

(even if our evidence were admissible by your resolution) it would neither be very helpful to your Committee, nor fair to the cause which we represent, to impair seriously the strength and extent of our refutations, or of our other testimonies, by compressing them into the brief tabloid form required by your Committee.

Bishop Cleary attended in Parliament on the 20th August, 1920, armed with a mass of authorities, to set before the Statutes Revision Committee the facts of Catholic doctrine and Church or canon law relating to the present Bill, and to refute the numerous misrepresentations thereof which had taken place. On the advice of the Hon. Sir John Findlay, Dr. Cleary's evidence was not submitted—and this precisely because of the assurances given by the Statutes Revision Committee that the facts of Catholic doctrine and canon law, and the accuracy or otherwise of Archbishop O'Shea's and Bishop Cleary's statements thereon, would not be investigated and determined by the said Committee. We were left in no doubt by the Statutes Revision Committee that it had not entered on, and would not enter on, any investigation of what was or what was not Catholic marriage doctrine or law.

But an entirely new situation has now been created by the amendment made by the Legislative Council in the Marriage Law Amendment Bill at present before your honourable House. Eminent counsel have advised that the Bill in question, if it becomes law, may be invoked to penalize heavily the direct or indirect teaching of certain doctrines and laws not alone of the Catholic Church, but of the Protestant and Jewish denominations as well—and even to suppress the circulation and teaching of important parts of the Holy Scriptures which forbid (as being neither "true" nor "sufficient") certain classes of marriage that are legalized in New Zealand.

Assertions were made before the Statutes Revision Committee to the following effect: That whatever were the real marriage doctrines of the Catholic Church, a main complaint of some of our opponents was this—that statements were made by some persons, represented as speaking the views of the Church, reflecting upon the character and legal validity of certain purely civil marriages in this Dominion. We were (and are) unable to admit that the statements so made (which referred exclusively to the sacrament of matrimony) rightly bear the interpretations put upon them. Nevertheless, to meet this complaint in a spirit of charity, assurances were given by us to that Committee that—long previously to, and quite independently of, the proceedings now before Parliament—steps had been taken by us to make certain verbal alterations in catechetical publications, which would preclude any reasonable inferences of the kind alluded to above.

The amendment passed by the Legislative Council, however, does not deal with irresponsible statements as to what are the doctrines of the Catholic Church in regard to marriage. It goes much further: it makes a direct and vehement attack on the real doctrines of that Church itself, and (as already stated) upon those of every religious denomination that stands by the teachings of God's revealed Word on Christian marriage. The amendment in question is therefore an unequivocal attempt to repress and crush what are admittedly religious doctrines pure and simple.

This proposed drag-net legislation renders it doubly necessary for the Parliament of this Dominion to examine minutely at the present juncture the objective truth or otherwise of the various statements advanced in support of this Bill. Your Committee's resolution precludes the possibility of our doing—in any really effective way—our share in this necessary work of investigation and illumination.

In the circumstances, we must regretfully accept the option implicitly contained in your Committee's resolution—that of not appearing before it to offer further evidence.

In conclusion, we renew the expressions of respect for your Committee and for your honourable House, and sign ourselves with much consideration and esteem,

Very faithfully yours,

†THOMAS O'SHEA, S.M.

Coadjutor-Archbishop of Wellington.

†HENRY W. CLEARY,

Bishop of Auckland.

The Chairman,

Special Committee appointed for the consideration of the Marriage Law  
Amendment Bill, Wellington.

Letter from the Rev. ROBERT WOOD to the Hon. the ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

DEAR SIR,

"Glendarnal," Mary Road, Karori, 9th October, 1920.

I see from to-day's papers that the Marriage Amendment Committee do not desire to hear those who have already given evidence, and I shall be grateful if you let me know if this applies to me.

I appeared before the Legislative Council on my own and did not possess any authority to represent the Presbyterian Church. I had no time to get the commission that I have put into your hands which makes me represent the Committee of the Church whose business it was to protest against the *Ne temere* decree.

In the Legislative Council Committee I had to listen to very gross misrepresentations from Sir John Findlay of the faith and practice of the Presbyterian Church *et* *re* deceased wife's sister marriage, and I had no opportunity to lodge a protest or even to ask a question through the Chairman of the Committee, and Bishop Cleary is circulating Sir John Findlay's misrepresentations all over the land. The Presbyterian Church has no *Ne temere* decree in New Zealand, Scotland, or America, or anywhere else, in relation to this deceased wife's sister marriage, and a very serious wrong will be done to the Presbyterian Church if evidence correcting Sir John Findlay on this and on other points are shut out.

May I trouble you to let me know if the newspaper notice nullifies my commission which was placed in the hands of Chairman of Committee.

The Hon. Mr. Lee, Attorney-General.

Yours truly,

ROBERT WOOD.