

court, and that is the end of the matter as far as Roman Catholics are concerned. The course generally followed in Quebec, and I presume in many other countries—it was followed in England for generations—was that parties who did not agree between themselves would apply to the court for separation as to bed and board. A finding is always made for alimony to the wife and for the maintenance and care of the children. Nothing of that kind is done by the federal parliament, and that is our strongest objection against divorce. It is unnatural and immoral and, with no disrespect to the opinions of those who believe otherwise, it is contrary to what I would call the well being of the state, because it saps the very foundation of home life. With that going on, what will become of the state in a very short time? The other day I cited some figures showing that in the United States in a period of fifty years prior to 1925, 6,500,000 people, including the children, had been affected by divorce. If we continue this state of affairs, where shall we find ourselves later on?

I shall not deal particularly with the case under discussion, but the hon. member for Labelle has disclosed a most extraordinary condition of affairs. He has pointed out that evidence was adduced by a minor, a young girl of fifteen years of age, who was the chief witness in the case and who was called upon to testify against her father. If that is the procedure which the people of this country wish to uphold in the parliament of Canada, I have never seen anything like it, although I have sat in this house for thirty-two sessions. Such a procedure is contrary to public polity and to the interest of the state.

As I said a moment ago, we do not want and we have never asked for divorce in Quebec. It is imposed upon us, and the unfortunate people in the present case, if they secure their divorce and wish to remarry, must leave the Catholic church; they cannot remain within its fold because they will be debarred from remarriage. For all these reasons I am glad that the opportunity has been offered me once more to direct the serious attention of the members of parliament to the remedy which must be applied to put an end to the most extraordinary state of affairs that exists at present with regard to divorce, and I hope the legal minds of the house will find a solution when next session comes round.

Mr. EVANS: Certain views which have been expressed this afternoon regarding the case before us make one wonder what a federation, or a confederation, as we call it, consists of; and a feature of the inconsistency

of our position as a parliament has been well brought out by the hon. member for Labelle. We have before us a case of a woman belonging to the Catholic church and yet no Roman Catholic in the house will sponsor the bill. The inconsistency lies in this parliament insisting on granting divorces for certain provinces while some provinces deny the right of parliament to grant divorces to those who belong to particular churches, to interfere, as I believe the hon. member said, with the civil and religious rights and social status, chiefly of the children. It was not made very clear by the hon. member whether he intended that those civil and religious rights of Quebec should extend to the other provinces of Canada.

Mr. BOURASSA: No.

Mr. EVANS: His actions are not consistent with his words, then, because not long ago I remember quite well his declaring in the house in an impassioned speech that the western provinces had no right to their own natural resources without the rights of the minorities in those provinces being safeguarded in connection with the separate schools. I am wondering how, under such circumstances, parliament can be a parliament for the whole of Canada. There does not seem to be any consistency in such a situation. But it all amounts to this: Is it not time now for parliament to enact a law that will give the right to Ontario to deal with its divorce cases? As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre pointed out the other day, it is quite within the competence of the government at this session of parliament to introduce a bill to provide for that. Why not do so here and now before parliament prorogues and end all this inconsistency and confusion?

Mr. BOURASSA: I am sure my hon. friend from Rosetown does not want to be unfair, and I want to be absolutely fair to him. May I say this just as a matter of personal explanation, although I think it is quite out of order. I never suggested in any way, shape or form that any piece of legislation should be enacted by parliament on any question whatever—I am generalizing it—because of the rights of certain minorities. What I have stated and what I repeat is that parliament, having pledged itself in writing and in law to certain things, cannot undo those things without redeeming its pledges to whatever parties are concerned, whether they are majorities or minorities. That is all there is to the question of the return of the natural resources.