

is immoral. It simply grants a sort of justice to those people who do not believe that when there are grave reasons for breaking the marriage tie they are morally guilty in seeking the annulment of that tie.

Mr. J. J. HUGHES (Kings, P.E.I.): If this bill becomes law it does not in my opinion recognize divorce, does not establish divorce, and does not say it is a good and praiseworthy thing. As I view it, it simply says that the injured wife shall have the same standing and the same rights before the courts of the western provinces that the injured husband has now, and that appeals to my sense of justice. I do not think we are opening the gates to divorce by legislation of this kind or that we are encouraging it in any way. If I thought we were I would vote against the bill, but I simply cannot vote to place a wife in an inferior position, and say she shall not have the same rights before the courts of this country as a husband has. Therefore, I will either not vote at all or vote for the bill. I intend to do my duty as a member of parliament, and therefore I will remain for the division.

Mr. THOMAS VIEN (Lotbinière): If the proposed legislation should have the effect suggested by the hon. member (Mr. Hughes) not to increase the possibility of a greater number of divorces in the future, I would be quite willing to let it pass at least with a tacit silence, to be logical and consistent with myself. But my hon. friend says: If I were sure that this was going to increase the number of divorces, or increase the facilities to obtain divorces, I would vote against it. I think a minute's reflection will convince my hon. friend that that is absolutely the effect of the bill. If this bill becomes law not only will a man in the western provinces be allowed to obtain a divorce on grounds that are absolutely recognized to-day, but this right will be given to a lady as well.

Mr. ARTHURS: Why not?

Mr. VIEN: I will come to that in a minute. I am now touching the question of the number of divorces, whether it will increase the number or give a greater facility to obtain a divorce, whether the evil will be greater or will be less, or will be the same. No man who gives a moment's serious reflection to the piece of legislation which we are now studying will fail to realize immediately that if it were enacted the number of divorces as well as the facilities for obtaining them would be greater than they are at present.

Mr. HOEY: In order to substantiate the truth of his statement, the hon. member should give us the figures with respect to the Maritime provinces and of western Canada.

Mr. VIEN: I am not talking of the Maritime provinces but of the four western provinces, and I do not need to go into any definite details. Why is this legislation before us? Is it not brought forward for the purpose of enabling certain persons who cannot obtain divorce to secure it more easily than is now possible?

Mr. BOYS: Is it not purely and absolutely a financial question? The applicant comes to this House and gets the divorce, if she has money, but if she has not sufficient money to come here she does not get it.

Mr. VIEN: My hon. friend will agree with me that at present there is no federal legislation respecting divorce; there is no law of divorce on our federal statutes.

Mr. BOYS: No, but the recognised custom is that people who can come to this House may get a divorce on the ground, with very few exceptions, of adultery only. There are a few isolated exceptions, but that is the recognized ground; and this legislation enables the applicant to get relief in the province in which she lives, which she can now get in Ottawa if she has the money.

Mr. VIEN: The fact is that we have no federal divorce law.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): Every divorce bill that we pass here is a federal law.

Mr. VIEN: They are private bills in every instance; there is no standing federal legislation on divorce. There is no public law on the matter. Every private bill is judged on its own merits by the Senate, and every application for divorce must be separately presented to parliament. But if this legislation is carried there will be in future a general law governing divorces in the provinces concerned. Hon. gentlemen who have spoken before me on this question have all recognized that divorce is a social evil, and they have suggested that if there were anything in their power that could be done to restrict rather than to enlarge the facilities with which divorce is obtained, they would do it. Well, to achieve the aim and purpose of the hon. member for West Calgary (Mr. Shaw), it seems to me that this legislation which is now before us is not fitted. The hon. member wishes to equalize the facilities with which women can obtain divorce, with