

Private Bills

Company Limited, be considered at the same time in committee of the whole?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE—THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 41, respecting Interprovincial Pipe Line Company.—Mr. Bennett.

Bill No. 42, to incorporate Peace River Transmission Company Limited.—Mr. Murray (Cariboo).

SECOND READINGS—SENATE BILLS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There are several divorce bills on today's order paper. Shall they all be taken under the one motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. H. W. Winkler (Lisgar) moved that the following bills be read the second time:

Bill No. 94, for the relief of Jane Louttit Dormer.—Mr. Winkler.

Bill No. 95, for the relief of Roger Loisselle.—Mr. Winkler.

Bill No. 96, for the relief of William Oscar Gilbert.—Mr. Winkler.

Bill No. 97, for the relief of George Magner.—Mr. Winkler.

Bill No. 98, for the relief of Teodora Szablity Szentirmai.—Mr. Winkler.

Bill No. 99, for the relief of Arthur Piche.—Mr. Winkler.

Motion agreed to and bills read the second time.

DIVORCE JURISDICTION

EXCHEQUER COURT TO HAVE JURISDICTION IN ACTIONS ORIGINATING IN QUEBEC AND NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre) moved the second reading of Bill No. 3, to provide for the jurisdiction of the Exchequer Court of Canada in matters of divorce.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as the house will realize, this bill is identical in form to one which I have moved on two or three previous occasions. The purpose of the bill is to free parliament from the necessity of processing divorce bills. I am sure it is correct for me to say that no one in this house likes or approves of the fact that we are handling divorce in this parliament of Canada at all.

I readily recognize the opinions that have been expressed on former occasions about divorce, and as to whether or not the passing of this bill would seem to be an acceptance of the fact of divorce; but I would point out that, whether we like it or not, we already have a divorce court in Canada for people

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

in those provinces where there are no provincial divorce courts. The provinces concerned of course are Quebec and Newfoundland. I for one respect the desire of the majority of the people in those provinces that there should be no divorce within the confines of those provinces.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that we in this parliament also have certain rights. In particular I feel that we have the right to be free from the necessity of constituting ourselves as a divorce court. I am sure that we are not proud of the manner in which we conduct our court proceedings when we become a divorce court. As a matter of fact unless some of us, particularly in this group, choose to make an examination of these cases, they go through in batches. We have not really got into high gear yet, so far as this session is concerned. If my arithmetic is correct, I believe that so far we have given second reading to only 74 of these divorce bills. However, we did 38 of them at one crack, 30 at another, and just a few moments ago we gave second reading to six more. As the session goes on this number will probably amount to 250 or 300, if the records of former sessions are any indication.

Now, as I say, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have in Canada, here in the parliament of Canada, a divorce court, to which persons of the provinces where there are no divorce courts have access. Hon. members concur in that fact every time these divorces are put through in this House of Commons. It seems to me that it would not be altering that situation by one iota, so far as principle is concerned, so far as recognizing the fact of divorce is concerned, if we were to decide, on the one hand, that we are not going to establish divorce courts in the provinces where they do not want them—the fact of the matter is we could not do it, but let it be clear that we do not want to—but on the other hand, let us exercise what is our undoubted right to transfer the handling of these divorces out of this parliament, out of this building, and put them into some other court, some other building, right here in the city of Ottawa. In other words, my suggestion is that the place where this job is done should be transferred from this building to another building a few hundred yards away, at the same time making it crystal clear that we do not ask that this be done within the boundaries of the provinces where divorce courts are not desired.

It is on that basis that I make again, through the medium of presenting this bill, the suggestion that the Exchequer Court of Canada be given authority to deal with divorces from the provinces where divorce courts are not established.