

and simple misdemeanors were capital offences. Still, it must be remembered that we owe our legislation to the laws of England; and in the mother country, both in the House of Lords and in the divorce courts they have been careful, in dealing with these cases, to be governed by precedent. Divorce has been allowed in England on the same principle that applies to separations in the Province of Quebec. I have been told heretofore that I am opposed to divorce. So far I am opposed to it, and I have acted strictly, as I believe, in accordance with principle. I believe that we should have certain rules to guide us—that we should not be a law unto ourselves, and defy precedents and the authority of law and of legal principles. We should certainly have some rule to guide us, some basis on which we should act in all cases. According to our present system you could bring in a Bill asking for divorce for any cause you please, even to incompatibility of temper. There is no principle on which you could throw out such a Bill on its introduction, no basis for deciding against it, if my hon. friend's contention is right. If we must have these divorce cases in the Senate we must, to do justice and equity, exercise the functions of a court, to which it should have been relegated long ago. Let us understand that we are to be governed by certain fixed principles, and will not permit laxity in granting divorces, which could not fail to have a most demoralizing effect upon the country. Every one is supposed to know the law and to be governed by it, yet we come here and say that we exercise the paramount power of Parliament, that we are superior to the law, that we are legislators, and that our opinions, our wisdom and discretion are paramount. I say our power should be exercised on known and intelligent principles. If people can come here under the impression that they can rely upon their influence with members of Parliament, bound by no principles or precedents, to get a divorce, it will lead to a great deal of laxity, and we will be inundated with petitions. If we must deal with divorce here I shall endeavor to do my duty, as I have always done, in the state of life to which God has called me. I know my infirmities—perhaps not all of them—I cannot see myself as others

see me, but whatever I undertake to do I try to do to the best of my ability. I have no objection to acting on the divorce committee, conscious, as I am, I have self-esteem enough to believe that the interests of morality and of society and the rights of all parties will not be injured by having me on the committee.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I am glad to hear the conclusion of my hon. friend's speech, because I was beginning to fear that he was opposing the motion I had made to place him on the committee. It flatters me, also, I would like to say to the House, to find that the hon. gentleman remembers so well all the doctrines which he says I advocated last Session on the subject of divorce. Though I am not on this committee, I do not think that has much to do with the question, but since, from the conclusion of my hon. friend's speech, it appears that he is willing to act on the committee, of course I am glad to see that he agrees with the nomination I have made, although he may not have agreed altogether with the basis on which the selections are made. I am happy to see him on the committee, and the committee, I think, may be pleased to hear from my hon. friend such a distinct enunciation of the course he intends to pursue in dealing with the subject of divorce. It is a good thing to know beforehand what may be expected, and my hon. friend has given us a very good exposition of his views on divorce. As to the idea of provincialism in the formation of the committee, the principle adopted was not intended to be irrefragable, and to apply, under all circumstances, whatever might be the merits of the parties. This subject of divorce may be brought up in respect of a resident of any one Province of the Dominion; and, other things being equal, it appeared to me a fair and reasonable proposition that the committee should be framed so as to represent all the Provinces. I laid down no principle about it; I advocated no provincialism; I recognized the general principle that, so far as practicable, all the Provinces of the Dominion should be represented on every committee, provided always, of course, the hon. members are suitable for the purpose, which I fancy every hon. member of the House is for any committee. That being admitted,