

Mr. GUTHRIE: What is the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: That the Bill be referred back to the committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills for further consideration.

Mr. CURRIE: The reason given by the hon. member for South Perth (Mr. Steele) why this motion should be adopted was that the procedure with regard to this Bill was irregular and he wanted it referred back to the committee of this House. A committee of this House cannot cure that irregularity, which he said had taken place, and in consequence of which he asks that this Bill should go back to the Private Bills Committee.

Mr. KNOWLES: He said it was not a point of order.

Mr. CURRIE: He said that the proceedings were irregular and that for that reason he wanted the Bill sent back. But the reasons which he advanced, in view of what the Speaker has said cannot possibly be an argument for referring it back. I think the hon. member for South Perth would be justified in withdrawing his motion after the statements made by Mr. Speaker. Let us proceed with this Bill because we have only a few days more. There will be only one or more occasions when this Bill can be taken up by the House. Can it be said that there is no attempt to block this Bill? It is whispered all around that every attempt has been made to block it. Let us proceed to the third reading. Withdraw the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion submitted by the hon. member (Mr. Steele) must be regarded as an amendment to the motion which was put: that I do now leave the Chair. Mr. Edwards moved:

That I do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 126, letter 2T of the Senate intitled "An Act for relief of Albert Edwin Gordon."

Mr. Steele moves in amendment, seconded by Mr. Bennett (Simcoe):

That I do not now leave the Chair, but that the order of the House for the House to go into Committee on Bill No. 126, letter 2T of the Senate, intituled "An Act for the relief of Albert Edwin Gordon" be discharged, and that the Bill be referred back to the Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills for further consideration.

Mr. W. H. BENNETT: As the seconder of the amendment that the Bill be referred back to the committee, I will not touch upon the point that has been raised by the Chairman of the Committee, but for other reasons I think that this Bill should be referred back. I have been a member of this

House for a number of years, and for the first time in my life have I known an important divorce case to be brought down to the House and members absolutely forbidden to read the evidence. Why this departure from the old-established rule? My hon. friend from North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) says: "Who says you must not read the evidence?" Who will tell me where to get copies of the evidence to read it? Copies of the evidence are always printed and they are always placed in the boxes, but for some extraordinary reasons the evidence in this case has not been brought down and handed to members. It is true that I have seen in the possession of some of the elderly members of the committee copies of the evidence, but to be allowed to lay hands, much less eyes, upon these holy things is utterly impossible. I see one now lying upon a table before me—I will not point out which table—ear-marked and thumb-marked at the top of every page where there may be something or wherever there may appear to be something against this unfortunate woman. I am a member of this committee, and I have heard the case discussed ad libitum. I was told that if I would wander up to the committee I would find out what the mysterious parts of the evidence were in this case. I wandered up and heard the evidence discussed. On that committee there are sixty members apparently interested in what goes on at that committee, but on the occasion when this matter was decided there were but only seventeen members sufficiently interested in it to be present. The committee was almost evenly divided—there was only one of a majority in favour of granting the divorce. Is it not absurd to ask that a divorce be granted when only seventeen members, or a third of the committee were prepared to go and hear the matter discussed, and when, after it was discussed to a certain degree, there was only a majority of one in favour of it? I heard enough of the evidence to convince me that I should not vote to permit this suppliant for a divorce to be cut loose to marry any decent woman, as I believe his present wife to be. The man knew it would never do to give a point-blank denial to the evidence of this woman who had presented herself, and whose evidence, according to the committee and from what I heard, was of such a nature and such a class that he did not dare to contradict it.

Let us take another phase of this estimable party who is applying for a divorce. I think that of this unhappy marriage there