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THE REGISTRATION BILL.

We observe that a bill has been introduced before the Commons of Canada "to provide for the registration of marriages, births, and deaths, and for the collection and publication of Statistics." We regard this as the beginning of a new era for our country, and, if the Act, when it becomes law, is judiciously worked it will, without doubt, be of the greatest benefit. Some years since we endeavoured to arrive at some definite conclusions regarding the mortality of our country, but found that inasmuch as there was no system of registration which was in any way reliable we were unable to get anything positive, and, in consequence, relinquished the task. Hitherto a register has been kept by the clergy, but it is not correct; errors will creep in, even when the greatest care is employed to avoid them. A general registration law should be, entirely under government control, but it need not in any way prevent the exercise of the customary religious rites practised by all denominations. With many these ceremonies are regarded by believers as a matter of faith, and, therefore, cannot be interfered with; at least no law, however stringent or well administered, can supersede the carrying out of acts of faith by the people; nor is it expedient that a registration Act should possess such a tendency. In desiring, therefore, to see, which we do, the introduction of an Act which will be in its operation a civil Act, we do not in any way counsel the interference with any religious ceremony. The religious belief of the people is a matter with which the government has nothing whatever to do. The first principle of British independence is equal rights secured to all, be he prince or beggar; rights which are indisputable, and which cannot be meddled with so long as they do not contravene the law which, in the wisdom of the law-givers, is adopted for the general weal. The clergy, therefore, need not imagine that, in the introduction of a Registration Act, their customary privileges are in any way assailed. Indeed, in many parts of the country the government will be forced to seek the assist-