

absence of such evidence are we to condemn her and her children, to put the brand of Cain upon their brows and to tarnish their reputations for life? Surely hon. gentlemen will see that in this case, where the committee divided 8 to 9 in one House and 3 to 2 in the other, we must be careful before we sanction a measure which will dishonour the name of the woman who has been so brutally used by this petitioner. They even brought in the fact that on one occasion this woman took a drink of liquor. She took a drink of liquor. Could the process of defamation go farther? Every scintilla of evidence is raked up to show that she even took a drink. That shows the combing—the fine combing—of all the acts of this woman to enable the petitioner to get around his obligation to pay her \$1,200, or \$800, a year as provided for by the agreement between them. "If Albert Edwin Gordon," speaking without reading, "discovers at any time after this deed of separation is executed and delivered, that there is anything in Mrs. Gordon's conduct which will entitle him to get a divorce, her alimony ceases." It is a splendid thing for him to get out of this \$800 a year if this Parliament will help him. He will be relieved of the payment of this money and the woman will have to go out into the world to support herself and her children. What a splendid man this is, purporting to come here with clean hands to ask Parliament, the highest court in this Dominion, to give him freedom upon such evidence as he was presented and in order that he may save himself the payment of \$800 a year. That agreement seems to have been conceived and devised to entrap this woman. It was done with the mean, astute purpose of setting a deliberate trap to get this woman into such a place that if he could find out anything about her he might be relieved of the alimony and of all conjugal rights and duties. The whole thing looks suspicious. Let us not lose sight of the character of this man who seeks relief here, as his character is shown by the evidence. This man ought to be in jail for the crime he was a party to against his wife. Why was he not prosecuted? He should, be prosecuted now. Clean hands, Mr. Speaker—how can this Parliament grant this man's petition on the evidence which is not denied. The woman was in fear of her life. With a man who is battering her up against the wall, pulling her hair and assaulting her continuously, a woman is not a free agent. She cannot be condemned because she

would tell one story to-day and another to-morrow. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Northrup) says that she fell on a hair pin. Yes, knocked down by her husband. That is the evidence; there is no question about that. For the last nine or ten months this man, although bound to pay this woman money, has not paid her a dollar. He has defaulted on his own agreement in addition to his other foibles and shortcomings. He refuses to pay her but he has plenty of money to pay somebody to procure this evidence. She is not in a position to take steps to secure legal redress. She has no means. She is absolutely helpless unless she gets the money that he owes her but will not pay. I submit that under these circumstances, and having regard to the doubt as to the evidence and the fact that the committee in one House divided 3 to 2 and in the other 8 to 9, to the fact that many hon. gentlemen have not read the evidence and to the further fact that my hon. friend from Hastings (Mr. Northrup) has condemned the practice of asking the Parliament of this country to grant divorces, the House should hesitate before voting in favour of this Bill. The hon. member for Hastings has made the argument that this House is not competent to deal with a matter like this and yet he asks this House to give judgment when many hon. members have not read the evidence. I believe the day has not yet come in Canada when a matter of this gravity will be decided by Parliament without the members having a personal knowledge of the evidence. I am strongly opposed to and will vote against this Bill in all its stages.

Mr. GRAHAM: When this Bill was up several evenings ago I voted to have it referred back to the Private Bills Committee because members had not read the evidence. Some of them, I regret to say have not done so yet. I have read nearly every bit of evidence and I am more convinced than ever that this petitioner is not entitled to succeed on that evidence.

Mr. THOBURN: It was not my intention to go into the merits of this case until the Bill was in committee, but after hearing the statements of the hon. member for North Perth (Mr. Morphy), I feel it my duty to this House to give them some information. Having had the privilege of hearing the evidence, seeing the petitioner and the respondent, and hearing the matter thoroughly threshed out in the Private Bills Committee, I could come to no other