

manner that she describes on the two occasions that she has sworn to, would be open to great reproach and a person whose evidence should be suspected. But her evidence is so conclusively contradicted that no reliance can be placed on it. She admits that ladies frequently went to that office. Furthermore, she had not only to stoop down two or three feet to look through the slit, but it was proved that it was covered with a flap, and in order to see what was going on in the room, she must have put her fingers in and moved it aside. Another fact which shows that her evidence is not consistent with the truth is this: she brings here a photograph of Mrs. Clapp, for what purpose I cannot tell, unless she did not know the respondent at all and this was put in her hands in order that she might be able to identify her. It was proved conclusively that the photograph was never taken in that way, that a photograph was taken of Mrs. Clapp and her two children, and that this photograph was prepared by removing the impression of the two children. Mrs. Roehrig's conduct from beginning to end is not of a character which would lead this House to place any reliance on her evidence. A true woman shrinks from any appearance of impropriety. Therefore, I attach no importance to her evidence, even if it stood alone; but it is contradicted by Mrs. Clapp and Mr. Dorland. If Mrs. Clapp was the abandoned woman that she is described, would Mr. Dorland have come here from the United States to perjure himself and shield her? It is the last thing that he would do. The credibility of Dorland is unimpeached. The sincerity of the man brought conviction to the minds of most members of the Committee that he was speaking the truth, and upon his evidence there rested no suspicion of untruthfulness. Then we have Mrs. Clapp brought back and examined, and she contradicts every charge made against her. After she was driven from her home, a detective was employed to follow her, but he gives no evidence that establishes any guilt on her part. He tried to impose on the Committee by saying that he saw Dorland and Mrs. Clapp going up some steps to a door. Mrs. Clapp explained that it was a respectable place where she was visiting, and this man may have gone to the door but never went into the house with

her. The detective was paid a sum of money to hound this woman, but he could not prove anything against her—he brings nothing that tells against the character of the respondent. Then we have Pingle's evidence: that any woman would go all the way to Palmerston for the purpose which is charged against her by the petitioner is too absurd to be believed. It cannot be reconciled with common sense. The conduct of Pingle before the Committee, and the manner in which he contradicted himself over and over again, shows that he was not a reliable witness. A man of such a degraded character who would come before the Committee in the state in which he appeared, is the last one that could be believed. No woman would allow herself to be defiled by such a wreck of humanity as Pingle. It is not reasonable to suppose it, and it is not so. My hon. friend from Calgary spoke about the preponderance of evidence. We are not to be governed by that, but, according to the rule of evidence which we have adopted in this House and which has been referred to by the hon. member from Amherst, you are to give the accused the benefit of the doubt, if there is a reasonable doubt. Now is there any certainty about this case? There is no certainty; unless the hon. gentleman possesses powers beyond those with which ordinary mortals are gifted, he cannot come to the conclusion that this case is established beyond a doubt. There is doubt—serious doubt, from the character of the witnesses and the contradictory nature of the evidence. We are dealing with the most sacred relations that exist between man and woman. We are asked to sever the most holy tie that binds them together. We are asked here to stamp with infamy for life the character of this woman; I am sure you will hesitate before doing anything of the kind. You, by your decision to-day can say that there is a reasonable doubt in your minds as regards the guilt of this woman. If you so decide, you do not call this woman an adulteress, or stamp her as a perjurer. On the other hand, if you pass this Bill you not only brand her with infamy, but pronounce her, and those who have given evidence on her side, guilty of perjury. There is an easy way of getting rid of the difficulty in this case, by giving the woman the benefit of the doubt—the reasonable doubt which everyone must admit exists.