

he shall come under the penalties of the law. We want to protect the rights of the individual—the civil liberty and the religious liberty of persons to be married as they see fit. Apart from that, the Church of England, or any other Church, may have its own religious doctrines, and teach its doctrines and perform its ceremonies as it pleases.

Hon. Mr. Anderson : Suppose I married a Catholic, and we had children, and in a Church the priest says my offspring are illegitimate ?

Rev. Howard Elliott : There is no objection to his stating his doctrine so long as he does not single you out as living in sin, or say that your children are illegitimate.

Hon. Mr. Anderson : The present clause puts upon the State the duty of prosecuting the man for saying that, and I have my own civil right to prosecute him for slander.

Rev. Howard Elliott : Yes, under certain conditions. As to further proceedings, I promise to read Bishop Cleary's letter through carefully and if necessary to forward to the Committee any letter that I may consider necessary in reference to it. May I suggest that in view of the evidence given this morning as to the process of double marriage, the Committee might add a rider to their report, or in some other way direct the attention of the Department concerned to the practice, and if necessary have the practice stopped ?

Hon. Mr. Anderson : I intend to have the whole matter looked into by the Crown Law Officers immediately after the session closes, and have it attended to next session of Parliament.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter from Archbishop O'SHEA and Bishop CLEARY to the CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 11th October, 1920.

We, the undersigned, have read in the daily Press the following resolution passed by your Committee : " The Committee on the Marriage Amendment Bill intimate that in view of the evidence already taken, and the full public discussion that has taken place by means of pamphlet and otherwise, they do not consider it necessary to open up the whole question again. If, however, any persons specially interested have not yet been heard, or if any points bearing on the Bill have not yet been sufficiently elucidated, they are prepared to hear evidence briefly stated on Tuesday, 12th October, 1920, in the Joint Committee-room, Parliament Buildings, at 10.30 a.m."

The above-quoted resolution determines the conditions under which further evidence (if any) will be taken by your Committee in connection with the Marriage Law Amendment Bill now before your honourable House. The situation thus created has been carefully considered by us, both by ourselves and in consultation with the Hon. Sir John Findlay, and all three of us are agreed that we should not (even if we could) tender any further evidence under the conditions set forth in your Committee's resolution.

It is due to ourselves, to the high respect which we entertain for your Committee and for your honourable House, and to our deep sense of the responsibilities of Parliament in this connection, that we should state the grounds of our decision not to offer further evidence on the Bill now before you. Summarily stated, our reasons are the following :—

1. A very considerable mass of our new evidence has already appeared in print under the titles " The Marriage Law Amendment Bill " and " Catholics and the Marriage Laws : A P.P.A. Pamphlet " (second edition, revised). These pamphlets were written by Bishop Cleary. They have an important bearing upon the Marriage Law Amendment Bill. It was our intention to place this printed matter before your Committee, for record as evidence of much pertinence to the issues now before your honourable House. But by the terms of your Committee's resolution these pamphlets appear to us to be probably excluded because of their previous (though very recent) publication as pamphlets ; while they are obviously and certainly excluded by reason of their overstepping the limits of brevity required by your Committee's resolution.

2. We had in hand, with a view to its submission to your Committee, a further extended mass of fresh evidence, having an important bearing (direct and indirect) upon this Bill. This evidence has not yet been published in any form. It consists mainly of detailed refutations of numerous statements, quotations, and contentions already placed before the Legislature with a view to promoting the proposed measure, and to influencing the opinions of honourable members thereon. In our opinion, this fresh matter has a close and important relation to the issues raised. Yet it must be excluded from the purview of your Committee on the ground of its unavoidable lack of the required brevity.

3. A selection of refutations of various misrepresentations has lately been placed by us before the public. We take it that they are probably excluded from consideration by your Committee by reason of their recent appearance in pamphlet form, and certainly on account of their lack of the brevity required in your Committee's resolution. But, in addition to the misrepresentations mentioned above, a considerable body of other travesties and caricatures of Catholic doctrine and Church law has been submitted to the Legislature. In our opinion, these have had some (perhaps considerable) influence in promoting the present project of legislation. A good part of the matter in question consists of misrepresentations of an extremely grave and reprehensible kind, having a grievously misleading effect, even in regard to the contents of specified official documents of our Church. We have on hand full and detailed refutations of this misleading matter that has been submitted to Parliament, but it is beyond the bounds of possibility for us to reduce it within the measure of brevity required by your Committee's resolution. In the circumstances, we hold that