

the situation. But virtually it will be under the same compulsion in this case as in the other and will hardly venture to incur the displeasure of a Province by disallowing an Act without having first submitted the constitutionality of the Act to the Supreme Court. The indirect effect of the proposed legislation will obviously be to restrict the exercise of the veto power to Provincial laws which have been pronounced by the highest judicial authority *ultra vires* of the enacting Legislature. This is a consummation devoutly to be wished in the interest of the Confederation.

THE visit of the Emperor of Germany to England is regarded as having been an unqualified success, whatever that much abused term may mean in this connection. Certainly nothing in the way either of state pageantry or of popular cordiality seems to have been wanting. The young Emperor, by his personal frankness and charm of manner, and perhaps still more by his astonishing energy and dash, won golden opinions from all classes. It is quite possible that, as often happens in other social circles, the predetermination on both sides to be pleased and gratified may have had not a little to do with bringing about the result. One thing is clear, the thrones and Governments of the two great nations are nearer to each other, and have established more cordial, not to say confidential, relations than ever before. Not all the disclaimers by Lord Salisbury and other Ministers will convince the people, or even the members of Parliament, that the visit has not a deep political significance. It would indeed be impossible to dissociate the *entente cordiale* thus established from political consequences of a very important character. But there is little doubt that both English and Germans see, or think they see, much more than this in the affair. Certainly it will be most difficult for a long time to come to convince the French that the brilliant and unprecedented event means anything less than an alliance, virtual if not actual. And one of the peculiarities of the situation is that this popular conviction in the three countries, and especially in France, will, even if unfounded, have to a considerable degree the same effect as would the fact itself. One may well agree with Mr. Labouchere in his persistent belief in the existence of an understanding without accepting his theory as to its motive. It is inconceivable that a compact with Germany should have no broader basis on the part of the English Government than a childish dread of the spread of republicanism in Europe. The feelings and attitude of France in relation to the rectified German border, and to the British troops in Egypt, afford more substantial reasons for a German alliance than any of a merely theoretical or sentimental kind. The question of most pressing and immediate importance is in what way and to what extent will the action of France be affected by its own interpretation of the event. Whether or not there is any modicum of truth in the report that the French and Russian Governments are confabulating with a view to an alliance against England, there is some reason to fear that the relations of England and France may be seriously strained in the near future. As we have intimated before, France seems chiefly responsible in this matter, as England has certainly been disposed to be friendly to her nearest neighbour. What effect the new turn of events may have upon the negotiations for the settlement of the Newfoundland question remains to be seen. The refusal of the British Government the other day to say anything concerning the progress of negotiations is by no means encouraging.

THOUGH pronounced a "success"—horrible word in such a connection—the recent "electrocution" experiments in New York have, we venture to say, increased rather than lessened the difficulties which beset the infliction of capital punishment under present-day conditions. Most of our readers are no doubt conscious of the involuntary but unconquerable revulsion from the thought of the death penalty under the old method of hanging, which is prompting the search for a substitute. It is becoming increasingly evident that capital punishment by this method cannot be much longer continued. The revulsion may be a sentiment rather than a logical or moral conviction, but the effect is none the less powerful, and the ultimate result none the less certain on that account. The sentiment itself is the product of social conditions and influences, which are themselves the outcome of our civilization. As sentiments they are not to be reasoned away. They are much more likely themselves to take command of the reasoning processes and determine their conclusions. Already very many whose judg-

ments may be convinced, alike by induction from facts and by deductions from the study of human nature, that capital punishment in some form is necessary to the safety and well-being of society, are, nevertheless, constrained to admit that the very conception of the hanging process, however carefully the operation itself may be concealed from public view by prison walls, is becoming repugnant if not positively demoralizing in its general influence. Nor is this result wholly due to the accounts of horrible bungling which so frequently shock the sensibilities of a whole nation. Tried by modern standards of thought and feeling the thing itself is felt to have in it an element of inhumanity, not to say brutality, incompatible with the refinement of the day. The very attempt to substitute death by electricity is itself a convincing evidence of this fact. Many were at first disposed to think and hope that instantaneous and certain death by the electric current would conciliate, so to speak, this sentiment and enable the guardians of the public safety to continue to protect human life by the strongest of all safeguards, without any such jarring upon the sensibilities of the public thus safeguarded. The result thus far has been, we venture to say, only disappointment. The number must be small of those who have been able to read the accounts, more or less minute, of the scientific appliances and careful preliminary preparations, to say nothing of the actual processes, of the New York tragedy without experiencing the same feeling of revulsion, in its full force. Probably one of the chief factors in the production of this feeling is a natural repugnance at the part which a fellow-being has to take in bringing about the result. We may have thought that this repugnance arose chiefly from the necessarily degraded character of the one who could volunteer for such an office. If so, the illusion is dispelled. The mental vision forced upon us of half-a-dozen men of education and refinement engaged in the task of contriving and adjusting a scientific machine to deprive a wretched fellow-creature of life, to say nothing of the sudden writhing of the victim, is found to be not a whit less excruciating. Clearly something else will have to be done. The picture of an ancient Socrates, compelled to administer the fatal potion with his own hand, and calmly relapsing into a sleep from which he is never to awake, is far less objectionable. What shall the outcome be, death by soporific drugs, the abolition of the death penalty, or what? The solution seems as far off as ever.

ONE of the most remarkable speeches ever delivered by a Government official in defence of a Government's action was that made in the British House of Commons a few weeks since by Sir John Gorst. The subject of debate was the policy of the Indian Government in the Manipur affair. Sir John Gorst is Under Secretary in the Indian Department, and so subordinate to Lord Cross, who is Secretary of State for India. There can be little doubt, we suppose, that the management of the affair which led to the Manipur disaster, by the Indian Government was, to say the least, blundering to a degree. Sir John Gorst's speech was, ostensibly, a defence of the Indian Government. But his speech throughout was a marvel of cynicism. Under the guise of a refreshing candour, he conveyed the impression very clearly that the settled policy of the Government of India in its dealings with the natives is to repress men of ability and force of character in the positions open to natives, and to put a premium on mediocrity, the implied cause being of course that the clever ones are more likely to become troublesome, while those of lesser ability are more amenable to Government management and discipline. The inference in the Manipur case would be, clearly, that the Senapati was put aside because he was an able and independent man, whereas the Government wanted a more pliable tool in his position. It is easy to imagine the probable effect of such a statement made by an officer of the Indian Department in the British Parliament, upon the susceptibilities of the native Indians when they should hear of it. Lord Cross took an early opportunity to administer from his place in the House of Lords a veiled but severe rebuke to his subordinate. He even went so far as to declare that "to say that it was because the Senapati was an able and independent man that he was put on one side was to say what is absolutely opposed to fact and to common sense." The natural result followed, in so far that Sir John Gorst either actually handed in his resignation or was proposing to do so, when the Premier intervened and a reconciliation was effected, the objectionable expressions being explained away, though not, it certainly must be confessed, in a very convincing manner. But

all the same, Sir John's speech has gone to India, and will no doubt be eagerly read by the more intelligent and educated natives, who will not be slow to draw their own inferences. It will hereafter be hard, we dare say, to convince a good many both in India and in England that there was not a good deal of truth in Sir John's first speech.

IT is announced that Mr. Jeffrey H. Burland, of Ottawa, has offered a prize of \$2,500 for the best manuscript of a Canadian history for school purposes. The offer is both generous and patriotic. It is encouraging to find such evidence of Canadian interest in Canada. It is arranged, we understand, to have the matter taken up at the Convention, and to form a committee of leading Canadian Educationists to arrange the details of the competition and to award the prize. The names of the committee may, therefore, be known before this number of THE WEEK is issued from the press. Every true Canadian must approve both of the motive of the donor and of the purpose for which his gift is to be made. It will be necessary, no doubt, that certain definite principles be laid down to govern the competitors. The true ideal of a work on history is, of course, a record of facts and events as they actually occurred, with description of characters, events and developments as simple and accurate as possible. While the more graphic these descriptions the better, they should be absolutely free from untruthful colouring or exaggeration, under the influence of national, racial, political or any other kind of bias. Everyone knows something of the absurd and mischievous exaggerations which used to pass current as historical facts in the schools of the United States in its younger days. There can be no doubt that the injurious effect of these misrepresentations is still observable in some features of the United States' national character. The mistake is one which the people of a young and enthusiastic nation are very likely to make. Is there not just now serious danger of a similar error in Canada? It is desirable, in fact indispensable, that our school histories should be adapted to cultivate a national and patriotic spirit. There will certainly be some danger that writers, especially young writers, may be tempted to sacrifice strict historical truth to the desire for effect. It is the easiest and most natural thing in the world to over-paint our own national heroes, and to exaggerate their exploits. There is perhaps still greater danger lest a narrow and unfriendly spirit towards neighbours with whom we, though we were in earlier days at war, have long been and hope long to be at peace, may be unwittingly cultivated in the schools. There are not wanting complaints that some influences of the kind are already at work in the name of patriotism. The writing of history is always a difficult and responsible task, demanding especially a large development of the judicial temper and spirit. But a special responsibility devolves upon the writer of a history for use in the schools, seeing that the ideas and opinions, and, it may be, errors and prejudices imbibed from it are well nigh indelible. The Canadian national character is just now in the formative stage. It is being to a large extent moulded in school and college to-day. All will desire that it should be patterned after the best and noblest ideals. It may, therefore, not be amiss that those who may be chosen to formulate the conditions for the competition, should be cautioned to remember that what is wanted is history not fiction, and that the desire to honour and magnify the heroism which is, happily, by no means lacking in the Canadian life of the past, should be kept in rigid subjection to the requirements of historical accuracy.

DISCUSSION is still rife in some of the foremost journals of the United States in regard to a nice question in morals to which we referred some weeks ago. The question is whether a minister may honourably remain in the service of a church, though repudiating leading articles of its creed. It is postulated that there is to be no concealment in the case; that would be condemned on all hands. The dissent is to be open, radical and have to do with matters of belief which are regarded by the great majority of the denomination as vital. The *Christian Union* finds many able supporters of its contention that it is in such a case the man's duty to stay in the church, unless formally ejected, and try to reform it. Were all who have, or think they have, got new light immediately to step out of the church when they find themselves forced to repudiate some of its dogmas, there would be, it is argued, no chance to reform the church from within—the only point of vantage from which a church can ever be