

as free libraries are concerned, what I propose is this—that they should apply to the Treasury for such Parliamentary documents as they may be of opinion will be of advantage to the persons who frequent them; and I will engage next year to bring before the House an Estimate to defray the charge of supplying those documents gratis, and then leave it to the House to decide whether they think the expenditure ought to be incurred or not. The total charge for all Parliamentary Papers incurred by any individual or association who wishes to possess them would be £20 a-year under the present arrangement. The First Lord of the Treasury in the late Conservative Government made an arrangement by which free libraries could be supplied with these Papers at a discount of 25 per cent, which would bring the charge down to £15 a-year for free libraries. If, therefore, the Government were to supply every free library with all Parliamentary literature, the cost would be somewhere about £2,000 a-year. But I imagine that there is a large portion of Parliamentary literature which free libraries would not care to possess, and, therefore, I think it will be right to let them apply to the Treasury for such literature as they may require, and then let the House decide whether the cost should be incurred or not.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCES—THE CONFEDERATION
—NOVA SCOTIA.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether information has reached showing that the people of Nova Scotia are opposed to the confederate form of Government under which they live; whether they have made several attempts to secure more favourable terms from the Home Government; whether their prayers for reform have been refused; whether in consequence they have expressed their desire for Legislative independence; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will grant this request?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horn-castle): Her Majesty's Government received, in June last, a despatch from Lord Lansdowne, enclosing a Resolution which had been recently carried by a majority in the House of Assembly of

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Nova Scotia, advocating withdrawal from the Dominion of Canada, but no subsequent communication on the subject has been received. Some Correspondence also took place on the subject in 1868, which will be found in a Parliamentary Paper dated June 10, 1868. Her Majesty's Government have no power to alter the terms of the British North America Act, 1867, which was settled with the assistance of delegates from Nova Scotia, and was subsequently approved by the Legislature of that Province. I may add that we have every confidence that the Dominion Parliament will desire to redress, as far as possible, any reasonable grievances of which a Province may complain.

IRELAND—THE KINGSTOWN "BIRD'S NEST"—DETENTION OF CHILDREN.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called to the occurrence last week at the Kingstown "Bird's Nest," in connection with the four children of the Army pensioner M'Greil; and, if the Government will take steps to have the child who is still detained restored to his mother?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: I have read an account of the occurrence last week at the institution called the Kingstown "Bird's Nest" referred to in the Question of the hon. Baronet. I am informed that the child mentioned, with the other children, was placed in the institution by his father in June last; and, under such circumstances, the Government have no power to interfere as to his custody.

THE CURRENCY, &c.—THE GOLD COINAGE.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, having reference to the present unsatisfactory condition of the gold currency, Her Majesty's Government propose to take any steps in the matter?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL) (Paddington, S.): Of course the matter has been under my consideration, but it is a very large and very difficult subject. I have not been long enough at the Exche-