matters of greater real moment, until a settlement, definite in its nature and honourable to all in its terms is reached. It cannot be taken out of politics by ignoring it, for it is a question that cannot be ignored; and surely the history of the last fourteen months demonstrates the futility of trying to remove it by ill-considered legislation to which large and influential sections of the people are bitterly hostile. The spectre can be laid in only one way by considerate and careful action based on indisputable facts determined upon by a tribunal of accepted authority. By the fortunate failure of the attempt to drive the Remedial Bill through Parliament with a club, this course is yet open; and if the Government that will be charged with the conduct of affairs of the next Parliament does not follow it, you, Mr. Editor, will hear much of the Manitoba School Question for the next ten years, however weary you may be of it; and not much of anything else.

The Government put itself in an indefensible position by the precipitancy which marked the passage of the Remedial Order; and its apologists have ever since been trying to justify it by begging the question. Perhaps the most daring attempt yet made of this character is that of "G. T. B." in his remarkable letter to The Week. In this he held that Parliament by "refusing that redress which the law requires should be given" (by this meaning no doubt its unwillingness to bolt the half-baked Remedial Measure) is "inculcating the doctrine that we are to abide by the law only so long, and in so far as it comports with our own wishes," and is thereby "debauching the masses from their allegiance to law and order." "G. T. B." furthermore warns all laymen off the premises by telling them that they are not acquainted with the documents bearing on this "purely legal" question, and that they should accept the judgment of lawyers. It might be pointed out that if it is a legal question the lawyers seem unable to agree upon it: and that the weight of eminent legal authority in Canada is against the doctrine of irresponsibility which he elaborates in his letter. But the question is not a legal one; rather it is one eminently fitted to be dealt with by sensible laymen. The fundamental facts which govern the case are easily ascertainable to those who desire to learn them. Among the "documents" of the case, which I fear "G. T. B.," despite his reflection on the laymen, has never read, are the speeches of Edward Blake and Sir John Macdonald in Parliament in 1890 on the resolution introduced by the former, and the judgment of the Privy Council in 1892. It passes comprehension how any intelligent man, fresh from the reading of these utterances, could hold the views expressed by "G. T. B.," and by such other apologists of the policy of coercion as Mr. Hughes, M.P., the editor of the Victoria Warder, who tells his readers that "the question is forced on the Dominion Government by law," and that some of the Cabinet Ministers are not in love with the Remedial measure, but have acted in championing it as a sheriff would in executing a condemned criminal. These are extreme utterances but they indicate the line of defence to be taken in places where it would not be profitable to display the side of the shield now being held up in this Province by the Government's friends. Even those who are too intelligent or too honest to assert boldly that the Government had no power to do other than it has done, seek to create the same impression by a more subtle argument. Thus Mr. Dickey admitted to Parliament that it had freedom to do as it pleased in the matter; but in the next breath he said that if it didn't act precisely in the way the Government wanted it to it would be as guilty of dishonour as if it had repudiated its bonds. There is practically no difference in effect between the statements of Mr. Dickey and of "G. T. B.;" for to be bound in honour is more than to be bound in law.

Now against this bold assertion, which in its various forms, is the one bulwark of defence which the Government has, let us put Sir John A. Macdonald who knew something of law and of the duties of the advisers of the Crown as well. When in 1890 Mr. Blake suggested the resolution under which the reference to the Supreme Court and afterwards to the Privy Council was made Sir John accepted the proposal but in doing so made it perfectly clear that he had no intention of subordinating Parliament or the Executive to any court. He said: "Of course my hon. friend (Mr. Blake) in his resolution has guarded against the supposition that such a decision is binding on the Executive. It is expressly stated that such a decision is only for the information of the Government. . . . *The Government may dissent from that 'opinion' and it will be their duty to do so if they differ from the conclusion to which the court has come.*" The italicised sentence is in the last-degree destructive of Mr. Dickey's argument. Sir John Macdonald would never have uttered it had he wanted to hide behind the dictum of a court, as men who were his colleagues when he uttered those words are now trying to do.

Therefore if we accept Sir John's statement as interpreting the sense in which the Parliament of Canada accepted Mr. Blake's proposal, it follows that even if the Privy Council had been specifically requested to pass judgment as to whether an actual wrong had been done the Manitoba minority its decision would have been open to review and reversal by Executive and by Parliament. Then, how much stronger is its right to claim entire freedom of action in the present case where the Privy Council had not been asked to disentangle the mass of conflicting statements and determine what are true and what are false. Mr. W. S. Fielding Premier of Nova Scotia, it seems to me was well within the mark when he recently wrote: "I most emphatically say that the legal proceedings before the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council were not a 'proper inquiry' into all the facts of the Manitoba School Question. Those proceedings did not pretend to be such an inquiry. The judgment was given, on assumed facts which did not cover the whole subject but only touched so much of it as was necessary to the consideration of the questions submitted to the court as to whether the case was one which the Dominion authorities could hear an appeal." Furthermore there is ground for the contention that the Privy Council used the word "grievance" in a technical sense; for it must be remembered that it had already in 1892 expressed its opinion of the Justice of the Manitoba legislation of 1890 in these words: "But what right or privilege is violated or prejudicially affected by the law? It is not the law that is in fault; it is owing to religious convictions, which everybody must respect, and to the teaching of their church that Roman Catholics and the members of the Church of England find themselves unable to partake of advantages *which the law offers to all alike.*"

It has been established to the full that the privileges which the Roman Catholics of Manitoba have been deprived of were those granted to them by the legislation of 1871. In the original case before the Privy Council the counsel for the minority suggested that these privileges were virtually irrepealable; and their Lordships in their judgment remarked on this contention with a good deal of dry humour: "If the views of the respondents were to prevail it would be extremely difficult for the Provincial Legislature, which has been entrusted with the exclusive power of making laws relating to education, to provide for the educational wants of the more sparsely inhabited districts of a country almost as large as Great Britain, and that the powers of the Legislature which on the face of the Act appear so large, would be limited to the useful but somewhat humble office of making regulations for the sanitary conditions of school-houses, imposing rates for the support of denominational schools, enforcing the compulsory attendance of scholars and matters of that sort."

But mark and behold how the dogma of "automatic action" smashes the finding of the Privy Council. The Privy Council says that the Manitoba Legislature has the power of repealing its own school laws. Granted, says the Dominion Government, they have the power to repeal them; but if they do we shall be obliged, owing to our devotion to the Constitution, to compel them to promptly re-enact them under penalty of our doing so if they do not.

This is absurd enough in all conscience; but it is not so absurd as the commentary which the Government's actions make on its words. The "automatic action, no responsibility" theory breaks down when tested by the Acts of the Government itself. The Remedial Bill differed radically from the remedial order which was the first manifestation of this unique "automatic power;" and the proposition to the Manitoba Government, made by the Dominion Commissioners last month, has little resemblance to either, in that it abandons the claim for separate schools, excepting in towns and villages, which in effect means excepting in Winnipeg. It should need no demonstration that if Parliament in honour or in law has no functions but to register on the statute book the opinion of the Privy Council, the Government was guilty of either illegal or dishonourable conduct in drafting the late lamented Bill and in amending its demands on Manitoba. The explanation of the divergence of the Government's actions and words is, of course, that its