

French decisions, though entitled to the highest respect . . . are not of binding authority in Quebec" *McArthur v. Dominion Cartridge Co.* (2), still less can they prevail to alter or control what is and always must be remembered to be the language of a legislature established within the British Empire. In the present case, as in *Doucet's* case, the learned judges of the Supreme Court of Canada sedulously, and as they conceived successfully, conformed to this rule and decided, though in different ways, a question of construction of the Quebec Code in accordance with reasoning, which seemed none the less convincing, because it was suggested by French authors or followed a view long laid down by the Court in Quebec. Nor can the history of the Quebec Code be altogether banished from the recollection of those who administer its provisions, and it is true that under certain conditions it is legitimate to refer to the prior cases which it was intended to codify: *Vagliano v. Bank of England*, (1). A construction of articles, which have long been before the Courts, differing from that hitherto accepted, will always, even in a tribunal not bound by prior decisions, be adopted with caution.

Still, the first step, the indispensable starting point, is to take the Code itself and to examine its words, and to ask whether their meaning is plain. Only if the enactment is not plain can light be usefully sought from exterior sources. Of course it must not be forgotten what the enactment is, namely, a Code of systematised principles and rules, not a body of administrative directions or an institutional exposition. Of course also the Code, or at least the cognate articles, should be read as a whole,

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(1) [1891] A. C., p. 145. (2) [1905] A. C., at p. 77.