yes.

I think we all feel it is unfortunate that a medical doctor should come to parliament asking that we accept evidence that would lead to the granting of a divorce on the testimony of two girls who were so very young, and one of whom certainly did not tell the truth. She had been well coached between the time she gave evidence before the Senate and when we heard her. One of the members asked her about this statement, and she had a very clever reply that a 20-year-old girl would never think of. It was the answer a very smart lawyer would put into the girl's mouth. There was no apology whatever for having misled the Senate or for having a prepared reply. That disposed of the matter as far as that was concerned.

There are still two more matters I should like to mention. Counsel for the petitioner introduced two pieces of evidence which, in my opinion, were most unfortunate. I have not read all the evidence in connection with these Senate divorce cases, but I am sure the Senate would not have printed the language this girl used in trying to besmear Mrs. Ferron. Of course Mrs. Ferron denied the allegations completely. I thought it was unfortunate, but her lawyer consented to her introducing this evidence. I could tell from the attitude of a number of members that they thought this was most unfortunate.

The other piece of evidence which counsel tried to introduce and which was rejected by our committee—and by a very small majority of the committee—was an affidavit which counsel for the petitioner had secured a few days previously. The co-respondent named in this particular divorce case was alleged to be 19 four years ago, when this incident occurred and he has been with the air force. When the case was heard before the Senate counsel pointed out that a notice had been sent to the brother mentioning that he was being named in it, and the law of the country required that he should be informed as to what was going on. I am reading from page 32:

Mr. Riel: According to the practice, I have sent a registered letter to Ronald Leonard at his station of the R.C.A.F., Comox Island, B.C., notifying him that he was the respondent in this case.