

*Divorce*

every measure which will make it harder for anyone to get a divorce.

Miss AGNES C. MACPHAIL (Southeast Grey): I suggest that there is a splendid way out of the difficulty of marriage, and that is my way—stay out.

Mr. GRAHAM: In the absence of the Prime Minister, I give his approval.

Miss MACPHAIL: When in doubt say no. I believe it would be a good thing to make marriage harder instead of easier, for there is too great a tendency on the part of people to rush into marriage without realizing either its hardships or its binding nature. It is a fact that all women contribute more to marriage than men; for the most part they have to change their place of living, their method of work, a great many women to-day changing their occupation entirely on marriage; and they must even change their name. They then work continuously for many years until death happily releases them, and that without wages at all. They work without pay. No one can claim that a married woman is economically independent, for she is not; apart from some very rare exceptions, married women are dependent economically, and that is the last possible remaining bond on women. Women have struggled for ages now, and to-day they are ably championed in our country by the hon. member for West Calgary (Mr. Shaw) and his friends who in this House are demanding further rights for them. When I hear men talk about woman being the angel of the home I always, mentally at least, shrug my shoulders in doubt. I do not want to be the angel of any home; I want for myself what I want for other women, absolute equality. After that is secured then men and women can take turns at being angels. I stress that angel part, because I remember that last year an hon. member who spoke from the opposite benches called a woman an angel and in the next breath said that men were superior. They must therefore be gods.

An hon. MEMBER: Was it the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Fournier)?

Miss MACPHAIL: I do not remember his constituency. Now, I welcome this opportunity to register my vote in favour of equality for women, who, I think, should be granted divorce on the same grounds as men. It is likely they suffer more than men do because they do not get it, and so I am glad of this opportunity of showing to western Canada that we as a parliament are endeavouring to be fair to the four western provinces.

[Mr. Graham.]

Those provinces have possibly a good deal of reason for the feeling that eastern Canada and the capital of the Dominion are quite indifferent to their needs. I am not arguing either in favour of or against divorce, but I do think that this is a question of equality and that anyone who votes against the bill is after all voting against that principle. And I hate to say that when I think of the Minister of Railways (Mr. Graham), who is indeed very fair usually. I hope hon. gentlemen will remember how the women of the four western provinces will feel towards those who vote against them, because that is after all what it amounts to; they are the women directly concerned. Twice this subject has been introduced in the House, and I believe it will continue to be introduced again and again until justice is done our women. They are merely asking for justice—absolute equality.

Mr. W. D. EULER (North Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have no interest in this bill except in so far as it is an effort to correct what to me seems to be an undoubted injustice. The Minister of Railways (Mr. Graham) before dinner stated that in his early youth he had learned to believe in three things—the undesirability of capital punishment, the virtues of education, and the evil of divorce. I might say to him and to the House that with the first two of his beliefs I am entirely in accord, but I cannot follow him in his attitude towards the bill under discussion. This bill, introduced by the hon. member for West Calgary (Mr. Shaw), appeals to me solely on the ground that it seeks to remedy an injustice. If the House admits the propriety of divorce as an institution, then the argument for the bill of the hon. member is in my opinion absolutely unanswerable. I would like to compliment my good friend from Bellechasse (Mr. Fournier) on his speech. Its choice diction, and the beauty and nobility of thought of his remarkable panegyric of married life and the sacred joys of home were, I think, an effort that none of us could hope to equal. And assuredly I have no criticism to make of those who, either from conscientious convictions or because of the practice of their church are unalterably opposed to divorce.

But it does seem to me that much of the debate this afternoon, especially from opponents of the bill, was more or less beside the point. Those speeches might very appropriately have been made if the bill called for the establishment of divorce as something new, or for its abolition. But divorce is already an established fact in this country. The bill, I submit, does not touch the es-