

Modern invention has been taxed to produce the most destructive weapons of war, but a German chemist has invented a bullet to diminish the horrors of war. It is brittle, and contains a powerful anæsthetic which produces complete insensibility, lasting twelve hours; so that a battlefield where it is used will be covered with bodies apparently dead, but only unconscious, which in that condition may be carried off as prisoners.

According to the *American Meteorological Journal*, an attempt is about to be made at St. Augustine, Fla., to sink a 12 inch artesian well to a depth sufficient to obtain water hot enough to heat buildings, pure enough for domestic purposes, and with pressure enough to run heavy machinery. Water can be found in Florida by boring 250 feet; and it is known that the artesian wells in that State have considerable pressure, and from a depth of 600 feet send water of warm temperature to a height of 45 feet when piped. The earth's internal heat is already forced into practical service at Pesth, where the deepest artesian well in the world is being sunk to supply hot water for public baths and other purposes. This well supplies daily 176,000 gallons of water heated to 158 deg. Fahrenheit, and the boring is to be continued until the temperature of the water is raised to 176 deg. Heavy machinery is run by artesian well power in many parts of France, and the experience of the French shows that the deeper the well the greater the pressure and the higher the temperature. At Grenelle, a well sunk to the depth of 1802 feet, and flowing daily 500,000 gallons, has a pressure of 60 lbs to the square inch, and the water from this well is so hot that it is used for heating the hospitals in the vicinity.—*Nature*.

A SERIOUS MATTER.

The opponents of Confederation may pronounce it a failure, but we do not. By this we do not mean to imply that in all respects Confederation has been satisfactory, or that the constitution under which it was effected is an inspired document, free from ill-judged provisions, and not capable of amendment. To those who honestly opposed Confederation at the time of its inception, we have nothing to say,—their day was not our day, and we have to deal with things as we find them, not as they were twenty years ago. What we find to day is—that the provisions of the British North America Act are causing friction between the Federal and Provincial Governments, and that the financial arrangement under which the Central and Local Governments are carried on, is proving to be a source of irritation, and one which, if not speedily re-adjusted, threatens to clog the wheels of progress, and check national development. Under the provisions of the Act the respective Provinces must depend upon the Federal treasury for the bulk of the moneys they have to expend; and while there is no proportional increase in their receipts, according to the increase in population, the Federal revenue is steadily growing with the growth of the country. It must be apparent to any observant man that the financial resources of Nova Scotia are not sufficient to meet the requirements of the public services; and yet, if the present financial arrangement with the Dominion is continued for the next twenty years, we shall not then be able to draw from the Federal treasury one cent more than we now do, while with the increase in our population our contribution to the Federal treasury will be materially augmented. To resort to direct taxation for Provincial purposes is manifestly out of the question, so long as our tariff wall is maintained as it now stands; and hence it is plain that the Federal subsidies to the Provinces will have to undergo a revision every ten years, or else the Federal Government will have to allot to each Province a schedule of dutiable articles—the revenue collected upon which shall be paid into the Provincial treasury for purely Provincial purposes. Mr. Mercier, the Premier of Quebec, is moving for a congress of Provincial representatives to consider this whole question in all its bearings; but in view of the fact that the people's authorized representatives are shortly to assemble in Parliament at Ottawa, we see no reason for the convening of a special congress. Sir Chas. Tupper, as Finance Minister, should grapple with this question, and settle it, once and for all, in a manner that would prevent further friction. Should he do so, his name will be handed down to posterity as the saviour of the Confederacy.

A STRONG PRINCIPALITY.

The persistent arming of Montenegro is one of the worst signs of the coming storm in the East. The wholesale introduction of cartridges into the Principality, the purchase of Krupp batteries, and of European rifles to replace the few old flintlock pushkas still carried by young lads in the mountains, show that Prince Nicolas considers the time for action to be at hand. Montenegro has an army, but every man and boy over 14 years of age who is not hopelessly incapacitated is bound to carry arms in the defence of his country.

The events of the last few years have given Montenegro a position different to that which she formerly held. Before the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina she was surrounded by Turkish provinces. Now her northern boundary marches with Austria. No longer in chronic dread of her old-time foe, she now sits between the two stools of Austria and Russia. Prince Nikita has more characteristics than the hereditary valor of his race. He is a cool and skilful statesman, and balances himself and his little principality between the two great powers with consummate tact. He is, with good ground, credited with leaning to Russia rather than to her rival, but the preference is sedulously guarded from outward appearance.

The prowess of Montenegro always makes her a valuable ally, and now that the unexpected spirit shown by Bulgaria has, for the moment, somewhat foiled the designs of Russia, a friendly Montenegro would be a valuable *point d'appui* against those of Austria. The bugbear of Austrian

aggression is therefore continually paraded before the Prince, in order that the northern frontier may be well guarded, and Austria's road to Mitrovitz carefully watched. If Russia and Austria come to blows, we shall see a *coup d'état* in Serbia, and it is quite on the cards that Montenegrin forces may be found aiding in the deposition of King Milan in favor of Peter Karageorgievic, a descendant of her ancient rulers, and blocking Austria's road to Salonica by the occupation of Novi Barar, Russia hoping in this manner to replace Austrian influence in Serbia by her own.

WHITE SLAVERY.

It was with great pleasure that we noticed in a recent issue of our city contemporary, the *Acadian Recorder*, a very temperate editorial, dealing in part with what THE CRITIC had said with respect to the existence of white slavery in Nova Scotia. Our contemporary attributes our advocacy of legislative interference with the farming-out system in vogue in several counties, as prompted by sympathy for the unfortunate poor, but intimates that in giving expression to our views we had allowed sympathy to overbalance reason, or in other words, that our appeal was made from the heart, not from the head. What we have said, and what we do say, whether coming from our head or heart, is this, that farming-out the poor is an utterly pernicious system, and that its evils are quite apparent to all those who have had an opportunity of witnessing its results. We have no desire to paint things in darker colors than they really are; but we claim that the report of the Government Commissioner appointed to investigate the working of the Poor Law in Digby County, with the evidence taken before the Commission, proves conclusively that under the existing law, abuses are tolerated which are far from being creditable to Nova Scotian civilization. Our contemporary makes the following significant admission and statement in defence of the farming-out system, upon which we have a few comments to make. It says—"It is too true that people who take paupers to board are generally but one remove above pauperism themselves. And yet these poor people often treat their boarders more humanely, and provide for them better than the inmates of some poorhouses are looked after."

We fail to see how persons who are only one remove from paupers themselves, can provide for those who are placed in their charge, better than they would be provided for in modern poorhouses; but what about the medical attendance of the unfortunate paupers in the event of sickness. If the weekly allowance for board is used by the semi-pauper boarding-master in providing the poor under his care with wholesome food and comfortable lodging, can he be expected to obtain for the paupers the needed medical aid. Our contemporary may claim that this is only a matter of dollars and cents, but it is an important matter, and one that should not be left optional with boarding masters. But why haggle over this question. It has been demonstrated beyond a peradventure that the poor of a municipality can be more economically and comfortably provided for on a County Poor Farm than they can be under the farming out method. To a Provincial inspection of poorhouses and jails we can see no objection, but this will not obliterate white slavery in the land. Our legislators should take a bold and determined stand on this matter; and by making the limit of the poor district co extensive with that of the municipality, forever put a stop to a system, under which some of our Provincial poor are left to the tender mercies of semi pauper boarding-masters, and through which cruelty and corruption may be cloaked under the mantle of expediency.

THE EDUCATION ACT.

The Education Act is the most important one that has engaged the attention of the Legislature during the present session. The circumstances of the case appear to be these. The Government finds the revenues of the province so limited as to hamper their operations in the direction of public works. Retrenchment of the present expenditure is determined upon as the best remedy. Now, we give the government credit for taking a practical view of the situation. At the present juncture it seems as if economy were necessary. Whether the revenue can be immediately and sufficiently increased, seems still to be an open question.

The necessity of limiting expenditure being acknowledged, we are brought face to face with the question, in which branch of public service this economy can be practiced with least injury to the future of this province, and it is the government's solution of this problem to which we take exception. As the population of this province increases, as new schools are opened, as the professional standing of the teachers improves, a gradual increase in the cost of education will be necessary. There are still 95 school sections without schools, besides 316 in which school is kept open only in summer and 187 only in winter. Under these circumstances, to limit the amount which shall in the future be expended upon education would be to make an iron boot for a growing foot.

But it may be argued that, although the government grant to education may remain stationary, the amount paid by each district may increase. In other words, if the educational system of this province escapes serious injury it will be because some of the money now derived from other sources will have been raised by direct taxation. Now, if direct taxation must be resorted to, we should prefer to see it adopted to meet the expenditure on roads and bridges. People are much more likely to pay readily for the repairing of a dangerous bridge than for the supplanting of a defective teacher. The result of this bill will be the increased employment of low-class teachers—of whom there are even now too many. While we approve of the government's endeavor to keep the expenditure within the revenue, we think that the Education Bill should have been a last, rather than the first, resource.