

the House—a courtesy becoming to this House in the position which it occupies, and I believe characteristic of it. If he has not always been fair in his statements, I am sure he meant to be fair, and that is all that can be expected of human nature. The greater part of my hon. friend's speech was directed to the important subject of the Manitoba school settlement. My hon. friend says that that settlement has not met with the approval of the country. I differ from my hon. friend there. While it has not received the universal approval of the country, it has received the approval of the great majority of the electors. My hon. friend says that there was an understanding with the Manitoba government on the part of the Liberal party of the Dominion which prevented any settlement being made by the government of which he was the head, and of which he was an important member before becoming the head. I quite deny that there was any such agreement. I ought to know something of it if there was any, and I have never heard an observation or a word which would enable me to fancy that any such agreement had existed. The subject of the schools is one of very great importance, because it involves religious considerations, and because it relates to the very delicate as well as important subject of education. Nobody can have any doubt that there has arisen out of that question strife and bad feelings throughout the whole Dominion. We all recognize the evils incident to religious strife and bad feeling, and as Canadians, desiring the prosperity of the country and the well-being of its people, we all must feel how desirable it would be that evils of that kind should cease in the land. The great objection to the policy of my hon. friend while he was a leader of the government or a member of it was, that he did not take into account the public feeling which existed on this subject, or the importance of preventing this strife and this bad feeling. It was in 1890 that the Manitoba legislature passed the Act which has given rise to all the trouble that has taken place. That Act, I have no reason to doubt, was passed in good faith. It was passed under the impression that such an Act was in the interest of Manitoba, and it was passed under the impression also that it was within the power of the provincial legislature to pass such an Act. That impression appears now to have been a

mistake. The Privy Council, to whose decision we all owe respect and pay deference, has decided that while the Act was perfectly valid in point of law, which had long been thought to be the only matter in question, the Act gave jurisdiction to the Dominion Parliament to correct a grievance which the Act worked to the minority of Manitoba. That is the result of the decisions, and there is no doubt that the local legislature, according to these decisions, had the power to abolish the separate schools of Manitoba, and there is no doubt also, that the passing of the Act gave jurisdiction to the Dominion Parliament to interfere, if parliament should think fit. The power is not a judicial one, or to be exercised judicially. The counsel in arguing for the minority before the Privy Council disclaimed any pretense that there was any judicial authority or any judicial duty on the part of the government or of parliament. Counsel declare that as regards parliamentary action, it was a political question—that political considerations were to be taken into account. So it was the duty of the government to do that which was best for the country in the matter and to remedy the grievance in some way which would be consistent with the best interests of the Dominion. Now, what was the course that the late government pursued to accomplish that object? As soon as the decision of the Privy Council was known here, steps were immediately taken to have an appeal which the minority had the right to make to the government considered and entertained; that appeal was made accordingly within a few weeks after the receipt of the decision of the Privy Council. The decision at which the late government arrived was that set forth in the remedial order. The province of Manitoba was not prepared to adopt what the remedial order required. Now, this matter was a very delicate one. It was one which had to be dealt with very cautiously and very considerately. What the remedial order proposed to do was to restore the Act as it had previously stood, as nearly as was practicable. The objection to that was that it was far too sweeping a thing to do in so hasty a manner. The effect of it would have been to perpetuate religious strife in Manitoba, and the religious strife would have prevailed all over the country; and before determining upon a course so injurious to the country,