

the Act of Lord Lyndhurst did not apply to the Colonies, and that, consequently, marriages of this kind were only voidable, and not void, and, unless rendered void during lifetime, the children were legitimate. Inasmuch as the only tribunal by which they could be voided was an Ecclesiastical Court, and as we have no Ecclesiastical Court in Ontario, after death such marriages were lawful and their issue legitimate. Still, that is not the proper position in which the matter, I submit, ought to be placed. If they are only voidable, if there is no Scriptural or moral law against them, I submit the prohibition which rests on no other authority than the Prayer-book of the Church of England ought to be removed, and marriages of this kind ought to be legalised. I understand that objections will be taken by some hon. members in this House to the terms of the Bill, inasmuch as it contains a clause referring to the necessity of obtaining a dispensation in any church in which a dispensation is necessary to the validity of such a marriage. If, by the rules of any particular Church, marriages of any particular kind require a dispensation in order to make them valid according to the laws of the Church, I confess I see no reason why we should interfere and prevent that state of facts continuing. I understand that some objection will be taken to the form of the Bill on the ground that there is, in fact, only one Church in which a dispensation for marriage is known and practised: namely, the Roman Catholic Church, and that it will be placing Roman Catholics in a different position to what the rest of the community are in, and making their marriages subject to the will of higher authorities. I do not know that there is any reason why we should interfere, in any way, with the particular religious or ecclesiastical regulations of the Roman Catholic Church in reference to the question of marriages. Protestant as I am, I confess I have no fear of any harm resulting from the passage of the Bill in its present form. But, inasmuch as I believe my hon. friend who has introduced the Bill intends to move that it be referred to a Select Committee, in order that its provisions may be deliberately considered and made acceptable to the various religious communities in the Dominion, and to the various Provinces and their different marriage laws, any mat-

ter of that kind is, I think, a matter of detail, which can more properly be determined upon in a Select Committee than it can be in the House. I take it that we have at present to decide whether the principle of the Bill is one that ought to be accepted or not. In voting in favour of the second reading, we determine nothing more than the principle of the Bill; unless there is something in the Bill which is manifestly wrong, and then it should be rejected *in toto*. I have, therefore, much pleasure in seconding the motion of my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier (Mr. Girouard), for the second reading of this Bill, and I trust that, if any objection of the kind I have referred to is raised, it will be disposed of elsewhere, and that this House will follow the example set by the House of Commons of England, in seven or eight different divisions, which has by large majorities, usually of about 100, voted in favour of the removal of the prohibition in England, which is contrary, I submit, to the enlightenment of the present age.

Mr. THOMPSON (Haldimand): Every day, Mr. Speaker, when you open this House, you invoke the Divine blessing upon our deliberations, and I propose to-night to follow that course which to me seems most in accord with the Divine will. I oppose this Bill from a Scriptural point, on the Divine Law as laid down in Leviticus, chapter 20, verse 21. We are told in the Great Book that we are neither to take away from nor add to one word of it. Notwithstanding the able arguments of the hon. members for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Girouard) and North Victoria (Mr. Cameron), I beg to move that this Bill be not now read the second time, but that it be read the second time this day six months.

Mr. MILLS: I desire to make a few observations on the merits of the Bill before the motion is put. I am rather inclined to support the Bill than the amendment. I confess I do not see the Scriptural objection that presents itself so formidably to the mind of my hon. friend from Haldimand (Mr. Thompson). I will just say a word or two on what appears to be the popular Scriptural objection. I have a very great deal of respect for those who entertain that view, and who profess to be guided by what they believe to be the law of Moses in this par-