

THE PRIVY COUNCIL'S ANSWER.

The judgment of the Privy Council of England in the marriage case, handed out Monday, confirmed the opinion of the four judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, that the Dominion Parliament has no power to pass laws relating to marriage. In the opinion of the courts the various provinces have the sole authority to make laws for the solemnization of marriage. That settles the question without a doubt, but it seems unfortunate that the Privy Council in its wisdom did not condescend to give an answer to the second question: "Does the law of the Province of Quebec render null and void, unless contracted before a Roman Catholic priest, a marriage which would be otherwise legal, which takes place in such Province? (a) between two persons who are both Roman Catholics, or (b) between persons one of whom, only, is a Roman Catholic?"

The Privy Council's only answer is: "In view of the previous decision this becomes unimportant and superfluous." The man in the street cares little whether the marriage laws are enacted by the Provinces or the Dominion, but he wants to know whether the marriages referred to above are legal or illegal, and whether children of such contracting parties are to be branded as illegitimate. The public will not be satisfied with anything less than a positive answer. If question No. 2 is answered in the affirmative there will be a strong agitation to have the Quebec law changed, failing which a change in the British North America Act will be asked for. Canada will not be inclined to submit to a law which is more favorable to Catholic priests than it is to Protestant ministers.

The Mail and Empire is opposed to giving Ireland the privilege of making her own local laws. In an editorial note Tuesday The Mail asks:—"What sort of prosperity will Home Rule give Ireland when the very discussion of it results in the crippling of Harland and Wolff's ship-building plant, one of the greatest industries in the country?"

It is true a good deal of rioting and much bad feeling have sprung up over the discussion of Home Rule. In Ulster on the 12th of July when Orange speakers mentioned the name of King George that Sovereign was treated with derision, because he is supposed to be in favor of an Irish Parliament. But we cannot see why The Mail and Empire should blame supporters of Home Rule for the trouble. Home Rulers in Ireland now obey the laws made by the British Parliament. If the same Parliament pass a measure for Home Rule is it reasonable for the Orangemen to say they will not submit to it? The minority should submit to the majority, and The Mail should not encourage them in their spirit of defiance.

The Catholic Register says: "There were 38,247 converts received into the Catholic Church during 1911. These figures have been secured by the Apostolic Mission House at Washington, D.C., from the reports from chancery offices throughout the country, and they possess all available accuracy. They are the aggregate of adult baptisms taken from the baptismal records."

If these figures are correct is the report not startling from a Protestant standpoint? Can it be shown that Roman Catholics in any considerable numbers are leaving their church and connecting themselves with Protestant denominations? Orange societies are increasing rapidly, particularly in Ontario. Can it be shown that Orange lodges are making converts from Catholicism, or are they driving Catholics more closely together? These questions are asked in all seriousness. An answer will be appreciated.

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4-2

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4-4

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3-1f

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3-3

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1-1f

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—ON—

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