

why women should be given the same privilege.

Mr. GOOD: Does the minister think it right for one section of the Canadian people—and, I take it a minor section—to impose its ideas forcibly upon the majority of Canadians on a question of this kind?

Mr. LAPOINTE: I do not know what my hon. friend argues or insinuates; I do not want to force my views on anybody. I think however that I have as much right as my hon. friend to express my opinions, and I am merely availing myself of that right. My views on this subject may not please the hon. member and I do not intend to attempt to force them upon him. But I hope that he will not try to prevent me from expressing them.

Mr. GOOD: I was misunderstood; perhaps I may be allowed to repeat the question. Is it right to impose upon the majority of the provinces of Canada who are now recognizing and sanctioning divorce, a restriction which is accepted and believed in by a minority of the Canadian people?

Mr. LAPOINTE: I do not agree with the hon. member as to where the majority or the minority lies in this case. My hon. friend has already offered resolutions in this House for which he claimed the support of the majority of the Canadian people; and really I know he is wrong in that assumption, for the majority of the Canadian people are against some of the proposals he has advanced. He may be wrong even in this instance. So far as the argument of my hon. friend from Centre Winnipeg (Mr. Woodsworth) is concerned, that the women of the west should be treated as the women of the east are treated, I do not know what he means; the women of the west have exactly the same right to come and apply to this parliament for divorce as have the women of Quebec or Ontario.

Mr. McMASTER: At greater expense.

Mr. LAPOINTE: At greater expense if you consider the cost of bringing witnesses. But that does not at all take from the force of my argument that they are absolutely on the same legal footing.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Technically they are equal, but in practice they are not.

Mr. MARTELL: As a matter of law can a person domiciled in a province which has a divorce court come to the Senate of Canada for a divorce, and would the powers of the Senate be co-equal with those of the provincial court in that respect?

Mr. LAPOINTE: I have no doubt that that is the case. Now, is it not a tragedy—the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcell) has referred to it—to witness in this House the number of divorces increasing every year, as has been the case for the last three or four years? We are spending hours every week enacting legislation on divorce, legislation which always contains the words, "right to marry again." We were proud of our record in that matter until very recently, but we seem to envy the record of our neighbours to the south, and we are going well in the direction of equalizing our record with theirs. Everybody speaks of equality and equalization; it seems we are working in that direction. I say it is a tragedy, and I absolutely agree with the hon. member for West York (Sir Henry Drayton) as to the necessity of preserving the home; and that everything that breaks up the home is an evil in itself. When we talk of this question of divorce we very often forget the children. I claim that when a man and his wife have children their position is changed; they owe themselves to their family and to their children; they are not free if they were free before. But nobody speaks about the children. Parents cannot divest themselves of that duty, and certain considerations which I have heard expressed this afternoon must disappear when this moral and social question, so important to society, is considered.

As I have said, I believe that divorce is an evil, and that we should not increase the facilities to secure it. I am opposed to the bill for that reason. I am in favour of the amendment, because I know that if the right to marry again is taken away from applicants for divorce we shall not have to pass so many divorce bills every week during session of parliament. If the amendment carries I know that it will be a very effective remedy for the evil. I will vote for the amendment. As to the amendment the hon. member for West-York (Sir Henry Drayton) said he would move, in view of the fact that, it would partly restrict the evil I think I will support it if the amendment of the hon. member for Lotbiniere is not carried.

Mr. HOEY: If this amendment carried, would the province of Manitoba, which now has its divorce court, still have the right to grant divorces in that province with the right to marry again?

Mr. LAPOINTE: No.

Mr. HOEY: This amendment would apply to the whole Dominion.