Parliament, as well as the government, must on its own responsibility and on grounds that can be justified to the public, decide whether any relief and what relief if any, is to be given. But is not the government, and is not parliament, to have any regard to the opinion of the court? Surely they are. It is one thing to say that parliament is not "bound" by the opinion of the court. It is quite a different thing to say that there is no mora obligation to give relief, in a case in which the court has found that there is a grievance, and that the constitutional act is a "parliamentary compact" by which the crown was pledged to protect the minority against such a grievance. When the Imperial parliament on the petition of the Protestants of Quebec to Her Majesty put the provisions in the constitution for their protection, it was not intended as a mere form of words. It was intended to be a real protection to them. And it must be equally efficacious to protect a Catholic minority. Of what use is the appeal clause in the constitution if the applicants who invoke its protection are to be met with the answer that federal interference with the will of the provincial majority is inconsistent with provincial autonomy, and that relief must therefore be denied? The will of the majority was the very thing that was feared, as liable to do injustice. The Protestants of Quebec were unwilling to trust themselves to the generosity of the majority, and hence the federal protection was extended to them against that majority. Of what use, I repeat, is the protection if it is not to be invoked—if the will of the majority must still prevail as an inviolable right that must not be opposed?

Clearly Sir Alexander's amendment was meant to be a real protection against a real grievance. The powers conferred on the federal government and parliament were useless unless they were to be acted upon. The Queen and her parliament did not mean to put the Quebec memorialists off with an empty form of words, giving them an appearance of a right of appeal while the reality was wanting. A clause granting in words a right of appeal, and giving parliament power to redress, can be of no value unless the minority, when aggrieved, may invoke these powers, and unless the appellate body can exercise them. Good words and kind wishes are very nice, but in themselves they will not support life. The Protestants of Quebec asked the Queen for bread—she did not give them a stone. If you say to a destitute brother or sister, "Be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding if ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" So it was written long since for our edification. The lesson is as valuable today as it was eighteen hundred years ago.

Are we to apply one rule to the case of the Protestants in Quebec and a different and contrary rule to the Catholics of Manitoba? The constitutional provision is the same in both cases. Is there a reason for insisting that in the one case the provision shall be effective, and in the other non-effective—a dead letter?

I have indicated that there is a material difference in the character of the schools of the majority in the two provinces. The schools of the majority in Quebec are avowedly Roman Catholic schools. Those of the majority in Manitoba profess to be entirely undenominational—absolutely non-sectarian. Is this a circumstance that affects the rights in either case, or that should weigh with the federal authorities in deciding whether or not relief is under all the circumstances due to the Catholics of this province? I shall follow out this enquiry in another letter.

JAMES FISHER.

To the Editor of the Free Press.

Sir,—In my letter I think I made it clear that the provision for an appeal to parliament against provincial educational laws was placed in the constitution so that it might be an effective guarantee to the Protestants of Quebec that privileges once granted to them by the provincial legislature in respect to their separate schools would be protected against future attacks by the legislature. I showed that exactly the same provisions were embodied in the Manitoba constitution for the protection of the minority in this province whether it might be Protestant or Catholic. It is clear as I have shown, that this provision was to be effective for the protection of Protestants. I now come to the consideration of the question whether there is anything in the conditions affecting the Manitoba minority which would justify the application of a different rule Is it right under existing circumstances that the protection of parliament should be extended to the one minority and refused in the case of the other? At the first blush the mere statement of the question would appear to furnish its own answer.