

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

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,—

Wellington, 12th October, 1920.

I have to acknowledge receipt of yours of 11th instant, signed by yourself and Bishop Cleary, and addressed to myself as Chairman of the Special Committee appointed for the consideration of the Marriage Law Amendment Bill.

I note your reasons for deciding not to tender further evidence before this Committee, and I submitted your letter to the Committee. Without making further comment on your letter, I think it my duty to acquaint you with certain evidence tendered to the Committee to-day, which may appear to you to be of sufficient importance to warrant further consideration of your decision so far as concerns this new evidence.

There was put in evidence to-day two copies of marriage certificates from the district of Hamilton relating to the marriage of Neil McLean, school-teacher, and Ada Annie Casey, nurse. The first certificate is dated 20th June, 1908, and shows that the above parties were married before the local Registrar. The second certificate is dated 13th July, 1908, and is issued by the Rev. Joseph Croke Darby, officiating minister at St. Mary's Church, Hamilton; and in both certificates the parties are described respectively as "bachelor" and "spinster."

The Registrar-General of Marriages was called as a witness, and stated that he had no record of the second marriage, and no record of any certificate having been issued authorizing it.

The Committee were of opinion that your attention should be drawn to this evidence, because of the fact that it understands no similar case arising in New Zealand was presented to the Committee of the Legislative Council.

The Committee meets again on Friday next, the 15th instant, at 10.30 a.m., in the Joint Committee-room, and if in your opinion this further evidence calls for comment, I shall be glad if you can advise me whether you will be represented at that sitting of the Committee, notwithstanding the fact that you have decided not to tender evidence on the general questions arising out of the proposed legislation.

I have, &c.,

W. DOWNIE STEWART, Chairman.

His Grace Coadjutor-Archbishop O'Shea, Wellington.

Letter from the CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE to the Rev. ROBERT WOOD.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 14th October, 1920.

Your letter of 9th instant addressed to the Hon. Mr. Lee was placed before the Marriage Amendment Bill Committee at its last meeting.

I note that you are commissioned to represent the Protestant Principles Committee of the General Assembly of New Zealand. I also note that you assume from the notification in the Press that the Committee does not desire to hear those who have already given evidence, and you ask to know if this applies to you.

Your interpretation of the Press notification is hardly correct, as the Committee expressly intimated that, "if any points bearing on the Bill have not yet been sufficiently elucidated," they would hear further evidence.

However, with reference to your complaint that you had to listen to gross misrepresentations in the Legislative Council Committee from Sir John Findlay of the faith and practice of your Church *in re* deceased wife's sister's marriage and had no opportunity of lodging a protest, or even to ask questions through the Chairman, the Committee is of opinion that it can hardly review the decision of the Legislative Council Committee on such a question. That Committee having heard the statements was the best judge as to whether they should be replied to or not.

In any case, my Committee does not consider it necessary to consider either the allegations or possible replies thereto, as it appears to be quite feasible to arrive at a conclusion without entering on a prolonged controversy on theological doctrines.

The Committee meets again to-morrow, Friday, the 15th, at 10.30 a.m., and is still prepared to hear evidence on relevant points, but not on questions already adequately discussed or dealt with by the Legislative Council Committee.

I have, &c.,

W. DOWNIE STEWART, Chairman.

The Rev. Robert Wood, "Glendarnal," Mary Road, Karori.

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

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 14th October, 1920.

I have to thank you and your Committee for your letter of 12th October, informing me that two marriage certificates were submitted to you at your meeting on that day—one from the Marriage Registrar at Hamilton, and the other, concerning the same parties—McLean and Casey—dated 13th July, 1908, and signed by the Rev. Joseph Croke Darby, in both of which the parties are described as "bachelor" and "spinster."

If this second certificate is a genuine one, the use of the aforesaid words in it was, and is, absolutely against the regulations of the Catholic Church in New Zealand. The archbishops and bishops have never approved of any such designations being put in the records of the sacramental validations of legal marriages. As stated in my letter to the Statutes Revision Committee of the Legislative Council (page 6 of the "Proceedings"), the Church "requires merely the names of the parties, the names of the witnesses, the place and date, and the name of the priest who assists at the ceremony" (Canon 1103, "Code of Canon Law," Vatican Press, Rome, 1917).