

all, but rather that there is something of a spiritual union in the ideal relationship which ought to exist between husband and wife. But let me speak of the other side, that where there is no love in such a union, the position of a woman under the marriage law may be very little better than that of a legalized prostitute, and it is against that situation that I would protest. I am speaking particularly of the woman because marriage is much more vital to her than it is to the man. The position of a woman when she has lost any love for her husband, nay, even lost respect for him, is intolerable under present conditions, and there should be some way in which real relief should be granted.

Reference has been made to the effect of divorces upon children, and to me that is one of the strongest reasons for limiting divorce; but I cannot be blind to the fact that the position of children in a home where there is no real union between husband and wife is by no means an ideal one. In many respects under those circumstances the home might be broken up and the children have a happier life and better prospects for the future if taken out of a home of that character. Therefore, even considering the welfare of the children, I cannot agree that we should retain the marriage bond as inviolable under every condition imaginable.

May I suggest that this demand which is coming for a larger measure of freedom in dissolving the marriage contract is coming, at least in part, because of the higher position that is being attained by women? For many generations, for many centuries, woman has been regarded as distinctly inferior. Her legal status has been inferior; her educational opportunities have been inferior; her economic position has been inferior. In some instances she was little more than a chattel. In many cases she had few property rights, and so she was more or less under the control and dominance of her husband, come what might I am glad to think that owing to various historical developments, women are gradually obtaining a position of equality with men. If they do so, that will have to be recognized in our various public institutions.

Mr. McMASTER: It is being recognized.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Yes. This is simply another indication of the demand for such a recognition. In closing, for I do not want more than to indicate these positions, let me suggest that all the bill is asking for is this, that women in the west should be placed in the same position as women in eastern Can-

ada. Surely they ought not to be denied that right. How can anyone in eastern Canada deny westerners that right? Further, the bill asks simply that women in the west shall have the same rights as men in the west now have, and I say: How can any man who respects women and the new position of women in the world, deny women that right?

Mr. VIEN: Will the hon. member not admit that my amendment has no bearing on the effect of the bill in respect of equalization of the rights of women and men?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I would ask whether the hon. member would vote in favour of the bill in that case?

Mr. VIEN: No.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I thought so, and it seems to me that this is simply one way of evading what would be the effect of the bill.

Mr. VIEN: My hon. friend will allow me a correction. It is not an evasion of the bill. As I said in my opening remarks, I resisted the bill. The House passed judgment on the principle of the bill. This amendment has nothing to do with the principle of the bill in so far as it tends to equalize the rights of women as compared with the rights of the men. It simply adds to the bill a clause which is quite different and implementary of the bill itself.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I have already said that it seems to me the amendment proposed absolutely alters the character of divorce itself.

Mr. VIEN: Yes—not of the bill.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Not of the bill, but that does not prevent me from saying that it would seem as if this were a means of defeating the end which the bill has in view.

Mr. VIEN: It cannot be so.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Certainly it would result in the defeat of the end which the bill has in view, and if, after mature consideration, we are to decide that divorce is absolutely unchristian, immoral and should be against the laws of the land, let us decide that question on its merits. But when we have presented to us a definite bill asking simply that the women of western Canada shall be given the same rights as the women of eastern Canada; that the women of western Canada shall be given the same rights as the men of western Canada; then I do not see, if we