

*Divorce*

western provinces have the same right of redress from parliament that the people of Quebec and Ontario enjoy, and they have the same right of access.

Mr. HOEY: But the application to parliament for a divorce is more expensive.

Mr. LEWIS: We have the same right to apply to parliament for redress but the question of expense, as has already been pointed out, is a serious one, and in many cases is a great handicap to many people who might wish to dissolve the marriage relationship. If hon. members who object to increasing the facilities for divorce will submit legislation with the object of rendering divorce more difficult I will support it. But, as matters stand, believing that both sexes should enjoy absolute equality, I must vote for this bill which proposes to remove a handicap as far as some Canadian women are concerned.

Hon. GEORGE P. GRAHAM (Minister of Railways and Canals): I hope I shall not be considered old-fashioned. I should not like the House to think that I am ungallant where the women are concerned, but I am against divorce and anything that looks like it, and always have been. There are three subjects on which, early in life, I made up my mind. One was my opposition to capital punishment; the second that I would never object to any amount of taxation for the education of the young; finally I have been absolutely opposed to divorce under any circumstances. I will give you one or two reasons for my belief, although I do not pretend to be any better than other people. We in this country have adhered to the principle that marriage is more than a contract. Only the clergy are allowed to perform what I call the "sacrament of marriage" and at the conclusion of nearly every marriage you will hear these words pronounced:

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

I am a firm believer in the principle that marriage is a moral and not a commercial contract, and I do not believe, from the moral standpoint, that this House or any other body has the right to dissolve a marriage. You will say that may be cruel. No. Where divorce is made easy the marriage vows are held lightly. Many people marry and only remain married for a few weeks, because when they do marry from momentary inspiration or hallucination they know they can be relieved from that marriage tie through the courts or, in this country, through parliament.

[Mr. Lapointe.]

Mr. FORKE: Does the hon. minister think the last words of the marriage service that he quoted have any meaning in a case such as he mentioned? If one has been deceived to begin with, what is the proof that these words are not a mockery? You admit they have never been joined together and the words have no effect; consequently you consider these words are of no avail whatever, so far as marriage is concerned.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am speaking from the inside and not the outside. Conscientiously, I believe that those who enter into the marriage vows undertake a serious obligation and the various churches attach a solemnity to these words as the last admonition.

Mr. FORKE: They ought to.

Mr. GRAHAM: And to my mind the contract is not a civil contract; it is rather a moral contract.

Mr. HOCKEN: Is it not both?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am stressing the moral side of it for my part, although it may be both, and I do not conscientiously believe that it is the right of any legislature to dissolve this contract. You will say "It is a horrible thing for a man and woman to be compelled to live together after certain discoveries have been made." Well, they are not compelled to live together. They can be legally separated and never live together again; but under those conditions they cannot marry again. If the law said that a man must live with a woman, or conversely that a woman must live with a man, under such circumstances as we know exist, then I might favour some other method of having them separated. But the law of every province and the law of the Dominion of Canada gives them the right to separate and to live separately; so that there is no argument at all on account of the fact that they do not live together.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): Who is going to support the woman?

Mr. GRAHAM: Very often the woman has the money. If hon. members will go through the records of the United States on divorce they will discover that in a great many cases the women have the money and ask for the divorce, but that is drawing me away from what I wish to say. I would point out that if no divorcé was allowed to marry again there would be mighty few divorces asked for in any country. We do not need to go into any history or statistics to prove that. That is evident on the face of it. But