

tions 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 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:

"That the Moderator, Dr. Reid, Principal Caven, Dr. Gregg (convener), and Prof. McLaren, be appointed a Committee to prepare petitions to the Governor-General and both Houses of Parliament, deprecating their giving assent to the Bill now before Parliament, which proposes to give legal sanction to marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister or his deceased brother's wife. The petition to be submitted for approval at next meeting of Presbytery."

And they ask for delay, and I think it right to give them time to fully present their views to this House. I would ask the hon. gentleman who has introduced this Bill, to be content with it, and withdraw further proceedings upon it, so that the House may be able to pass upon it another year.

MR. HOUDE: I understand that a certain portion of the public would prefer to see this Bill undergo a slight change in its wording, so as to make it read that laws prohibiting such marriage are repealed, instead of saying that these marriages will be legal. Some hon. members