

native question in a thorough manner—no half measures. As to his having approved of the paragraph referred to in Mr. Fairbairn's instructions, he very much doubted whether that paragraph was ever read at the deputation referred to; at any rate it escaped his attention, and had it not done so he should certainly have resented it as a slur upon the settlers of the district. It was not correct to say that he had approved of these instructions; what he did say, and what he was reported to have said, was that, so far as he could understand the instructions—which he had simply heard read over by the Governor—he thought the course proposed to be pursued (not the instructions themselves) was a wise one, namely, to send a Magistrate and a police force to deal with native offenders on the spot. He also told the Governor that it would be a marvel to him if Mr. Fairbairn could get through the work with which he had been entrusted, in six months. He marvelled so still, and he was very much afraid that the mission had returned before its work was completed.

MR. CROWTHER said the fault he found with Mr. Fairbairn was this: although all he wrote was perfectly true according to his own ideas, yet he had not said all which, in justice to the settlers whose evidence he took, ought to have been said, in order to show their exact meaning. For instance, any one reading the summary of Mr. Campbell's evidence as given by Mr. Fairbairn would imagine that he employed none but natives on his station, whereas in reality he employed no less than sixteen white people, of various ages. Again, the evidence as given by Mr. Crawford, and which the noble lord opposite considered so valuable, conveyed a wrong impression altogether, as to the number of sheep which had been lost from that station. Mr. Crawford had only had the station a few weeks when Mr. Fairbairn went up, and the losses had not been in his time at all. The thousands of sheep which had been lost, were lost before Mr. Crawford ever took the station; but any one reading Mr. Fairbairn's report would imagine that the natives had only taken 57 sheep altogether, whereas, in truth and in fact, that was only during the few weeks Mr. Crawford had had the

station before Mr. Fairbairn visited it. As he was sure that it was the wish of the House to deal with this question in a dispassionate manner and not without due deliberation, he would now move that Progress be reported, and leave given to sit again on the following day.

This was agreed to and Progress reported.

The House adjourned at a quarter past five o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 22nd September, 1882.

The Law as to Gambling—Gratuity to Chaplain of Legislative Council (Dean Gegg)—Aboriginal Native Offenders Bill: third reading—Loan Monies Control Bill: second reading; in committee: suspension of Standing Orders; third reading—Native Question: Adjourned Debate—Suspension of Standing Orders—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

THE LAW AS TO GAMBLING.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL asked the Attorney General whether the Government intend taking any steps during the recess in regard to amending the law relating to gambling, with a view to introduce a Bill next Session dealing with the subject. As hon. members were aware, the subject was one which had gained considerable notoriety of late, and letters had appeared in the public prints which would lead one to believe that a good deal of gambling was going on among some sections of the community, and there was an impression abroad that the law as it now stands was not sufficient to enable the authorities effectually to cope with the evil. If it was the intention of the Government to

deal with the subject during the recess with a view to the introduction of an amended Act, he ventured to suggest to them that it might be well to frame the Bill on the lines of the South Australian laws on the subject. On reading a pamphlet written by a gentleman now on a visit to this Colony, and who some time ago made a trip from Adelaide to the Mount Browne digging, across the border of New South Wales, he noticed that the author, discovering that gambling was very prevalent amongst the miners on these diggings, remarked "it was evident that they had not the fear of Mann's Gambling Act before their eyes"—Mr. Mann being a prominent South Australian politician. From this observation, he (the hon. baronet) would imagine that the South Australian Act must be such as to cause gamblers to hold it in fear; and it had therefore struck him, if it was the intention of our own Government to legislate afresh, it might be well they should frame their legislation on the lines of this South Australian Act.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) said if the hon. member desired a categorical answer to his question as to whether it is the intention of the Government to deal with the subject of gambling during the recess with a view to the introduction of fresh legislation on the subject next Session, the hon. baronet should have given notice of his question. He might, however, inform the House, what he had already informed the hon. baronet privately, that, although the law as to gambling in this Colony was a very doubtful question, yet there is a section in the Police Ordinance which admits of the evil being pretty effectually dealt with, and he was glad of this opportunity of directing public attention to it. This section gives full power to impose a penalty of £5 for every case of gambling or of card-playing permitted on a man's licensed premises, and, in order to secure a conviction under this section, it is not necessary to prove that the gambling in respect of which the charge is made was an unlawful game within the meaning of the statute. The mere fact of cards having been played is sufficient to secure a conviction, and to warrant magistrates in imposing a penalty of £5 for every such conviction.

GRATUITY TO CHAPLAIN OF THE HOUSE.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place upon the Supplementary Estimates for next year the sum of Fifty pounds as a donation to Dean Gegg, in recognition of his long services as Chaplain to the Council, extending over a period of nine or ten years."

The motion was agreed to *nem. con.*

ABORIGINAL NATIVE OFFENDERS BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL, 1883.

Read a third time and passed.

LOAN MONIES CONTROL BILL.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved the second reading of this Bill. The hon. member said it was unnecessary for him to say much with reference to its provisions, inasmuch as it mainly consisted of the same clause which had been taken out of the Loan Bill, after the promise of the Government that they would support the clause as a separate measure. Another clause had been incorporated with the Bill, providing that an annual statement of all proposed loan expenditure shall be submitted annually for the sanction of the Legislative Council, in the same manner as the annual Estimates of Expenditure for the public service.

Motion for second reading agreed to, without discussion.

MR. STEERE moved that the Bill be now considered in Committee of the whole House.

Agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short title:

Agreed to.

Clause 2.—"So much of the moneys raised under any Loan Acts now or hereafter to be in force in this Colony as may be required for the salaries and allowances of officers, or the wages of workmen, for the purpose of the said Acts, and also for the construction

"of the several buildings, and purchase of rolling stock which may be required for the purpose aforesaid, shall be annually submitted to the Legislative Council."

MR. MARMION asked whether this clause, as worded, might not be taken to mean the wages of workmen employed by contractors?

MR. STEERE did not think so. The Legislature could not have any control over the wages of a contractor's workmen.

MR. RANDELL said he had himself intended to call attention to this clause, but on another ground to that referred to by the hon. member for Fremantle, on the ground, namely, that it might hamper the Government very considerably as regards the employment of workmen.

The clause upon being put was agreed to.

Clause 3.—Annual Statement and Estimate of proposed expenditure to be submitted for sanction of Legislative Council:

Agreed to *nem. con.*

Preamble and title agreed to.

Bill reported.

MR. STEERE moved the Suspension of the Standing Orders, and the third reading of the Bill.

Agreed to.

THE NATIVE QUESTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. CROWTHER said that, in moving the adjournment of the debate the previous day, he stated that he disagreed somewhat with Mr. Fairbairn, because he had in some instances not conveyed a correct impression as to the real state of affairs. He then pointed out how this had been the case with regard to Mr. Campbell's and Mr. Crawford's stations, as disclosed by the report, which conveyed an erroneous impression altogether. Then again he found Mr. Fairbairn making use of a casual remark made to him by young Mr. Gale, to the effect that "if the Government would shut their eyes for six months and let the settlers deal with the natives in their own way it would stop their depredations effectually." Now he could not help thinking it was very unfair to make use of, and to make capital of, a

casual observation like that, made by a young fellow like Mr. Gale, especially in connection with the very next sentence, in which another gentleman stated that, in the early days of Champion Bay, the natives were shot down right and left, for sheep and cattle stealing, the obvious inference sought to be conveyed being that, if the settlers on the Gascoyne were allowed to deal with the natives in their own way, there would be wholesale slaughter. Now he did not think that was a fair use to make of a chance expression like that. It savoured more of the skilled advocate than of the impartial judge. He believed himself, if the settlers were allowed to deal with this native difficulty in their own way, they would be able to deal with it effectually, but God forbid that he should insinuate that the course they would adopt, if allowed to do so, would be to shoot down the natives right and left. There were other ways than that of dealing with them, and of effectually dealing with them. The noble lord, the Colonial Secretary, said that Mr. Fairbairn had his detractors with respect to this particular mission, and that, having exposed certain abuses, the men who committed those abuses were naturally annoyed, and sought to controvert Mr. Fairbairn's statements. But, so far as he understood, as to anything Mr. Fairbairn had said or done, all the settlers of the district, with one solitary exception, spoke in the highest terms of what he had done. He thought himself Mr. Fairbairn, according to his lights, had scrupulously done his duty. He had received letters from two of the largest settlers in the district, stating that if the Government would only continue the work begun by Mr. Fairbairn, and with a stronger force, they would be left in this difficulty—they would have nothing to complain about. They would be deprived of the Briton's privilege of grumbling. One of his correspondents (Mr. Campbell) spoke of Mr. Fairbairn as a painstaking magistrate, who had done his work well. For his own part, he did not think, from all he could gather, that the natives generally were at war with the settlers or anything like it. The real cause of the strained relations between the whites and the natives was traceable to the return to the district of certain

native gentlemen who had been educated, and had matriculated, at Rottneest. These were the gentlemen whom the settlers were particularly anxious to get at,—the ringleaders in these disturbances. The noble lord told them that within the last two years no less than six or seven expeditions had been sent by the Government to these disturbed districts; but, so far as he could make out, they were sent there, not to bring offenders to justice, but to investigate and report. He had seen the members of some of these expeditions on their return, and certainly their reports did not agree with Mr. Fairbairn's, nor, in all cases, with the reports of the settlers. He thought it would have been as well, if the official reports sent in by these other expeditions had been presented to the House in conjunction with Mr. Fairbairn's (The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the hon. member will find them on the Table; there is nothing in them which the Government wish to withhold). The noble lord seemed to blame the settlers for employing native shepherds at all, and seemed to be laboring under the delusion that the natives so employed are wild from the bush, and that the settlers are ready to entrust their flocks to any black-fellow they may come across. Now, he was inclined to believe that these settlers knew as much about their own business as we know about ours, and that they were not such fools as to entrust their flocks to natives who knew nothing about shepherding, without at any rate keeping a careful watch over them. What they did do was to entrust their sheep to natives in whom, from personal experience, they had some confidence; and it might startle the noble lord out of his equanimity to know that some of these natives make the very best shepherds that can be employed. Referring to the murder of Mr. Clarkson, and the steps taken by the Government to bring the murderers to justice, the noble lord laid great stress on the fact that the names of two natives given to them by Mr. Brockman as having been concerned in this murder turned out to be the names of two young children. Why, there might be thirty people belonging to this same tribe of natives bearing the same name, and he was very certain Mr. Brockman never intended that the intelligent

policeman entrusted with the duty of capturing the murderers of poor Clarkson should have directed his attention to two little children, of tender years. The hon. member for Geraldton took good care not to refer to cases of kidnapping, to cases in which the whites had committed outrages on the blacks. So said my noble lord opposite. And quite true, too. But it was equally true that it was the settlers themselves—such men as Brockman—who furnished the Government with information with reference to these kidnapping cases, in order to protect their own fair name. There were black sheep in every flock, and he believed of the settlers generally that they would be the first to expose any abuses committed by those amongst them, with regard to kidnapping or the ill-treatment of natives. He should support the resolution of the hon. member for Geraldton, and, in the words of that resolution, he could only express a hope that such steps may be taken by the Government as will effectually remove all causes of complaint, and thus tend to the speedy development of a promising portion of the Colony.

MR. SHENTON said he had listened attentively to the debate on this much-vexed question, and he thought that, in all fairness, one phase of the question which had not yet been referred to, ought to be taken into consideration. He did not for one moment mean to say that very serious depredations had not been committed by the natives in these districts, still he thought that, in justice to all parties, hon. members should go right to the very bottom of the cause which had led to the complaints that had of late been made by the settlers, with respect to inadequate police protection. Hon. members were aware that early last year a Commission was appointed to inquire into the whole question of Departmental Expenditure. Now that Commission, of which he had the honor of being a member, went very carefully into the expenditure connected with every department of the public service, including the Police Department; and, as one of the members of this Commission, he stood before the House that evening ready to take upon himself, to some extent, the blame which had been cast upon the Government for not pro-

viding more police protection for the Gascoyne. The Commission considered that question in this light—that, if police protection was to be extended to the settlers of that district, it ought to be so managed that it would not entail any additional expense upon the Colony, and the Commission recommended that the police at Sharks Bay should be transferred to the Gascoyne, with only one additional mounted constable,—which the Superintendent of Police did not consider sufficient. Altogether, that Commission recommended a reduction of £2,500 in the police vote, and no doubt, if blame attached to anybody, the members of that Commission should come in for a share of it. He remembered very well, when the Commissioner of Crown Lands spoke in that House some years ago with reference to the Land Regulations which it was proposed to apply to these districts, the hon. gentleman stated that one great reason why the Government proposed to liberalise the regulations as regards the North District was because the settlers going to those out-of-the-way parts of the Colony must necessarily, for the purpose of self-protection, maintain a larger staff than they would have to do in the settled districts of the Colony. Mr. Fairbairn reports that, so far from the settlers maintaining a large staff for the purpose of self-protection, they apparently left themselves and their flocks almost entirely to the tender mercies of the natives, and did not adopt such precautions as in common prudence they ought to have done. Under these circumstances, one could hardly wonder that depredations were committed. Temptations were placed before the natives, and it was unreasonable to expect that these untutored savages could withstand such temptations. These temptations were aggravated by reason of the fact that during the past two or three years these districts had suffered severely from drought, resulting in great loss to the settlers as regards their flocks; and, if the flocks of the settlers suffered from these droughts, so also did native game, and the probability was these wretched natives were driven to extremities by the pangs of hunger. All these things ought to be taken into consideration in dealing with this question. He did not wish to

make any accusation, in a general way, against the settlers for not maintaining a large staff of white servants, for he was aware of the difficulty in the way of obtaining white labor, for out-of-the-way places like these; and, in the next place, he was not unmindful of the fact that, owing to the heavy losses which the settlers had sustained by reason of droughts, they could ill-afford to provide themselves with any very large establishments, as they might have been had they been favored with more prosperous seasons. All these things ought to be taken into consideration; and in apportioning the blame in respect of the insufficiency of police protection, the fact that the Departmental Commission recommended a considerable reduction in the police vote, and that there was a general feeling at that time that no additional expenses should be entailed upon the Colony, ought to be borne in mind. He noticed, on reference to *Hansard*, that the Government, notwithstanding the recommendations of the Commission, asked the House to increase the vote in order to enable them to provide greater police protection for the settlers of these districts, and he found that only two members (Mr. Brown and Mr. Higham) expressed their concurrence with the action of the Government in so doing. The proposal, although it did not evoke any hostile opposition, met with no response whatever at the hands of other hon. members, and he thought there was every reason for saying that, at that time, the feeling which animated the majority of hon. members was one in favor of retrenchment, the Legislature being determined, at whatever cost, to cut down expenditure as far as possible, so as to wipe off the deficit which was then a heavy drag upon the Colony. He was afraid that in some cases their zeal for retrenchment went too far, and he very much feared this was a notable instance of it. Under all these circumstances, he thought there was nothing to be gained by cavilling about the past; he believed most people were under the impression that the Government were now doing all within their power to cope with this native difficulty, and he would therefore move, as a further amendment: "That this Council having considered the Reports placed before it on the state of

"affairs in the Murchison and Gascoyne Districts, is of opinion that the steps lately taken by the Government are well calculated to meet the requirements of the case, and to establish a better feeling between the white settlers and the blacks." The hon. member pointed out that the only difference between this amendment and that submitted by the Colonial Secretary was, that the present amendment limited the expression of opinion embodied therein to the steps which had been "lately" taken by the Government, rather than to their action throughout.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said he was quite ready to accept this amendment, and he hoped it was one that would commend itself to the House generally. He could not but think that the wording of the original resolution was somewhat of a reflection—although perhaps not so intended—upon the course which the Government had adopted with reference to this matter. He might say that, inasmuch as he held himself personally responsible for the action taken by the Government, he could not help regarding that resolution as reflecting upon himself, and, not upon himself alone, but also upon that House, for, as had been pointed out by the hon. member for Toodyay, the provision made by the Government for affording police protection to these districts was considered by the House, last Session, when the proposals of the Government were laid before it, sufficient to meet the exigencies of the situation. Even the hon. member for Geraldton himself thought so, at the time. He (the noble lord) appealed to hon. members, whether they did not all of them, when the Session closed last year, return to their homes under the belief that the Government had adopted, or were about to adopt, all necessary steps, for meeting the requirements of these districts in the way of police protection? If the House thought anything further was required beyond what the Government proposed to do in the matter, nothing was said about it; and, if an additional vote had been suggested, the Government certainly would not have opposed it. Who, therefore, had hon. members to blame—if blame existed—but themselves, if nothing further was done than the Government

proposed to be done. Surely they could not blame the Government. If hon. members had pointed out at the time that they considered the vote insufficient it was for them to have done so. [Mr. S. H. PARKER: Oh, no, it was the duty of the Government to make adequate provision in the first instance.] The Government had done what they conceived to be necessary in the matter, and the House acquiesced in their proposals; and, afterwards, when the deputation waited upon the Governor on the subject, the hon. member for Geraldton himself expressed his satisfaction with the course which the Government were adopting. It was very strange that since they had taken this action, not a single letter of complaint had been written by the settlers to the Government. Did hon. members wish the Government to be guided by *ex parte* statements which were circulated by a certain section of the press, by persons who wrote for an object? He thought hon. members would give them credit for being possessed of very little common sense indeed if they were to frame their policy, and to base their action, upon *ex parte* statements of the kind he referred to, or to take notice of every letter that appeared in a newspaper. Had these settlers whose cause the hon. member for Geraldton championed, and perhaps properly so, remonstrated with the Government in any way, since we had taken the action approved of by that House last Session? In no solitary instance had they done so. While on the subject of newspaper correspondence, he had seen disparaging remarks made with reference to a letter which appeared in the *Morning Herald*, of August 25th, signed "An Old Settler," with reference to the state of affairs on the Gascoyne, and doubts had been publicly expressed as to the genuineness of that communication, and the extract therein, purporting to be from a letter received by the writer from a settler in the Gascoyne District, showing how useful the natives were to the settlers. This very letter had that day been placed in his (the noble lord's) own hands, and he was in a position to state that there was no doubt as to its authenticity, and that it was from a gentleman who was one of the oldest settlers in the district, and who had had

quite as much experience as the hon. member for Geraldton himself. The letter had been shown to him by a gentleman whom every hon. member in that House honored, in order to prove its authenticity,—with reference to which grave doubts had been cast, as he had already said, in the columns of another newspaper. The letter was as follows:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Morning Herald*.

"DEAR SIR,—A great deal has been said of late concerning the dreadful depredations that have been committed by the natives in the North-West Districts of the Colony taking a one-sided view of the state of things. One would naturally come to the conclusion that those poor, unfortunate, uncivilised beings are a terror to the settlers, but I think that the following extract from a letter received from a settler in the Gascoyne District will lead to the conclusion that these much maligned natives will, before long, and as civilisation extends, be looked upon by the settlers as a useful race of men, and that their services will be greatly appreciated by the flockowners and others in the Kimberley and Gascoyne Districts. My informant after speaking of the number of sheep in his possession (then under his sole charge), and the amount of white labor employed by him, says:—
 "My expenditure in wages for next year will be a very small amount, my chief labor being native. They do the shearing, wool scouring, well sinking, and everything that is required of them."

Faithfully yours,
 AN OLD SETTLER.

This communication had been disparaged in the columns of one newspaper, and its genuineness assailed, but, as he had already said, the letter referred to had since been placed in his own hands, and there could be no doubt whatever as to its being genuine. Did not this show the conflict of opinion which existed as to the relations between the whites and the natives in these districts? Two well-known Justices of the Peace who had recently visited that part of the Colony, came to him on their return, and he asked them their opinion as to the true state of affairs. The purport of their conversation, which he took a note of at the time, was this: he asked them if they did not think there was some slight exaggeration as to the difficulties which the settlers had to contend with, as regards the natives, and the reply he

received was that undoubtedly there was, and that if a few of the ringleaders among the natives were arrested and duly punished, it would have the desired effect, and that the presence of a Magistrate and the police on the spot would completely meet all the requirements of the case. [Mr. Brown: Hear, hear.] Had not the Government done this? [Mr. Brown: Only lately.] They had done it before these two gentlemen went up there, and the course which they had adopted would, he was sure, meet with the approbation of the country generally. He believed there was a section—and he said unhesitatingly it was only a section—that did not believe the Government were taking adequate measures to meet the requirements of the case; but no Government could hope to please everybody. It would be foolish on their part to attempt it. But he unhesitatingly maintained that the country generally approved of the action of the Government in regard to this native question. The hon. member for Geraldton made what he might call a great flare the other day with respect to certain statements which appeared in some telegrams from Western Australia published in the papers of the other colonies, and which it was stated were calculated to do great harm to this Colony; but he would ask the hon. member whether he did not think the following telegram, which appeared in the *Australasian* of Sept. 9, received in Perth that day, was not as much calculated to retard the settlement of our Northern territory as any of the telegrams which met with such sweeping condemnation at the hands of hon. members the other day:—

"Perth, September 2.

"Letters have been received from the Gascoyne River to the effect that severe fighting has occurred between the white settlers and the natives, in which the latter were worsted. No particulars or official confirmation of this news are yet to hand."

Was not that statement one which the hon. member ought to take up, quite as much as the statements contained in the telegrams which he brought under the notice of the House the other day? Was there a grain of truth in it? [Mr. Brown: Yes; strictly accurate]. He denied that there was a word of truth in

it, and, as the hon. member had challenged him, he would explain the whole affair, which arose out of the recent murder of the white shepherd, Brackley, who was in the service of Messrs. Gooch and Wheelock. This man, it appears, was murdered by a native, who had also been in the same service, and whose woman Brackley had taken from him. When Messrs. Gooch and Wheelock discovered the murder, they went out to hunt up the native who committed the outrage, and they came across eight or nine natives belonging to the Lyons River country, and what did they do to them? According to their own statements, believing the man they wanted was among them, they fired upon the party right and left, leaving four or five of them dead on the ground. The spot where this outrage was committed was examined, and the trees all round were regularly riddled with shot. And this was the "severe fighting between the white settlers and the natives," referred to in this telegram. It appeared that, when pursued, one of the natives threw his dower at their pursuers, and thereupon, as already said, the latter fired into them right and left, with the fatal results mentioned. These were the men's own statements, in black and white, and he knew of no other "severe fighting," or anything else to justify this telegram, which was much calculated to retard settlement and the advancement of the district.

MR. BURT thought that, on the face of the papers before the House, they would find the main facts to be these,—that the settlers in the vicinity of the Murchison River and also of the Gascoyne were continually making complaints that the natives were committing very serious depredations, taking their property and killing their sheep in a somewhat wholesale manner, and were also guilty of certain outrages in the way of assaults upon their persons; and, that for the investigation of these complaints, the Government sent up Mr. Fairbairn, with a police escort, who forwarded certain reports to the Government, which reports had been presented to the House. Having seen these reports, and certain other communications which had also been furnished to the House in compliance with a request

made by the hon. member for Geraldton, that hon. member brought the whole subject under the consideration of the House, and the resolution moved by the hon. member was one which he (Mr. Burt) did not think many people could find fault with. He did not think it was a strong resolution in any way. Had the hon. member moved what he said he had intended to have moved,—a resolution to the effect that the Government had lamentably failed in their first duty towards these settlers, he did not think the hon. member would have been able to have carried his (Mr. Burt's) vote with him. He had endeavored to approach the consideration of this most important question—for undoubtedly it was an important question, affecting, as it did, not only the welfare of these particular districts, but the interests of the Colony generally—with an unbiassed mind. He had looked into the reports and in some of the evidence which accompanied them, and he deduced from them this fact,—that the complaints of the settlers had been substantiated, that very serious depredations had been committed by the natives, and also very serious assaults made upon the settlers themselves as well as upon their servants. Mr. Fairbairn in his first report, relative to the doings of the natives on the Murchison, said "the settlers had lost large numbers of sheep, and doubtless had suffered severely from native depredations;" and when, at a subsequent date, he reported from the Gascoyne, he told the same tale. These reports were borne out by the opinion of His Excellency the Governor himself, who said, in his minute, "it was evident that the natives had been exceedingly troublesome to the settlers." For his own part, he was inclined to lay very great blame, after a consideration of these reports, upon the Government, in respect to the steps they had latterly adopted, but he would say this—they appeared to have gone into the matter—probably they were anxious not to step beyond the limits of the law—but he thought they had gone into this native question in a half-hearted manner. Not latterly he admitted, but until within the last few months they seemed to have dealt with the difficulty in a very half-hearted sort of way. He found, on perusal of the instructions

issued to the police, that the hon. member for Geraldton was rather borne out in the construction he put upon these instructions, and that these police expeditions were simply intended as visits of inquiry and investigation, rather than anything else. As pointed out by the hon. member for Geraldton, some of the complaints sent in to the Government were made by gentlemen of well-known respectability, and whose veracity could not be impugned or questioned; and, instead of giving the police definite instructions to bring the offenders to justice, and to remain in the district for a reasonable length of time in order to enable them to do so, the Government contented themselves with instructing their officers to inquire and investigate. He could not help thinking that the police themselves, seeing the nature of their instructions, must have worked in a half-hearted sort of way, probably contenting themselves with riding about from one place to another, in the belief that so long as they made a report to the Government, that was all that was expected of them. The Government, when despatching these expeditions, did not in any way appear to have impressed upon them the absolute necessity of bringing back the offenders with them, and, as a matter of fact, many of these native murderers were at large up to the present moment. He could not but think that measures could have been adopted to have brought these people to justice; indeed, he thought, it was a scandalous thing that these criminals were still at large. It was very little use sending the police up there without a Magistrate, yet that was what was done all along, until Mr. Fairbairn was sent up, a few months ago. He noticed that the Colonial Secretary in one of his minutes appended to Mr. Fairbairn's progress reports, said that "though depredations on the flocks had been numerous and serious, yet in no one instance have bands of armed natives come down on any station and driven off sheep." He was not aware that it had ever been stated that "bands of armed natives" had come down upon the settlers. [The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, it has.] If so, he did not think the statement was borne out by the evidence—although he noticed that it was done on one occasion.

Nor did he think the natives were anything like at war with the whites; but what he did think was this—that the way these natives were behaving towards the settlers, in the absence of police protection, must eventually lead to the abandonment of the district, unless effectual steps were taken to remedy the existing state of affairs. It was all very well to say that huts and stores were left unprotected; it was simply impossible in a district like this to have every locality where stores were kept guarded night and day. The settlement of new territory would be impracticable under such conditions as those, and anyone who suggested it must have curious notions as to the work of colonisation, in a country like this. He did not however find so much fault with the Government for putting this forward as an excuse for the depredations from which the settlers had suffered, as he did for the base insinuation conveyed throughout these memoranda that the settlers themselves, by their own conduct, were to blame for the attitude assumed by the natives towards them. It certainly was amusing to read some of these minutes attached to Mr. Fairbairn's reports. The noble lord opposite, referring to Mr. Wittenoom, said "he is evidently young." Well, that was not a very heinous offence,—at any rate it was one for which Mr. Wittenoom could not be held responsible. But, according to the noble and venerable lord, not only is Mr. Wittenoom "evidently young," but also he is "inexperienced in the usages of civilisation." Now really one would think from this that Mr. Wittenoom himself was nothing better than an uncivilised savage; though, for his own part, he failed to see how a long experience in the "usages of civilisation" could be regarded as a necessary qualification for the work of pioneering, in the midst of hostile natives. The noble lord also said that Mr. Wittenoom "had no doubt been carried away by the regrettable letters and articles that have appeared in a section of the press, which had looked at the question from a biased and one-sided point of view." He did not think that remark was justifiable. Letter after letter appeared in the columns of the press from the settlers of the district,—settlers whose words were

worthy of every credence, and no one reading those letters could come to any other conclusion than that a very serious state of things existed in those districts. He was afraid the noble lord himself, in charging any section of the press with looking at this question from a "one-sided point of view" had left himself open to the same charge against himself. The noble lord had taken quite as "one-sided a point of view" of it as any section of the press had. The noble lord said the settlers "permit the seizing of native women." Such a remark was utterly unsupported by anything which appeared in the papers before the House. There was no instance affording any evidence of a settler doing any such thing,—with one solitary exception, which stood absolutely alone. Mr. Fairbairn, referring to this case, said: "At Irrida, a native came and complained that last summer a settler, travelling to the Gascoyne with sheep, took three girls from the Murchison, his own woman being one of them; and this native's story is corroborated by the settlers. Two of the girls, it seems, were in service, and, on hearing what had taken place, their master pursued the party on horseback, for thirty miles, and brought one of them back. The other hid from him, and was taken on to the Gascoyne." That was the only instance of a native woman being abducted, and he did not think it justified the noble lord in charging the settlers, as a body, with permitting the seizure of native women. It was obvious from Mr. Fairbairn's own report that these girls preferred the company of the whites to the blacks, and that there was no necessity to resort to forcible abduction. Mr. Finnerty, in his evidence, said he did not think the natives resented their women being kept by the settlers. Mr. Brockman also said he thought the natives were, on the contrary, very willing to let the whites have their women, but he thought they might probably resent it, if they were taken against their will. There were other instances of settlers expressing the same opinion; but there was no evidence whatever of anything approaching a seizure of these women by the whites, and he maintained that the papers before the House in no way justified the noble

lord's sweeping accusation that the settlers of these districts permit and condone the seizure of native women. "Surely," the noble lord went on to say, "this in itself (*i.e.*, the seizure of native women) is sufficient to account for the 'aboriginals stealing sheep, for some kind of reparation.'" This statement was advanced in the face of the fact that, although depredation after depredation was committed, and it was in evidence that hundreds and if not thousands of sheep were missing, in no single instance was it shown that any of these reprisals were in any way to be traced to the fact of white men having seized native women. Everybody who knew anything at all about these natives, every hon. member in the House—except perhaps the noble lord himself—must know very well that these women, if taken against their will, would simply walk off again and join their own tribe; it would be impossible in a district like the Gascoyne, where doors were unfurnished and huts unguarded, to detain them against their will. The noble lord said "the natives are waiting near for a chance of procuring their women, and being bound to live, take sheep with the connivance of their friends." That was a picture painted with no paint obtained from any of these papers; and if anybody had painted things blacker than they really are, if anybody had looked at this question from "a biassed and one-sided view," it was the noble lord himself. "It will be seen from these few instances," the noble lord said, "how statements have been made which, when investigated, do not bear the coloring placed upon them by the disseminators,"—he (Mr. Burt) had already shown very clearly, from these documents, that the noble lord's own statements did not bear the color he had put upon them—"who," the noble lord added, "for reasons best known to themselves, but painfully apparent, have placed constructions on the doings of the natives, to further, if by any means possible, their uncivilised mode of dealing with the aboriginals." He challenged the noble lord to show from these papers that the natives had been dealt with in what he called an "uncivilised mode." What did Mr. Fairbairn himself say? "The natives in the

"service of the whites appear to be 'well fed and kindly treated.'" Those were Mr. Fairbairn's own words, and yet in the face of them, the noble lord charged the settlers with dealing with them in an "uncivilised mode." There was not one single word, throughout the whole of these papers, voluminous as they were, to justify such a statement. Yet His Excellency the Governor complimented the noble lord upon this memorandum, and said it gave a very good view of affairs, as disclosed by Mr. Fairbairn's report. He would say it again, and he challenged any unprejudiced person to controvert it,—Mr. Fairbairn's report disclosed no such thing, and afforded no ground whatever for such imputations, which were altogether baseless. As he said at first, he said again now, he approached the consideration of this subject without the slightest prejudice or feeling in the matter, and he must candidly say that there was no evidence whatever to show that such a state of things existed as described by the noble lord, in this minute, which His Excellency the Governor said gave "a very good view of the position of affairs." And the inference drawn by the Government as to the reason for this state of things was utterly unfounded. "What right have we to be surprised," His Excellency said, in one of these minutes, referring to the murder of the shepherd Redfern, "when we hear that a 'native, 'sulky' with a shepherd for taking his woman away, has put the white 'man to death?'" What evidence, he would ask that House was there that this native, to whom allusion was made by His Excellency, was "sulky" with the man whom he murdered "for taking his woman away?" (THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member will find it in Mr. Fairbairn's last report.) He thanked the noble lord. Mr. Fairbairn's words were these: "Some of the settlers inform 'me that the natives have told them 'he (Redfern) was murdered by a native 'named Wangabiddie, and that he murdered him for his—rations.'" This was what the settlers told Mr. Fairbairn, upon the information of other natives; and the statement to the contrary, the statement, namely, that he was murdered for taking Dickie's woman away, was only supported by the evidence of one native.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford): The hon. member is wrong. Mr. Fairbairn says: "I have questioned 'several natives (through an interpreter) 'who were found on the Kennedy range, 'not far from where the murder was 'committed, and who are known pretty 'well to have seen Wangabiddie since, 'and in whose possession some of Redfern's things were found; and they all 'state that Wangabiddie killed him because he was 'sulky' with him for taking away a woman named Kaluman."

MR. BURT, continuing, said, on the other hand, there was the evidence of the settlers, based upon the information of other natives, that Redfern was murdered for the sake of his rations; but His Excellency, ignoring all this, paraded the statement to the contrary, and jumped at the conclusion that the man was put to death because his murderer was "sulky" with him for taking a woman away. What right had His Excellency, or anyone else, to jump at that conclusion, in the face of the other evidence, showing that the man was killed for the sake of his rations? Was not this another instance of the "biassed and one-sided view" which the Government took of this native question throughout? One thing was very certain,—if these districts were ever going to be settled, and the settlers were ever going to succeed, the natives must be employed in some way or other by the whites. They had proved very useful to the settlers farther North, and gave them very little trouble; but there was a very good reason for that. That part of the Colony was settled by men who had been allowed to deal with the natives in a spirit of firmness, and with a strong hand, and the result had been satisfactory in every way, both to the settlers and to the natives themselves. He did not suggest, as had been thrown out by the noble lord and the Government, that, in the opinion of the Gascoyne settlers, these natives ought to have been shot for sheep-stealing; far from it. And he was sorry to find the Government insinuating that, if the settlers were allowed to deal with the natives, in their own way, this would be the treatment they would mete out to them. [THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They say so themselves]. Well, he noticed that out of ten or twelve of

the settlers examined by Mr. Fairbairn, two only made the passing remark that if the Government were to leave them to deal with the natives in their own way they would not be long in settling the difficulty. But he thought a mere casual and unguarded observation like that, made in the course of conversation, should not be taken as expressive of the fixed opinion of the settlers generally, in the face of the acknowledged fact that, at present, the natives are well fed and kindly treated by these settlers. It was a notorious fact, although the noble lord might not be aware of it, that, in the winter season, the natives of these districts and of the country farther North were largely dependent upon the good nature of the settlers for their sustenance: an immense number of them were fed by the whites, not only those in their service, but others as well, and he thought it reflected the greatest credit in the world upon these settlers that, notwithstanding the depredations they were suffering from and the outrages committed upon them, they treated the natives—feeding them, and in many instances clothing them—in the handsome manner which, as was well known, they did.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS regarded this native question as a very important one, and he was sorry to find that it had been approached and dealt with, in the course of this debate, in rather a recriminatory spirit. He thought it was a question that should be dealt with calmly and dispassionately, and with an eye to its important bearing upon the development and future welfare, not alone of the Gascoyne and its tributaries, but of the whole of this vast territory. We might yet undertake the settlement and colonisation of districts a thousand or fifteen hundred miles beyond the districts now under consideration—we had, in fact, a third of a continent to deal with, and there could be no doubt that, in the settlement of this territory, this native question must play an important part. He should therefore have been glad if hon. members had shown that they were prepared to take a broad and comprehensive view of the whole question, rather than that the debate should resolve itself into a critical discussion of certain papers laid on the

Table of the House for the information of hon. members, setting forth what had been done by the Government recently in connection with the so-called native difficulty in one portion of our territory, chiefly with reference to some larcenies and cases of sheep-stealing on the Gascoyne,—which, of course, had every right to review; but he was sorry hon. members had not gone beyond that, and looked at this native question in all its bearings. Allusion had been made by the hon. member for Toodyay to the fact that when the land regulations for these Northern Districts were under discussion in that House some years ago, he (the Commissioner) had drawn attention to the fact that an attempt had been made many years previously—so far back as 1868—to settle these districts, and that the attempt was attended with failure, the settlement having to be abandoned, and that no further steps were taken to colonise it for ten years afterwards. In order to encourage settlement, the Government framed very liberal land regulations, but it was specially stipulated that no protection or Government establishment in these districts would be guaranteed to the public until deemed expedient by the Government,—thus warning intending settlers that, in return for the very liberal conditions upon which they could take up land, they must be prepared to provide such establishments as would enable them to afford themselves protection and security against native depredations. But what do we find is the case? Settlers had gone up to these districts, in a very spirited manner no doubt, but dependent almost entirely upon the natives for their labor, and in a great measure upon native women. These women, it might be said, are almost the only solace (so to speak) these poor savages possess, and no doubt it must be very galling to them to lose them; yet it was in evidence that they were largely employed by the settlers, in almost all matters, and it could hardly be wondered that their ideas as to the rights of property were very vague indeed. Possibly they ventured, in the first instance, to kill a solitary sheep, and, finding they were not challenged, became emboldened. Familiarity bred contempt, probably, as regards sheep stealing as well as anything else; and so

these natives, as they became more familiar in their relations with the whites and their flocks, committed these petty larcenies,—for, at the worst, he looked upon these depredations simply as so many thefts, committed by untutored and uncivilised tribes. But he was himself digressing from that view of the subject from which he should have wished to see this question discussed, namely, in a broad and comprehensive spirit, as one of national importance. If they were not prepared to do so this Session, he hoped they would, on a further occasion, deal in all seriousness with this subject of the native question, pure and simple. He himself had fixed opinions as to the lines which we ought to follow in dealing with the subject, and his own ideas as to the native character, and native protection and management. The present was neither the time nor the occasion for enunciating those views, but he felt sure the present Administration was perfectly alive to the necessities of the case and the exigencies of the situation. He also felt satisfied that hon. members, if not collectively and unanimously, still by a large majority, would be of that opinion. He hoped and trusted that, when the House met in Session again, they would have an opportunity of seriously considering this native question in its entirety. He was quite certain himself that, before any great length of time elapsed, and as settlement extended, we should have a great deal of trouble with these natives. All the information to hand with respect to the natives in the more Northern portion of our territory led to the belief that, as settlement extended in that direction the settlers would find themselves subjected to even greater troubles, and have more serious difficulties to contend with, than the present settlers have yet had in dealing with the native races. The subject was one which must, sooner or later, command the attention of the Legislature and of the Government. As to what had been done in the past, and the limited amount of protection which had been afforded to the settlers in these districts, he thought, if blame existed anywhere, it attached to the Legislature collectively rather than to the Executive Government. He maintained that the Executive Government had, with the

limited means at its disposal, since these representations were made to it, done all in its power to cope with the difficulty. Under these circumstances, he hoped the House would agree to the amendment now before it, which his noble colleague, on the part of the Government, had expressed his willingness to accept.

MR. STEERE said, if any blame attached to anyone in connection with this native question, for not taking proper measures to repress disorder, he really could not agree with the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, that the blame attached to that Council; for, unquestionably, if the Executive Government had come before the House, and stated that, in consequence of the disturbed state of affairs in these districts, a larger vote was necessary for affording them police protection, that House would not have refused it. He therefore could not acknowledge that this Council was collectively to blame, if the want of adequate protection had not been supplied, or if things had been left undone that ought to have been done. Nor was he prepared to say that the Executive Government had been to blame. In his opinion, no question had ever been before the public in regard to which it had been so difficult to arrive at a right conclusion as this native question, and for this reason,—that the statements made by the settlers themselves who had been affected by these depredations were so entirely at variance with the report made by the special magistrate who was sent by the Government to inquire into the state of affairs, that it was very difficult indeed to reconcile them. They were at variance even before Mr. Fairbairn ever went up, and the statements taken from these settlers by that gentleman did not altogether agree with their previous statements; and now that Mr. Fairbairn's report had been printed, the settlers denied that the statements contained in this report were in accord with the statements they made to Mr. Fairbairn. There was, in fact, such a conflict of opinion that it was almost impossible to arrive at the true state of affairs in these disturbed districts. He admitted he had not had time to look over the whole of these papers, but from what he had seen of them he noticed the existence of a

great diversity of opinion even among the settlers themselves. Some of them said the natives were useful to them; a good many—he did not know whether they were the same settlers—said, however, that they lost a great number of sheep; others, again, said they had not suffered much loss. For his own part, he must confess he was rather surprised to find that the great majority of the settlers had not lost what, from his own experience in sheep farming he should consider a large percentage of sheep. He thought that the number of sheep he lost annually, on his own station, in proportion to the number of his flocks, was far greater than the number which appeared to be lost in these districts. That might be because the country is open country, and thus rendered it very easy work to shepherd flocks, whereas the country where his sheep were kept was thick country, and sheep were more easily lost there. There might be natural causes to account for the discrepancy, but still the fact remained that the number of sheep lost up there was comparatively small, and it certainly had surprised him to find it was not greater. He noticed also that the majority of the settlers examined by Mr. Fairbairn stated that their sheep were taken away in small quantities, and not driven off in large numbers. Others, however, said they had lost a good many at a time. This was no doubt a most unsatisfactory and disheartening state of affairs to the settlers, and he could quite understand their complaining about it. But, whatever remissness there may have been in the past, he did not think anyone would say that the Government were not now taking proper steps to induce a better state of things. He was not going so far as to say that they had not, before now, taken such steps as they considered necessary to meet the requirements of the case; but he had been particularly struck by one letter among the correspondence laid on the Table—a letter from Mr. John Brockman, the only Magistrate in the district, who appeared to have done all he possibly could, in his magisterial capacity, to endeavor to put a stop to the depredations of the natives. This gentleman informed the Government that things were so bad that he had found it necessary to swear in special constables in

order to try to apprehend native offenders, and that the settlers were losing sheep by thousands; he also pointed out the great difficulties he had to encounter not only in capturing the offenders but also in securing them after they were arrested, before an opportunity was afforded to send them to Geraldton for trial. Mr. Brockman, he noticed, mentioned a case in which he had to swear in as special constable the master of a vessel (the *Sarah*), taking down some of these native prisoners, and that, on a subsequent occasion, the same man refused to take any more, owing to the difficulties and obstacles which had been placed in his way when he arrived with the natives at Geraldton, owing to the Inspector of Police refusing to recognise him as a special constable. He must say he was surprised to find that, although this letter of Mr. Brockman's came under the attention of both the Governor and the Colonial Secretary, judging from the minutes attached, no notice whatever was taken of this complaint. [The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Oh, yes, there was; the hon. member will find it on the Table.] He was very glad to hear it, for it certainly had seemed to him a very strange proceeding that no notice should have been taken of it, and of the serious difficulties which the only Magistrate in the district had to contend against. Some exception appeared to have been taken to Mr. Brockman swearing in special constables, doubts being entertained as to whether such an emergency had arisen as to justify such a course being adopted. But to his mind there was no doubt that such an emergency had arisen, and he was pleased to find that such was the opinion expressed by the Attorney General. Nothing convinced him more as to the serious state of affairs which had existed in the district than the fact that since the 1st of January last no less than sixty-four natives had been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, and, in the majority of cases, sentenced to the longest period of imprisonment which the law allowed to be passed upon them, principally for sheep stealing, on the Gascoyne and the Murchison Rivers. He thought this fact spoke for itself, and disclosed a state of things that had never existed in any part of this Colony

before,—a most serious state of things indeed, so many convictions, in so short a time, and extending over not a very large area of country. A great deal had been said as to the cause of this ill-feeling between the natives and the settlers, and it had been attributed by the Government to the interference of the whites with the native women. He must say, when he first saw Mr. Fairbairn's report, it had struck him that there was a great deal in that, and that the strained relations between the natives and the settlers had been produced in a great measure by the latter cohabiting with the native women. But he had since had reason to alter that opinion, for he understood from persons who were well acquainted with the habits of these natives that the mere fact of the whites cohabiting with their women would not call forth any ill-feeling on the part of the blacks. He put this question to Mr. Fairbairn on his return from the disturbed districts,—In your opinion is it in consequence of the white men having the native women that all this ill-feeling has been produced between the two races? Mr. Fairbairn's reply was to this effect—that the natives generally raised no objection to their women being taken for temporary purposes, but what they did object to was their being taken away from them altogether. Consequent upon what Mr. Fairbairn had told him, and what he had also heard from gentlemen who were well acquainted with the habits and customs of these natives, he had come to the conclusion that the cause of the ill-feeling which existed between the two races was not, as alleged by the Government, attributable to this practice. In conclusion, he could only say, if the hon. member for Geraldton pressed his resolution, he should feel bound to vote with him, for there was nothing objectionable in it that he could see, so far as the Government were concerned. It conveyed no censure upon them, and, if it did, he did not know but that he would vote with the hon. member. At the same time if the hon. member chose to withdraw it he would then vote for the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Toodyay, which he understood had been accepted by the noble lord opposite, on behalf of the Government.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) said: I had imagined, Sir, that the hon. member for Geraldton would have acted the part of the governor of the Cana marriage feast, who kept the best wine until the end of the banquet, and that the hon. member was keeping the most spicy and piquant dish of the Session until its close. For weeks past the clouds have been gathering and lowering over our heads, and we seemed doomed at any moment to instant destruction. Lo! the Olympian Jove has appeared, and hurled his thunderbolt at the devoted heads of the members of this bench,—and, not satisfied with hurling one only, he actually moved us into Committee for the purpose of hurling a dozen thunderbolts at us. Well, sir, after all, it appears to me that the storm has passed over with a little bit of summer lightning. I might quote to the hon. member a line that comes to my memory from Horace,—

Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus,

—the mountains have heaved with the pains of childbirth and they have brought forth a ridiculous little mouse. Or, as the question we are dealing with is the native question, I may be permitted to exercise a little bit of fancy, and say they have brought forth a puny, picaninny 'possum. Sir, there is absolutely nothing proved against the Government in the way of neglect. I will give the hon. member the greatest possible credit: he has marshalled his facts with consummate skill, and done the most he could with the materials at his command; but, after all, what does it amount to? Has he really proved a single case in which the Government has been negligent in taking steps for putting down any instance of depredation brought to their notice, or failed to attempt to bring to punishment any person guilty of any of these depredations? I think my noble friend has conclusively proved that, in every case brought to the attention of the Government, every possible step was taken to bring the offenders to justice. And, if we failed to do so in some instances, if we have not succeeded in bringing the offenders to justice, is that a charge to be brought against this Government? Can the hon. member point out a single town, in the most civilised country, where, in every case of theft, in

every case where there has been a breach of the law, the offender is brought to condign punishment? I think not. And if that is the case in civilised towns, where they have the highest system of police organisation, what can he expect in such remote districts as the Gascôyne and the Upper Murchison? If a few of these wretched natives manage to get away after having committed offences and broken the law, is it to be charged to us that we are neglectful in our police regulations? I think the hon. member has not proved a single case of negligence on our part, and if he should have done so, is he really going to charge that to us for culpable neglect, or dereliction of duty? Why, sir, it seems to me that, after all,—and I am surprised at it myself, for I have listened with attention to all that has fallen from the hon. member—it seems to me he has not proved one solitary case in which we have been guilty of any remissness. A great deal has been made of the question as to the cause of these depredations and reprisals. I must confess that I myself know nothing of the customs and habits of these natives, but, looking at the question as one may do who has read of these aboriginal races and their habits, I should not be at all surprised to find that what has been said is true, and that really these natives have been somewhat aggrieved at the fact of their women being taken away from them. The hon. member challenges us to prove that these women are taken away by sheer force. Possibly it would be difficult to do so. But, I take it, that is not the grievance in the eyes of these natives. I cannot altogether go with the hon. member for the Swan that this is a matter with regard to which these people have no feeling whatever, for my own opinion is that these savages, like other savages, in all parts of the world, are very sensitive, are very tender—I may be laughed at—on this point. After all, sir, a man is a man; and as His Excellency very well points out, in his minute to Mr. Fairbairn's report, surely their women are as valuable to these natives as our flocks are to us; and unless I have very strong evidence to the contrary, I shall continue to believe that these blackfellows do place great store upon their women. The hon. member for Geraldton seems to

make a great point, and challenges us to prove, that these women are taken from them by force. Granted they are not. That does not lessen the evil in the eyes of the blacks themselves. Their grievance is that their women are taken away from them, and that they are thus debarred from companionship and association with them. It matters little to them whether they are abducted from them by force, or seduced from them by the wiles and fascinations of the white man. The hon. member seems to think it is the latter, and that the superior blandishments and allurements of the civilised white offers more attractions to these thick-lipped Venuses than the rude courtesies of their own savage swains—that, in short, they prefer a white paramour to a black husband. But I take it, sir, that the natural protectors of these darkskinned coquettes do not stop to consider whether they are simply allured by the superior fascinations of the white man, or are forcibly abducted by him from their allegiance. What they complain of, and it appears to me very naturally complain of, is the fact that they lose the society and companionship of their women, and that is quite enough. It is not proved to the contrary, and, that being the case, I think they have a good deal to be dissatisfied about. I have no intention of throwing a stone at these settlers, for their conduct in this matter, for of course we cannot expect very refined notions amongst men living in primitive simplicity, in such a remote out-of-the-way territory, and probably very much put to it to find a little bit of comfort after their hard day's work. I assure hon. members I am not treating this subject in a jocular vein. I actually do think we must not throw stones at these white people, situated as they are, because they do not care to live by themselves, after doing a hard day's work, without any solace or comfort whatever. But we must also look at it from the black man's point of view. We must not withhold our sympathies from these people simply because they are not the same color as ourselves. Whether by force or by stealth, the fact remains that their women are taken away from them, and they are aggrieved thereby, and naturally so. For myself, I should have been very much inclined,

as my hon. friend the Surveyor General suggested, to have approached the consideration of this native question from another point of view than that into which the discussion upon it seems to have drifted, and to deal with it, not in detail, as to whether Dickie was "sulky," or whether Jimmy was arrested within a reasonable time, or Jackie sentenced to a sufficient term of imprisonment at Rottneest. This was not the way I should have expected this native question would have been approached. I certainly thought the question would have been otherwise discussed by the hon. member for Geraldton, who is well capable of doing so, and who has probably paid as much attention to this native question, if not more so, than a great many hon. members of this House put together. I should have thought that, instead of attempting to prove that the Government had been a little negligent here, and a little remiss there, the hon. member would have dealt with the subject on its broad merits, and laid before the House and the Government some proposition whereby we might have proceeded to deal with this native question, not in detail, but in a comprehensive manner. I am sorry that has not been the case, for I am sure the hon. member is well capable of so dealing with it. I believe that not only is he thoroughly acquainted with the habits and customs of the aboriginal race, but he is a man who here represents a class of whom Governor Eyre may be accepted as a type—a philo-aboriginal. I am saying this in earnest; I believe he has a good heart not only for those of his own race but also for these blacks; I was pained very much the other day when I saw it stated in print that the hon. member was actuated by a feeling of hostility towards these natives; for my honest belief is—and, I venture to say, that belief is shared by every member of this House—that the hon. member for Geraldton is animated by nothing but good and honorable feelings towards all men, whether they be black or whether they be white. But I do regret he has not thought fit to bring his great experience to bear on this question, in the way suggested by my hon. friend the Surveyor General. Notwithstanding the fact, however, that this debate has

gone off in a somewhat narrow direction, and resulted in a collapse—I hope the hon. member will forgive me for saying so—notwithstanding, I say, such being the case, I cannot help thinking that some good will come out of it. I am perfectly sure that amongst the settlers in these districts there are as honorable and good men as any I see around me in this House. I am perfectly convinced of that, and I am proud to say it. But, sir, I am also convinced that amongst them there also men with whom I should be sorry to shake hands. And we must not forget that these untutored savages are unable to discriminate between the honorable and dishonorable among them, and, until they have been taught to do so, I am afraid we must expect to find a great deal of resentment and of reprisals on their part. [Mr. BROWN: Hear, hear.] If so, why put the blame upon the Government? Why not consider the difficulties the Government itself has to contend with? Why, sir, the Government itself cannot get to the fountain of evil in this matter. The fountain of evil, sir, in this native difficulty is not the black man but the white men who began those ill-practices which have led to these reprisals—men like Mountain; and it is in consequence of the ill-treatment these savages received at the hands of Mountain and his like that they have been goaded into the reprisals, which every hon. member must deplore. That, sir, I take it—and I am looking at the matter purely from a common sense point of view—that, I take it, accounts for a great deal of the recent disturbances. When I am talking about Mountain, I am not speaking of him individually but as the representative of a class, for I am very much afraid there are many more like him. [Mr. BROWN: No.] The hon. member tells me, no. I am glad to hear that there is only one man with so black a character as Mountain; but, I venture to say if there are not many so black as him, there are many who approach him. I cannot help thinking that: I am quite prepared to admit, and it gives me pleasure to say so, that the majority of the settlers in these districts are humane and honorable men in their dealings with these natives, but, if this Mountain should be the King of the Blackguards, you may

depend upon it he has a considerable number of followers in his train; and, if so, it is quite enough to account for a great deal of the hostility which we are told exists between the two races. I think, however, that hostility has been softened down very considerably by this discussion. Even the hon. member for Murray, with his sound common sense, is obliged to admit it—though I almost thought the hon. member was sorry to admit it. When the hon. member got up, I made sure he was going to support the hon. member for Geraldton through thick and thin; but the hon. member himself was bound to admit that there is nothing like a strong feeling of hostility between the blacks and the whites. If so, I think the hon. member for Geraldton ought to be satisfied. The hon. member has done his best to show that a state of things has existed which the Government ought not to have allowed, and I think he has admirably succeeded in showing that the Government had done all it could, under the circumstances, hampered as it is by the want of money, and by the enormous distance of these disturbed districts from the seat of Government, and the consequent difficulty of laying hands upon the evildoers. I am not here to say that nothing of a regrettable nature has happened in these districts, and that the settlers have not had a great deal to contend with, but I venture to state, and I believe without contradiction from any hon. member who looks at the matter with an unbiassed mind, that it has been clearly demonstrated that the Government has been in no way unmindful or neglectful of its duty, but that we have done all within our power, with the means at our disposal, as the exigencies and the circumstances of the case seemed to us to demand, and that, in the words of the resolution of my noble friend, the steps we have taken have been such as were well calculated to meet the requirements of the case and to establish a better feeling between the white settlers and the natives.

MR. RANDELL said he noticed the hon. member for Perth was actively engaged in preparing his ammunition, for annihilating the hon. and learned gentleman who had just sat down; and, as he (Mr. Randell) thought it would be un-

wise for the House to be flooded with the eloquence of two such learned gentlemen, without some one interposing, he ventured to trespass for a few moments upon the time of the Committee by offering a few remarks upon the question at issue. He thought, in the first place, every hon. member would admit that the hon. member for Geraldton had brought this question forward in the greatest good faith and with the best intentions, and that the hon. member had no desire for a moment to snatch anything like a victory from the Government. For his own part he saw no reason for doing any such thing; he failed to see what advantage was to be gained by it, under our existing constitution. If we were living under a system of party government it might have been a different thing. We saw such impeachments, if he might use the word, taking place in many parts of the world at the present moment, and one's mind went back at once, in this connection, to the heavy charges made against the English Government by their opponents, purely with a party object. ["No, no," and "Hear, hear."] There could not be a question, he thought, about that. The Conservatives had charged the present Administration with not having taken the proper steps to quell the disturbances in Egypt; but he thought himself that subsequent events had shown that the present Ministry had inherited a very ugly Egyptian legacy from their predecessors in office, and we now knew for certain that they had done all they possibly could in the matter. He thought the case of our own Government, with reference to this native question, stood very much on the same ground. The hon. member for Geraldton, doubtless, felt very strongly on this question, and there was not the shadow of a doubt that the settlers themselves, as a rule, also felt very strongly with regard to it; but he thought we must all admit that the Government had exercised a very wise discretion in the matter, in not unreservedly accepting, as gospel, reports written upon the position of affairs by gentlemen who were naturally smarting under the feeling of losses sustained and of consequent aggravation. He thought, when hon. members calmly considered the evidence disclosed in the

papers before the House, they must admit that the Government were quite justified in acting very cautiously in the steps which they took upon receiving those reports. He considered that this was fully borne out by the epitome of the evidence as furnished by Mr. Fairbairn. He did not profess to have read the whole of the evidence in detail, nor had he any intention of doing so; he was quite satisfied, for his own part, with the précis of the evidence presented to the Government, and by the Government to that House, by the gentleman who was despatched on a special mission to inquire into the true state of affairs in the disturbed districts, for he believed it would be admitted that Mr. Fairbairn's reports presented a very fair and impartial summary of the voluminous evidence which was contained in the papers before the House. It was his intention to have referred to this question upon economical grounds, but, as that had been done already, it would be unnecessary for him to traverse the same ground again. He had no doubt that this consideration of the subject—the policy of strict economy and retrenchment of expenditure which had been preached in that House for some years past—had weighed upon the mind of the Government, as well as the feeling, which was apparent throughout these reports, that the statements published in the newspapers with reference to this native difficulty were, to a large extent, exaggerations. He would be one of the last to say one word which would imply that he looked upon the settlers themselves as having been the cause of the state of affairs which appeared to exist between the whites and the natives, in these disturbed districts, but he thought when men, with a full knowledge of the dangers and difficulties attending the work of colonisation in a country where the natives predominate, and especially natives of the type of these Gascoyne natives, and with a knowledge that in years gone by these people offered a stubborn resistance to a settlement of their country by the whites,—he did think that, regard being had to the facts disclosed in these papers, the settlers, as a rule, had not exercised the prudence which one had a right to look from them in attempting the occupation of a new territory. He

thought they might naturally have expected—having amongst them, as he was informed, men who had previously been the cause of ill-feeling amongst these natives, by their ill-treatment of them—that there would be attempts at reprisals made on the part of the blacks, and that, in common prudence, every care would have been taken to guard against these attacks and depredations, whereas, it appeared that the settlers left their stores and their flocks to a great extent unguarded and their own persons unprotected. There was no occasion to charge the settlers with having been in themselves the cause of these disturbances; it did not follow that those who had been assaulted or robbed by these untutored savages had been guilty of any ill-treatment or unkindness towards them; on the contrary, it was well known to all those who had read the history of colonisation in other countries, and who had heard of missionary efforts made to civilise heathen races, that too frequently those who had treated the aboriginal inhabitants most kindly, and who were their best and truest friends, fell the victims to their treachery and brutality, and whose lives were sacrificed for the guilt of others. These savages did not stop to reason as to the justness of their action, when committing these reprisals. In support of this position, he need only instance the sad case of the late Bishop Patterson, who, as hon. members were aware, proved himself for years to be a good friend to the native races among whom he labored, but who, after all, fell a victim to their savage instincts. Again, going further back in the history of missionary work, he might refer to the case of the martyred missionary John Williams, who was a true friend to the natives among whom he labored for years, but who was eventually massacred by them. He mentioned these cases to show that the mere fact of the settlers at the Gascoyne having suffered at the hands of the natives of that district did not necessarily show that there had been any ill-treatment on their part of the aboriginal races. Regard being had to all the circumstances of the case, and to the fact that the means at the disposal of the Government were limited, also that there was reason to believe that the reports received and circulated were of

an exaggerated character, he thought it could not fairly be said that the Government had not adopted every step that could reasonably be expected of them to deal with the evil. He understood from the noble lord, the Colonial Secretary, that no less than six expeditions were sent by the Government to these districts, prior to that conducted by Mr. Fairbairn, within the last two years, showing clearly that they were anxious to make themselves acquainted with the true state of affairs in order to cope with it successfully. He should like to refer to one very serious matter which the hon. member for Geraldton had taken exception to, namely, the instructions given by the Government to Mr. Fairbairn, when he was sent on his special mission to visit the disturbed districts. The hon. member stated that at any rate one of the settlers on the Gascoyne had taken the same view of these instructions as he had, and that other settlers also regarded them as an insult to them. Now he thought no one who dispassionately considered the particular paragraph referred to could possibly arrive at such a conclusion as that. What did they find? His Excellency directed Mr. Fairbairn to proceed to the Gascoyne, for what? "To report, from a disinterested side of the question, the real state of the relations that exist between the settlers and the aboriginals—whether the former have acted in any way harshly towards the latter, and thereby forced them to the hostile attitude they have assumed towards the settlers, or whether, on the other hand, the natives have, without receiving provocation, taken upon themselves the position which they are said to occupy, from a belief that they will not be punished, and from a mistaken notion of our inability to cope with them successfully." That was the paragraph so obnoxious to the hon. member for Geraldton; but, for his own part, he failed to see anything of an objectionable tendency in it; on the contrary, he considered it one of the most valuable directions in these instructions, and he was sorry to find the hon. member taking exception to it, and also that the settlers themselves resented it as an insult. This was a very serious part of the question, and the reason he referred to it was, because the hon. member stated

that the settlers, in consequence of it, refused to co-operate with the Government in the suppression of disorder. He thought this was a most unfortunate state of affairs. He considered that the country, generally, as well as the Government, had a right to expect the cordial assistance and co-operation of every settler in the district, in their efforts to induce more friendly relations between the native race and the occupiers of the soil. He could not see, even supposing such a construction as that put upon the paragraph by the hon. member for Geraldton could be maintained, that it would exonerate the settlers from a duty which they owed to the Government of the country, to assist them to the utmost of their power in bringing about more amicable relations between the two races, and thus facilitate the settlement and development of the territory. He was sorry to find that the debate, as pointed out by the hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, had assumed a somewhat acrimonious and recriminatory tone, and that the discussion had not been more strictly confined to the main question at issue,—whether the Government had adopted such steps as were necessary, under all the circumstances, to abate the evil complained of. He could answer for himself, honestly, in the affirmative, and he should be prepared to give his vote in accordance therewith. He believed the hon. member for Geraldton was quite prepared to accept the amended amendment, which he trusted would meet with the approval of hon. members generally.

MR. CAREY said a great deal of stress had been laid by more than one speaker as to the evidence taken by Mr. Fairbairn being at variance with the published statements of the settlers. Knowing Mr. Fairbairn as he did, perhaps better than any other hon. member knew him, he felt it was only right he should say—and he thought most hon. members would agree with him—that no one could have been sent on this mission more likely to have given an unbiassed report than Mr. Fairbairn himself. He was a gentleman who had served the Colony well for over twenty years, in various capacities, and who had always borne a very high character, and he (Mr. Carey) did think he might safely say that any report emanating from Mr. Fair-

bairn would be an unbiassed report, uninfluenced by any other consideration than an honest desire to do justice between all parties. Allusion had been made in the course of the debate to the fact that since January last no less than sixty-four natives had been sent down from this district to undergo various terms of imprisonment for sheep stealing. Now when he found, on looking over the returns laid on the Table, that for stealing one solitary sheep a sentence of two years had been inflicted, and that this sheep had not been stolen by one native alone, but by two or three others—in one instance there were no less than eight natives implicated in the larceny of seven ewes and thirteen lambs—he thought, looking at these facts, very much stress could not be laid upon the large number of natives who had been sentenced for sheep stealing. Nor did he think any exception could be taken, on the ground that the offenders were not adequately punished, when they got two or three years for being concerned in stealing one sheep. A great deal of stress had also been laid on the fact that the murderers of Clarkson were still at large, but the noble lord the leader of the Government had pointed out what steps had been taken by the authorities to endeavor to bring these men to justice, and therefore it was not necessary he should again refer to the matter; he had done so, in order to remind the House that ours was not the only country in which murderers were allowed to remain at large while the blood of their victims cried to heaven for vengeance,—a country, too, favored with a numerous and well-organised police force. He referred to the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke,—an outrage committed in broad daylight, and in a country swarming with police, and yet the murderers were still at large. Was it any wonder then that in a country like this, and in a distant part of it like the Gascoyne, inhabited by a mere handful of whites, but with a numerous native population, and where there were no police at all on the spot, guilty natives should remain uncaptured? Reference had also been made, and adverse comment indulged in, because the Government, when they sent a police expedition to inquire into the state of affairs in the disturbed districts,

did not also appoint a Stipendiary Magistrate for these districts to deal with offenders on the spot. He ventured to say that had the Government, without reference to that House, appointed a paid Magistrate, hon. members who now blamed the Government for doing what they had done, would have taken exception to such an appointment. Therefore he could not see that much stress could be laid on that fact. He would not weary the House at this late hour with any further remarks, but he thought he ought to say that he had a son temporarily employed in surveying one part of the country referred to, and his son wrote to him saying that he and his party had had no trouble whatever with the natives so far.

MR. CROWTHER: Then he has written in a different strain to other people.

MR. S. H. PARKER said it appeared to him the hon. member for Geraldton had taken a wrong view of this question altogether. Only a short time ago, when he (Mr. Parker) brought forward a resolution in favor of the adoption of self-government, the hon. member for Geraldton said he was perfectly satisfied with the way in which the present Government managed the Colony's affairs. But what did the hon. member ask us to do now? Nothing more or less than to pass a vote of censure on a Government that he refused a few days ago to turn out at once. Although he must say that the hon. member's resolution was a very mildly worded one indeed, and did not amount to very much in itself, still the whole drift of his speech, and the sole object he had in view, was to pass a vote of censure on the Government with regard to their native policy. He maintained the hon. member had no right to do that. The Government, so long as they were in office, were entitled to the support and the respect of the country, and the hon. member had no right to attack their policy, and to ask the House to pass a vote of no-confidence in them, unless the hon. member was prepared to accept the responsibility of taking office, in their place. [The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear.] He was glad to hear the noble lord expressing his concurrence. For his own part, as he had already shown, he had no confidence in the Gov-

ernment himself, and he wanted to get them turned out; therefore he was one of the privileged few who could consistently support a vote of censure upon the present Administration. Those who had opposed the resolution he brought forward the other day in favor of the adoption of Ministerial Government, on the ground that the present constitution answered all our present purposes, could not consistently now adopt a vote of no-confidence in the Administration. But for his own part—he announced it openly—he had no confidence at all in the Government, and therefore it would be quite consistent on his part to subscribe to any vote of censure which might be passed upon them. As regards this native question, he was inclined to think they had done as much as could be expected from them, and that was very little. It would be absurd to expect much at the hands of any ministry that did not represent the country. The hon. and learned Attorney General frankly acknowledged that he knew nothing about this native question,—that the hon. member for Geraldton knew more about it than all the occupants of the Treasury bench put together. Yet the hon. member for Geraldton asked the House to pass a vote of censure upon them, as if they could be expected to deal with this native question in the same effectual manner as the hon. member himself would have dealt with it had he been Minister of Native Affairs. The hon. member was expecting too much altogether from a Government that stood confessed of being entirely ignorant of this native question. If the hon. member wished to see a vigorous native policy introduced, let the hon. member join him in his efforts to obtain for the Colony a free constitution, under which we shall be able to take the management of our public affairs upon our own shoulders. He heartily concurred in the expression of regret made by his hon. friend the Attorney General, with reference to the unwarrantable statement published in a local newspaper, ascribing motives of personal hostility towards the natives on the part of the hon. member for Geraldton, and going so far as to say that if the hon. member had his own way he would deal with these natives by shooting them. Now the man who

penned that paragraph was a fit companion to be classed with the infamous Mountain himself. So far as he could gather from the recent action of the Government, he thought they had done pretty well, with reference to this native difficulty—had done, in fact, what they ought to have done in the first instance. What he complained of was this: what they were doing now, they ought to have and might have done long ago. The hon. and learned gentleman opposite told us they were hampered by the want of funds, and the noble lord himself told us that, if we wanted more effectual steps to have been taken for the protection of the settlers, we ought to have voted the Government more money. That was a most extraordinary position to take up. Surely the Government of the country was primarily responsible for the maintenance of law and order; and until the House positively refused to vote the Government the funds which they say they require for that purpose, the Government, and not that House, must be held responsible. As a member of the Legislature, he repudiated altogether any responsibility in connection with this matter. The Government got all it asked for, and why seek to cast the blame upon that House? Surely it was the duty of the Government to have ascertained what was wanted, and, if the House granted all they said they required, how could the House be blamed in the matter? The House was not responsible for the administration of public affairs. Something had been said about the recommendations of the Departmental Commission, but what on earth had that House to do with the recommendations of any Commission? They looked to the Executive Government to carry on the public service in an efficient manner, and not to any Commissions; and, so long as the Legislature was prepared to vote such sums as the Government conceived to be necessary for such purpose, surely it was not for the Government to turn round and blame the House if the vote did not prove adequate for the object in view. As to the native women being the cause of these troubles, he thought that was absurd. Mr. Fairbairn's views on this part of the question were sensible enough, but the minutes of the noble lord oppo-

site, on the same subject, were simply ridiculous; and he was sorry to find His Excellency the Governor endorsing them. He did not think any one, who was any judge of the value of documentary evidence, could, upon a critical examination of these papers, have come to the conclusion which the Government had done on this subject, or penned such remarks. There was nothing whatever throughout the whole of these documents to show that the native women were forcibly abducted by the whites; they were simply offered to them by the blacks, as a mark of hospitality and good-will on their part, and he could not conceive anything more likely to cement friendly relations between the two races than that the whites should accept this proffered token of friendship. There was no doubt that the Government were on an entirely wrong track, as regards their native policy, and he was afraid they were doing the country a considerable amount of harm, outside the Colony. He was recently conversing with a gentleman from South Australia, with reference to our Northern territory, and the development of the Kimberley District. He seemed much impressed with the value of this part of our Colony, and he asked him how it was people did not come over here in greater numbers for the purpose of speculating in our Northern lands. The reply he received somewhat staggered him. This gentleman assured him that if you talked about going to Western Australia over there, people said: "Go to Western Australia? Don't you believe it. Why, the Governor would let the natives shoot us!" With reference to the resolution before the Committee, and the amendment, he was not prepared to accept either, for the reasons he had already given, and therefore he begged to move the following amendment: "That this Council having considered the Reports placed before it on the subject of the state of affairs in the Murchison and Gascoyne Districts, is of opinion that the measures taken by the Government were all that could reasonably be expected from an Executive which does not represent the country, and is responsible only to Her Majesty's Government for its administrative action in reference to disputes between the aboriginal and the white

"races; and further, that this Council deems it inadvisable to pass any resolutions which may tend to create a greater want of confidence in the present Government than at present exists, until Members are prepared to take upon themselves the responsibility of administering the affairs of the Colony."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said he had listened to a great many debates in that House and heard a great many speeches, but of all the ridiculous and stupid remarks he had ever listened to, commend him to the speech of the hon. member who had just sat down. He said so unblushingly and unhesitatingly, and he wondered at a man of his common sense indulging in such remarks. There was not one word of sense in his speech, which was simply childish nonsense. He should have thought the hon. member would have been able to deal with the question without turning it into ridicule, and showing his utter incapacity to hold the reins of Government,—which seemed to be the hon. member's ambition. If important measures like this are to be treated in this flimsy sort of way,—if that was the hon. member's style of dealing with questions of public importance—he did not think the hon. member would be allowed to hold the reins of any Government for long; for he was sure the settlers of the Colony would soon get tired of the hon. member's childish proceedings. The hon. member blamed the Government for the vote for police protection for the Gascoyne not being sufficient; if the hon. member had thought so at the time, why did he not suggest to the Government the desirability of increasing it, instead of coming there to cavil about it now? The hon. member for Murray and Williams said there was nothing in the evidence contained in the papers before the House to show that the whites took away their women from the natives: he would refer the hon. member to the evidence of George Morgan, who said: "When the men are allowed to keep native women they are allowed rations. I think it would be better to keep them (the native women) at arm's length." Another witness, Thomas Simms, said: "I do not think shepherds should talk about shooting

"natives when they take their women from them." Did not that show that the women were taken from the natives? Mr. Charles Gale, in his evidence, said "the whites only take the young women." Mr. Finnerty stated: "I think it is a bad thing for the settlers to keep native women; the women's friends must be fed or they will steal; they always hang about where women are kept." Did not this show clearly that the whites are in the habit of taking the natives' women from them? Yet the hon. member said there was no evidence whatever to prove that such was the case.

Mr. BURT said that what he stated, and what he again reiterated, was this—and he challenged the noble lord or any one else to controvert it—that there is not a tittle of evidence before the Committee that these women were forcibly taken from the blacks. Everybody knew they associated with the whites, and the hon. and learned Attorney General said he would be the last to throw a stone at these settlers if they solaced themselves, after their hard day's work, with the companionship of these "thick-lipped Venuses." But that was a very different thing indeed to forcibly seizing these native women; and there was not the slightest foundation, so far as these papers went to show, for charging the settlers with taking these women by force, or detaining them against their will, or against the wishes of the blacks themselves. With reference to the duty of the Government and the duties of that House in regard to the votes required for the public service, a most novel principle had been enunciated from the Treasury bench that evening. The noble lord said, if the Government did not ask for a sufficient vote, for any particular service, and the House thought it would require a larger vote, it was the duty of the House to increase the vote, and, if it neglected to do so, it had itself to blame, and not the Government, if the vote proved insufficient. That was certainly a most novel principle to enunciate, and one which, if acted upon, could not fail to be very detrimental to the public service. He would read for the information of the noble lord an extract from a speech delivered in the House of Commons, on the 7th of July last, referring to this very question. Dealing with the

Bill for the prevention of crime in Ireland, Mr. Gladstone said: "He would remind his hon. friend that there was, or had been, a rule of that House that when demands were made by the Government upon the people for grants of money, what the Government asked might be reduced, but could not be augmented. According to the principles of the constitution, it was not the duty of members of that House to say to the Government, 'What you ask is not sufficient for your purpose; you ought to get more.' That rule was wisely framed to prevent the House from giving more money than the public service required. There was an exact analogy between that case and the demand made upon the House for the grant to the Government of coercive or restrictive powers. That House was the guardian of liberty. The responsible Government was, in the first instance, primarily and supremely the guardian of order. If the Government declined or failed to ask from the House of Commons what was necessary for the maintenance of order it failed in its first duty." He should have thought the noble lord would have known that, and that this principle enunciated by Mr. Gladstone would have been known to the Government, but it appeared not. They were told that evening by the noble lord that the hon. members of that House were to blame because they did not urge upon the Government the desirability of making a larger provision for the maintenance of law and order on the Gascoyne; whereas, in reality, according to the principles of the constitution, the Executive Government was primarily and supremely the guardian of law and order, and it was the plain duty of the Government to ask that House to make adequate provision to enable it to discharge its proper administrative functions. If it failed to do so, as it appeared to have done in this instance, the blame rested with the Government and not with this House.

Mr. BURGESS defended the settlers from the charge of forcibly taking native women from their natural protectors, and deprecated the idea that this was the cause of the disturbances between the whites and the blacks. The first settlers on the Murchison were good

settlers, and lived on friendly relations with the natives. For years, there was never any complaint against the blacks, who were assisted in every way by the whites, and everything went on all right. Then came another class of settler—cockatoos—for the most part idle, worthless vagabonds, who thought it was a fine country for sheep-breeding, without much trouble or much expense. Then commenced the trouble with the natives. These people, too lazy to look after their own sheep, procured the services of native women, and treated the blacks in a very different manner from what the pioneer settlers had done, laying the foundation of the present ill-feeling, and the unhappy relations which existed between the two races. The first settlers found no difficulty whatever with the natives. Mr. Brockman and others lived right amongst them for years, and never were molested by them; but a very different stamp of settlers followed, and the result may be seen in the present attitude of the natives towards the whites generally, which was a most unfortunate state of affairs.

MR. MARMION said his own opinion as to the origin of the present state of affairs was this: for four or five successive years the settlers in these districts had good seasons; their flocks thrived and increased; the seasons were all they could wish; the natives found congenial employment; everything went on well, and nothing happened to disturb the equanimity of the settlers. Afterwards came a period of drought, of bad seasons, of depression, such as had not been experienced in the district for the last twenty or thirty years. The settlers began to lose their sheep through various causes, drought and bad seasons chiefly, and they not only lost their sheep but also their temper, being sorely tried, and having a great many difficulties and disappointments to contend against. The natives too suffered from the effects of drought, their native game became scarce, and they themselves were reduced to a state of semi-starvation. Then began the depredations, which the settlers have been complaining of for some time past—on a small scale at first, but gradually assuming very serious proportions. Correspondence which he had received from settlers in these districts, with whom

he was associated, pointed clearly to this having been the origin of the present disturbed state of the country. The manager of one station, in which he was interested, gave him a very doleful description of the condition of the country, consequent upon the succession of bad seasons, and told a sad tale of the dreadful ordeal they had gone through during the past few years. The condition of the natives was such that even little boys did not hesitate to resort to sheep-stealing, and really it was hard to blame the poor starving wretches, under the circumstances. Before he had received this information, his sympathies were entirely against the natives, but when he was informed of the true state of affairs, and the terrible straits to which these wretched aborigines were reduced to, it touched a sympathetic chord in his nature, and resentment gave place to pity. It seemed to him that, being like ourselves, but human, and reduced to a state of semi-starvation, these poor wretches, seeing sheep roaming about, unprotected in the bush, it would be unnatural to think they could restrain from helping themselves to some of the white man's mutton. If hon. members would only look into the evidence given in Mr. Fairbairn's report, he thought they would see that this view of the question was shared by some of the other settlers. Mr. Brockman, for instance,—as fine a specimen of a pioneer settler as ever penetrated a new country—what did he say? This was what Mr. Fairbairn wrote: "Mr. Brockman thinks that 'stocking the country is making the 'natives' food scarce, and that they 'must either work or thief. In a dry 'season such as the present, there is 'literally nothing for them to eat but 'the seed of the mangrove. The natives, he thinks, are stealing sheep, because they are—hungry.'" That was the expressed opinion of probably the most experienced and most practical settler in the whole district. "The natives are stealing sheep because they are hungry." Would we not do the same, were we similarly situated? Would we, with all our superior moral training, with all our boasted civilisation, not do the same, if we were hungry, and could get nothing else to eat? For his own part, he was inclined to think these natives

were not quite so much to blame as he had been led to believe at one time they were. But, doubtless, there were other causes which had contributed to the present hostile attitude of the aborigines towards the settlers, and he thought, himself, the Government had been somewhat to blame for not taking earlier steps to abate the evil, and been more prompt to afford the settlers protection. At the same time, it was quite true they might have believed the reports which they received were exaggerated, and, besides that, it must be admitted they were somewhat hampered as regards ways and means. He was not prepared, however, as a member of that House to accept any responsibility as to any inaction on the part of the Government on that ground. Had they showed there existed any necessity for a larger vote and for stronger protective measures than those which they asked the House to ratify, there would have been no opposition on the part of the House to any reasonable vote for such purpose. There was one thing in these papers which had struck him as very remarkable,—it appeared to him very strange that the Government showed no sympathy whatever with those settlers who endeavored to utilise the labor of these natives, to their mutual advantage. He thought this was a most unfortunate position for the Government to take up, for, in his opinion, nothing could prove more beneficial, and more conducive to the cementing of friendly relations between the two races, than that the whites should utilise the services of these aboriginal natives; nothing could be more beneficial as regards the whites, and nothing could be more advantageous to the natives themselves, so long as they were kindly and humanely treated, as, he was glad to find from Mr. Fairbairn's report, was the case with those now employed by the settlers in these districts. He was afraid, however, the Government did not think it was a wise policy thus to utilise native labor. He said so, because he noticed that both His Excellency the Governor and the noble lord on the Treasury bench held up the manager of one station with which he (Mr. Marmion) was connected as a sort of paragon, for all other settlers to follow, because he did not employ native shepherds. He

alluded to Mr. Little. Now with all due respect to Mr. Little, for whom he had the highest regard, and in whom he had the greatest confidence, knowing as he did that he was actuated in all he did by an earnest desire to do everything he could in the interests of his employers; but, with all due deference to His Excellency the Governor and to the noble lord, he could only say that he trusted other managers would not, in the interests of station owners, follow Mr. Little's example, in regard to the non-employment of natives. If they did, all he could say was, it would make a considerable difference in their balance sheet, and on the wrong side of the ledger. When Mr. Little first went to the Murchison years ago, he went there with a full intention of utilising native labor, and he was under the impression there would be no difficulty in his doing so, as had been done in the North District; but since he had been up there, he had not employed native labor as he had intended doing, and, possibly, in many respects, his arguments against doing so were very good and very sound from some points of view; but, so far as the financial result to those with whom he was associated was concerned, the system adopted was one which had operated very detrimentally to their interests, and he believed also to the interests of the natives themselves, in the immediate neighborhood. Under these circumstances, he regretted very much to find the Government discountenancing the employment of native labor on these stations, and he could not help thinking it would be a most unfortunate thing for the districts concerned if the recommendations of the Government in this respect were to be generally adopted.

MR. BROWN said the noble lord, the leader of the Government, stated that he (Mr. Brown) had agreed with the steps proposed to be taken by the Government last year, but what he objected to was that those steps were not taken before. The noble lord said they had always sent up the police to inquire and investigate, when any outrages were reported to them; but what he objected to was that they did not send up the police to bring the offenders to justice, on the spot, and not merely to inquire and to investigate. The noble

lord also said that at the deputation which waited upon His Excellency the Governor in May last, he (Mr. Brown) had again expressed himself as perfectly satisfied with the action of the Government. He thought it was but due to himself that he should again refer to what took place at that deputation, and also to what he said in that House last Session when the proposal to extend police protection to the Gascoyne settlers was under discussion. He would quote from *Hansard* (p. 320): "He (Mr. Brown) expressed the pleasure which he had felt at the fact that the Government had recognised the necessity of extending police protection to the Northern settlements, which had been so long neglected in this respect. The small force, however, which it was proposed to send up would be altogether inadequate were it not that the police could calculate upon the co-operation and assistance of the settlers. The natives in that district had of late become very troublesome and aggressive, and, in fact, were masters of the situation, stealing and killing the stock of the settlers, who dare not adopt any efficient measures in self-protection. They were either obliged to break the law or lose their property, and although undoubtedly some of them had broken the law, in self-defence, still, so far as he had been able to ascertain, they had not gone beyond the bounds of humanity or of justice,—though, strictly speaking, they had no doubt rendered themselves amenable to punishment. He did not think, however, any one could blame them for endeavoring to protect their property, situated as they were, at the mercy of these natives; and the sooner they were afforded some protection the better would it be for all concerned. Regard being had to the fact that the revenue received from this district (the Gascoyne) during the first six months of the present year had exceeded £2,000, he thought the settlers were fairly entitled to receive some protection in return, and he should have been glad if the Government had been able to send a stronger force than it was now proposed to send. It occurred to him that it was well worthy the attention of the Government whether some provision should

"not be made at these distant settlements for the trial of native and other offenders on the spot." Was that expressing himself perfectly satisfied with what the Government at that time proposed doing? Until Mr. Fairbairn was sent up there, months afterwards, and at the urgent solicitation of the settlers, nothing whatever was done by the Government to make provision for the trial of offenders on the spot, and it was only this Session they came forward with a proposal to give the district a Stipendiary Magistrate. What he said at the deputation he had already read to the House, and he would leave to any hon. member to say whether his words would fairly bear the interpretation put upon them by the noble lord. If they did, then all he could say was, he did not understand the meaning of plain English. The noble lord had misrepresented his views altogether. As to the telegram which recently appeared in the *Australasian*, referring to a skirmish between the whites and the blacks, he could only say that, from what he had himself heard, the telegram was strictly correct. He had received a letter from Mr. Julius Brockman giving an account of the affray, and Mr. Brockman said the natives "fought like devils." He was pleased to hear the Attorney General say he thought, although he (Mr. Brown) had not dealt with this question on its broad principles, the discussion would result in some good. The particular principle he wished to impress upon the Legislature and upon the Government was this—that the law should be put in operation in these districts. He asked no more, and in asking that he was simply asking what he considered to be the bounden duty of every Government to do for the people under its care. He did not in any way desire—he did not know that the interests of the settlers themselves, or the interests of the Colony, would be served, were he to do so—to ask the House to agree to any resolution that could be construed into a vote of censure upon the Government. It had not been his intention to have conveyed a vote of censure, nor did he see that his resolution was open to such a construction, and he should have much pleasure in accepting the amendment of the hon. member for Toodyay, which had also

been accepted by the noble lord, the head of the Government, for it appeared to him that his own resolution and the amendment as at present worded were synonymous. It was a mere truism to affirm that "the steps lately taken by the Government are calculated to meet the requirements of the case, and to establish a better feeling between the settlers and the natives." But this did not absolve them from blame in respect of their past action. One word in conclusion: he hoped the Government would not conceive it had done its duty in connection with this matter so long as the men who speared Bailey were running at large, and not brought to justice: or so long as the men who murdered Clarkson, in 1874, remained at large. The noble lord twitted him with a knowledge of the fact that two of the names given by Mr. Brockman to the Government in connection with this murder were the names of two little children. What he said was this—that the murderers were well-known, and that even the Government's own police officers were in possession of conclusive proofs of who the murderers were. He hoped the Government would not consider they had done their duty until they had also brought to justice—if not too late to do so—the seven natives for whom they issued warrants in 1874, for spearing Charles Shires, and also those who speared Luke Parkwood, and those who speared Henry Birch—they knew very well who did it: also the men who speared Mooney in 1878, and who attacked Mr. Howard's shepherd, who had five spears sent through him; also those who speared Collins, and the men who speared Mick. He hoped the Government would not conceive they had done their duty, or "met the requirements of the case," until they also brought to justice the murderers of Redfern, and the murderers of poor Brackle. He trusted the Government would see the necessity of bringing these natives to justice. He also hoped if any breaches of the law had been committed by the whites as well as by the blacks, the Government would equally bring the offenders to justice. He begged to withdraw his resolution, as it afforded him much pleasure—since all those words referring to the past had been struck out—to accept the amend-

ment of the hon. member for Newcastle.

The amendment submitted by Mr. PARKER was then put and negatived, and Mr. SHENTON's resolution—"That this Council, having considered the reports placed before it on the subject of the state of affairs in the Murchison and Gascoyne Districts, is of opinion that the steps lately taken by the Government are well calculated to meet the requirements of the case, and to establish a better feeling as between the white settlers and the natives"—was agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) moved that the Standing Orders of the House be suspended, with a view that, at its rising, the House adjourn until 10 o'clock on Saturday (next day), for the transaction of business.

Agreed to.

The House adjourned at eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Saturday, 23rd September, 1882.

Control of Loan Monies—Message (No. 15): Assenting to Bills: Reserving Increase of Members Bill; re Excess Bill and Water Police Charges; and vetoing Dog Bill—Message (No. 16): Assenting to Appropriation Act: Reserving Loan Monies Control Bill; and vetoing Aboriginal Native Offenders Bill—Message (No. 17): Increased Grant of Land to Mr. Alexander Forrest, and Donation to Dean Gegg—Prorogation.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at ten o'clock, a.m.

PRAYERS.

CONTROL OF LOAN MONIES.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to inform Her Majesty's Secre-