

Private Bills—Divorce

which we are asked to dissolve these marriages, but if I heard the hon. member for Victoria, B.C., correctly I understood him to make the statement, "I believe there is collusion in them." That is a most amazing statement for him to make, along with the admission that he voted for them.

Mr. Fairey: Mr. Chairman, I said "I suspected from the nature of the evidence there might be collusion."

Mr. Regier: In that case that puts a slightly different light on it. However, coming back to the integrity of this evidence, I notice that of the very few cases which have been contested—I think about half a dozen cases in all this winter have been contested—three cases have not made the grade, and it makes me begin to wonder, if these men and women with whom we are at present concerned had the wherewithal and contested these cases, how many would manage to make the grade through this house and through our committee.

I asked one of these attorneys concerned how much it would cost me to get the type of divorce with which we are now dealing. "Well," he said, "I will tell you. If it is an open and shut case, and if we have no arguments anywhere down the line, my minimum fee would be \$1,250." I was horrified, and he turned to me and he said: "Well, we have to pay the government so much"—I forget the exact figure, but it was about \$300-odd—"and then there is this fee and that fee." I said: "That is your minimum, \$1,250?" And he said "yes" and he added, "That is \$250 less than what most of my fellow lawyers are charging."

Now, imagine a husband or a wife in any one of these cases being served with a notice of divorce and facing a fee like that in order to contest it. In all likelihood the marriage has broken up in any case, and who wants to spend \$1,000 to defend a broken home. These circumstances throw a great shadow of suspicion on all this evidence on the basis of which we are supposed to dissolve these marriages.

I have heard a rumour, in fact it is more than a rumour for I read an item in this regard in a newspaper some time ago, to the effect that there is a possibility of the other place being given sole authority to deal with these matters. I hope the government will never seriously accept such a suggestion because what has been revealed this winter should be enough to convince the government that that is not a solution. I cannot support these measures because I have lost all

[Mr. Regier.]

faith in the type of evidence which is being given to committees of this house or of the other place.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Chairman, I hope there will be a vote on this before six o'clock. I take the statement of the hon. member for Victoria, B.C., on his responsibility as a member of this house. He states that he suspects collusion. I therefore propose to vote against this, and I call for a recorded vote.

The Deputy Chairman: Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. Harris: Mr. Chairman, I must say that I have had some information this afternoon that I did not expect to obtain. I happen to be perhaps the only member of the house who has appeared before the Senate committee on divorce when Ontario was in a position in which some of the other provinces appear to be at the present time. I must say that my hon. friend's remarks on the charges being made lead me to think things have improved in that particular field.

Mr. Knowles: There has been a lot of inflation since then.

Mr. Harris: Yes, I suppose so, and a lot of good things have happened, at least under the Liberal government. But it does seem to me, if I may raise a point of order, Mr. Chairman, that the Leader of the Opposition and others who have spoken on the matter that you ruled out of order are perhaps suggesting something which might be considered by the house with respect to any responsibility we might have in the matter, such as suggested by the hon. member for Prince Albert, namely in the role of a Queen's proctor. It is at least a thought to bear in mind for future occasions and I think it could perhaps be debated if one felt so inclined on the estimates of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Knowles: Well done.

Mr. Harris: Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, may I call it six o'clock?

The Deputy Chairman: Shall I report progress and ask leave to sit again?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Clause stands.

Progress reported.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Applewhaite): The time allotted for private and public bills having expired, the house will resume consideration at eight o'clock of the business which was interrupted at five o'clock.

At six o'clock the house took recess.