these churches, schools and manses, I think that is as far as we can fairly ask the municipalities to go. When we see the large amount of land that is locked up in many towns as far as municipal purposes are concerned, I think we have a right to ask that those to whom it belongs shall be dealt with in the same way as other citizens are, and be made to pay their proportion of the city rates.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: There is one question the hon. the Colonial Secretary has just brought to my mind, and that is as to unimproved church lands. In my opinion the blocks held by churches in the centres of towns have just as much right to pay rates as anyone else. In Northam, for instance, a very large proportion of the land in the centre of the town has been alienated to the churches. The holders are now beginning to improve it a little; but it is only fair that unimproved town land, whoever it belongs to, should be made to contribute its proper proportion of the rates.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 9 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Friday, 15th January, at 3 o'clock.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 14th January, 1892.

Petitions: Yilgarn Railway Route—Petition: W. A. Turf Club Bill—Plans: Fremantle Harbor Works—Opening of telegraph between York and Southern Cross—W. A. Turf Club Bill: first reading—Bills of Sale Act, 1879, Amendment Bill: third reading—Northam Southern Cross (Yilgarn) Railway Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7·30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITIONS: YILGARN RAILWAY ROUTE.

MR. PARKER, MR. DE HAMEL, and MR. HASSELL presented petitions from the electors and inhabitants of York and Beverley, of Albany, and of Plantagenet, respectively, praying that the starting point of the proposed Yilgarn Railway should be from York, or South of York, instead of from Northam.

Petitions received and read.

MR. PIESSE said it had been his intention to have presented a petition of a similar character from his own constituency, but owing to some mistake the petition had not reached him, although he was advised that it had been posted to him. He simply mentioned the matter because his constituents might otherwise think that he had neglected their interests in not presenting the petition.

PETITION: W.A. TURF CLUB BILL.

MR. PARKER presented a petition for leave to introduce this private bill.

Petition received and read.

PLANS: FREMANTLE HARBOR WORKS.

MR. DE HAMEL, without notice, asked the Premier whether he would place upon the table of the House the plans made by Sir John Coode in connection with his larger and his smaller scheme for improving the harbor at Fremantle?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he would have much pleasure in acceding to the hon. member's request.

PROTECTION OF NORTHERN SETTLERS AGAINST HOSTILE NATIVES.

MR. R. F. SHOLL moved the House into committee for the purpose of dealing with the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House it is expedient, in consequence of the hostile attitude and the depredations constantly committed by the aboriginal natives on the Upper Gascoyne, Murchison, and Ashburton Rivers, that the Government should, without delay, take prompt and efficient measures to protect the lives and property of the settlers in that locality." The hon. member said: In rising to bring forward the motion standing in my name I feel that I have a very heavy responsibility cast on my shoulders. I feel that the matter is not only an important one, but also a difficult one; but I also feel sure that it is a matter in which I shall obtain the sympathy, not only of the members of the present Government, but also of all the members

of this House. Members must have seen from letters that have appeared in the local papers recently, that the condition of affairs on the Northern rivers, in the interior of this colony, is somewhat serious. I know that the difficulty of dealing with this state of affairs is a serious one too, but it is one that is deserving of the earnest attention of the Government. We in the settled parts of the colony have not the slightest conception of the difficulties which the pioneer settlers of our Northern territory have to contend against. Not only have they to contend against drought and bad seasons, with their flocks and their stock dying in hundreds—that is a difficulty which cannot be foreseen or avoided—but they have also to contend with hostile natives, who also kill their flocks and herds by hundreds. I think this is a matter that requires very grave consideration from those in authority. These settlers naturally ask the Government to protect their property, as they are prevented themselves by the laws of the country from protecting their own property. I think that is only reasonable. It may be said it is impossible and unreasonable to expect that when settlers go into the interior to open up settlement, in a large colony like this, the Government should follow them and give them protection. It may be said that the cost of doing that would be so great that it would be beyond the means of the colony. But if that argument is to be used, I think the Government should, by proclamation or some other means, let it be generally known that beyond a given latitude and within certain meridians of longitude, the Government of the colony will not undertake to protect any body of settlers. I think they should do this in the interests of all concerned. We know it is generally supposed that the interior of this continent is only a wilderness, but our pioneer settlers are endeavoring to show that it is not a wilderness, but that it is capable of carrying a large quantity of stock. They are doing all they can to show that it is not the barren waste it is supposed to be, and in doing this they are making the country more valuable. The least the Government can do is to assist them in this. But what is the state of things in these Northern districts at present? Letters have appeared in the papers setting forth the unfortunate state of affairs existing there. I am dealing more particularly with the Upper Gascoyne, the Murchison, and the Ashburton districts. I have letters here from settlers up there, in which they complain that the police are quite unable to deal with the amount of native depredations that are committed. They say that, not only is the number of police quite insufficient, but also that they have not a sufficient number of horses. I am not quite certain as to the number of policemen there, but I know they are only possessed of five horses between them.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Where is that?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: On the Upper Gascoyne and the Murchison. I have it on very good authority that they only possess five Government horses. The police themselves are using their own private horses or horses supplied to them by the settlers. I have a letter here from one of the settlers which shows that the police have even been dependent on the settlers for their rations—even for the bare necessaries of life in some instances. [*Letter read.*] I think this is not a fair state of things for these settlers. I think the least the Government can do is to supply a sufficient staff both of men and horses, to enable the police to arrest the natives who commit these depredations. I believe it was in Governor Broome's time, when His Excellency visited the Murchison, that it was suggested that it would be more economical to supply the police with extra horses, so that they could have relays and give their horses a rest, instead of working them too much and going to the expense of sending hay and corn into the interior. It was proposed that they should have a double set of horses, so as not to have to work them too hard, but give them an occasional spell. That was a very reasonable and wise suggestion. But, instead of sending up any extra horses, a very one-sided arrangement was carried out. They stopped sending the fodder, but did not supply the extra horses; and the consequence has been that it has been impossible for the police to do the work expected of them. They have the same number of horses, but minus the forage that used to be supplied to them before. It has been suggested that a great deal of the present difficulty might

be avoided, so far as this particular locality is concerned (the Upper Gascoyne and Murchison district), if the Government were to establish a police station about 15 miles to the eastward of Mount Labouchere, which would be a central position. It is considered by the settlers that the mere fact of the police being stationed there, within a day's ride from the different settlers' stations in that locality, would go a great way to prevent the natives about there from committing these depredations. I believe that there is a permanent pool and any amount of food at this place, and it is not considered that it would be very expensive to have a police station there. Two policemen and two native assistants, with about a dozen horses, would be sufficient. The mere fact of the police being within reach would have a deterrent effect upon these natives, who are becoming pretty cunning and very knowing. There is now a police station at Mount Gould, but that is between 100 and 200 miles away from where I propose to have this other station. I understand that the present staff of police is altogether insufficient to cope with this native difficulty. I am informed, and I saw from a letter written by a well-known settler of the district, Mr. Bush, which I think everybody read, that the whole of the police force in that part, which embraces a very large area of the district I allude to, is not more than seven. I allude to the Upper Murchison and the Gascoyne district. It was my intention only to have dealt with those two rivers, the Murchison and the Gascoyne, but just before I placed this notice of motion on the paper unfortunately news came down of a well-known settler being speared to death on the Ashburton. I hope and trust it is only a rumour—I believe there has been nothing definite yet heard about it; but it may be too true. And the danger does not apply only to the Gascoyne, the Murchison, and the Ashburton, but right away up to Kimberley. It behoves the Government to adopt some means to protect the settlers in these outlying districts. I know it is a difficult matter for the Government to provide police protection all over this large territory, but I think some of the police might very well be removed from the towns and sent up the country. I also think that some of those well-fed and sleek horses that we see the police riding about Perth and these parts would be better employed if they were shifted from the towns. They are only ornaments here—there is very little work for them to do; and if the question of providing horse flesh is any consideration, the Government already have plenty of horses, which they could shift from these towns and send them to those country places where they might be of some use. Another cause of a great deal of the difficulty of dealing with the natives is the state of the law dealing with masters and servants, as regards the employment of these natives. That matter was pointed out to the Government when the Aborigines Protection Act was before this House (50th Vic., No. 45). It was pointed out then, when the 44th clause of that Act was under consideration, that it would never work. That clause provides that no summons or warrant for the arrest of an absconding native shall be served or executed by the police beyond a distance of 30 miles from the place where such summons or warrant was issued, except when especially directed by a Resident Magistrate. It was pointed out at the time by those who were acquainted with the matter that this provision would be inoperative. A native servant may abscond and leave his master's sheep in the bush, and his employer may have to send 50 or 100 miles before he can get a warrant from a justice of the peace for his arrest, and that warrant cannot be served upon the absconding native if he is more than 30 miles away. Anyone who knows anything about these natives in these Northern districts must know that such a law as that must remain a dead letter. The natives are finding this out; they leave their sheep in the bush, and clear out and do what they like, knowing that their employer has no remedy. The result of that is that not nearly so many of these natives are now employed by the settlers, and consequently they are running about the bush and stealing sheep whenever they get a chance. Employers won't have them on their stations, when they find they can run away with impunity; and the settlers are now giving their attention to the introduction of Chinese

labor on their stations, instead of native labor. I say Chinese labor, because it is impossible to obtain white labor to do the work up there. That, I think, will be borne out by many members present, who know probably more about it than I do. The question is, what are these outlying settlers to do? The law will not protect them, and they are not allowed to protect themselves. One of the settlers, Mr. Clarence Brown, writing on the subject, says that they are not allowed to protect their own property, "nor," he adds, "do I wish to convey to you that they are anxious to do so." They are all loyal subjects, these settlers, who are ever ready to abide by the laws of the land, and all they ask for is that protection which is their due from the Government. Mr. Brown says the natives he refers to are not the ordinary aboriginals to be met with, but savages of the purest type, who are ever ready to kill the settlers' stock, and to burn the fodder they are saving for a dry season. These are the class which the settlers have to guard against, and it is for protection against these that they look to the Government, but, I am sorry to say, look in vain. As Mr. Brown says, they have no wish to take the law into their own hands; they are a law-abiding race. But they are so far removed from the centres of civilisation that they ask the Government and this House to give them that protection which I think every member will consider is their due. I quite own that it is a difficult matter, a very difficult matter, for the Government to deal with, but I think it is their duty to inquire into this matter and see if something cannot be done to relieve these settlers in these far-away districts. We know they have a very great deal to contend with, not only from drought and other causes which they cannot fight against, but also from these native depredators, who destroy their sheep by hundreds, and do so out of pure mischief, not because they want them to eat. Often they kill them or drive them away in a spirit of pure mischief. If they kill they take a little of the liver or the caul fat, the choicest bits, and leave the carcase on the plains. As I have said, I feel I have a great responsibility on my shoulders in bringing this matter before the Government; I only wish that someone with more practical experience and more knowledge of the circumstances had accepted this responsibility, and have made the matter more clear, and put it more forcibly before the House. At the same time, I do not fear that it will not receive the sympathy and support not only of the Government and of the members of this House, but also of all reasonable people in these settled parts of the colony. There is a feeling abroad among the settlers—I hardly believe it myself—that the police are to a great extent responsible with regard to the conduct of these natives. It is thought — whether the police take it upon their own shoulders to do it or not I cannot say—it is thought that they rather encourage the natives in the belief that they are masters of the situation, that if their employers punish them they can come to them (the police); and the consequence is that the settlers are at their mercy. I do not say that this is a fact—I should be sorry to commit myself to that statement, but there is an impression abroad that it is so, and some people do not hesitate to speak very positively in that direction. There is another matter, and that is with regard to the class of men sent up there as police constables. Some of them are quite unfit for the work. I know it is difficult to get suitable men to go up there, but some of those sent are utterly unfit for the duties that they have to carry out. Some are very good men; in fact, as I saw it stated in the paper by Mr. Bush, in his letter the other day, some of them cannot be beaten in any part of Australia. But, as I have said, some of them are quite unfit for the work. Members no doubt read in the papers, or heard of it, where one of these policemen had charge of some of these native offenders, and they turned the tables on him completely, took the keys out of his pocket, chained him up, and actually burned his nose with a firestick. They didn't take his life, certainly, but they did all they could to treat him with indignity, and the poor man, who knew nothing about natives, was helpless in their hands. If that was a specimen of the police sent up there to protect the settlers, no wonder the settlers complained that some of them were quite unfit for their work. I do not know that I need detain the House any

longer. It is well known to hon. members and to the Government that the settlers in these outlying parts require assistance and protection, and I think they are justly entitled to it. As I have said, they are the pioneers of settlement, and they are law-abiding subjects of Her Majesty, who ought to receive protection from the laws of the country. With these few remarks, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. DARLOT: I rise to second the motion proposed by the hon. member for the Gascoyne. Things in the Upper Murchison, the Upper Gascoyne, and the Ashburton districts, with which I am most intimately acquainted, have got to such a pass now that it behoves this Government to do something in this matter. No doubt the present season of drought has something to do with it, but I do not think that is altogether the cause of these native depredations. It is a state of things that has been gradually coming on, year by year. No doubt this native law that the hon. member for the Gascoyne referred to, that an absconding native cannot be arrested if he gets 30 miles away from where the warrant was issued, has had a very injurious effect upon the natives. That law is simply a dead letter. A native may abscond from the home station of a squatter, and he only has to walk 30 miles away to be safe from arrest. He may still be on the settler's run, but his master cannot touch him. The only way he could get at him at all would be to take a magistrate to somewhere near the place where the native has gone to, and issue his warrant there and get a policeman to arrest him on the spot. If the native got away 30 miles, the warrant would be no good. These absconders go about amongst other natives that are working for the settlers, and those natives, seeing that they can run away with impunity, leave their work and do likewise. It was only the day before yesterday that a gentleman who holds a seat in the Upper House informed me that he had received a letter from a prominent settler on the Gascoyne, stating that there was a regular organised gang of these natives there, headed by no less a personage than a notorious aboriginal gentleman from the Swan. This gang were roaming about the country killing sheep, and pillaging all the huts they came to. What were the unfortunate settlers to do? With regard to extra horses for the police, it was, as stated by the hon. member for the Gascoyne, when Governor Broome visited the Murchison —I think it was in 1887 or in 1888—and partly at my recommendation, that this fodder allowance for the police was done away with, and the suggestion made that they should have a double set of horses to enable them to do the work. Practically the fodder allowance was useless. For nine months out of the twelve, the police would be away from the stations; and this allowance even for the three months was only just enough to half starve the horses; and, partly at my suggestion and other settlers, it was done away with. We suggested that the money voted for fodder should be expended in horses, and that the police should have two sets of horses; instead of being allowed three horses each—one for each constable, one for his native assistant, and one packhorse—that they should have six horses. This was agreed to, and the Government did away with the forage allowance, but from that day to this they never supplied the police with a double set of horses. What few horses were sent to the district were horses that had been condemned horses, mostly from Perth; and most members will know that if a horse cannot do its work in town on plenty of corn it is utterly unfit to do its work in a country district on grass. As the hon. member for Gascoyne said, there are too many of these police horses about Perth, apparently doing nothing. It is an every day occurrence in this town, and I noticed it to-day particularly,—you have only to go to the corner of the Recreation Ground to see it; you can see the police riding these sleek horses for exercise; there is actually nothing else for them to do. This very day I saw two policemen leading six horses out for exercise. If some of these horses were sent into our Northern districts they might do some good service. The police there might make some good use of them. At present they are very short of horseflesh, and this is one reason why they are unable to afford the settlers more protection. Last July I happened to be on the Murchison, and I saw the police from

the Gascoyne bringing in about thirty natives to be tried. They had only nine horses between the lot, and, out of that nine, only three solitary horses belonged to the Government, and pretty objects they were. In fact they were utterly useless for doing any work; they could hardly carry empty packs or their own hides. Yet these are the kind of horses that these men are expected to work. The best policeman in the district requires a good horse to carry him, or he cannot do much good. With regard to the class of men sent up to these districts as police constables, some of them are excellent men. I quite agree with my hon. friend Mr. Bush when he said that some of these men cannot be beaten in any part of Australia. But others are sorry specimens. We had one gentleman amongst them upon whom the natives played a nice trick. The hon. member for the Gascoyne has already referred to it, and told the House how the natives he had in custody made him change places with them. They not only put him in chains, but also burnt his nose for him. I know he denies it; but I happened to see his nose when the new skin was growing on it. You would think that this would be a warning to a policeman to keep clear of these natives with friendly intentions. But no. Since that time he has let no less than four other different lots go. One of them was a mere boy. He could not even keep a boy in safe custody. What, in the name of goodness, is the use of sending men like that new chum to a district like ours? I do not think he knew whether the sun rose in the East or in the West.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think he has left.

MR. DARLOT: I think it was high time he did. We have heard of one or two murders by natives in these districts lately, and I think it is about time the Government should consider whether it would not be wise to have these men who commit murders hanged on the spot, and not at Perth, or Geraldton, or Cossack, or elsewhere. If found guilty by a jury, let them be hanged on the spot where the murder was committed. Let the police go out and gather as many natives as they can from that part of the district, and in their presence let the man or men who committed the murder be hanged. Let them not bury them, but leave them there hanging, as a caution to future offenders. People may say that would be a cruel and bloodthirsty thing to do, but I maintain it would have a very desirable effect. It would probably save other would-be murderers from losing their lives. With regard to this question of punishing native offenders, I should be very glad to see the Government doing away with the native prison at Rottnest. In my opinion, it is nothing but a hotbed for evil and vices. I know this for a fact, that last May, as I was proceeding to the Murchison, I passed 15 natives that I had sentenced, with a brother magistrate, to twelve months for cattle stealing, the previous July. I passed these 15 natives close to Mullewa. When I had last seen them, ten months before this, they were simply miserable specimens of humanity, but when I passed them near Mullewa they were all sleek and fat. Each man had a very nice shirt on him, and on his head 10lbs. or 12lbs. of flour. I stopped them, and went over to see them and look them over, and I could not recognise any of them. I asked one of them his name, and then found that this was the very gang I had sentenced to twelve months, but, instead of being the miserable and emaciated specimens who had been tried, they were now fine, stout men. They went on their way next morning –they belonged to the Upper Gascoyne, and had been sentenced for cattle stealing at Mr. Clarence Brown's station, the gentleman whose letter was quoted by the hon. member for the Gascoyne. You would have thought that ten months at Rottnest whould have done them some good, cured them of their thieving habits. Far from it. Several of them did not even wait to get back to their own country. Seventy miles before they reached their own country they killed a bullock, and in less than a fortnight one of them was on the chain again, charged with killing two others. They killed three bullocks in three weeks, as soon as they were released, showing that Rottnest had done very little in the way of reforming them. Several settlers of the Gascoyne have told me that their cattle now have got into such fear of natives that, after sundown, it is utterly impossible to get them near to or across a gully. The natives are always hunting

them, and if they hear the slightest twig break, they are off. Most members connected with stock know that cattle in this state of fear are not likely to thrive, or grow fat, or much profit to be made out of them. I do not wish to detain the House any longer on the subject. I am sure it has only to be brought under the notice of the Government for them to do something in the matter. I beg to second the resolution of the hon. member for the Gascoyne.

MR. CLARKSON: This question of dealing with the natives is a very difficult one. It always has been a difficult one. I fear that we, living as we happily do, in this part of the colony, are apt to treat with a certain amount of indifference the difficulties and dangers which surround the settlers in the more remote Northern districts of the colony. It is, perhaps, natural that we should do so. The unfortunate settlers in that part of the colony are this year suffering severely from causes over which they have no control, and, if we are to believe the letters that we have all no doubt read in the papers, they have additional cause for complaint in the way they are being harassed by the natives. They do not appear, judging from these letters, to have a sufficient number nor a proper class of men there as policemen. The idea of sending a new chum to catch a nigger is simply absurd. The Commissioner of Railways here might just as well stick me on an engine and tell me to drive to York as to send a new-chum policeman to catch a native. He is worse than useless for such work. I have no doubt there are certain difficulties surrounding this question; no doubt the Commissioner of Police finds it difficult to get suitable men to go into that country.—[The PREMIER: Hear, hear.]—I feel quite certain there is a difficulty in that direction. Still I know, personally, several policemen in this part of the colony—I have spoken to them—and I rather think they would prefer it to a town life. I think it would be better to keep the "new chums" to the streets of Perth rather than send them out into the bush. We all know—those of us who have had any experience amongst natives—that there is only one way of keeping them in order, and that is by instilling them with fear. It has been the fashion of late years to look on the native as rather an ill-used creature, and to indulge and favor him in every possible way. I am not one of those who would advocate the cruel treatment of natives. They are very useful on stations, and are employed by many of the settlers; but they must be kept down with a strong hand to get any good out of them. If you once allow a native to get the upper hand, he becomes master of the situation, and the white man may as well retire. It simply comes to that. With regard to the native prison at Rottnest, I consider myself that a sojourn there is simply a pleasant sort of holiday to the natives. As the hon. member for the Murchison just now said, he has seen natives coming back from Rottnest immensely improved physically, but certainly not morally; and I have often noticed the same thing myself. I have asked them how they liked it, and they seemed very pleased with their lot there: "Plenty eat'm; nothing work'm." They simply look upon it as an agreeable holiday, a pleasure trip, and not as a punishment. I think it is quite time that native institution was wiped out altogether. It simply encourages the natives to do wrong, the treatment they get there. I am very sorry that this House has no control over the amount that is annually voted for the Aborigines Protection Board. I should like to know what becomes of that money. Is it doled out in blankets to the few natives about the towns? I believe a great deal of it must go that way. I know an instance of a native in my own employ who got six of these blankets within two months from the officer appointed by the Government to serve them out. He would go one day in a "booka" of kangaroo skin, and get a blanket. Another time he would go dressed in European style and get another; and so on. He assured me he got six blankets altogether, although he did not require a blanket at all. I was giving him £3 a month and his rations, the same as a white man. He left the stock and his woman to go and obtain this relief from the Government. I consider that a waste of money decidedly. I feel that this motion of the hon. member for the Gascoyne is a very proper one to bring before this House, and I really hope that the Government will do something in the direction indicated. I can

readily understand that the present exceptionally dry season at the North affects the police horses there as well as others, and that they are not in very grand trim. But one of the first reforms required is as to the class of men sent up there as policemen. These men ought to be the best men that can be got—men with colonial experience. New chums, as I have said, are perfectly useless. I also think, as the hon. member for the Murchison suggested, that the police should have a double set of horses, so that they could rest one set while they were working the other. I am very pleased to support the hon. member for the Gascoyne in this matter.

MR. QUINLAN: I may be asked, perhaps, before going any further, what do I know about natives, having been a resident of Perth so many years. But I rose simply to offer a suggestion to the Government. It is unnecessary for me, after the lengthy remarks of the hon. members who have already spoken, to dwell upon the subject before the House. That has been dealt with in an exhaustive manner by those who are more intimately acquainted with the every-day life and habits of the natives than I am. But I have become acquainted with some facts to-day which enable me to make a suggestion as to one way of solving this native difficulty at the North. Instead of stringing up the natives, or shooting them as dogs, and striking terror into them that way, I would suggest that the Government should enter into correspondence with the managers of the Native Mission that has recently been established in that part of the Kimberley district known as the Promontory, in the neighborhood of Beagle Bay. I am in a position to say that, if negotiations were entered into, this place could be used for the purpose of transporting or transplanting, or whatever term you may choose to apply, natives from other parts, instead of sending them to Rottnest, which is simply a college for training natives in bad habits. There is a black brigade there, I believe, commanded by a gallant gentleman who has been in the Army. I do not think he will ever succeed in making soldiers of his black recruits, and, beyond teaching them to become ten times worse than when they were sent there, I really do not know what use that establishment is. The outlay upon it is something like £4,000 a year. The natives sent there are brought down at considerable expense from the far North, and there is the expense of sending them back again to their own country. All this could be saved if the Government could accept the suggestion I have thrown out to-night. If they would send these natives who are committing depredations, and killing sheep and cattle in all directions, to this Mission, they would never be returned to their own country, and they would be but little expense to the colony, because the Mission has been established with the view of turning the natives to some good account, and civilising them. That would be better than sending them to Rottnest to graduate in crime, and it would be better than stringing them up by the neck, when they commit capital offences against the law. Certainly the suggestion of the hon. member for the Murchison seems a desirable one, that these natives should be hanged on the spot where they committed the crime, if they are to be hanged at all; and I suppose so long as the law provides hanging for capital offences these natives will have to be strung up somewhere. I think it would be much better to do so on the spot if it has got to be done, instead of bringing them down to Perth. It would be unbecoming of me, who knows so little of the habits of these natives in these Northern districts, to offer any opinion on the subject; but I cannot help thinking it would be a good thing for the Government, if they have any sense of humanity, to consider the suggestion I have made. I know the Premier has a strong feeling of sympathy with the aboriginal natives of the colony, and is inclined to treat them leniently, and I hope he will see his way to accept this suggestion, in the interests of the natives themselves, and save the colony the money that is now thrown away yearly on Rottnest. I hope, as the Government have had it drummed into their heads so often about the uselessness of this establishment, they will adopt some measures for doing away with it, and before very long too, instead of wasting the public money on that black brigade under Colonel Angelo or Colonel Somebody Else. It would be far better if these natives were sent to the Mission that has been

established up there, instead of bringing them down here. I can give facts and figures to show that there are about 1,500 or 2,000 natives at present existing in that part.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Where?

MR. QUINLAN: On the Promontory, at Beagle Bay, and about that district, and, if you don't get rid of them, there will soon be 5,000 there. I think the Aborigines' Protection Board might do something in this direction, and I hope the Government will not ignore the suggestion I have made. These natives would be taken care of at the Mission, if sent there, and efforts would be made to reform and civilise them, so that they would be no longer a trouble to the settlers with their depredations and sheep-stealing. They might become civilised in time, and their services might be utilised. They could be accompanied by their better halves if they liked. It would certainly be better than throwing money away on Rottnest.

MR. PIESSE: While admitting that the worthy settlers at the North deserve every protection—and I am sure the facts stated will receive the attention of the Government—it appears to me that the whole question is a very difficult one to deal with. As to providing extra police protection, I suppose that can easily be done, if the funds are provided; but the expense entailed must be very considerable. I think it is very necessary that the police sent up there should be well-chosen men, and West Australians, rather than new chums, unacquainted with the bush, or with the natives or their habits. If these men were supplied with sufficient horseflesh, they ought to be able to do a great deal to help us out of the difficulties complained of. There is one other matter I should like to refer to, and that is with regard to hanging these unfortunate blacks. The hon. member for the Murchison said he would like to see them taken back to the place where a murder was committed, and there hanged in the presence of the other natives. No doubt that would have a good effect, but I do not think it would be a humane act to leave the bodies to hang there, unburied. It might deter others from committing depredations in that locality, but I think it would be a very inhumane act, and one unworthy of those who call themselves Christians. I have no great belief, myself, in what are called "Exeter Hall" principles, but we are dealing with the original owners of the soil on which we are now living, and no doubt we should show some justice towards them, and treat them in a fair manner. There is not the slightest doubt that much of the trouble now brought upon us was caused by the early settlers of the colony.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: No.

MR. PIESSE: In a great measure we are suffering now from some of the things that took place years ago.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: No. It is an unjustifiable assertion.

MR. RICHARDSON: Excess of humanity.

MR. PIESSE: As to the natives sentenced by the hon. member for the Murchison, and who, he says, were in an emaciated condition when he sent them to Rottnest, but when he saw them after coming out were fat and sleek, that does not seem to say much for the Murchison, for these natives must have been short of food when they were brought up for trial. They must have been robbed of their natural food, or they would not have been in the emaciated condition they were in, and perhaps this may help to explain their depredations. If these natives cannot find their natural means of sustenance, they must have recourse to the flocks of the settlers or starve. I do not blame the settlers for crying out: I know they must have a great deal to put up with, and a great many losses, and I sympathise with them very much in their difficulties. At the same time I should like to see some humanity shown towards the natives. As to Rottnest, I cannot see how the Government are going to imprison natives in any other place except that island prison. You cannot keep them on the mainland without incurring great expense or working them in chains. They have been worked in chains on the mainland, and what was the result? The public cried out against that method of punishment, and it was done away with. Rottnest Island has been found to be the only suitable place for imprisoning them. These natives, when sent there, naturally gain flesh under the treatment they receive there, with regular food; and we must feed them. We cannot starve them. We must treat them as human beings, although we imprison them. Some re-

marks were made by the hon. member for Newcastle in regard to the blankets supplied to the natives. The hon. member said that a native shepherd of his obtained six of these blankets, surreptitiously or by false pretences. I do not wonder at his wanting six blankets, if they were all of the same quality as I saw distributed in the Williams district. Six of them would only make one ordinary blanket. I had the curiosity the other day to weigh one of these blankets, and it only weighed 13oz. How could you expect a blanket like that to keep an unfortunate native warm? We are well protected from the cold ourselves, and a 13-oz. blanket will not keep a native warm in winter. Whoever had the ordering of those blankets should have seen that they were such as would answer the purpose of keeping out the cold. These natives ought to be provided with proper covering. The least we can do is that. There is a large amount set apart for them every year, and it would be interesting to know how the money is spent. Perhaps the proper course would be to bring the matter under the notice of the Government, and possibly that may be done this session. The blankets now supplied are altogether unfit for the purpose for which they are wanted. I may perhaps have spoken a little heatedly on this subject of the treatment of the natives, but as a West Australian, and a West Australian of the second generation, I have some feeling towards these aboriginal natives of the soil, and I should like to see them treated properly.

MR. RICHARDSON: I do not think that many words are necessary to support this resolution. I think it commends itself to the House, and I do not suppose there will be much opposition to it. But I think the few remarks that have just fallen from the hon. member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse) are, without any intention on his part, calculated to mislead, and rather become a red herring across the trail. We are at present engaged in discussing a resolution for the protection of the settlers; the hon. member's remarks dealt with the protection of the natives. He pleaded for a certain amount of humanity to be shown towards the natives. I think the whole pith, the *crux* of this native question, and the whole of the difficulties surrounding it, may be traced, not to any lack of humanity, but to ultra-humanity. I think that what the settlers are suffering from is the result of an excess of humanity,—well meant, I believe, and honestly meant, but very much misguided, and no doubt the result of great ignorance of the whole question. I know from my own experience that few can compare with these settlers themselves in the humanity, sensible humanity, they have shown towards the natives,—not that stupid, maudlin humanity that would keep them idle and lazy, like the specimens we see parading the streets of Perth, who take good care they will never do a day's work so long as they can beg sixpences, which they spend at the first public-house they come to. That is what we are suffering from, an excess of this stupid kind of humanity. I know from my own experience that the difficulties which these Northern settlers are suffering from are quite unintelligible to residents in the town, or even in country districts where the natives are more or less civilised. I really do think these settlers themselves now deserve some little sympathy at our hands. For the last ten years the natives have had all the sympathy and all the protection, and I think it is about time we turned round and extended a little of that sympathy and that protection to the settlers themselves. I believe the whole difficulty has arisen from nothing else than some very misguided directions that were given to the police, and which made the police feel it almost their duty to coach these natives up as to what they should do, and what the settlers should do for them. Probably the natives, not understanding what was meant, looked upon the police as specially appointed by the Government to protect them in their roguery and in their depredations against the settlers. I do not say for a moment that that was the intention, but that has been the practical effect of this way of teaching the natives, and of our ultra-humane policy. I think it is about time we woke up to some common sense on this question, for there has been the reverse of common sense shown in the past, even by otherwise sensible men, on this subject. I hope the hon. member for the Gascoyne's resolution will produce some practical

result, and that the Government will take strong measures that will put an effectual stop to this lamentable state of things that has been going on at the North for years. With reference to the blankets supplied to the natives, the hon. member for the Williams says he was not surprised to find that a native required six of them. Probably if the hon. member had watched what was done with these blankets, he would have found that four or five out of the six were immediately bartered for something else, an inside covering in the shape of grog, instead of an outside covering. He would have found that that enterprising native was not long in realising on his ill-gotten property. I have much pleasure in giving my cordial support to this resolution. I hope it will not be treated in that "Exeter Hall" spirit which is so often allowed to surround this native question.

MR. TRAYLEN: I can tender, for my own part, my congratulations to the hon. member for the Gascoyne for the forcible and yet moderate way in which he has introduced this motion. If he had been less forcible, there would have been no reason for his motion; and if he had been less moderate he would have overshot the mark, and alienated sympathy from himself and the object he has in view. I therefore very sincerely compliment him on the way he spoke to the motion now before us. I suppose the position is this, that we must spend more money in providing police protection, and we must alter our law relating to the treatment of aborigines. We shall have to alter our law with respect to the issuing of warrants in the case of native absconders, because it seems monstrous, this 30-mile limit which is now in existence, and which makes it almost impossible to secure the arrest, and consequently the conviction, of an absconding native. This provision is surrounded with such difficulties in our Northern districts that it is very little use for a master to endeavor to set the law in motion. My reply to all the remarks that have been made with respect to the treatment of native prisoners at Rottnest, their sleekness and so on, is this: if we treated them to a little application of the cat-o'-nine-tails they would probably have a far less pleasant recollection of their sojourn there than they seem to have now. I am not going to advocate that they should be so treated that they should go back where they came from as emaciated as when they were sent down; they must be fed and properly treated. But there does seem no reason why they should not be made to feel that they have done wrong, and the most effectual way of doing that, I take it, would be by the administration of a little whipping occasionally. So far as hanging these natives goes, I do not think they care very much about it. I believe the natives are rather apt to laugh at the white man—so those acquainted with the natives tell me—for objecting to be taken out of this world. This I submit for the consideration of the Government, whether it would not be well for us to authorise punishment to be administered to these natives in the form I have indicated. Very obviously we must give a greater number of constables, and establish a larger number of police stations with all the necessary equipments for efficiently carrying out the work of protecting the property and lives of the settlers in these far-away parts, inland. It may be said that if the settlers will go to these remote portions of the colony, in the interior, where the natives are so wild and commit such depredations, and where the settlers are so scattered, it may be said that it will be a very expensive thing to provide them with police protection. It may be said that they should be left to take the consequences, and that we cannot afford to go after them all over the colony with that police protection which they require, and which I think they really require. But if we admit this, I conceive that the end will be, some day or other, such an ebullition of temper on the part of the settlers, goaded at seeing their flocks killed and occasional murders committed, that may lead to disastrous results, perhaps on the side of the whites and of the blacks also; and that is a contingency we are not to sit here and contemplate as though it were a matter of no consequence. I take it we must be prepared to go considerable lengths to avert a calamity of this kind. We must do for those who have gone so far inland that which perhaps seems a little unreasonable in other circumstances and that is, we should give back to them in the form of police protection nearly all that they give

to the Government in the direct way of paying rents. After all, the bargain may not be such a very bad one for the general community, though we do this; because the farther settlement extends the more sheep we shall have, and the more sheep we have the more wool will be exported, so that indirectly it benefits the whole colony. On the other hand if the natives so harass our settlers that they are discouraged from extending their operations, if they destroy the settlers' sheep, as we are told they do in hundreds, both the flesh and the wool is lost; and the loss of property in that way, or rather the property that might be saved by some efficient system of protection, would go far to make up the greater cost incurred in providing that protection, and which I am persuaded we must go to in sending a sufficient number of police to these districts, and equipping them properly for their work. I have spoken thus strongly so that the Government may learn that if they came forward with what might seem an expensive scheme of police protection they would have my support.

MR. SIMPSON: I have very much pleasure in rising to support the resolution submitted to the House by the hon. member for the Gascoyne, as the facts and the details he has given us are, I believe, unimpeachable. To my mind this question is beginning to assume rather ugly proportions. If we take the history of the colony for the last six months, it seems to me we have a stream of blood gurgling away from Kimberley to the Irwin—the blood of settlers "done to death" by natives. First of all there was poor Miller done to death at Kimberley. Within the last few days another death has been recorded, which I am sure has enlisted the sympathies of the members of this House, on the Ashburton. Then we have young Waldeck, on the Irwin, also done to death by natives. I think the best way to proceed in this matter is to start on the basis of teaching these natives the sacredness of human life. I do not address myself so particularly to the property aspect of the case, but human life must be held sacred at any price. We must bear in mind that the development of our colony depends largely on pioneering. Men go out, not in armed bands, or protected by the police, but with their lives in their hands, to discover and develop the pastoral, the agricultural, and the mineral resources of the colony; and the least we can do is to extend them some protection. We must bear in mind the proportions which this native difficulty is assuming. It seems to me to suggest that these pioneer settlers may be done to death at any minute by an absolutely useless nigger. The whole thing seems to me to resolve itself into what was once said by a distinguished Australian statesman, Sir Samuel Griffith; we must look the matter in the face, and decide whether the country where these native depredations are committed is to be a white or a black man's country. Men who reside there, and whose word is their bond, tell me they have known niggers spearing their cattle simply for the fun of the thing. Not because they were driven to it by drought or by hunger, but simply for fun. Rather ugly fun for the squatter, the man who has surrendered all the comforts of civilised life and faced the dangers and drawbacks of this almost torrid country. When these depredations are committed, these natives simply laugh at you. They know they are masters of the situation. There is, of course, the possibility of their being captured, but one must have a very large imagination to realise that possibility. But, if they are captured, what is the prospect opened out to them? A temporary but pleasant seaside sojourn at Rottnest. I think that Rottnest establishment is about the most grandmotherly thing, and the most silly thing, this colony can show, with its sleek and well-fed niggers. The hon. member for the Murchison has told us of what came under his own observation, when he came across a party of discharged natives from that charming nigger retreat. I may say that the last time I was out in that Never-Never country I saw a native prisoner who had started out with better clothes on than myself, but either the cut of them was not to his tastes, or perhaps they were a little too warm, and he first pitched away his coat, and later on his trousers. He had the decency to retain an undergarment which a paternal Government or the Aborigines Protection Board had supplied him with. He had some flour, also presented to him by the State, and that nigger, after capturing a

few lizards, sat down to enjoy his repast, absolutely king, and supremely indifferent to our laws. He naturally felt the utmost contempt for the rights of property or the sacredness of human life, so far as the white man was concerned, and looked forward with positive gusto to the prospects of another sojourn in that agreeable retreat at Rottnest. I do not wish to use any bloodthirsty arguments about natives. I have seen good natives and bad natives, and I have a strong opinion about them. I think it will be a happy day for Western Australia, and for Australia at large when the natives and the kangaroo disappear. So far as their service on stations is concerned, although I know they are employed by some very level-headed men engaged in pastoral pursuits, still I think when those men come to make up their ledgers and reckon the cost of this kind of labor, the difficulty of management so as to get any satisfactory results, and the methods of conciliation one has to use, it is a question whether those engaged in pastoral pursuits would not do better without this class of labor, and employ some other form of labor more useful. My own idea about this native difficulty—I throw it out with all due deference to more experienced heads than my own, and to the Ministry,—but my own idea is that in these sparsely settled, out of the way districts, the settlers should distinctly understand that when they go there they have to be their own police. I do not think this colony has revenue enough to establish an extensive system of police protection in these far-away districts. I think all of us know that in the settlers in that part of the country where these depredations are committed we have a good class of settlers—a high stamp of men. I say sitting here as the representative of a constituency largely connected with pastoral pursuits, I should be only too happy to put into the hands of a board, appointed by the Government power to administer justice to natives in that part of the colony, without bringing these natives all the way to Perth. Let this board be composed of men in whom the Government would have confidence. I would also protect the natives. I would ask the Government to appoint a Native Defender in these districts, whose duty it would be to protect the natives, to see that however emaciated or decrepit a native might be he should be properly protected and receive British justice. I think this would be an economical and a good way of dealing with these natives. There is another point in connection with this native question: I would suggest for the consideration of the Government that the time has come when these natives should be distinctly told that they are to remain on the reserves set apart for them, and that if they go outside those reserves they do so at the risk of suffering pains and penalties. I think that would infuse the native mind with respect for the white man. We are told that it is because of the drought—at least it has been so suggested—that these depredations are committed. I have known droughts, so far as food is concerned, in cities; I have known it in Melbourne and Sydney. But I have never heard it suggested that this scarcity of food warranted a white man to steal a leg of mutton out of a butcher's shop, without being punished for it. If a bad or a dry season is to establish the rule that a nigger may kill a sheep or a bullock with impunity, I do not know where we are going to draw the line. The killing of one sheep or of one bullock or of twenty, or a hundred, is only a question of degree. I think that in dealing with this matter all maudlin sentiment should be abolished. The time has come for drastic, exact, and positive measures, administered not with a light hand. The Government of the colony should accept the position without flinching and see that justice is done with an iron hand; and let the natives realise that while we are ready to treat them kindly and well so long as they behave themselves, they must also be made to understand that they must show an absolute respect for human life and property.

MR. A. FORREST: Before this debate closes I should like to say a few words on this very important subject. I will not go so far as my hon. friend on my right (Mr. Simpson) in condemning the natives; in many parts of this colony, and especially the North, they are very useful to the settlers. The natives in the district I represent are a good class of natives, and the trouble with them is, on the whole, small, except when you get

into the mountains. In the low lands, between the ranges, the natives are a most useful lot of men, and I should be sorry for it to go forth that there is any necessity for those drastic measures referred to by my hon. friend on the right. All we ask, all the settlers require, and all I require in supporting this resolution, is that we should receive protection in those inland districts. We require little or no protection near the coast. If the police could be kept about the head of the rivers, and they were supplied with a sufficient number of horses, that would meet all that is absolutely necessary at present. Being largely interested in sheep and cattle, I may say that I received letters from these districts two or three days ago stating that the natives are killing sheep wholesale; but all they want is that the Government should take effectual steps to stop it. They do not want to retaliate on these natives. All they ask for is sufficient police protection. No doubt the exceptionally dry season is, to a considerable extent, the cause of the natives coming with impunity to take the sheep away. On many of the rivers in the inland districts the sheep are left to themselves, because it is simply impossible to shepherd them. Feed is scarce and water is scarce. What is wanted is an efficient staff of police, with plenty of horses to enable them to patrol these districts, accompanied by a magistrate, who could issue warrants, and have the natives arrested and brought in for trial. That is my idea about it. The hon. member for West Perth (Mr. Quinlan), I understood, recommended that the natives should be sent to the Promontory Mission. He said there were 1,500 or 2,000 natives about Beagle Bay, and he says the best thing to be done is to send them to that establishment to be missionised. I think he has greatly exaggerated the number of natives; I do not believe there are 2,000 natives in the whole of West Kimberley. A great deal has been said to-night about the blankets supplied to the natives. I do not wish to occupy the time of the House, but I should like to tell a story. One native, a very good man in his own particular way, was able to get no less than six blankets, I believe, from the Secretary of the Aborigines Board. He came for a blanket six days in succession, and the Secretary did not know he was the same native. That shows that the Secretary of the Board is not very particular in giving out these blankets, or we would not hear of one native managing to get six. But that is a small matter compared with the troubles of these Northern settlers, and I hope the Government will do what they can in this matter. They are as fully aware as the members of this House are of the troubles caused by the natives up there, and they must know that something ought to be done to stop them. The settlers cannot afford to have their sheep slaughtered in hundreds, simply for the fun of the thing. Very often when these natives spear them they do not even eat them; they simply drive them to the ravines and the hills and destroy them, and then come down for another lot. I say that is not right; and I hope something will be done in the matter. I am hardly in a position to suggest what, except, as I have said, that there should be an efficient staff of police, properly equipped, sent to these inland districts, and kept there. There is no fear for those stations within reasonable distance of the coast. The natives there are very peaceable and very useful. I am speaking specially of Kimberley, where they mind all the sheep and do nearly all the work on nearly all the stations between Kimberley and the Gascoyne. I most cordially support the resolution, and I hope it will be carried without a division, and that the Government will promise to see what can be done in the matter, and that without delay.

MR. PHILLIPS: I simply rise to say that I can thoroughly support what has fallen from the mover of this resolution. I think it is time that some steps were taken by the Government to give more protection to the settlers. There never was a more cold-blooded murder than that committed recently in the district I represent when young Waldeck was the victim; and there is a strong feeling among the settlers that something must be done, and that justice has not been done them in the past.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government have no objection to this resolution as proposed by the hon. member for the Gascoyne. I do not, myself, see that it will do a great deal of

good, even if it is passed, because the Government are fully alive to the necessities of this matter. But it is well, perhaps, that members should have an opportunity of discussing the subject. I do not think, however, that any member here can tell the Government more than we know about the subject, for we have means of communication far superior to any that is possible for any member of this House to have. The Gascoyne district seems to be most unfortunate so far as the natives are concerned. I cannot, myself, understand why the natives of that district seem to be the worst lot of any other natives, or why they should give more trouble than those of any other district in the colony. Perhaps some hon. members may be able to explain it. I certainly cannot explain it, unless it is that the class of settlers in that district have not been as good managers of the natives, or had as much experience in the management of them, as those in the far North, and even those in the South. At all events we have always had the troubles of the Gascoyne district paraded before us——

MR. RICHARDSON: Kimberley too.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not so bad as the Gascoyne. It is a strange thing. Although I know there is a difference of opinion on this point, it has been suggested that the trouble experienced with the natives is always coincident with very bad seasons. I know that some members will tell us that it is not so, that the season has nothing to do with the trouble the natives give. But, for my part, I believe the two things go together. In very dry seasons the natives, in the first place, probably have a difficulty in finding food, and water being scarce they are thrown together in large numbers about the few watering places that have held out; and we all know that when natives congregate together they then become very troublesome. I would like to point out to the House that the Government have not been idle in this matter. If I had time, and desired to do so, I could prove that we have done a great deal, and that the police have done a great deal. We have expended £3,225 in the Gascoyne and Murchison districts on the police. We have 15 white policemen in that district, and we have 11 native constables—26 in all—and we have 39 police horses in the district. We have arrested, during this past year, since the 1st January up to our most recent information, 216 natives. In looking through the list—for I am not speaking without book, I have it here before me, a list of the natives arrested, with their names, where convicted, the charges against them, and the sentences they received—and, in looking through the list, I notice—I regret to say it, for it shows a screw loose somewhere—that a good many were arrested in the Gascoyne district, and taken to Carnarvon, and there discharged. I suppose the evidence was not sufficient for the magistrate to convict.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The settlers cannot afford to go 300 miles to obtain a conviction.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Members will see from the list of arrests that the police have been pretty active in that part of the country. I will read one or two extracts from the papers I have before me. They show that the natives no doubt have been very troublesome; they have been stealing and killing stock, no doubt about it. At the same time, opportunities have been given them to commit these depredations. With reference to the case mentioned by the hon. member for the Gascoyne, Mr. Bush's case, I have a report here from a very reliable officer on the subject. He mentions that in June last Mr. Bush's sheep were taken from up the river, and sent down for shearing; that most of them were too weak to travel, and were left behind in the bush without anybody to collect them or look after them. He says he was down there in July, and the natives were killing these sheep, and he arrested some of them; some 200 or 300 sheep were left to the natives.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: What authority is that?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I will give it when I have done. With reference to another case, at Shaw's station, the same officer reports that most of the natives had been caught, but that there were still a few others, and that they was still killing sheep. This report, which is a very interesting one, and comes, I believe, from a very good and reliable officer, is signed "Samuel

Brockman, p.c." I also have a report from the magistrate, in which he says, amongst other things, that as to the offences committed at Nookawarra, he attributes them to the way in which the place had been left unprotected. As to another case—I need not mention names—he says that much of the trouble, he believes, has been brought about by the bad management of the owners; that he did not believe they gave sufficient food or clothing to their natives. I have every sympathy with the settlers myself; not only are they harassed by bad seasons and the consequent great losses, but their troubles are aggravated by these depredations of the natives. I may say that we propose some fresh legislation for dealing with the aborigines, which I think will tend in the direction of what the hon. member for the Greenough (Mr. Traylen) referred to—the administration of the lash, which I think would be attended with good result, instead of imprisonment. With regard to what was said by the hon. member for the Murchison (Mr. Darlot) about a blackfellow whom he saw returning from Rottnest, and who commenced his bad habits again before returning to his own country, but who was arrested and sent back to Rottnest, that seems to me rather complimentary to the police. It seems to me that the policeman in that case did not neglect his duty, when we are told that within a fortnight he had this native on the chain again.

MR. DARLOT: If my memory serves me, that was by a settler.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Another discharged native was mentioned by the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson), who said he found him on the road with some food on his head, which had been given him when he was discharged. I do not see anything wrong about that.

MR. SIMPSON: You do not do it to white criminals.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We do not send them back to their own country, or where they committed the crime, when they are discharged. The natives we do, and you cannot send them on the road without food. With reference to the suggestion that executions should take place upon the scene of the murder, that matter has already been taken in hand by the Government. In the case of that unfortunate murder at Kimberley, where Miller was killed, the Government are now taking steps by which the murderers will be executed on the scene of the murder; and I think probably that may have some good result, not only as regards the protection of the white population but also as regards the natives themselves. I do not think I need say anything more, except one remark about the very disparaging way members have spoken as to Rottnest. I think most of those who have spoken about Rottnest have never been there, or they would have seen that the natives have to work much harder than they ever did in their lives before. They have to work in the fields all day, and they work in the saltworks; in fact all the work there is done by natives. Whatever can be said about Rottnest it cannot be said that they lead a lazier life there than they do in their own country. Of course they are treated kindly; that is part of the system. It is regarded more as a reformatory than a prison. It always has been, as anyone may see who will take the trouble to read the Act under which this Rottnest establishment was formed, a place where they may be kept in custody and be subject to discipline, while at the same time they may be allowed to roam about in the way that is supposed to be best for their health, having been used all their lives to roaming about. One hon. member said this establishment at Rottnest costs the country £4,000 a year. That is altogether wide of the mark; in fact, it is quite incorrect. The amount on the Estimates last year for the upkeep of the establishment was £3,200, and there is a revenue of £700 or £800 a year derived from the place; so that the actual cost is not much more than £2,000 a year. And as I have said, besides being a reformatory for the natives, the natives do a great deal of work on the island that would otherwise cost a good deal, if we had to employ free labor to do it. There are wood and water to be provided and carried to the lighthouse and the pilot station, and other work of that kind. I am not going to defend the present system, but when wild statements are made by those who have never been there I thought I might just refer to it.

I can only say, in conclusion, that the Government will do all they can to arrest the natives who commit these depredations we have heard of. Our desire is that the settlers should be protected; but, I can assure members as regards these depredations, although they cause great loss to the settlers, there are other losses far in excess of those attributed to the natives. I have a paper before me—I will not read it; I do not think it is desirable—as to overstocking and the want of ordinary precautions in some parts of these districts. While I can well understand the troubles of the settlers on seeing the weak condition of their stock, dying about them, and the natives coming in to kill those that are strong and well, still the House can see the difficulty of our position. Additional police protection means money, but we are placing on the Estimates this year a sufficient sum to meet these difficulties, and if members when they see our Estimates think we have not sufficiently provided to meet the exigencies of the case, we shall be very glad to put more on them.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL: There was no occasion for the hon. gentleman who has just sat down to defend the action of the present Government, for the action of the Government was never attacked. When I brought forward the motion I did not do so with any view of finding fault with the Government, but simply to invite discussion, and to bring certain facts before the Government to induce them to alter the present state of things. I feel sure the present Government will do all they can to do what is necessary to protect the settlers in these inland districts. With regard to the report of the officer referred to by the Premier, I do not see that it is any excuse, because sheep are too weak to travel, that the natives should kill them. I believe the officer referred to—so I am informed by my hon. friend here, Mr. Darlot—is one of the best officers in the district, and no doubt what he says is perfectly true. The House can quite understand that when a lot of sheep are travelling, and there is a scarcity of water, some of them are bound to stray and straggle behind; but I do not think that is any argument why the natives should be allowed to kill them with impunity. With regard to dry seasons being an excuse for the natives committing these depredations, I think it is generally acknowledged that it is generally easier for the natives to obtain food in dry seasons than in good seasons, for this reason, fish is more easily obtained, and kangaroos, emus, and turkeys flock in to get water, at the permanent pools, where the natives themselves congregate. I think it would be a good idea if the Government could arrange for the Minister whose function it is to control the police, and also for the Commissioner of Police, to travel through these districts and see what the settlers have to put up with. We should very soon then have the native difficulty settled. I think the settlers would soon convince the Commissioner that their losses are not caused by the want of supervision. I think it is a pity that the Police Department should have at its head a Commissioner who really has had no experience in squatting, and it is unfortunate that the Police Department should be under the control of a Minister who has no sympathy with these Northern settlers, and who certainly has had no experience. But, taking the Government as a whole, I feel that everything that could be done would be done. I noticed a letter that was written the other day, and the person who wrote it had the courage to sign his name to it, saying that when the Government were written to about the natives, the reply went back that the matter had been referred to the Aborigines Protection Board, and that the cause of the trouble was because there was not sufficient supervision. I should like to know what the Aborigines Board has to do with the depredations committed by natives, or why the Government want to consult the Board at all in the matter. With regard to the natives at Rottnest being hardworked, no doubt they are, in a way, and no doubt they are well fed too. I am very glad to hear that the Government are quite prepared to deal with the matter referred to in this resolution. I cannot sit down without replying to a few words that fell from the hon. member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse). Anyone would think from what he said that the settlers of the district were the offenders, and that the settlers were the men who ought

to be put on their trial instead of the natives. The hon. member also stated, and I took exception to it at the time, that the settlers are now suffering from what was done by them in the past. I conclude from that that the hon. member means to say that the natives in the past were so badly treated by the settlers that they are now simply retaliating. I say that is an unjustifiable assertion. The hon. member is speaking of what he knows nothing about. He had no right to say that these depredations are done in retaliation for what the settlers did to the natives before. If he knew anything about the native character he would have known better, but I feel sure he knows nothing at all about the matter, or else he would not have spoken as he has done. I know the hon. member is a very just and a very straightforward and upright man, and, in saying what he did, no doubt he thought he was doing a kind act for the natives. But it is not a question of the treatment of the natives, but a question of the protection of the whites; the protection of the property and lives of the settlers in these Northern districts. I do not want to press the matter any further. I am glad of the support I have received in the matter, and I only trust that any effort which the Government may make to meet the difficulty will meet with success. I cannot help thinking still it would be well if the Government consulted some of the settlers and people who know the district as to the best means of meeting this very serious difficulty. But I have no doubt some means will be arrived at to cope with it.

MR. PIESSE: In reply to what has fallen from the hon. member for the Gascoyne as to the treatment of natives in the past, if it was understood that I referred to their treatment by former settlers, it was a mistake. What I meant was this: that some years ago, long ago, there was a treatment that caused the natives to retaliate. As for knowing nothing about the district, I may have been there before the hon. member was there. I was there twenty years ago, before there was a settler on the Gascoyne; and, as for handling natives, I handled the first natives that worked at Sharks Bay, pearl fishing. No one deplores more than I do the cause that has brought forth this motion; I feel deeply for the settlers up there who have suffered from the depredations of natives, and I sympathise sincerely with the bereaved relatives of those who have been murdered, and would do my very utmost to mete out justice in every way. I believe that something should be done to help the settlers in their difficulties, and to protect them from the natives. At the same time I think that our treatment of the natives themselves should be tempered with justice. I do not think we ought to treat them inhumanely, as suggested by the hon. member for the Murchison when he talked about hanging them to a tree and leaving their bodies to swing there. That was what caused me to speak. I think we should treat them like any other human beings, and mete out justice to them in a true British way, and give them the privilege of our much-boasted British law.

Motion—put and passed.

OPENING OF YILGARN TELEGRAPH LINE.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House steps should be at once taken to open communication by wire between York and Southern Cross." He said the contractor had told him that he had no objection to the telegraph line being used immediately, without regard to a dispute he had with the Government as to a portion of the line. All that was needed to work the line was that an operator should be sent to Southern Cross. It was not desirable to wait two months before the public could receive and send news by telegraph to and from the field. The report of the crushing for the past fortnight, which reached town last night, ought to have been known here at the beginning of the week. News of that kind was very important to persons interested in the mines; and not only so but it was particularly necessary that this public wire should not be kept for the private use of a few persons, who might take advantage of the public and of other shareholders and investors, during the next few weeks.

MR. SIMPSON seconded the motion.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the Government would be glad to open the

telegraph line to Yilgarn as soon as possible. But the line was not duly completed. There was certainly a telegraph line as far as Yilgarn, and messages could be transmitted, but as the contractor had not completed his undertaking, the Government were legally advised that any action by the Government in sending messages over the line might be construed into a taking over of the line. The contractor said he had no objection to the Government using the line for public messages, but he did not agree that they should do so, and in this position the Attorney General advised that the Government should not appear to take over the line by making use of it. He was still hopeful that within a few days an arrangement would be made for opening the line to the public.

MR. SIMPSON: You are using the line now.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the line was in the possession of the contractor, but the contract would not be completed for several weeks yet, although the Government would arrange to have it opened for public messages as soon as that could be done.

MR. SIMPSON said the contractor had the monopoly of sending messages at present, and this was objectionable, as a most important industry was affected.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked the Director of Public Works when the contract was supposed to be completed and handed over to the Government; also whether the Government intended to enforce any penalty, if necessary, in case of default on the part of the contractor?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he was not in a position at the moment to give the exact wording of the contract, nor the date when it was to be completed, but the time was not up yet, and there were very severe penalties attached to the non-completion of the work; and the hon. member might make up his mind that those penalties would be enforced.

MR. RICHARDSON hoped there was sufficient ingenuity in the Government departments to get over any technical difficulty, as to opening the line before it was taken over by the Government, now that the wire was in a condition for use. A few private individuals might obtain information as to the mines, and make use of it to the disadvantage of other persons.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the line was in charge of an inspector, and no private individual could possibly get a message along that line.

MR. SIMPSON said he was sure the hon. gentleman only spoke what he believed to be true, but as a matter of fact he (Mr. Simpson) knew of a message that had come through to another man besides those sent between the contractor and the Government.

MR. A. FORREST said he had a direct offer made to him for sending messages through the line. Any person who could use that line for getting information from the field would be in a position to buy or sell mining shares with peculiar advantage. All persons should be put in the same position.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) promised that whatever had been done, no message should pass through that line to anyone, in future, until the line was opened to the public. He would not admit yet that any private telegrams had passed through, but he would take care that any such irregularity should be stopped. He would make inquiries as to the statement that messages had passed of a private character. There must have been something very wrong if there had. He would see to it. If it was found possible to make use of the line, the Government would do it; but at the present the contractor had not offered the wire for use in such a way as the Attorney General considered sufficient. But he would see what could be done to meet the wishes of the House. He did not see any necessity for pressing this motion, but they had no objection to it.

Motion—put and passed.

W.A. TURF CLUB BILL.

MR. PARKER, in accordance with notice, moved for leave to introduce a Bill to enable the members of the Western Australian Turf Club to sue and be sued in the name of the Chairman of Committee of the Club, and for other purposes.

Question—put and passed.

Bill introduced, read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

MR. PARKER moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

Agreed to.

A ballot having been taken, the following members in addition to the mover were elected to serve upon the Committee:—Mr. Darlôt, Mr. A. Forrest, Mr. Loton, and Mr. Paterson.

BILLS OF SALE ACT, 1879, AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

NORTHAM-SOUTHERN CROSS (YILGARN) RAILWAY BILL.

The House then went into committee on this bill, which had previously been referred to a select committee.

Clause 1:

Agreed to.

Clause 2—"It shall be lawful to construct and maintain a Railway from Northam to Southern Cross, with all necessary, pro per, and usual works and conveniences in connection therewith, in the line and upon the lands described in the Schedule to this Act":

MR. PARKER: I rise for the purpose of proposing an amendment to this clause, and, as the report of the evidence taken before the Select Committee has been such a short time before hon. members, I feel it will be my duty to go at some considerable length into the evidence, so that members may become acquainted with the facts before they arrive at a conclusion on the merits of the question. It may be remembered that last session this House was almost unanimous, and the other branch of the Legislature also was almost unanimous, in concluding that it was necessary to build a line of railway to Yilgarn as early as possible. The question of the starting point of the railway was not mentioned, but it was part of the policy of the Government to develop the goldfields by means of a railway connecting the fields with the Eastern Railway. It was not part of the policy of the Government at that time as to where the starting point should be, nor did I conclude from the remarks of the Premier on several occasions that the railway should start from any particular point. It may be remembered that the Government agreed, last session, that trial surveys of the proposed line should be made from various points on the Eastern Railway. Northam, York, Beverley, and other points were mentioned in the House, and I understand that trial surveys have been made from several points, besides these three places, with the view of obtaining the best possible line to Yilgarn. Two lines were particularly surveyed for a considerable distance, some 110 or 120 miles—one from near York and one from Northam; and the Government resolved, on the recommendation of their Engineer-in-Chief, that the line should start from Northam. But, as I have said, I take it that the policy of the Government is to connect Yilgarn with the existing railway system and settled districts of the colony. I understand that the Government in no way look upon it as part of their policy that the line should start from any particular point and no other. If it could be shown that it would be more advisable in the interests of the whole community that the line should start from some other point, I have no doubt the Government would accept that decision in the spirit in which they always accept the decisions of the House, and in the same spirit as they are apparently prepared to accept the decision of the House as regards harbor works at Fremantle. The Government, however, having had these trial surveys before them, on the recommendation of their Engineer-in-Chief, prepared this bill in favor of Northam as the starting point. I will ask members, firstly, to consider Mr. O'Connor's report, and to mark well his reasons for deciding in favor of Northam. He points out in his report, dated the 3rd December, 1891, that "the estimated cost, curious to say, is almost the same for either route, being £216,445 for the Northam route, and £216,992 for the York route." He also points out that, as regards the grades, the ruling gradient on either route will be 1 in 60, and that the curves are about the same on either line; but he comes to the conclusion that it would be advisable to adopt Northam as the starting point, simply because it would be 15 miles nearer the port of Fremantle from Yilgarn than the distance from Fremantle by the other line. This is simply from the working point of view. Mr. O'Connor is very careful in concluding his remarks in saying that he knows

nothing about the quality of the land on either route. What he says is: "From "the engineering construction point of "view, it would seem that either route is "equally good; while from the working "railways point of view, the Northam "route has distinct advantages; and, "unless there are other considerations, "as to quality of land, &c., &c. (of which "I have no knowledge), to turn the scale "in the other direction, I would there-"fore recommend that of the two routes "herein referred to, the Northam route "be adopted as the best." It will be observed that Mr. O'Connor specially mentions that he has no knowledge of the land on either route, and that he recommended Northam as the starting point simply because it would save 15 miles in haulage from Fremantle. He estimates that the capitalised value of this saving in haulage would amount to £30,000. The select committee had an opportunity of taking Mr. O'Connor's evidence on this question, and it will be found on referring to the report of his evidence that he estimated this £30,000 on the assumption that there would be 10,000 tons of goods carried from Fremantle annually to Yilgarn, as soon as this line is opened. I need hardly remind this committee that that is obviously a very large over-estimate of what the traffic is likely to be for some time. I hope that in time the traffic may reach the amount mentioned by Mr. O'Connor as that upon which he based his calculation; but it must be clear to anyone that it is impossible that this estimate will be realised within, anyway, a few years. In estimating the traffic over this line, Mr. O'Connor distinctly said in his evidence that he had made no allowance for any traffic from anywhere but the port of Fremantle. The following question was put to him: "Did you estimate at all the capitalised value of the saving in haulage on the assumption that a portion of the traffic would come from the Great Southern line, or did you simply take into consideration the traffic along the Eastern Railway; did you estimate there would be goods and passengers carried by the Great Southern line?" He replied, "I did not." Then he was asked: "Then you did not take into your calculation that there would be any goods carried from the South of the junction?" His answer was: "My estimates were based on the goods that would come from a port; I have founded it all on that basis. It seemed to me to resolve itself into a question of supply, which, I took it, would have to come from some port." And he was asked, "You assumed it would be all from Fremantle?" He answered: "I assumed there would be 10,000 tons from that end." Then he was asked: "You did not take into consideration any traffic from the Eastern Districts themselves?" He replied: "No, not in the shape of farm products. That would be additional in both cases." It will be observed that Mr. O'Connor is apparently—I do not know whether it is from his being such a recent arrival in the colony—but he is apparently under the impression that the whole of the goods consumed or used at Yilgarn must be imported. He has come to the conclusion apparently, that the Eastern Districts can and will produce nothing. Not a single ounce of produce is estimated to come from the Eastern Districts.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): He says that would be additional.

MR. PARKER: The whole of this 10,000 tons is to come from the port of Fremantle. He assumed we could produce nothing for the goldfields in the Eastern Districts, but that everything should be imported from the other colonies and landed at Fremantle. In a word, he assumed that the farmers and the laboring classes of other communities outside this colony are going to reap the principal benefits from our Yilgarn goldfields. All I can say is, if such were to be the case, if this railway is simply to be built to carry imports and nothing but imports to Yilgarn, it would be just as well for us if Yilgarn ceased to exist, and that we should not have this railway at all. I was under the impression that these fields would not only tend to introduce a large population into the colony to work the mines, for the benefit of those who worked them, but also for the benefit of our agriculturists and pastoralists. I thought that a large market would be provided at Yilgarn which would tend to develop the pastoral and agricultural industries, particularly in the Eastern Districts, and also all over the colony. I was under the impression that all the

flour, meat, hay, barley, oats, etc., consumed on the Yilgarn goldfields would come from the Eastern Districts or some other part of the colony. I did not suppose that the Engineer-in-Chief, after living some months in the colony, would come to the conclusion that every ounce consumed on these goldfields would be imported by ship, and paid for by us to some foreign country. That is his innocence, I hope. He says he estimated there would be 10,000 tons of goods carried on this line annually, and that every ounce of it would come from Fremantle, and be imported into the colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): He says all the rest would be extra.

MR. PARKER: If the hon. gentleman will read the evidence he will see that Mr. O'Connor based his estimates entirely upon the goods that would come from a port, that port being Fremantle. He did not assume there would be a single ounce from the Eastern Districts. No doubt the principal object in view in building this railway is the development of the goldfields; but a secondary object to my mind is the development of the agricultural industries which would follow from the development of the goldfields. I take it that if the railway is constructed in a proper position so as to bring the best agricultural districts into communication with the fields, there will be a very large expansion of the agricultural and pastoral industries, to the benefit of the whole community, particularly so far as the clearing and cultivation and settlement of the soil are concerned. That certainly is, to my mind, a secondary consideration in determining the construction of this line. But the Engineer-in-Chief had put it out of consideration entirely. He has simply taken into consideration the haulage of imports, and imports only. He has not given a thought to our own producers; they stand out entirely in the cold. All he thinks about is the nearest way of getting from Fremantle to the goldfields, and the cheapest and readiest way of conveying imports from that port to Yilgarn. Let me ask members to consider for a moment what will be the chief articles carried on this line of railway? I say unhesitatingly that after the necessary machinery is placed on the fields—and the conveyance of machinery will only last until the mines are supplied with what they want, which will not take long—I say unhesitatingly that, outside machinery, the principal articles that will be carried on this line will be the products of the Eastern Districts, such as flour, hay, barley, and oats. As these fields develop, not only will the population, the number of consumers, increase, but the number of horses that will be largely used on the fields will also increase, and the demand for these agricultural products will increase. Therefore I cannot but think that the principal traffic on which this line of railway must depend to make it pay will be the products of our Eastern Districts. No doubt another item that will have to be taken into consideration is the passenger traffic. I have no doubt that the main passenger traffic will probably be from this end, the Fremantle end; but I am also certain that a large proportion—I will not say one-half, but a large proportion—of the passenger traffic will come from the Eastern Colonies viâ Albany; and surely those who come from the other colonies by way of Albany are as worthy of consideration as those going from Fremantle or Perth. We must not only take into consideration our present requirements, but also look forward to an increase of settlement. We know that recently the Government have declared and set apart a large quantity of agricultural land for settlement along the Great Southern line of railway. I find from a *Gazette* notice which has been appearing now for some time that my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands has set apart some 580,000 acres of land on that line of railway as agricultural areas. In effect he announces to those visiting the colony in search of land, and to those already amongst us: "I have set apart 580,000 acres on the Great Southern Railway, and it is now ready for you to settle on it and develop it; it is set apart specially as agricultural areas, and, being so, we guarantee that it is fit for agriculture, and that if you settle on that land you will be able to make a comfortable living, if not a fortune."

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): We haven't told them all that.

MR. PARKER: A very small flight of imagination will carry the mind so far. Let us look at the position of these agricultural areas. I see that from Beverley down to a place called Darkan —I do not know how far that is—there have been 235,000 acres set apart as agricultural areas, and that at Katanning there are 100,000, and that beyond that there is the balance, making up the 580,000 acres. I take it that if people are invited to settle on these areas, it must be obvious to the Government, and especially to my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands, that they will require a market for their produce. It is no use asking people to settle on the soil, unless you can point out the probability of there being a market for the produce which they grow.

MR. CLARKSON: They have got Albany.

MR. PARKER: I will just point out how they have not got Albany. Some of them will have Albany; those on the other side of Katanning will have Albany. But what about those on this side of Katanning? There are 100,000 acres set apart at Katanning itself; 40,000 acres at some unpronounceable place, "Ewlyamartup;" 180,000 acres at Pallinup; and 30,000 acres at Tenterden, — altogether over 300,000 acres between Katanning and Albany. I will not take those into consideration in this instance. They certainly may have Albany for their market. Albany will also be supplied from Broomehill, where there is a large quantity of agricultural land. But this side of Katanning would not have Albany for a market. It must be obvious that you cannot produce cereals and carry them a very great distance at a profit; at any rate you cannot do so and compete with producers who have only 20 or 30 miles to carry. So that so far as Katanning is concerned, and south of Katanning, I will eliminate them from my calculation, and let them supply Albany. I will ask members to apply themselves simply to the areas on this side of Katanning. We have at Darkan and this side of Darkan 235,000 acres laid out as agricultural areas, and as such I take it practically guaranteed by the Government to be fit for agricultural purposes and agricultural settlement. And we must bear in mind that this is only the refuse of the land, after the West Australian Land Company have had their pick. If the Government can select 235,000 acres between Darkan and Beverley fit for agriculture, what must the West Australian Land Company have in the way of good land within the same distance? I will put it moderately at double what the Government have been able to select; that would be 470,000 acres, which, with the Government land, will give us over 700,000 acres of agricultural land which is fit for settlement and lying alongside a railway, and where selectors can go and settle down, and buy land cheap, on deferred payments and easy terms. But where is the market? The market for the Eastern districts up to the present time, with the exception of those products sent out to Yilgarn, has been Perth and Fremantle. But I think it must be obvious to anyone who considers the matter for a moment that persons who settle down at Darkan, Wagin, Buchanan, and these other places on the Great Southern Line—unless their land is very much better than that about Northam, Newcastle, and York—cannot expect successfully to compete in the markets of Perth and Fremantle with the Eastern districts. Such being the case, surely it would be advisable for us, while we are about to build a railway, to give these people whom we are anxious to see settling on the soil, a market for their produce. And where should that market be? Why, at Yilgarn, the very place provided by Nature for the products of these districts.

MR. CLARKSON: We can supply Yilgarn from Northam and Toodyay for years to come.

MR. PARKER: Can you really? That is wonderful. Of course if the hon. member says so, it must be a fact. I daresay Northam and Toodyay can do a great deal more than they have done. But, judging from what they do now, I do not think there is very much prospect of their supplying Yilgarn for years to come. I was under the impression that some of the farmers about Toodyay —perhaps the hon. member himself will correct me if I am wrong—had done very little in the way of cultivating their land.

MR. CLARKSON: A mistake. Look at the Census returns.

MR. PARKER: I have done so, and will deal with them presently. But from what I know about Toodyay and Newcastle—I am not speaking of Northam at present; Northam has done a great deal more, it strikes me, than Toodyay and Newcastle—from what I know about the Toodyay and Newcastle people, they have been very apathetic in spending money in clearing and cultivating the soil.

MR. CLARKSON: You don't know anything about it.

MR. PARKER: I may point out to the hon. member that it is very easy to make that remark, but it would be very much better (if the hon. member will take my advice) if, instead of saying to another member "You don't know anything about it," the hon. member were to get up and prove it. I am going to produce statistics presently, taken from the Census returns. What I was going to say was that although this line of railway to Yilgarn is intended primarily to connect the goldfields with our settled districts, a secondary consideration is that the development of our agricultural lands should be taken into account, and that if we desire to have the land that has been thrown open by the Government and by the West Australian Land Company settled, we must do something to provide those who settle on it with a market. It has been stated that if this line goes by way of Northam it will make a difference of 15 miles less haulage than if it went by York. On the other hand, I would point out that if these settlers alongside the Great Southern Railway have to send their produce through Northam to the goldfields they will have to go 27 miles farther than if the line went from York. Is it right that we should compel our own producers to pay for 27 miles extra haulage, in order to give imported produce the benefit of 15 miles less haulage from Fremantle? Is it more desirable to encourage importations from abroad than it is to encourage local production? And why should we say to travellers coming by way of Albany, "If you want to go to Yilgarn you must travel 27 miles farther than you need to, because we consider it more important to expedite the carriage of imports from abroad than our own local products." If members will look at the map they will see that there is a line of railway running from Clackline to Newcastle, and another from Spencer's Brook to Northam. I take it that a radius of about 15 miles from a railway is about the distance within which agricultural pursuits can be carried on successfully, so as to compete with other producers within easy reach of a railway. Newcastle is about 20 miles north of Northam, both of which places are supplied with a railway, and, adding 15 miles to that distance—which as I have said is the radius within which agriculture can be carried on successfully in competition with places nearer a railway—we find that north of Northam has 30 miles of agricultural country lying to the north of it. How much lies to the south in the direction of Darkan or Katanning? I believe Beverley is about 40 miles distant, and that from Beverley to Katanning is 126 miles, making a total of 166 miles. But let us take it 30 miles this side of Katanning. That would give us 136 miles of country lying south of Northam, the greater portion of which is fit for agriculture. I think I am justified in saying that, because we find that the Government, who have only the refuse of the land, have been able to set apart 235,000 acres in agricultural areas, all within reasonable distance of the line. Is it fair to this agricultural community to place the railway which would be the means of carrying their produce to market at one end of this agricultural country? On the one hand, we have 35 miles of agricultural land north of Northam, and on the other hand we have 136 miles of agricultural country to the south; and yet, in order to save 15 miles of haulage in the case of imports from abroad, the Government propose to add 27 miles of extra haulage for these local producers, to the south of Northam.

MR. CLARKSON: What about Victoria Plains?

MR. PARKER: Victoria Plains will never carry produce to Yilgarn. The hon. member apparently does not appreciate my argument. I submit it is only within 15 miles of a railway that producers can hope to successfully compete with those living within a lesser distance; beyond that distance the cost of carriage would probably kill the profits.

Victoria Plains is about 50 miles from Newcastle; the settlers there do not even carry their wool there at the present time. It goes on another line of road entirely. I find from the Census returns that the amount of land in occupation in the Toodyay district is 2½ million acres, and that the amount of land in occupation in the York district is 1½ million acres; so we may take it that as regards the quantity of land occupied in the two districts, Toodyay stands at 5 to 3 as compared with York. That being the case, one would imagine that this immense district would have a proportionately larger amount of land under cultivation.

MR. CLARKSON: It has all been locked up for years.

MR. PARKER: I find that this immense district, with its 2½ million acres in occupation, has only 32,000 acres in cultivation, while York, with only 1½ million acres in occupation, has 30,000 acres in cultivation. Then, again, Toodyay with its 2½ million acres in occupation has only 140,000 sheep, while York has over 139,000. Toodyay has only about 800 sheep to show for its million more acres in occupation.

MR. CLARKSON: All locked up in the Midland syndicate concession.

MR. PARKER: Couldn't even sheep get at it? What I wish to point out to the committee in deciding the point this railway should start from is that we should consider, not the interests of Northam, not the interests of York, not the interests of Fremantle or Perth alone, but consider the interests of all the districts, and consider the interests of Yilgarn also. I have already pointed out that if we consider the interests of the agriculturists we desire to see settle on the soil, we are bound to start it in a more central position than Northam. So far as I can see, the most central position on that line would be Beverley; and, if we cannot start it there, we ought to start it as near Beverley as possible. But it is not only the producers at this end that we ought to consider; we have also to consider the consumers at Yilgarn. Can it be said that the consumer at Yilgarn would be able to obtain his produce at such a rate as if the railway started from a more central position? It is obvious that if these agriculturists have to pay for carrying their produce 27 miles farther than they otherwise would, they will add it to the price, and the consumer at Yilgarn will have to pay for it in the end. Therefore, in the interest of the producer, in the interest of settlement—and does not the interest of settlement mean the interest of the whole colony, whether residents in towns or elsewhere—in the interests of settlement, in the interests of the producer, and also in the interests of the consumer, I say it is obvious that a more central point than Northam ought to be chosen as the starting point of this Yilgarn railway. I have pointed out how the Engineer-in-Chief came to advise that Northam should be the starting point. In his first report he says "other things being equal, it would seem desirable to adopt the Northam route." That was presuming that other things were equal. But after we had been in select committee some time, and after Mr. O'Connor had given his evidence, we obtained a further report from him, from which it will be observed that "other things" are far from "being equal." In fact the "other things" are all in favor of York, and not in favor of Northam. In his first report the cost of construction was in favor of Northam, but in his second report, after receiving some further data, he puts the difference in the cost of the construction of the two lines at £4,172 in favor of the York line. I cannot but think that if Mr. O'Connor had this before him at the time he wrote his first report he would hardly have recommended Northam as the starting point. In that report he points out that from the point of engineering construction there was nothing to choose between the two; one was as good as the other. The reason he advised in favor of Northam was—firstly, because it made it 15 miles less distance to travel from Fremantle; and secondly, because other things were equal as regards either line. We now find a difference of £4,172 in favor of the York line from an engineering construction point of view. But I am going to point out that besides this £4,172, there is another thing in favor of York which has not been estimated by the Engineer-in-Chief. If members will turn to his evidence it will be found that Mr. O'Connor estimated the price of Northam town land at £30 an acre. He says, in

answer to a question as to his estimate for compensation: "It was assumed that the Government would get the land at the upset price or thereabouts, with a slight amount added for improvements." And he adds: "There is very little allowance for improvements; it is taken generally at about £30 an acre, which is the present upset price for town sections." I am perfectly astounded at the innocence of Mr. O'Connor, seeing that this line as surveyed runs right through the town of Northam, from one end of the town to the other; I am astounded at his innocence in expecting to get this land at the Government upset price. One would think that the past experience of the Railway Department would have shown him different as to the compensation they have to pay for land resumed for railway purposes, especially in towns. They know they never obtain a single acre at the Government upset price, but have had to pay compensation, with a certain amount for severance and any other injury done to the owner. Mr. O'Connor says he never estimated anything for severance, because, in his innocence, he thought that when a block was simply cut in two no question of severance arose. Therefore he allowed nothing for severance, but estimated the price they would have to pay for these town lots at £30 an acre, the Government upset price. Fortunately I had had an opportunity of perusing an advertisement the other day, which I cannot but think my friend the hon. member for Northam had a hand in, relating to some Church property offered for sale in Northam. It consisted of 7 acres 2 roods, and it was cut up into 32 blocks, which (without taking into consideration any roads or streets that might have been given in) would be something less than a quarter of an acre for each block. In the advertisement for sale it was stated that no offer for less than £30 would be received for these quarter-acre blocks; so that evidently these Church folk estimated their land at Northam to be worth about £120 an acre, and not £30 an acre, as estimated by the Engineer-in-Chief. We who have had something to do with arbitration and questions of compensation know full well that the Government have to pay the fullest price for any land compulsorily taken for railway purposes. In fact when land is arbitrarily taken, not only is the question of severance taken into consideration but also the question of compulsory resumption for the general good, and you never get such land even at the ordinary market price. Therefore I think we may safely say that these Northam town lands, being obtained by the Government for £30 an acre, the Government will have to pay £125 an acre at least, which will be four times the amount included in the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief. I have not the figures before me, but my recollection is that the estimate for compensation for the land taken through the town of Northam was between £900 and £1,000. If my argument is correct—and I really cannot see any answer to it—instead of this compensation being £1,000 it will be £4,000. If the Government get it for £4,000, looking at the way these blocks are cut up, it strikes me they will get the land remarkably cheap. Therefore, we have to add some £3,000 to Mr. O'Connor's estimate for compensation, which, with the £4,172 we are now told the Northam line will cost more than the York line, will make a difference in favor of York of between £7,000 and £8,000. While the line, if it starts from Northam, will, as I have shown, prove most injurious to settlement and retard the progress and development of the country, as regards the Eastern Districts and the country South of the line, and will not provide that freight for the Government railway which otherwise would be provided—while we find all this, we also find that if the line starts from Northam it will actually cost more by between £7,000 and £8,000 than if it started from York.

MR. CLARKSON: Nonsense.

MR. PARKER: The hon. member says "nonsense." I am very much obliged to him. It is always a pleasure to hear his remarks; they are always so apt and so much to the point, and couched in such a polite strain. One would really imagine that one was walking down Piccadilly, to hear such a polite gentleman as the hon. member is in his remarks. We come next to another point that we have to consider, and I must remind the committee that it is a matter of grave consideration and importance to the Govern-

ment, and it is this: if, by taking this line through Northam, they add 27 miles haulage to these people down South, they will discourage settlement, and will lose considerably in land sales and in railway traffic, and the colony will lose large areas that would otherwise be opened up; and they will tend very largely to deter people from settling at all in these agricultural areas and along that line of railway. I will only ask members before voting on this question to look at the point in the interests of the colony as a whole, and not to say, "I have always been in favor of the line starting from Northam, and mean to vote for it;" or, "I have always been in favor of the line starting from York, and I mean to vote for it." Let hon. members weigh well the arguments for and against either route. If, after listening to the arguments and reading the strong facts given in evidence, it is made clear that either of these lines will be to the advantage of the whole colony, as against the advantage of any particular town or district, I ask members to support that line. There is another matter which is prominently brought out in this evidence taken before the select committee, and which it is necessary to refer to at some length, for the reason that this report has been such a short time before hon. members that I fear that they have not yet had an opportunity of considering the question. One of the principal questions that the select committee had before it was the nature of the country which the two proposed lines traversed. On the Northam line, after leaving Grass Valley, you come to what is known as the Meekering Area, and then you traverse some distance until the two lines join, beyond which point the line would be common to both routes. We took a great deal of evidence on the question of the value of the land on either route. The first gentleman to whose evidence I would refer is Mr. R. G. Burges. He has some 2,000 acres of land, which he purchased himself, somewhere near this Meekering Area, and a portion of that Area is at present leased by him. In fact, a portion of it was taken out of his lease. Mr. Burges gave evidence with regard to this Meekering Area. He was asked, "Have you been near the Area lately?" He said, "Yes; I saw a good part of it last week." Then he was asked to look at a plan, where the line passed to his leasehold adjoining the area, and he was asked what the country was like from that leasehold along the proposed line. "The whole of that block," he said (pointing on the map), "is hardly anything but sand-plain and poison. The whole of that leasehold, except a few small pieces, is sand plain country and poison patches. South of the line there is a little patch of good country where the railway runs through,—very small; but on this side it is sand plain, solid sand plain for miles, except little patches, right into Meekering Area." Then he was asked to describe what the Meekering Area is like. His answer was: "A lot of it is low country, sandy land, white gum, small jams: some of it, in patches, is high country, fair soil, but with a large outcrop of rock. Light sandy patches in some places, and patches of forest country. After you go beyond Mortlock it is middling good country, in patches; but, taking it all through, it is inferior land." Then he was asked: "On your own farm there, how much land have you?" He said: "Over 2,000 acres." Asked if that was good land, his answer was: "Good feeding land; most of it is an outcrop of rock, but with patches of fair land, and patches of sandy land." "Why did you buy it?" he was asked. "Because," he said: "Mr. Keane, who sent a man round to take up every acre of land he could, was picking up all he could, and I was just before him and took up what I wanted." This witness, it will be seen, has 2,000 acres close to this wonderful Meekering Area. Although he himself lives at York, his land crosses the proposed Northam line, and he evidently ought to be an unprejudiced witness as to the merits of either line. Asked how many people are living on this Meekering Area, he said the only settlers he knew who actually live there are Wilkins, Snooke, Combley, Carter, and McCaul,—five in all. Sermon, he said, has got some land there, but he does not live on it. This witness, it must be remembered, knows the country well, and he told us that beyond this Meekering Area there was no settlement North of the proposed Northam line, within ten miles of the railway. I am going to deal first with the land north of the line; I will refer to the

other subsequently. Then we had Mr. Penny, a successful agriculturist living at a place called Green Hills. Referring to the country north of the proposed line he was asked: "Do you know the country between Doongin and the Beebering Hills?"—"Yes," he said; "portions of it are good agricultural country, but it is in very small patches. I went out there some years ago on purpose to select a place for myself, but I could not find anywhere where I could make what I thought a good home for myself and support a family; too small the patches of good country. You cannot get any extent of good country anywhere about there in one field. The sub-division fences would cost so much that a man of small means could not make it pay at all." He was also asked: "Do you know the Meekering Area, and the land about there?"—His answer was: "I have known it for 30 years. When I was a tenant under Mr. Burges, I cut sandalwood over it 30 years ago." Then he was asked: "Can you tell us whether the land alongside and within a reasonable distance of the proposed Northam line is better, from an agricultural point of view, than the land alongside and within a reasonable distance on the York side?" "No doubt at all about it," he said. "When you leave Meekering Area to Mr. Keane's place at Grass Valley you come to a sand plain, but when you pass Meekering Area there is nothing in the world but desert for miles and miles. There is nothing but sand plain right to Youndegin."—"That is on the Northam line; what about the York line?" he was asked. He replied: "You have heard my statement. There is more heavy forest land, 10 to 1, once you pass Meekering Area, than on the other line." Then we come to Mr. Marwick's evidence. Mr. Marwick told us he had known this country for a number of years; that he had taken people out to inspect the Meekering Area—parties who had been recommended to go there by the Survey Office. He said he knows the whole country around there well, so much so that the chairman of our committee was rather astonished when he examined him to find how he knew all the places he referred to on the map. This gentleman was asked: "Is there much agricultural land in the Meekering Area?" His answer was: "No; that is my opinion of it. I have searched it over often." Then he was asked: "Do you know the land north of Meekering?" He said he did. "Is that agricultural land?" he was asked. "I don't know" (he said) "that there is any worth calling agricultural land, northward, until you go a long way back." Then came the following question and answer: "Taking it generally, from the time you leave the Grass Valley property for a distance of 40 miles on the Northam route, and comparing it with 40 miles running from the 5-mile out of York, is the Northam country equal to the York country?"—"Not in my estimation; nor, I should think, is it for farms or anything of that sort." He was asked: "If a man wanted to get 500 acres of agricultural land within, say, ten miles on either side of the proposed Northam line, could he get it?" He replied: "Yes, he could get it in those forests about Doongin." Asked if he meant between Doongin and Northam, his answer was: "No; I don't know where he could get 500 acres of good agricultural land in a patch. There is good grazing land, but I believe it is taken up. There is a lot of low-lying land around Salt River, where I have seen 3ft. or 4ft. of water in winter." Then this question was put to him: "From your knowledge of the country—and I understand you to say you have been there for the last 25 or 30 years—is the land better as you go South than it is as you go North from the proposed York line?" His answer was: "Much better on the South." Then we had Mr. Dempster, who gave certain evidence with regard to Meekering Area. He was a Northam witness. He said he could not say a very great deal about the country beyond Bulgin, about 30 miles out, just outside the Meekering Area. He was asked: "Five miles from Northam, out towards the Meekering Area, what is the general description of that country?" He said: "It is all good land, I consider, out to Grass Valley. A great deal of it is under cultivation." Then he was asked: "How far to the right and left of that line does this agricultural land extend?"—His answer was: "I expect that about 15 miles North of Grass Valley would be all fairly good land; patches of it very

good land, and patches second class or forest country. South of it, it is all good land right towards York, only some of it is forest country. When you come to the Meekering Area, up to the Beebering Hills, and out as far as Bulgin, as you get Eastward, it becomes more patchy,—patches of very good country and some sand plain. Between the Doongin Peak and the Honeymooning Hill down to Doongin, there is some very nice country; and North-West of the Honeymooning Hill, about Boojerakine and farther on, is nice flat forest country." The witness was also asked what the country was like between Grass Valley and the Meekering Area? He said that two miles beyond Grass Valley it is very good forest land, but that it then becomes patchy. He was asked: "Are there any very good patches before you get to Meekering Area that are not taken up?" He said: "That I am not prepared to answer: I have not been over there lately, but I know there is nice country." Another question put to him was: "This Meekering Area; is not a great portion of it sand plain?" He replied: "There are some sand plains in it, but there is a great deal of very fair land." Then he was asked when he had last visited it, and he said he had not been through that country for the last six years, but that he used to horse-hunt a good deal about there, years ago. He was then asked when he was last along the line as far as Doongin. "Not for many years," he said; "it is nearly 30 years since I passed from Northam to Doongin." Asked if he had been along the other portion of the proposed line, he said he had not been along the line for a good many years; that it was 30 years since he was at Moranoppin and Meredin. Asked if he had been along the York line at all in recent years, his answer was: "No; there is a part of that country I have been very little over, from Needlings inward; but from Needlings outward I was over the country about 15 years ago." It will be observed that so far as Mr. Dempster's evidence is concerned he has given it from recollection extending many years ago. Then we took the evidence of Mr. Snooke, a man who resides on the Meekering Area, and who told us about his crops. He said he had averaged about 17 bushels of wheat for three years; that he had cultivated about 20 acres; and that he had grown some barley, but had never stripped it, but let his cattle have it. Now, from my experience of farming, I should say that barley was not worth stripping, when he turned his cattle into it. Mr. Snooke, it appears, has a garden, about six acres, which produces certain fruits and vegetables, specimens of which he brought down here; and no doubt there are other small portions of this Area that would do the same, as there are in all parts of the colony. He said he had not travelled over the line beyond Meekering, except some eight or ten miles in the direction of Kelkering. But I may say that the line does not go towards Kelkering; so that this witness's evidence of the country beyond Meekering is really valueless. Then we come to the evidence of Mr. Robinson, Mr. Keene's manager at Grass Valley, who describes the land as seen on a visit he made, only one visit. He was asked: "What is the nature of the country, say ten miles from Northam, to the Meekering Area; is there much agricultural land?" He said: "Immediately after leaving Grass Valley there is a patch of rough ground and a little sand plain; then you get into good land." He was asked if there was much extent of good land, and his answer was, "Good-sized blocks in some places; in other places small patches. There is a good patch towards Meekering Area." He also said, "There are patches of sand plain intermixed; it was a patchy country where I went." Asked what his general impression was about the agricultural land in the Meekering Area, his answer was: "Some of it is very good, and some not so good—mixed, patchy country. Some of it is York gum and jam country, and some sand plain." Then he was asked: "How did you find the country between Meekering and the Bulgin Rock?" He replied: "Not very good country; patchy country with sand plain between. That answers up to Youndegin, but you get poison country that way. Right up to Cubine paddocks there is plenty of poison." Then he went on to describe Cubine. I am going to speak about Cubine directly, when I speak about the land about York. Then we come to the evidence of Mr. Carter. We were under the impression, from the way in which this witness gave his evi-

dence, that he was going to give us some evidence of the land about Meekering, but, when we asked where he lived, we found he lived at a place called Long Forest, about 15 miles from Northam and 17 miles from York—about midway between the two places. It appeared that all the good land he was speaking about was about Wilberforce, Mr. Hamersley's place, and in that locality. These are the Northam witnesses. If I were addressing a jury, and the question was whether the land from Northam outwards along this proposed line of railway was good land or not, I should say, "Gentlemen, all you have to do is to depend upon the evidence given by the plaintiffs themselves. Just examine their evidence, and you will find that those who do know anything about the country say that the land is principally sand plain and rocks and forest country, or light country; that there is no settlement along the line at all beyond Meekering. The other evidence is that of persons who have not been over the country for the last 30 years; they have not had the temerity to visit it since."

MR. CLARKSON: I have been over it scores of times.

MR. PARKER: It's a pity you were not called.

MR. CLARKSON: I will tell you all about it by-and-bye.

MR. PARKER: Mr. Dempster, at all events, one of the plaintiffs' own witnesses, had not been over it for 30 years, and really he was the only Northam witness who gave any evidence worth anything, because Mr. Robinson, when travelling, did not go along this line of railway at all. As to Mr. Carter, he described the land about where he lived and the crops he obtained, but we found on closer examination that this witness lived halfway between Northam and York, and could not be affected whichever way the line went. Mr. Snooke was simply a gardener, who produced a few things in a favored spot, under a rock, where there was damp ground. There are thousands of such places in other districts of the colony that will produce fruit and vegetables equally as well,—Pinjarrah, for instance. He told us further that he had grown some barley, but that he never stripped it, but turned his cattle into it. People do not turn their cattle into a crop unless they think it is not worth stripping. These are the Northam witnesses. If we wish to damn the country through which the Northam line runs, after passing Grass Valley, all we have to do is simply to listen to the evidence of the Northam witnesses themselves, for no more damning evidence could be given. The mere fact of having to produce Mr. Dempster as a witness, who has not seen the country for 30 years, is in itself a damning fact. But let us turn to the York witnesses. I will take Mr. Robinson's evidence first,—a witness who came from Northam; and what does he tell us? He was asked about Cubine, what extent of good, agricultural land is there? His answer was: "There is very good land at Cubine indeed; but I believe there is poison right up to the fence." Most of us know that poison land when cleared makes the best of land. I think a member who now occupies a distinguished position in the Upper House will tell us that. Mr. Robinson was then asked what the country was like from Cubine back to Needling. His answer was: "There is about the usual run of land as there is from Meekering to Youndegin. You come on a patch of very good country indeed, which I was told was the head of the Ballybally brook." I will ask members to bear in mind that Mr. Robinson did not come to give evidence in favor of the York line; he was a Northam witness. But he is forced to admit that "there is very good land at Cubine, indeed," and also from Cubine back to Needling. It was here, when he camped on the way, that he noticed that patch of very good country.

MR. CLARKSON: An old sheep camp.

MR. PARKER: Then we have Mr. Penny's evidence. He has lived in the York district about 30 years, and holds 1,100 acres a little to the southward of the proposed line. Asked if his land was all agricultural land, his answer was: "No, not all; about 700 acres, I think, is good agricultural land—that is what I call first-class land, capable of producing 20 bushels to the acre. The remainder is good forest land, heavy salmon gum country. I objected to this kind of land at first, but I have since found out that if you go to the expense of ring-barking it, and let it lie for a while, it makes splendid land. This is the very land I

gave my evidence about to the Commission that sat at York two or three years ago. I did not know it so well then. I wanted to get a portion of it cleared, but could not get it done at less than £7 an acre. I said, 'Let it remain; I can't afford it.' That same land, after ringbarking 120 acres of it, I find now I can clear it at actually less cost than I did my other farm land. After you ringbark, you can actually go and gather the bark that falls off the trees for burning, and without any grubbing at all; 60 per cent. will burn out, except the surface roots." It appears from all the evidence that this salmon gum or forest country is the kind of country that principally prevails on the York route, and it is now considered the best agricultural land when cleared. This witness told us there was a great deal of it in the neighborhood of Greenhills, all taken up. He was asked: "What extent of land do you consider there is in that vicinity?" His answer was: "I consider there is nearly 10,000 acres, including what is taken up and what is available." Then the following questions and answers were given:—

"162. Is that this forest country that you speak of?—Portion of it. Everyone, since they have found out they can clear it so easily, have taken up a lot of it.

"163. How far from York is that?—17 miles.

"164. Twenty miles from York is it the same description of country?—No. When you go about 8 miles farther (that is, 25 miles from York), there is a fine quality of land, but patchy—say 100 acres in a field. About 8 miles at the back there is 3,000 or 4,000 acres of what I call first-class land.

"165. Thirty miles out from York, continuing Eastward, what kind of country is it?—Good forest land; the best agricultural land when cleared, if a person has the capital to let it lie idle for a few years. It is not all good solid land, but patches. At Cubine there is magnificent land. When you go North it is not so good, but if you went South-East to Youndegin, there is better land that way, a good bit.

"166. When you get down to Naleeying Spring, about 40 miles North of Cubine, what description of country have you there?—Some of it is very good country, but very patchy. Before you get to Mount Stirling there is some magnificent country, and what I call first-class second-class land. There is a wonderful quantity of this forest land. There is not much about Mount Caroline, but nine miles on this side there is good country. You then come to a sand plain. But at Cuttening there is fine land; I cannot say to what extent, but a good large extent. I have never been farther than Cuttening.

"173. Do I understand you to say that beyond 20 miles there is plenty of good land?—There is a good quantity. There is but one small portion that is taken up, and that was by Mr. Parker, to secure a well. Because, the reason why, it was such a long way from town; it was too far from market, with the bad roads.

"174. Can you tell us who are the persons who are residing (say) beyond a distance of ten miles from York along the proposed line of railway, towards Mount Stirling?—It would be nearly impossible for me to gather my thoughts to give you that information straight off; I would have a good deal to study. But there are between 30 and 40, I am confident of it.

"175. Do you know how many people are living in your neighborhood, about Green Hills?—From 20 to 25 settlers, I think.

"176. You mean heads of families?—Yes; people who have taken up land and settled.

"177. Are they all cultivating their land?—A portion of it. There is no one there who has taken up land but depends teetotally upon cultivation, except Mr. J. T. Parker.

"178. How much land do you reckon there is under cultivation about Green Hills?—I could not say exactly, without a great deal of study. I should say from 1,500 to 2,000 acres; and I am certain that that could be trebled. Green Hills is the cream of the York district.

"179. Towards Mount Stirling, after leaving Green Hills, are there any settlers?—Oh, yes; there is Martin, at Cubine, and Charlie Heales south of that.

"180. That's a long way from the proposed line?—Yes, a long way to the South. There is no one except Sewell

and Parker in that direction. At Doongin and Toapin there is some first-class land, especially South-East of Doongin.

"184. What is the average of your wheat crop at your place?—For the last 15 years, until this year, I have never been less than 20 bushels to the acre. This year my crop averaged 18 bushels, all through. On the York route, you have to consider that for 17 miles by 13 miles it is all taken up, or nearly all, and people settled on it at the present moment."

The next witness we turn to—I am sorry to have to detain members at such length, but as members only received this report yesterday I think it is my duty to call attention to the evidence before we come to a decision on the motion I am about to submit, for it is a very important question we have to decide, so important that upon our decision will depend where the Government will start this line, and whether those large agricultural areas I have referred to are to be settled or not, or to remain idle: the next witness we have is Mr. Marwick. He says there is very good country about Greenhills and South of it. Asked how far South, his answer was: "There are intermediate patches of sand plain, but as far back as I have been, to Moorambine, there is a continuation of good country, except a barren patch or two of sand plain. Twenty miles from York, at Wardering Spring, there is very good land, except a few barren patches about the Needling Hills." "Land suitable for agriculture?" he was asked. He said, "Yes; principally jam country, with patches of forest country." Then he was asked: "What quantity of good agricultural land could you get 30, 40, or 50 miles out of York?" He said: "A very large area, about Cubine and Doongin and that way, good country, as far as Toapin,—good salmon country intermixed with morrel. Towards Youndegin there is more sand-plain country. It is more patchy. The good country runs in long stretches between sand plains. At Naleeyring Spring and about Cubine, there is some very good country. To the eastward of that, about Mount Caroline, there is a good deal of grazing land, and a good deal of forest land, but mostly salmon gum and morrel."

The next witness we come to is Mr. W. M. Parker, of Mount Stirling, who said he knew the road well between York and Mount Stirling, and the quality of the land, and that he had repeatedly been beyond Mount Stirling in the direction of Southern Cross. He said he knows the whole of the road out to Yilgarn, having often guided surveyors in many ways. His evidence is before hon. members, but I will read portions of it:

"376. After you get 10 miles from York what is the description of country then, say, for 20 miles to Cubine?—I have here a list of all the farms, 44 in all, all occupied and cultivated, and good farms, lying between the river Avon and Mount Stirling.

"377. How many miles North of the proposed railway line and South of the line does that list embrace?—An average of about 10 miles on each side, starting a short distance from York to Mount Stirling.

"378. I think we might take it that any farms within (say) 15 miles of York are favored by the present railway. Take 15 miles from York as a starting point, say from the Green Hills to Mount Stirling, you do not mean to say there are 44 farms?—Oh, no; it includes the Green Hills.

"379. What is the nature of the country generally between that and Mount Stirling?—It varies; there are strips of splendid land, of what has lately come to be known to be good land,—salmon gum forest, which has been proved to be the very best land when cleared for cultivation. There are large strips of that, suitable for farms: I suppose there might be at all events 50 farms between Green Hills and Mount Stirling established upon such land as that.

"380. Is there much of it taken up now?—No, simply because it is considered too far out for carting produce.

"381. Is it principally about Cubine?—A great deal of it is. When you get beyond Cubine, four or six miles, you get to this beautiful forest ground, which runs on either side to the salt lakes. There are 20 miles of country there suitable for first-class farms, beautiful, rich, red land, free from stones, that could be cultivated at any time of the year.

"384. What extent of good land do you think there is within a radius of ten

miles, down as far as Toapin?—I should think there are 20,000 or more—30,000 acres including Toapin—which could be made into farms. I am speaking of the belt of country running across from Cubine to Mount Stirling. There are more than 100,000 acres between Green Hills and Mount Stirling.

"385. That would embrace an area of ten miles on either side of the line? —Yes. At intervals, of course, there are belts of forest country and inferior white gum and sandstone country, but no sand plain; the sand plains are all on the left.

"386. From Mount Stirling to Mindebooka—say four miles south of Cubine —how would you describe the country? —Large belts of beautiful land and strips of inferior thicket and scrub forest, and belts of good land again; but no sand plains.

"387. How far beyond Mindebooka towards Meredin does this good land extend?—Ten or twelve miles; all nice, rich forest land.

"388. Have you had much land yourself under cultivation at Mount Stirling?—Not a great deal; 60 or 70 acres. I sheep-farm.

"389. What has been your average yield in the way of wheat?—From 15 to 20 bushels.

"390. Is that an authenticated record? —Yes.

"391. What extent of wheat land do you generally cultivate?—About 50 or 60 acres of wheat and hay; just enough for my own consumption; that's all. I could have grown more, of course, if I had gone into it. There is any amount of that forest land between my homestead and the river—beautiful forest land."

This witness, I may say, handed in a list of 44 settlers that he himself knew on the proposed York line, between Greenhills and Mount Stirling. Asked by the chairman whether the list included all the farms on the Greenhills, his answer was: "Yes. There is room between these farms for twice the same number of farms. Of course when people go to a new country they take up what they consider at the time to be the best of the land, like a man picking plums out of a pudding; but, others coming after, often get as good. When the present settlers selected, they had no idea that salmon-gum country was any good, for two reasons: it was more expensive to clear, and they did not know then that when cleared it would grow grass. It has since been proved that this forest country, when cleared, is inexhaustible as a corn-producing country. That has been proved by Mr. Penny and others . . . There is no doubt as to the capabilities of this forest country, once you clear it" . . . Then he was asked this question: "Is the land South of the proposed railway route superior to the land North of the route, as a rule?" His answer was: "Yes, it is." In addition to these what I may call agricultural witnesses, we also examined Mr. Griffen, who was recently specially commissioned by the Victorian Government to assist this Government as Inspector of Surveys, and who, from the knowledge and experience he has had with land, must be regarded as a witness of some authority, and certainly an independent witness. We had him up to examine about the surveys, but the question of the land cropped up, and it is most extraordinary how exactly he confirms the evidence given by the York witnesses. It will be seen from the report that Mr. Griffen was examined as to a proposed deviation viâ Minkadine and Moranoppin, and I may say that it was in consequence of his suggestion that the select committee recommended a deviation of 15 miles, and proposed an amendment to that effect in the third clause of the bill. He told us that in the event of this deviation the line would serve a greater number of people. Then he was asked:

"423. Why should it serve more people?—Because there are a good many living round the different stations on this route—namely at Moranoppin, Milligan, Mount Caroline, and Cuttening.

"424. Do you say that the settlement is all South of the present surveyed line?—Yes, there is little or none North of it.

"425. What is the nature of the country along the surveyed route up to the 90th mile?—There is a good deal of sand plain with short patches of good country mixed. There is also a good deal of forest country—about half of the whole. The forest country is not of the best kind, but there are good patches of jam. The largest jam patch would not be more than 600 acres.

"426. Do you consider the York line a well-watered one?—I do not consider either of the lines well watered. There are occasionally rocks to be met with on both routes where water could be conserved by draining and tanking. At Cubine water can be conserved, I have no doubt, but the same can, I believe, be done at Minkadine. Between Cubine and York (about 40 miles), and also within 20 miles of Northam, I anticipate little difficulty in obtaining water. After that my remarks just made apply to both routes. Water could be conserved at Mount Caroline, where Mr. Sewell lives; also at Cuttenning (Mr. Luke's place), but the alternative line might run almost as near the latter place.

"427. After you leave Meekering, on the Northam line, where do you get water?—Much in the same way as on the York line. The first place that I know of where water might be conserved is Doongin, also about the 65-mile or the 70-mile.

"430. What in your opinion is the quality of the land on the York route?—I consider it is better than the land on the Northam route for the first 40 miles. I do not think, excepting Grass Valley, there is any country equal to Cubine and Youndegin. This is volcanic basalt country, growing jams and salmon gums; generally admitted to be good land.

"431. Have you been across the country from Moranoppin to Nalyering?—Yes, up as far as Nanganine, and from thence across to Yorkrakine.

"432. What is the general description of that belt of country?—There are small patches of good country, that is volcanic soil, timbered with jam, but generally it is mostly sand plain and useless country mixed with small patches of fertile land." That, I may say, is on the Northam line. He says that for the first 40 miles there is better land on the York line than on the other line, and not only does his evidence in this respect support the evidence of the York witnesses, it is further borne out by the fact already mentioned, that there are already 44 settlers on that line, whereas there are only four or five on the other line, when you get ten miles out of Northam,—no settlement at all, you may say, within a reasonable distance. It is also shown to be a waterless country by this fact, that when you leave Northam on the road going to Southern Cross you have to run 30 miles North, right away to close to Mangoine, because the country on the direct route is unfit for traffic and waterless."

MR. CLARKSON: I have got three good wells of water for my sheep close to the place mentioned.

MR. PARKER: The hon. member himself tells us he had to sink three wells before he could get sufficient water to water his sheep. Of course I can only deal with the evidence given before the select committee. We cannot take the *ex-parte* statements of members here. If they wanted to give evidence they ought to have come before the select committee, and submit themselves to cross-examination. This committee is bound by the facts brought before the select committee.

MR. CLARKSON: I will give you my evidence by-and-bye.

MR. PARKER: According to the evidence here there is no settlement after you get ten miles from Northam, on the proposed line, between Northam and Southern Cross, whereas on the York line we have a list of 44 settlers, which was given to the committee, though it does not appear in the report.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There are very few beyond Green Hills, on the York line; you can count them on your fingers.

MR. CLARKSON: What is 44? There are 144 beyond Toodyay and Northam.

MR. PARKER: Natives, I suppose. This statement I have made is confirmed by Mr. Griffen, who has travelled over this country, and who saw no settlement north of the line until he came to Meekering. The point I wish to impress upon the committee with regard to this evidence is this: not only do I ask the Committee to consider the probable settlers along the Great Southern line, those settlers whom the Government desire to see occupying these hundreds of thousands of acres which they have set apart for settlement; not only do I ask the Committee to consider the settlers of the Eastern Districts, right away North and South, and to treat them fairly, rather than play into the hands and consider alone the importer from abroad. I also ask the House to consider this: whether, when you build a line of rail-

way the first object of which certainly is to serve the goldfields, but whether also you cannot at the same time run the line through agricultural country where a large number of farmers may settle down and become prosperous members of the community, and produce something that will feed this railway and also feed the large number of consumers we hope to see on these goldfields. I ask is it not more advisable that we should do this when we also find that a line running in that direction will actually cost less than if it were run through a lot of country which will never produce anything? Here we find that if you run this line from York, you will pass through this large number of farms at Greenhills, with room for double the number, and from there out to Cubine you have good land. There it is described by all the witnesses as first-class land, and thousands of acres of it, right away in the direction of Mount Stirling. You have the evidence of a man who has lived there for 20 years, that it is good forest land, good salmon-gum country, that will grow cereals, and that a great many farms could be established there. When you find all this good land on the York line, for some 70 miles, and on the other line soon after you leave Northam no agricultural land worth speaking of——

Mr. Clarkson: Twice as much.

Mr. PARKER: The hon. member will have an opportunity by-and-bye of making any extraordinary statements he likes, and I have no doubt the House will consider them at their proper value. I do not mind his interruptions; at the same time perhaps he will be good enough to allow me to proceed. I say when we find all this good land on the York line for a distance of 70 miles, good agricultural land that will largely help to feed this railway, and the remainder of which may be brought under cultivation and settlement, land that will provide cheap produce for the Yilgarn Goldfields, I ask the committee to pause before they throw away the great advantages of running a line through such country as that, in favor of running it through country which is mostly sand plain, and which cannot possibly at any time feed this railway or be of benefit to anyone. I am sorry that I have taken up such a considerable amount of time this evening, but I felt that it was a duty I owed to the country at large to place this matter fairly and clearly before the House. I do not think—I will leave it to the members who sat on the select committee with me to say—but I do not think I have misrepresented the evidence in any way. I think I have put it fairly before the committee, and there can be no question in the minds of anyone who considers that evidence, so far as the York line is concerned, that the preponderance of good land along that line over that on the Northam line is immense. In fact you cannot compare the two. While on the York line there is a belt of country extending to and beyond Mount Stirling, right up to Mount Caroline, available for agricultural purposes; on the other line you have, comparatively speaking, a sand plain,—not only according to Mr. Griffen's evidence, and that of the other witnesses, but also confirmed by the fact that there is no settlement on the line at all. It is obvious—it is perfectly plain—that this sand-plain country decreases in extent as you get South, and the country improves. These sand plains, apparently, extend more to the North.

Mr. Clarkson: Just the opposite.

Mr. PARKER: I have mentioned 70 miles beyond York, because, I imagine, that beyond that distance agriculture would not pay, and because the rainfall is not sufficient to enable the farmer to produce crops, so as to compete with producers living on or near to a line of railway. I am aware that crops have been produced beyond that distance, and produced at a profit; Mr. Marwick, at Yorkrakine, produced hay which he sold at a profit, because he got £30 a ton for it. But that is not a price that is going to be maintained when this railway is built; nor anything like it. I propose to amend the clause now before the Committee by moving to strike out the word "Northam" with a view to inserting other words in lieu thereof. If the Committee do not agree to that amendment, but confirm the clause as it stands in favor of Northam as the starting point, there will be no occasion for me to take any further action in the matter. On the other hand if the Committee agree to strike out "Northam," I propose then to

confer with the Government so as to have the necessary alterations made in the schedule of the bill.

MR. PIESSE: Owing to the lateness of the hour and the importance of the subject, I beg to move that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again on Monday night, 18th January.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at midnight.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 15th January, 1892.

Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PRAYERS.

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I regret, sir, to have to inform hon. members that this morning His Excellency the Administrator received a cablegram from the Secretary of State conveying the sad intelligence of the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence and Avondale, the grandson of our most gracious Majesty, and the elder son of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales. It is only one short month since Her Majesty's subjects were delighted to hear the news of the engagement of His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence. Now unfortunately the joyful intelligence then announced is destroyed by the sad news which we have received to-day. By the newspapers which reached us a week ago we had the opportunity of seeing that the whole of the British Press were unanimous in congratulating Her Majesty and their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales on the engagement. Now, perhaps even before those papers have reached some of the capitals of the Australian colonies, this sad news has preceded them by wire. I feel sure that all through Her Majesty's dominions there can be but one feeling to-day—feelings of condolence with the Royal Family in the sad loss they have sustained, and also with the lady whose bright hopes for the future have been so suddenly crushed. The death of His Royal Highness is a loss to the whole of Her Majesty's subjects. He was, we were all aware, the next in succession after his Royal father to the throne of England. Now their Royal Highnesses have but one son left. I think it is but right and proper that the members of this House, on such an occasion as this, should show their feelings of condolence and respect for the members of the Royal Family by adjourning our sitting. I therefore move that the House do now adjourn.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: It is a melancholy satisfaction to me to be able to second the motion of my honorable friend. This is not a time for words, but I hope a further opportunity will be given us of giving expression to that sense of loyal grief and deep sympathy which is felt with our Gracious Majesty the Queen and her family in the affliction they are now undergoing. It must be the proudest of all consolations to Her Majesty and her family that this news has evoked the widest, most general and universal sorrow in all parts of her wide dominions. If anything could afford her consolation in the suffering she is undergoing, it is the knowledge of this fact. But, at the present time, I feel it would be wiser and in better taste for us to reserve any further expressions of feeling on this matter for an opportunity which, I have no doubt the hon. the Colonial Secretary will afford us. I have the most melancholy satisfaction in seconding the resolution.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I may say that the Government has appointed Sunday next as a