

for the same, said some of the opponents of the Bill. The hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Jones), said the other evening, that the Bill "was brought forward in the interest of individuals, the endeavour being made to push it hurriedly through the House." Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to tell him that as far as I am personally concerned, I have no interest whatever in the Bill; I will even tell my hon. friend if this information will tend to remove his opposition or quiet his mind, that I have no sister-in-law to marry; I may confess that I cannot conceive how a man can have for his sister-in-law that love and affection which are necessary to make marriage happy. But, Sir, what we do not feel ourselves, others might, and as a matter of fact, do. Hundreds of these prohibited marriages have been contracted during the last fifteen or twenty years. If the necessary dispensation be obtained, the Catholic priest does not hesitate to perform the ceremony, and if among Protestants, no minister can be found willing to do the same, the parties cross the line, where they are always certain of finding relief. This Bill is brought solely in the interest of the people of this country, more as a beneficial measure in the future than a relief for the past, inasmuch as the marriage where one of the parties have died, are not to be affected by its provisions. I exceedingly regret that the hard case of the unfortunate lady, which I referred when I introduced the Bill, and deserved so much attention and sympathy from the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Wright), is not covered by the Bill as amended and reported by the Committee. The hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Jones), promised us some four or five weeks ago that if an opportunity was given, the Church of England would protest. That opportunity has been given and what have we seen? An agitation against the Bill? No, Sir, on the contrary, an agitation in favour of it. Hardly one newspaper can be cited against it, and it was, indeed, pleasing to see all the leading journals of the Dominion, both French and English, Catholic and Protestant, pronounce in most unequivocal terms in favour of the measure. I challenge the hon. members opposing it to quote one single editorial from any of the independent papers in favour of the

ungenerous course they are pursuing. However, this failure of sympathy was not for want of proper exertions and efforts. Lengthy and learned pamphlets and papers have been written by most eminent dignitaries of the Church, and, no doubt, the pamphlet of His Lordship Bishop Binney, of Nova Scotia, showing, in the strongest language possible, the "reasons for rejecting the proposed alterations in the marriage law of the Dominion," was calculated to produce a great effect. Sheets were also printed and circulated by the thousand, containing a very convincing report of the speeches delivered at a meeting, one would suppose, expressly called to influence the proceedings of this Parliament, and held in London, England, on the 26th of February last, to oppose "the Bill to legalise marriage (not with a deceased brother's wife, but only) with a deceased wife's sister." Petitions were also carefully prepared, printed, and distributed for signatures, by the various congregations spread all over the country. And what has been the result of this great canvassing? Petitions came, not from towns and cities, but from thirty-one small and obscure parishes of the Church of England, in Nova Scotia; one from St. Paul's Church, Chatham, New Brunswick; three from Prince Edward Island, that is from Milton, Summerside, and Crapaud. One came from some of the clergy and laymen of the Church of England, in Kingston, Ontario. We are still waiting for one from Gananoque, the important town where the hon. leader of the opposition to this Bill resides, and also from all the other towns and cities of Ontario and of the Dominion. None came from Quebec, or any other Province, except from the Church of England. It must be observed that these "parish" petitions are alike, in printed, or rather circular form; they do not emanate from the parishes or congregations as bodies, but only from a few individuals, in some cases five or six altogether in number, whose occupation, or position, is not given, who often cannot read nor write, and who, finally, are not always headed by their incumbent. To do, however, ample justice to these petitioners, it is, perhaps, better to lay the full text of their protest before the House: