

of adultery alone. That is all I am asking by this bill.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, since last session, since this matter was brought up in parliament last year, I have received resolutions—hundreds of resolutions—from women's organizations approving of this principle. I have received them from the locals of the United Farm Women of Alberta and the other provinces. I have received resolutions of a similar character from the Local Council of Women of my city, and I understand the National Council of Women have made representations along that line to the Prime Minister himself. Hundreds of women's organizations, not only women's organizations but men's organizations also in western Canada, have approved of the principle of this bill. And so I think parliament should now in this case constitute itself a true reflection of what matured public opinion is, at least in western Canada. I therefore recommend to the House that the second reading of this bill be now agreed to.

Mr. C. A. FOURNIER (Bellechasse): Should this legislation be enacted, one cannot help but realize that the tragic extent to which we condone the loosening of the marriage tie is a lowering sign of our times, a great modern evil, a false reasoning threatening our best institutions, striking at our noblest hopes.

Although this bill does not challenge the convictions and feelings of the people whom I have the honour to represent, it involves a general principle that for my part, as a member of this House, I cannot see submitted to parliament without registering my protest. And in so doing, Sir, I ask you and hon. gentlemen to accept my remarks as a starter to establish a fulcrum for reform in voicing righteous sentiments and as a live coal from faith's altar to touch the community's conscience and energize into determined action a purpose long latent in every good heart—the heart that desires that the evil of divorce, with all the wickedness it implies and all the wretchedness it entails, should wither away like the short-lived, fraudulent affections that foster it and linger only as a memory of what was once a mockery of Christian faith, and live and love.

What trespass have we committed, of what sin are we guilty, that we have to face the accusation of divorce at this session? Think of the harm that infects the divorced home, the deceit and defection, the misery without measure, sorrows innumerable, wasted lives, perverted careers, children bereft, their sacred rights of parents' united care parceled out or denied them, husband and wife divided,

not by exalted death but by a dry decision, whether of courts or parliament. To what degree this harm is hindering the better impulse of the race, to what extent the sorrows of law widowers and law-widowed wives and forsaken children is increasing, no one knows.

Mr. SHAW: May I suggest to the hon. gentleman?—divorce is not a disease, divorce is a remedy for a disease.

Mr. FOURNIER: In the very case now before the House the remedy sought is for a few affected ones; but the law is offered to all. To what degree this harm is hindering the better impulse of the race, to what extent the sorrows of law widowers and law-widowed wives and forsaken children are increasing, no one knows. To what degrading depth lies the evil which accompanies that harm and sorrow, no one can tell. Legalized lechery, adultery by due process of law, concubinage upheld by the constitution, all aspects of present day divorce, being sanctioned, flourishing in rank growth and their foul affects rise, like the exhalations of a noisome slough, which scatters to the winds the propagating plague that poisons the nation.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: May I ask whether in the opinion of the hon. member, and under these circumstances, or under any circumstances, it is right for this parliament to pass a divorce bill?

Mr. FOURNIER: No.

Mr. SPENCER: Has the hon. member ever protested the passage of any divorce bill in this House?

Mr. FOURNIER: That is exactly what I am now trying to do, and if my hon. friend will possess his soul in patience and listen quietly to what I have to say I shall give him some sentiments to take home with him. Sir, I have not the distinction of belonging to the legal fraternity, but I have no hesitation in declaring from my seat in this House that divorce is contrary to all authority. It is contrary, first, to the law of nature, from which all stable laws must come. I speak not of the nature of brutes, which couple themselves by hazard, but of the nature of men, and as a man speaking to manly men. In the first line of the first page of the law of nature you will find the institution of marriage, which existed before all society. It is anterior and superior to all laws. Civil law can regulate marriage, but marriage is not a simple contract; and the first cry of natural law came from the first cradle. Even Jeremy Bentham, an apostle of divorce, has said: