

not think this is the place to bring up questions of that kind, and it does not seem to me to be the proper way of advocating the passage of this Bill. I avow myself in favour of the amendment of the hon. member for Leeds.

MR. WELDON: As one of the few who are opposed to this Bill, I am not willing to give a silent vote. I understood my hon. friend from Jacques Cartier, on the second reading of the Bill, to state that this was a similar measure to the one introduced into the House of Commons, England, with the exception of the provisos which he added. I have, however, been unable to find in that Bill any provision legalizing marriage with a deceased husband's brother, and Sir Thomas Chambers, who was the introducer of the Bill in the House of Commons, never introduced such a proposition in his Bill. We look for light in legislation, to the Mother Country, where we find the question agitated in that country, that petitions were presented, that an association was formed and cases of hardship brought forward. But in this instance here, not one instance of hardship, not a single petition, not even the slightest agitation, until the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Girouard), brought his Bill forward. I regret that he has brought it forward. As to the religious phase of the matter, that is a question which men should settle by their own consciences. The unanimous voice of Christendom has been against such marriages. We know that, until 1550, no dispensation by the Popes was granted. I will read an extract from a speech of Lord O'Hagan on the subject, delivered by him in the House of Lords. He says:

"This principle has unquestionably been maintained at all times since the earliest days of Christianity. It was proclaimed in the Apostolic Constitution before the Nicene Council. It became a part of that great system of jurisprudence which was generated when the Christian civilisation rose on the ruins of the effete and corrupt Imperialism of Rome, basing the hope of the world on the strictness and continency of the family relations, and raising up woman from her low estate to soften and purify the rude society round her. The Theodosian code condemned the practice which we are asked to approve, and declared marriage with a deceased wife's sister to be unlawful, and thenceforth, for many a century, down even to our time, the doctrine of that code has been held intact by

famous theologians and solemn councils. It was the doctrine of Basil and Ambrose and Augustine. It was the doctrine equally of the East and West. It was affirmed by ecclesiastical assemblages in the various countries of Christendom, as they were successively comprehended within the fold of the Church, and it commanded the assent of all them. The dispensing power claimed by the Popes was at first resisted and denied, on the ground that the prohibition was absolute and mandatory by the law of God. The Greek Church, whatever may have been its decadence and shortcomings, is a venerable witness to the discipline of Christian antiquity, and we find that the unlawfulness of such a marriage was asserted equally by the Lutherans and Calvinists in Scotland, Geneva and in France."

That is the opinion of an Irish Lord who stood very high in legal circles and who was a Roman Catholic.

Some HON. MEMBERS: Question question.

MR. CASEY: I rise to order. This is something, Sir, that I am sure you will not allow.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. WELDON: The cause which relies upon disturbance and uproar to put down opposition must be a poor cause indeed. I think it is well for us, in such a great social and religious question as this, that we should consider the opinion of the religious bodies, and particularly the expression of opinion expressed by the Church of England. That Church should be listened to, and other religious bodies have requested that the matter should stand over, and I do not not see why such an important matter, both in its religious and social aspect, should not stand over another Session to give time for fuller discussion and deliberation, and ascertain fully the public opinion. I shall feel it my duty to support the amendment of the hon. member for Leeds.

MR. THOMPSON (Haldimand): The petition that I had the honour to present was forwarded by the Bishop of Nova Scotia, and was, so far as I know, voluntary on his part. There have been other petitions besides this indicating that more time should be given; there have been no petitions from the people asking for this Bill, and I think it premature to pass it. Other denominations wish to obtain time in order to present their views fully to this House, because it will involve a great change. The Presbytery of Toronto passed a resolution, resolving:

MR. PLUMB.