

some hon. gentlemen who do not belong to the same church that I do, and who have contended that the Roman Catholic Church permits such marriages. Those gentlemen are right in one sense, but wrong in another. The rule of the church is this: it does not recognize the power of civil governments to legislate upon the marriage tie, so that any legislation which deals with the validity of the marriage tie is, in my opinion, contrary to the rule of our church. That is one of the objections that I have to this Bill. Another objection is, that the law of the church prohibits such marriages, reserving the power, under certain circumstances, some of which have been referred to in this debate, to grant dispensations. The law is against such marriages, but, in exceptional cases, they are allowed, and it is in this sense only that it may be said that such marriages are allowed. But this Bill, without making any exception, legalizes these marriages. It affirms a principle which is entirely opposed to the law of the church. While the church enacts, as the general law, that "the marriage of a man with the sister of his deceased wife, etc., is prohibited," this Bill lays down a contradictory proposition as the general rule, viz.: "Marriage between a man and the sister of his deceased wife, or the widow of his deceased brother, shall be legal." Is it not clear that it is contradictory to the law of the church and of its doctrines? That is my second objection to the Bill. I question very much the propriety of admitting such a general rule—a rule which, I admit, will have the effect of affording relief to some parties, but is wrong in principle. We are all Christians, and I think it will be universally admitted that such marriages are not favorably regarded, though they may be allowed, by any religious denomination. They are not of such a character that they should be put on the same general footing as ordinary marriages. Therefore, to pass this Bill would be to lay down a principle which, as a general rule, is reprobated, I believe, by most of the Christian denominations of this country, and is opposed to the religious sentiment of the people. An hon. gentleman from Ontario remarked, to-day, that, while he has the greatest respect

for the opinions of the different churches, still he prefers his own convictions. This hon. gentleman should consider, whatever his individual opinion may be, that marriage is, in this country, admitted by all creeds to be a religious act, and, consequently, a matter which properly belongs to the different churches; and I hope that the day is far distant when it will be considered a civil matter. The best proof of that is the fact that, in all the religious denominations, the ceremony of marriage is performed by a clergyman. There is no marriage performed by civil officers, and, fortunately, civil marriage is not permitted in this country. To us Catholics, marriage is a sacrament, is of Divine institution, and is exclusively under the control of the church. I do not see how the opinions of the different churches on this question can be set aside. The Bill is also objectionable from a social point of view, but, at this late hour, I shall not enter into an argument on that branch of the subject. One hon. gentleman remarked this evening that he had heard very few arguments against the Bill; the reason was explained, even at the beginning of the debate—the late period of the session. If we had time, I should be perfectly ready to meet the advocates of the measure, and shew that there are very strong arguments against it. Is not the fact that Christianity, during eighteen centuries, has been opposed to these marriages, and that they have been allowed only under exceptional circumstances, sufficient to shew that they are objectionable? It may be contended that we live in an age of great advancement, but it must be remembered that the rules of morality are always the same and do not admit of progress. Unfortunately, instead of improving, in our age the sense of morality is diminishing, so that the tendency of the age cannot be used as an argument in favor of this measure. We are asked "why do you not vote directly against the Bill if you are opposed to it? Why do you ask for a year's delay?" My reason is, that I consider some legislation necessary to meet particular cases, although I am opposed to establishing a general rule, and, therefore, I wish to have a year's delay in order that such legislation may be introduced. What we want