

Private Bills—Divorce

rise in my mind to a suggestion that he perhaps could not get the evidence from her—I do not know. That is all I have to say. But I would like to see the committee to which this bill will go give it at least the most sincere and considered opinion and consideration that they are able to give it.

Mr. R. R. Knight (Saskatoon): I agree with the hon. member for Inverness-Richmond (Mr. Carroll) with regard to this case. I have read the evidence carefully, and it was more or less of a legal point between two lawyers. The hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Croll) has the advantage over some of us in that direction.

I can perhaps answer the question which the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) put to the hon. member for Inverness-Richmond as to whether there was any suspicion of collusion in this particular case. I of course am not qualified to judge, but I did notice that in this case a separation had been granted by the civil courts some years before the divorce action was brought. When the separation was applied for the question of adultery was not one of the reasons given for such separation. On the strength of that one of the lawyers did allege condonation in this particular case. I think that answers the question asked by my hon. friend.

Mr. Fulton: Very strong suspicion.

Mr. Knight: I am not qualified to go into this whole matter, but I want to point out that there was considerable doubt in the minds of some of the senators who adjudged this case.

In reply to the hon. member for Spadina, I would say that the acting chairman felt that an adjournment should be granted in this case if it were asked for. It was asked for, but I would point out to my hon. friend that the adjournment was for only twenty-four hours, or one day, and that the lawyer acting for that particular party felt that that time was not sufficiently long, nor did he feel that his client could afford on the spur of the moment to get the money to handle the necessary expenses.

The acting chairman also said—and this again is a legal point—that he thought the petition had been very poorly drawn. The Hon. Mr. Kinley is reported in the evidence as saying: "I suggest that the evidence is pretty weak." On that basis, sir, I think there is reasonable doubt in the matter. I would have said nothing about the particular case if it had not been for the statement of the hon. member for Spadina and the question of the hon. member for Kamloops. But as a matter of fact, I do want to draw the attention of the public to the cost of this bill and

[Mr. Carroll.]

its mates. I have made some investigation into the cost of the printing of these particular bills and the evidence, and also as to the disposition of the bills and the evidence when so printed. This particular bill, and others like it, would appear to cost for printing, presentation and distribution somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$125. I am informed this bill is one of 590 which have been passed from January 1, 1949, to the end of December, 1950. I am also told that some of these fees are decreased from the regular fee of \$210 to the sum of \$125. I was curious to find that the amount to which the fee was dropped was always \$125, and I was told that that is the estimate of what one of these divorce cases costs by way of paper, printing, distribution and other details.

It is interesting to note the sum total of costs of this bill and others like it. I have here a statement supplied me by the Clerk of the House in which he has set down information which he, in turn, received from the Clerk in the other place. In answer to my question as to what was the total cost of printing the evidence, and of the paper on which it is printed, between January 1, 1949, and December, 1950, it is pointed out that the cost of printing and paper for evidence in divorce cases as taken from accounts submitted by the Senate for payment, January 1, 1949, to December 31, 1950, was \$91,926.29. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that is a large amount of money to transfer to the wastepaper baskets, which I believe are their common destinations.

Then, as to distribution, it is interesting to note that a copy of this evidence is not available to the public; and I am glad of that. I notice however that twenty-five copies of the bill and the evidence pertaining thereto are preserved in the care of the Clerk of the Senate over a long period of time, presumably for the purpose of having it available for those who would require it. If the bill is not available to the public, then I cannot see the point of hiding away twenty-five copies of it. I cannot imagine how it could be of any use, if it cannot be given to the public. While this is not a large item, yet I suggest it is a large amount of money to be spent in this direction.

Mr. Lennard: May I ask the hon. member a question? Did the hon. member in the return receive any statistics showing what the applicant paid for appearing here?

Mr. Knight: Yes, I believe I have that. The parliamentary fee—and I should imagine that is the information the hon. member wants—payable on divorce petitions, under rule 140, amounts to \$210.