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THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

Into matters of religious controversy it is not for us to enter, nor is it our province to criticise the actions of ecclesiastical bodies so long as the laws of the land, and the rights of individuals, either as regards their persons or their property, are not interfered with. It is from this point of view only that we refer to the very serious allegations made against certain ecclesiastics in the Province of Quebec in respect to their dealing with the marriage laws of that province.

So much has been said and written upon the subject that we shall not enter the maze of conflicting opinions, contradictory statements, varying judgments, and differing opinions as to the power of Dominion and provincial legislatures as set forth in the B.N.A. Act, with which we are confronted. The subject is difficult and complicated enough without the elements of sectarian animosity, and party zeal, which make confusion more confounded, and add to the difficulty of arriving at any reasonable conclusion as to the real merits of the case, and the best way of dealing with it. It is sufficiently clear, however, that attempts have been made, and made successfully, to override the law of the province so far as to declare that marriages legally contracted are null and void when not solemnized according to rules laid down by ecclesiastical authority; consequently there has been an interference not only with the law of the land but with the rights of persons entitled to its protection.

Cases arising from this conflict of authority have been, and are now before the provincial courts. In some judgments have been given upholding the civil authority, in others exactly the reverse, but so far the Superior Court of the Province has not