

forming a connected scheme; they are not a series of detached enactments. Of course, again, there is a point at which mere linguistic clearness only masks the obscurity of actual provisions or leads to such irrational or unjust results that, however clear the actual expression may be, the conclusion is still clearer that no such meaning could have been intended by the legislature. Whether particular words are plain or not is rarely susceptible of much argument. They must be read and passed upon. The conclusion must largely depend on the impression formed by the mind that has to decide. In the present case their Lordships have arrived at the conclusion that the language of the articles is plain, in the sense that their meaning must be found in their words, though they are far from denying that the true construction is a matter of nicety and even of difficulty. It follows that the decision of this question is not legitimately assisted even by reference to the prior decisions in Quebec, which, in fact, are much less definite than they have been supposed to be, and that no useful suggestion can be derived from articles in the Code Napoléon differently expressed, or from the expositions of them, however brilliant, by learned French jurists. In no event can the intention of the legislature in passing the articles under discussion be gathered from the category in which they were placed by the commission which drafted the Code.

Art. 1053 and 1054 are the first two of a group of articles headed "Offences and quasi-offences." The first deals with damage caused by *faute* on the part of a person, who can tell right from wrong. The second deals further with the liability of such a person not only for damage caused by his own fault, but also for damage caused by persons whom he controls or things which he