

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 4 OCTOBER 1867

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 4 October, 1867.

The Native Police and the Aborigines at Morinish.

THE NATIVE POLICE AND THE ABORIGINES AT MORINISH.

Mr. WALSH moved—

1. That there be laid upon the table of this House a return of the correspondence which has passed between the Government and their officers, and any other persons, relative to the massacre of certain blacks at the Morinish Diggings, about the month of June last.

2. A copy of all Executive minutes on the same subject.

3. A return of the official report of the number of blacks shot on the occasion.

He was well aware that he had used strong terms in the motion, especially the word “massacre.” Probably the Government would feel it their duty—and he should, if he were in the position of a Minister—to take exception to the word, under the circumstances, seeing that they had to support the character of their officers. He had duly considered the word, and he thought it was the only one he could properly apply to the circumstances, as they had reached his ears; for he had happened to be not very far from the spot when the intelligence of the massacre was made known. He thought, too, if there had been an inquiry into the affair it would have shewn that there had been a massacre. The blacks had been most heartlessly and needlessly slaughtered, without rhyme or reason. There could have been no panic, and there was no necessity for the onslaught upon the blacks with firearms; for, irrespective of the police, the number of whites in the immediate neighborhood was some tenfold that of the blacks. To justify himself, and to shew that he was warranted in using the expression, he would quote from a description of the affair which, so far, had never been disputed, either in official form or otherwise. The writer styled himself “A Stray Reporter of the *Guardian*,” and he gave many minor particulars of his being near the spot. Thus he wrote:—

“A little before sunrise on the morning I have mentioned, I was lying awake, when I heard a regular volley fired, which at first raised my curiosity, and produced a strange sensation that all was not right. My mate, however, suggested that it might be the return of some opossum or kangaroo hunters, who had been out during the moonlight night, and I did not get up until my usual hour of rising. The first thing I heard was, that the black troopers had camped near the township”—

it was not an out-station on the frontier of the colony;—

“during the night, and had surprised the native camp, and shot a number of men, women, and children, amongst whom was a blackboy in the service of Mr. Joseph Pattison, as a stockdriver, who, being sick, had returned to his tribe for the night, that he might be under the native medical treatment of his friends. Poor Tommy, alias ‘Mr.

Pattison'—for, being a bit of a wag, he had adopted his master's name, to whom he was much attached—was a well-known character on the diggings, and his long boots, reckless riding, stentorian halloo, and good-humored face, distinguished him from all the other *boys* in the township. Tommy also had a faithfulness and devotedness to his master's service which shewed itself in many ways. Not long ago, accompanying Mr. Pattison with a mob of cattle, it was necessary to swim the swollen river Yaamba. The feat was performed without accident, and Tommy, keeping close to Mr. Pattison in the water, said with great earnestness, 'No be afraid master, me stick to you.'

That was not at all an uncommon event. It was characteristic of the aboriginal; and he (Mr. Walsh) dwelt upon it to shew that really if the blacks were capable of doing such kind and affectionate acts towards their employers, it was the duty of the House and of the Government—the duty of every Christian—irrespective of the sterner duty they had sometimes to perform, to see that the blacks were not unfairly treated.

"But to return to what I was about to tell you. On hearing that a number of blacks had been shot, I started for the camp, which was quite deserted. The first native fire I came to exhibited all the marks of a volley having been fired into those who had been passing the night around it. The clothes of men, women, and children lay on the ground, just as they had been thrown off and reclined upon during the night. Three pools of blood, two of them mixed with brain, were seen close to the fire, and a women's skirt and scanty clothing were also found soaked in blood, while, leading from the fire in several directions, traces of blood appeared, some of them as if falling from the wounded who had fled, and other two as if dead bleeding bodies had been dragged along."

Well, if that statement was true, was he not justified in applying the word massacre to the affair?

"On going to a water-hole, about ten yards off, I saw a black corpse in it, and, on the head being raised, I recognised it to be Tommy."

He (Mr. Walsh) really thought that Tommy was murdered, under the circumstances.

"There were three wounds to be seen, one through the arm, another through the chest, and the third had passed through the brain, from the temple upwards, in a slanting direction."

The poor fellow, he apprehended, had not lived very long. That night, and probably would, relieve some persons' minds of the idea that Tommy was really massacred!

"It was evident that all the shots had been fired at him from one side when in the same position, and that the shot through the skull had been received as he lay on the ground. Tommy's brother, and another boy who was wounded at the same time, assured me, last night, that they were all asleep when the first volley of balls were fired, and had no warning whatever that the troopers were upon them, until they were wakened up by being wounded. I did not see any more dead bodies at the time, but two men were afterwards

found below a log about twenty yards off; and a little further up a little girl about eight years old, was lying, shot dead, below a bush; and a little boy, who had been engaged in looking after Mr. Pattison's sheep yard, was also found dead."

Unless the whole of this was a fiction, was it not a massacre? Unless every word was false, was it not an atrocious massacre?

"A well-known gin, named Dora or Tory, was shot in the arm when sitting at the same fire, and has not yet had the bullet extracted. She, however—as well as a wounded boy in the service of Mr. Vicars, butcher—has been sent down to Rockhampton to the hospital, the inhabitants of the township having subscribed the funds necessary for doing so. It is, however, feared that the boy will die, mortification having commenced in the wounded arm. At the next fire, at which evidently only one man had been sitting, probably an old fellow, I found another pool of blood. The poor wretch seemed to have leapt about six or eight feet, when wounded, from the fire; and the ground all round bore marks of the agonies of his death-struggle—being spurred up and torn with his fingers in every direction. His body had, however, by this time been dragged into the long grass, and I did not see it, although it has been since recovered. In all, six human beings had been shot by the first volley, and about as many wounded, who are now dying in the bush. 'Blackfellows many in the bush, too much wounds, go by-and-bye,' has been again and again told me by the natives. One old man, suffering from a painful disease which nearly prevented him from hobbling along at all, tried to make his escape, and had got some distance from the camp, when a black trooper seeing him at once shot him down, mortally wounding him, although he lived in great agony until the night or morning of next day. Each day adds to the tale of horrors, and splints and bandages are as common as cast-off raiment amongst the unfortunates, and each has some story to tell of a killed or wounded friend or relative.

"So much for what I actually saw, now for what I was told, and in this I will merely confine myself to what the sub-inspector of native police said to me, who was in command of the troopers. I had heard that some Dawson blacks had murdered and mutilated a shepherd in a shocking manner, on one of Mr. Archer's stations, robbing his hut of everything they could find."

He thought he was almost justified in saying that was a fiction; and that he could appeal to the honorable member for Rockhampton, that the blacks had not done anything on any of his stations at the time—at any rate, nothing to warrant such a report being spread about.

"One of the troopers told this story, describing minutely all the details of the atrocities committed. On meeting the sub-inspector, he introduced the subject of the massacre himself—"

so it appeared that the sub-inspector must have called the affair a massacre;—

"and I asked him about the particulars of the murder. He expressed his surprise, and said that he knew of no shepherd having been murdered, and that, in obedience to instructions given him, he had followed up, by the assistance of a black tracker, two black men who had taken some

tea and sugar from a shepherd's hut. He had arrived in the township the previous night, and had camped near the Commissioner's hut, and just before daybreak he started for the black camp, ordering his troopers to load their carbines, which are double-barrelled, one barrel with blank cartridge to disperse the mob, and the other with ball cartridge to use in case they met with resistance. According to that gentleman's statement, although I must say, he only repeated what he heard (at least as I understood him), it appeared that on reaching the camp a blank volley was fired as he supposed, on which Tommy, who was killed, sprang up and shewed fight, throwing a nulla-nulla at one of the troopers, and nearly hitting him. This, he said, so enraged the troopers, that they, without his orders, delivered their second volley, shooting six of the natives."

Well, taking that statement of the sub-inspector, the native police were the aggressors. The blacks were camped near the town, doing no harm, and, if they had done anything, the police could have surrounded the camp and apprehended them quietly. He (Mr. Walsh) supposed that the police were so undisciplined, that, upon the nulla-nulla being thrown, they fired.

"He regretted, he said, that his men had shot Tommy, but he (the sub-inspector) had only done his duty. Had Tommy, he said, called out that he was Mr. Pattison's 'boy' he would have been all right; but added, the native police would be of no use unless they acted promptly, and made the blacks fear them. It was a pity, he said, that it had happened in a township so near Rockhampton, as there would be such a *blow* about it."

All he could say was, that the "blow" had been coming up a long time. He wished that some other honorable member had taken notice of this matter; it was one that he was supposed to have taken more than a proper measure of interest in.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: That he had made many enemies through it—more than any man in the country—was true.

Dr. CHALLINOR: Very likely.

Mr. WALSH: However, that must not make him fear to do his duty. The sub-inspector continued:

"—had it been in the bush it would never have been heard of. As to the hunt that followed the two volleys, in which blacks, gins, picaninnies, and dogs, were shot as a recreation, he said nothing—probably he knew nothing, for he believed his men were out *seeking their horses*, which they had left some distance from the township the previous night."

That, he (Mr. Walsh) believed, was the real version—that the men were out looking for their horses, fell in with the blacks, and, as a matter of course, fired on them.

"The universal feeling is one of disgust and regret, and the treatment of the black population by those in authority is freely canvassed. The *Christian institution* of the native mounted police is much discussed, and a spirit has been

called up which will not easily be laid. Confidence in personal safety is gone, and it is feared that retaliation will follow, for what can the white man expect, when he follows the example of the savage, and tries to cope with them on their own terms."

He trusted that the Government would give the House a full return to the motion, and that there were sufficient members in the House, now, who would insist that, in future, the blacks should be treated with something like justice—with a little more fairness—and as though they were being dealt with by Christians instead of savages.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there could be no doubt whatever that the honorable member for Maryborough had a perfect right to ask for those returns, or to pursue his monomania on the subject to extreme measures—to any extent he thought fit. That honorable member would have done well had he waited until the information he asked for had been supplied, before giving his opinion on the matter, instead of trusting to the account given by an anonymous correspondent to a newspaper—a man who was not even brave enough to sign his name to what he wrote. Those anonymous correspondents should always be looked upon with suspicion, if not contempt. If a man had a charge to make, he should give his name. He (the Colonial Secretary) would not, under any circumstances, pay any attention to anonymous remarks in the newspapers. The honorable member went too far in saying that a massacre had taken place. He was not there as an apologist, and he was not going to screen the officer commanding the black troopers on that occasion; but he could not think that any massacre had either been intended or carried into execution, in the true sense of the word. An error of judgment had been committed. It appeared that the officer had commanded his men to load one barrel with blank and one barrel with ball cartridge; the latter only to be used in case the blacks shewed fight. No doubt, some blacks had been shot. He thought the officer had acted with want of judgment, but not with cruelty. That officer had since been dismissed the service. It could not be said that those blacks were harmless, for the evening before the affray took place they had threatened a white woman with a tomahawk, and had demanded rations at several huts in a very violent manner, and had altogether behaved in a very bad way. They had been followed up by the police, and honorable members saw the result. He was not going to defend it. The blacks might have been dispersed without being shot; but it must be remembered that Tommy, one of the blacks who had been shot, was the first to shew fight. One of the policemen had been hit. He should not oppose the production of the correspondence asked for; but when honorable members applied for returns, they should, in all honor, wait until that evidence was before them,

before they made statements founded upon anonymous correspondence in newspapers.

Dr. CHALLINOR said the honorable the Colonial Secretary had stated that this was a monomania of the honorable member for Maryborough: if so, it was one that he ought to be proud of, and that the House ought to be proud of. The Minister had said, further, that honorable members ought not to take for granted an anonymous report. Well, he (Dr. Challinor) must say that he gave full credence to the report—alone, it was a *prima facie* case—and it was corroborated by his own experience of evidence taken from witnesses on oath, which had been published through the press. He had seen a child that was shot—not materially injured—in the affray at Fassifern. He knew, also, that decrepid old men—in particular an old man, blind of one eye—had been shot ruthlessly down. He had corroboration of that from the sworn testimony of white men, and his own observation. He knew, also, that a very quiet blackfellow and a gin had been shot at Dugandan; and, as to the character of the blackfellow who was shot there, the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. G. Thorn, could testify. He had, also, in his possession a bullet which was lodged in a blackfellow on one of those occasions. It was all very well for honorable members to laugh, but it would have been no laughing matter if they had been the subjects of assault. He had attended that blackfellow in the bush for weeks for the hospital. The patient was supplied with rations on public account. It was pitiable to see the emaciation of that man before he was cured of his wound. In point of fact, the limb mortified. Anyone who wanted to know the way in which blackfellows were “dispersed” should refer to the evidence taken, on oath, before himself at coroners’ inquests, and to the evidence given by Lieutenant Wheeler before a select committee of the Assembly. When he asked for the report made by the officer named, the honorable the Attorney-General declined to bring it forward, because it might tend to criminate on self-evidence; and the honorable and learned gentleman had said that when an officer was called upon by the superior head of his department to report on a case, he was bound to report truthfully, and he should not be placed in a position, by the production of that report, that he would not occupy at the bar of the criminal court. That shewed that there was evidence which would criminate the officer in charge of the native police. With regard to the instructions to fire blank cartridge, there was no evidence before the House except the statement of the officer in charge, as given in the newspaper report. Suppose that it was truthful, it did not disprove the charge. He (Dr. Challinor) could mention a matter that had occurred within his experience. At a volunteer funeral, at Ipswich, the officer in charge of the burial

party gave an order that his men should fire blank cartridge; but it was known beforehand that they intended to fire with ball cartridge. He strongly reprimanded that officer, and told him that if a similar thing occurred again he would report him at head-quarters. There had been no attempt to shew that anything more than larceny had been committed by the blacks—nothing more than a theft—they were, at the time, in the neighborhood of a considerable number of white men, enough to have surrounded the blacks and secured them as prisoners, when they could have been dealt with according to law. The honorable the Colonial Secretary palliated—he (Dr. Challinor) would not say justified—the dispersion of the blacks. The native troopers were not, however, justified in firing blank cartridge upon the camp. How were the blacks to know it was blank cartridge? It was unreasonable to suppose that they would not rise up in self-defence; but, because they had done so, they had been fired on with ball. He believed, if the honorable the Colonial Secretary was fired at with blank cartridge, without knowing it, he would shew fight, and he would feel perfectly justified in sending a nulla-nulla at the head of his assailant. Let the fact be admitted that the blacks had committed larceny—that they had robbed a hut—was that an excuse for dispersing and killing them? What was good for the black man was good for the white man. Honorable members knew that not long ago certain places in Toowoomba were bailed up by white men, who all supplied themselves with grog. But what would the country have thought if the police had been sent out to disperse them with blank cartridge, and, if the men did not go away and attempted to defend themselves, to fire on them with ball cartridge? Let the House deal justly and fairly with the blacks. The law was such, that it would not allow their testimony to be taken in a court of law. Therefore, the Government ought to be most careful with regard to their protection, so that no abuse of power should make them suffer unnecessarily or unjustly. The report of the officer in charge at Morinish might be perfectly correct; but still it was an *ex parte* statement. The blacks were unable to disprove it by law, if it was not correct. The honorable the Colonial Secretary had said that the honorable member for Maryborough ought not to have gone into particulars before demanding the returns. Well, honorable members were very frequently told, and it had been said to himself, that no sufficient ground was shewn for the production of papers asked for—that it was not right to put the country to the expense of clerical labor or printing, without cause shewn—to use an expression employed only last night. It was well known that the honorable member for Maryborough and himself (Dr. Challinor) thought alike on the black question,

If it was a weakness, or if more than a weakness, which caused them to be charged with monomania, then he was very glad to share in the reproach that had been cast upon the honorable member for his part in the matter before the House. If the fullest investigation was not made into it, it would stamp, not only the native police force, not only the Government, but the House, with reproach.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS observed that a great deal of credit was due to the honorable member for Maryborough for bringing the matter before the House, and he confessed that there was some credit due to the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, also. No honorable member was more ready than himself to condemn an indiscriminate slaughter of the blacks; but, at the same time, he could not fail to observe, that while the honorable member for Ipswich referred to the blacks having been slaughtered at Fassifern, and other parts of the colony, and condemned the great cruelties perpetrated upon them by Europeans, he had failed to notice the atrocities of the blacks—the murder of the Wills family, the Dawson murder, and the brutal murder of Fanny Briggs at Rockhampton. Those were all cases which the honorable member ought to have named. There was no one in the House who knew better than the honorable member how to screen the beastly atrocities committed by the blacks. He remembered having seen on the Mackenzie River the body of a murdered man, who had only been about six months in the country, had scarcely seen a black before, and had never provoked them. This man had been employed on a sheep station; and when he went out with his sheep, the blacks watched him, and killed him; and they did so for no other reason except to take his wife and children into the bush. He was well acquainted with the circumstance, as he had been sent for to hold a magisterial inquiry into the case; and he saw the man buried. He had no doubt that something very wrong had taken place, as the honorable member for Maryborough had stated, on the Morinish; but he believed it had arisen from an indiscretion on the part of the officer in charge, who had lost all command over the troopers at the time. He had for a long time been of opinion that there was something radically wrong in the native police force. He had had a great deal of experience among the blacks in New South Wales, as well as here; and he fancied that, if the officers of that force would exert themselves to get the blacks to go more among the stations, they might teach them to distinguish between right and wrong, and the blacks would not congregate in such large numbers, and be so effective for mischief as they were now. If they were scattered among the stations, they would be more under the command of the police, and, when they committed offences, would be more easily pursued than when they collected in the scrubs and ranges,

where they could easily conceal themselves. No doubt, if the Government made some effort in that direction, good would come of it. He knew in some—in nearly all—places in the north, the blacks would not go into stations; and the consequence was, that they took every opportunity of committing murder, and stealing sheep and cattle. He should be very glad to see the Government take some step in that direction, and see if they could not get some educated men to try and bring about a better understanding with the blacks; it would be much better than being always at war with them.

Mr. STEPHENS said it seemed to be admitted that a number of, or at least some, blacks had been collected on the occasion referred to. It was also pretty clear, from statements on both sides of the House, that there was no distinct charge against the very persons who were killed, though there might have been against some others. It had also been proved that the native police were the aggressors. The affair occurred in the vicinity of a township, and there were persons sleeping within hearing of the scene of the massacre. Well, if such an affair occurred near a township on this occasion, what reason was there to suppose that such occurrences did not take place in other places—in every place, in fact, where police were stationed. The honorable member for Clermont had stated that the officer in charge was guilty of an indiscretion; but he had not said whether that indiscretion consisted in shooting the blacks, or in doing so where the shots could be heard. That appeared to be the principle hitherto laid down in the House, and, therefore, he thought "massacre" was the proper term to use. Those unfortunate persons had not been killed under any legal authority; in fact, it was well known that there was no law for it at all. If the troopers had been disbanded, the same act would have been murder; but, as there was some sort of authority for them, the honorable member had used the term "massacre" instead of "murder." He did not see how such occurrences could be avoided as long as the native police force was maintained in its present form; for, although they had no law to authorise them to put blacks to death, what was the course pursued? A blackfellow was not allowed to give evidence in a court of law, and provision was made that only one white person could be present at these scenes. The consequence was, that the force, maintained at the expense of the country, in its present organization, was simply a force of extermination. Half a dozen native troopers were taken out, arms were put into their hands, and they were led out at dark, when everyone was quietly asleep, and allowed to fire volleys into a number of unoffending blacks. Yet, in consequence of the constitution of the force, no evidence of this massacre could be brought against it. That was a system which the House had deliber-

ately adopted, in sending half a dozen savages with only one man to command them; and until that system was altered, and other white men could be summoned to give evidence, so as to prove these outrages, there would be no remedy. As the matter stood, they knew that certain blacks had been killed; but there was no evidence to prove it, and no means of punishing the offenders. The honorable member for Clermont had alluded to other murders committed by the blacks. He did not know what his object was; it could not be to prove that two blacks made a white, or to make the murders less revolting. He thought a far more effectual mode of protecting the settlers might be adopted than merely providing a small force of extermination.

Mr. G. THORN said he could bear out the honorable member for Ipswich in his remarks on the massacre or murder at the Dungandan Scrub. In that case the blacks had been employed on the station and had committed no depredations in that district; they were employed eleven months out of the twelve on the station. In that case, as well as on the Morinish, he believed they had been wantonly shot down, and he strongly recommended the Government to make some alteration in the Act. On the broad ground of humanity alone, if on no other, the blacks ought not to be shot at and destroyed as they had been. He might also observe that the very day of the Dungandan massacre, some quiet blacks were shot at in that district by some police from Dalby, and his brother, the member for the Northern Downs, had the greatest difficulty in preventing the other blacks from killing all the white people on his station. The man who was now in charge of the same station was a new man, who knew nothing about the blacks, and he should not be surprised any day to hear that some murder had taken place there. He indorsed all that had been said by the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor; and he believed the blackfellow Tommy had been fully justified in rising in self-defence.

Mr. FRANCIS said he should have preferred to see the whole question of the native police of this colony, and the treatment of the blacks, brought under the notice of the House in some more definite shape. He had the strongest objection to the continuance of that force, and no member in that House could go further than he would in denouncing the murders which were said to have taken place. But he must say that the position taken up by the honorable the Colonial Secretary appeared to him quite unanswerable, that no one had a right to say that a massacre had taken place until he was in possession of evidence to prove it. He believed, as a matter of opinion, that the account—the horrible account—which had been read to the House by the honorable member for Rockhampton, was true; but he did not think the House was in a position to take action in the

matter until the evidence now asked for had been placed before it. He would suggest to the honorable member that he did not strengthen his case by discussing the subject before that evidence was produced. He might say that he felt deeply indebted to the honorable member for the course he had taken; and if the honorable member had made enemies before by shewing sympathy with the blacks, he (Mr. Francis) only hoped he might also make such enemies; though he must say he did not see that any enmity could be caused by shewing a proper regard for the interests of that race.

Mr. MYLNE said he believed that in almost every case where a slaughter among the blacks had taken place, it had been attributable to the inefficiency of the officers in charge of the police. He had met many of them who were totally unfit for their position; and he was convinced that until men were found who would make it a profession, and study the character of the blacks, the duty would never be properly performed. One of the very first principles in dealing with the aboriginals was not to intimidate them, and the firing of blank cartridge had the effect of inciting them to resistance—in fact, a blackfellow was justified in resenting such an act. No officer who was up to his duty would have adopted such a course.

Mr. ARCHER said the honorable member who had spoken last had pointed out the real cause—the inefficiency of the officers. Most of the massacres had occurred because the officers were not efficient men. The honorable member for Maryborough had referred to him personally, and had asked whether it was true that shepherds had been killed by the blacks on his station. The fact was, that robberies of the shepherds' huts had frequently taken place, but no violence had been offered to the shepherds. Still, those robberies had been very frequent, and the annoyance had been so great that it was found difficult to keep the men at the stations. At the time he spoke of, there was a gentleman in charge of the native police force in that district who would be a credit to any force—Mr. George Murray—and he (Mr. Archer) was in the habit of sending to that officer at any time when the blacks had been especially troublesome. And that gentleman could always easily disperse the blacks without shooting any of them—he knew better than to do so. But he had been removed to Springsure, and a new man, a very inefficient officer—a frightfully excitable Frenchman—had been placed in charge. Unwittingly, he (Mr. Archer) had sent to him upon one occasion, in reference to some robberies which had been committed at some of the stations, and asked him to send the blacks away. He had done so without the slightest hesitation, not for a moment anticipating any other result than that which had ensued from previous applications of a similar kind; for the blacks, although they

came about the stations, and were sometimes troublesome, never injured anyone, and all that he required was the protection which the native police had been accustomed to afford. He had, therefore, sent to the officer as usual, and shortly afterwards, to his horror and disgust, he had heard the particulars of the outrage which had been mentioned. He believed that every one of these occurrences arose out of the inefficiency of the native police officers. Had Mr. Murray remained in charge, he was convinced that not only would no death have taken place, but no shot would have been fired. There was a great difference in the character and efficiency of those officers. Some of them were men who were fit to command an army, while others were scarcely fit to hold a musket; and until some better selection was made, these affairs would continually occur. There was one mistake, however, which he must point out, viz., that all these outrages were caused by the native police force. Now, he did not hesitate to say that there would be more blacks killed if the force were done away with. He was convinced that he was right, and probably his experience, or at any rate, that of his family, was quite as great as that of the honorable member for Maryborough. At any rate, they had always been very successful in their treatment of the blacks, and it was their opinion that, if the native police were taken away, the settlers would take the matter into their own hands, and a worse state of things would ensue. He thought, therefore, it would be better not to abolish the force, but to take steps to make it effective and to put it in better order. The honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, had spoken of the way in which the blacks were dispersed. It was particularly true that some officers had a habit of dispersing them in the way the honorable member had mentioned; but, on the other hand, he knew many officers who would no more think of injuring a black when dispersing them than he would a white man. If officers of that sort were appointed, these occurrences would never take place; but it would never do to have the force abolished. He believed that had been the intention of the Government, but they had committed a great mistake, and if such a plan were carried out, it would be found that a number of stations which had been taken up in the north would have to be abandoned. He did not mean to say, if it were to the interest of the country, the sacrifice of a few stations should interfere with such a step; but he must say that the Government should not have held out inducements to people to take up country in the far north, if they intended to take away the protection which was one of the principal inducements. He had no intention to speak further on the subject, but the honorable member for Maryborough having asked him a certain question, he had stated shortly what he

believed to be the cause of these unfortunate occurrences.

Mr. SANDEMAN said he could not allow the subject to pass without confirming almost every syllable that had fallen from the honorable member for Rockhampton. Being an old resident in the colony, and having had considerable experience among the blacks in the earlier times, he might, perhaps, be entitled to give an opinion on the subject. He felt as certain as he was of his existence, that if the native police force were abolished, a far greater amount of outrage would take place than had ever been heard of since its establishment. He believed that the inefficiency of the force was entirely attributable to its bad management, and to the class of men appointed as officers. It had been for some time a bye-word, that the native police force of this colony was a refuge for the destitute, and that young men without experience of any kind were considered quite good enough for such a force. Yet there was no department under the Government which required men of greater judgment and experience, and it was not right to argue, from the abuse of the force which had taken place, that there was no necessity for it. He could quite enter into the feeling of humanity which had induced the honorable member for Maryborough to bring the subject under the notice of the House. He was aware that the honorable member had always held peculiar views on that question, and was of opinion that white troopers would be found equally serviceable; but he believed that if the opinions of experienced men were taken throughout the country, the honorable member would be found greatly in the minority. Every practical man would testify to the impossibility of keeping the blacks in check by means of a purely white force. The object of the force was not aggressive—they should be employed if properly managed rather for the prevention than the punishment of outrages. The honorable member for Clermont had stated, in answer to the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, that that honorable member seemed to have a greater feeling for the poor blacks than for his own countrymen. He (Mr. Sandeman) did not go as far as that, but he must say that the remarks of that honorable member did bear a very one-sided inference. The honorable member for Clermont had also alluded to several glaring outrages by the blacks. Now, he (Mr. Sandeman) happened to have been in the neighborhood, within a few miles of the place, immediately after the Wills massacre took place. It had been given out that the whites were the aggressors in that instance, but he was in a position to prove that that was not the case. The late Mr. Wills was known to be a man who erred rather on the side of kindly feeling, and if he had been a little more strict in his arrangements in forming a new station, the outrage in question would never have taken place. It was because of his kindly leanings towards

the blacks that precautionary measures were not adopted. The savages were encouraged, and it was by a pre-concerted arrangement among them that the attack was made. That was clear from the fact that every person on the station fell at a given signal. That was proved afterwards at the inquiry which took place. The bullock-driver fell at the side of his bullocks; the cook was knocked down at his fire; and Mr. Wills himself, who slept in a tent, suddenly awoke and was rushing out when he was struck down at the threshold. He mentioned that case because it was a very strong one, as shewing the treacherous nature of the blacks in their savage state; and he could vouch for the facts he had mentioned. It was not right to take a one-sided view of the subject, and he would urge that, from motives of humanity, it was desirable to make every effort to increase the efficiency of the force, rather than to abolish it.

Mr. MILES said he did not rise to defend the action taken by the native police in the case brought under the notice of the House by the honorable member for Maryborough; but, he thought it would have been better if that honorable member had simply asked for the correspondence relating to it, and had afterwards formally brought forward a motion on the subject. The honorable member had pursued an unprecedented course. Honorable members were asked to debate a question upon which they had no evidence whatever, and their time was taken up without any good result. He believed he might lay claim to have had as long an experience of the native police force as the honorable member for Maryborough. He had known that force not only in this, but in the neighboring colony, and he could state, without the slightest fear of contradiction, that if it were abolished there would be nothing more or less than a war of extermination. He particularly wished to impress that upon honorable members, especially those who were residents in the town and could have had no experience among the blacks. He had been on the frontiers for twenty-five or twenty-six years, and had been constantly in contact with the blacks. He had had to contend with them before any native police force was established, and, as far as his experience went, he was perfectly convinced that wherever the settlers were left to defend themselves a war of extermination would ensue. The honorable member was aware that there were certain periods of the year, such as the lambing and shearing seasons, when every man must be at his post; and, if the blacks came down, and a shepherd was killed, of course every man would help his neighbor, and it was not likely the blacks would be treated very leniently by them. The native police were in a different position altogether; their object when an outrage had been committed was to find out who were the guilty parties, and to punish them, and no others,

Mr. WALSH: They never did.

Mr. MILES: The honorable member said they never did, but that was a sort of mania with the honorable member; he believed he was diseased to a certain extent on that subject. The honorable member for South Brisbane had called the force an illegal one. He believed it was the case, but the question was, whether it was better to continue such a force, or to bring about a war of extermination. There could be no doubt that would be the result of abolishing the force. He believed that, during the three or four years he had resided on the Dawson, he had assisted to bury upwards of thirty bodies of white men who had been killed by the blacks. In many cases, those men were murdered when out with their flocks, and there were no witnesses to prove the murders. The honorable and gallant member for Ipswich had informed the House that the evidence of a black could not be received, and the honorable member for South Brisbane had pointed out that when blacks were shot by the native police, there was no evidence of the fact, because only one white man accompanied the troopers. But he would ask what evidence could be brought against the black who murdered those shepherds. He had known the blacks to watch a man day after day until they had an opportunity of murdering him, when there was no possibility of proving who perpetrated the deed. The honorable member for South Brisbane had also stated that, in the case on the Morinish, the police had pounced upon the blacks before daylight; but he could remember instances where the blacks had pounced upon white people in the same way. He need only cite the Hornet Bank massacre, and a more shocking outrage he had never heard of. At that affair there were altogether eleven, including men, women, and children, killed by the savages. He supposed that no more barbarous murders were ever committed. All the females, and even children of five or six years old, were violated in a most horrible manner; their legs and arms were broken—in fact, he had never witnessed such revolting barbarities. The honorable member for Ipswich could never refer to any outrage like that committed upon blacks. He would strongly recommend honorable members to be very careful in dealing with this question. He thought it would be well to bring the subject before the House in a proper form, after the correspondence had been produced. He must again warn honorable members that it would be very dangerous to abolish the force. If they had in some instances committed cruelties, they had prevented hundreds and hundreds of white persons from being murdered. Allusions had been made to the officers who commanded the force. He believed there was room for great reformation there. He had not had an opportunity lately of forming an opinion of them, but his previous experience of those gentlemen led him to form the opinion that nine out of every ten

ought never to have been appointed, for they were men without judgment or discretion; and, to put it in a mild form, the force was a refuge for the destitute. Besides, the constant association with black troopers tended to demoralise the officers; and, if it could be done, he should very much like to see some other force organised to protect the settlers. He had no doubt it might be done, though it would, no doubt, be more costly. He believed, however, that a white force would be quite capable of affording the requisite protection; that would, however, be a question which would require consideration. He had great objection to the force as at present constituted. As it was an illegal force, he did not think honorable members had any right to vote in support of it. He doubted whether the House could legalise it. For his part, he had had a great deal of experience among the blacks, and should never be afraid, with four white men, to protect a very large frontier. The blacks were great cowards, and whatever they did they did by stealth; and he had no hesitation in saying that a force of six white men would be quite as effective as double that number of black troopers. He had been out with the native police on several occasions, and had actually seen them shake and tremble, and afraid to fire their carbines. They were unmistakable cowards, and he would sooner take three white men with him than a dozen of them. The best quality was their power of tracking; they were undeniably good trackers. But they were great cowards; at least, that was his opinion. However, the House should, he thought, deal with the question in one way or the other; and he could only assure the Government that if the present force were abolished, some other would have to be substituted. He should otherwise vote against doing away with the force; because he believed it would be the grossest act of injustice towards the blacks themselves, and because the force prevented many depredations, and prevention was better than cure.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he felt very strongly on the question, and it was one in which he had had some little experience. He strongly indorsed every word that had been said by the honorable member for Leichhardt in relation to the Wills massacre. He happened to have been the last person who met that party going out. He was then coming down from Peak Downs, and had had great difficulty in keeping his own party from a similar fate at the hands of about eighty blacks who were endeavoring to cut them off. He had therefore felt it his duty to see Mr. Wills, and to tell him to arm his men. He was then within twenty miles of the spot where the massacre took place. The question was a very difficult one to deal with, though it might not seem so when looked at from a Brisbane or Ipswich point of view. He had lately been reading a work by a Mr. Hepworth Dixon, which contained

his journal of a trip from New York to the Mormon country. The writer there shewed the difference between those who slept quietly in their beds, and those who laid down to sleep with the feeling that the bark of their dogs was a warning that the Indians were surrounding them. He had been many and many a time in a similar position. The honorable member had stated that on some occasions he had known the blacks refuse to fire, and that they were liable to sudden fear, and would run away. Now, he could inform the House that, in his own experience, he had found the reverse to be the case. On one occasion he was travelling with bullocks, and when passing the scene of a former massacre, twelve white men who were with him were seized with sudden fear and deserted him, and the blacks alone remained with him. The whites, he believed, had been talking amongst themselves before that about the massacre of the Wills', and it was to that circumstance he attributed their being seized with a panic. He mentioned that as an evidence that whites as well as blacks were subject to panic—even the most gallant men, as was shewn in the case of the 14th Light Dragoons, at Chillianwallah, to which the honorable and gallant member for the Warrego, from his subsequent service in India, could testify. There must, of course, be a patrolling force of some kind for the protection of the settlers in the interior, but he thought that such a force should consist principally of whites, with a black tracker or two attached to every party. He was certain that such a force would not be more costly to the country than the present native police force was. One of the greatest blots in the history of this country, would be the manner in which they had treated the natives; and, in that respect, Queensland had more to answer for than New South Wales. A short time ago he was at Maryborough, when there were about a thousand blacks assembled. They had been called together two or three weeks previously, to receive blankets from the Government. Among that large number about fifty blankets were distributed, and those were such rubbish that one could very easily push his finger through them. In New South Wales, such a thing had never happened. There, the practice had been to give a shirt, pair of trousers, and a blanket, to every blackfellow. The distribution at Maryborough took place in the centre of the town, instead of five miles away from it; and the result was, that three or four of the most intelligent of the blacks broke into public-houses, and stole bottles of spirits; and he was sorry to say that he was one of the magistrates who sentenced one blackfellow to a long period of imprisonment, for an outrage of that description.

DR. CHALLINOR: Served him right.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No doubt, it served him right; but he would ask

the honorable member if a thousand white men had been assembled together under similar false pretences, would not more crime have taken place?

Mr. PUGH said he did not expect there would have been so long a discussion upon the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough; but the discussion, he thought, would not be without some benefit. The honorable member for the Maranoa had stated that town members took a very different view of those matters from what country members did; but he could tell the honorable member that since his arrival in the colony his vocation had brought him to be very much acquainted with the condition and habits of the blacks. He believed that the honorable member for the Leichhardt, when he was a member of the New South Wales Legislature, had a committee of inquiry with respect to the native police, and he believed that that inquiry was attended with very beneficial results. It appeared to him that the longer the force existed the worse it became; but he believed that, to a very great extent, the evils complained of arose from the force being badly officered. The only law that was known to the blacks was the *lex talionis*; and, as experience sadly proved, that principle had been frequently carried out. If atrocities were committed upon blacks, they took their revenge indiscriminately upon any whites that came in their way. He was sorry to hear the speech of the honorable the Colonial Secretary; for, though admitting that there was some force in what he said, and that the honorable member for Maryborough might have procured the papers, and then founded a motion upon them, yet sufficient had gone forth through the public press to warrant, in his opinion, the term that had been applied to the affair at the Morinish by the honorable member for Maryborough. He did not suppose that the honorable the Colonial Secretary would be apologetic for anything of the kind; but still he must say that the speech of the honorable gentleman appeared to him to be somewhat apologetic in respect to this matter. The honorable member for South Brisbane put this matter in its proper light when he designated it as part of a system of legal murder. Those black police were dressed up in troopers' uniform, and under the charge of white officers were sent roaming over the country to punish the blacks as they thought fit, and were wholly without any responsibility. The blacks were not allowed to give evidence in any court of justice against a white man; they knew nothing of the laws of civilised life; and yet they were held amenable to the law if they committed any crime. He fully admitted that the Government were placed in considerable difficulty in respect to such a question as the one now before the House; for they had wholly to rely upon the report of the officers by whom an affair of this kind

was committed; and upon those reports they had to base their conclusions. Now, he would ask honorable members if they could expect an officer to send in a report condemnatory of himself. Allusion had been made to the massacre of the Wills family. He did not know but that very massacre arose out of some atrocity committed upon the blacks by a party of whites. At any rate, it was said at the time that such was the case. As to the Hornet Bank murder, most honorable members knew the report that attached to that unfortunate affair, and what had since happened to one of the members of the family. The honorable the Minister for Lands alluded in his speech to a matter which the House ought to take up, and that was the matter of the distribution of blankets. The yearly distribution of blankets to the aborigines was not only a mere farce, but it was a disgrace to the colony. The quality of the blankets was getting worse and worse every year; and the blankets that were last distributed were nothing but mere shoddy. One shower of rain would make them all go to pieces. The blankets ought to be sent up to the places where they were to be distributed, at a much earlier period of the year than had been the custom, and the distribution should take place earlier; and magistrates might be empowered, when blankets were either not sent up in time, or when mere rubbish was sent up, to purchase suitable blankets in the district. The suggestion made by the honorable member for the Maranoa was one which he thought was worthy of the consideration of the House; and though he had no hope of the House being able to deal with the subject this session, he hoped, either by means of a select committee, or by a Bill, the House would next session be able to wipe off the disgrace that attached to the colony, of keeping up a force of legal murderers.

Mr. CLARK said he had noticed what he considered to be a most singular feature in the debate, and that was that almost every honorable member who had spoken seemed to have an utter detestation of those murders, or massacres, as they had been called; and yet they had used, he would not say opprobrious language towards those who had brought forward or supported the motion, but they had spoken of the honorable member for Maryborough, and the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, as gentlemen holding peculiar views; and had said that those gentlemen were philanthropic in their views. Now, he did not think that those honorable members should be called philanthropic for bringing this matter before the House. They should rather be glad than otherwise that those honorable members had brought this question before them. There could be no doubt that such atrocities as had been described were committed; and they ought to be inquired into. He had been told that a discussion of this sort took place every year in the House, and that it always took

place on a Friday. Perhaps that was why nothing ever came of the discussions. But, if such discussions had taken place every year, it was a disgrace that nothing had ever been done. He knew something of the blacks himself, though he could not say that he knew much about the native police force, but he had had several conversations with those who did know something about them and their doings. From what he had heard about the force in that way, he believed that the most sensible speech that had been addressed to the House in the course of the present discussion was the speech of the honorable member for the Maranoa. That honorable member lived in one of the outside districts, and had had considerable experience in dealing with the blacks; and it was, therefore, by such counsel as his that the House should be guided. He agreed in the opinion that the native police force, as at present organised, should be done away with; but then they must have some other force in its place for the protection of outside settlers. If they had not had the native police force, there would have been greater murders than had been committed. On the other hand, if the blacks were not protected in some way, the whites would just shoot them down as they used to do. The honorable member for the Maranoa made a very sensible remark when he said that the officers of the native police became utterly demoralised from their constant association with the blacks. But he would himself go further than that, and say he believed they really came to have a liking to shed blood. No man, he believed, could be long in charge of a party of black troopers—barbarians as they were—and continue to have an aversion for their practices. It had been said that, in the course of time, a butcher came to like the smell of blood, and delighted in the killing of a beast. Now, he questioned whether something of the same kind would not come to be the case with white men, as regarded the blacks, if they were put in the way of it. He must say he thought it was a great mistake to let one man take a troop of savages into the bush and do as he liked with them. As to the massacre, as it had been called, at the Morinish, they would have to take the word of the officer for what he did. The honorable the Colonial Secretary very properly said, that they should not have had any opinions in the matter expressed till the evidence moved for by the honorable member for Maryborough had been laid upon the table of the House. No doubt that was quite right. But when they got the evidence, what would it be? It would be the evidence of one man—of the officer in charge of the troopers. Now, he was quite as prepared to take the evidence of the correspondent of a newspaper, and of common report, as the evidence of the officer in charge. At the same time, he thought it was unwise to discuss the matter before the House at present. They should have the evidence before discussing

the question. But he was glad the discussion had taken place, because it would let honorable members, and the country, see that something would have to be done in the matter of re-organising the native police force. He hoped the Government would take some steps to deal with this matter—he did not say hasty steps to do away with the native police force altogether, and organise another in its place—but to see if something could not be done to prevent any more of those atrocities they had heard so much about.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it might be some satisfaction to the House to know that the amount placed on the Estimates this year for the payment of the officers of the native police had been reduced by nearly one half, and that a careful scrutiny would be made into the conduct of the officers to be dismissed. By culling the officers carefully in that way, it was hoped that the force would be much improved. No man had heard him speak favorably of the native police. It was as a necessity he had always regarded them.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he believed that the maintenance of the native police force had never been justified upon any other ground than that of necessity. Discussions had taken place upon this question almost every session without any result; but it was almost a certainty that this session an end would be put to the force altogether. The discussion that had taken place upon this motion would pave the way for the consideration of the votes on the Estimates for the native police. He believed this force had been stigmatised as an illegal force, and he agreed that it was of such a character. The validity of the force was backed up by what were fictitious warrants. The native police were supposed to put in force, in a legal form, warrants which had no legal force whatever. It would be far better to place those districts where it was necessary to maintain the native police under martial law, than maintain them under the fiction of a legal force. The effect upon the men themselves, and upon the districts where the native police patrolled, was most demoralising; and he thought that, looked at in the light of morals alone, the assumed benefit conferred on a district by the patrolling of these bodies of men, was not to be compared with the lowering and degrading influences which inevitably resulted from the association of these policemen with the inhabitants of the district. He perfectly agreed with those honorable members who had stated that some mode of protection was necessary for the inhabitants in the outside districts. In a country like this where an aboriginal and barbarous race had to give way to a civilized race, atrocities must occur on one side or the other at times; but efforts should be made to lessen the effect of contact between them as much as possible; and to try and prolong the existence of the aborigines as long as Providence saw fit to let them

remain here; but they could not expect to avoid altogether coming into collision with them. When the force was first organised, it was under the management of Mr. Frederick Walker, a man of firmness and determination, but also of humane feelings, who understood the habits of the aborigines, and never unnecessarily exercised the power confided in him. Both Mr. John and Mr. George Murray, who had been commandants in the force, were also men of intelligence and humanity, and understood the habits of the blacks, and never abused their power. What had ruined the force was the drafting into it of a class of young men who had no real knowledge of the country or the blacks—reckless adventurers, up to any mischief, and who, once they had a few savages under their command, were willing to commit any atrocity. It was such young men who had been the ruin of the force. Now, in dealing with the matter practically, he would ask in what district was it necessary to keep up this native police force? Was it necessary to maintain it in the Maranoa or Warrego districts?

MR. MYLNE: Yes. I am positive of it.

MR. DOUGLAS: Well it might be necessary to have a police force there with one or two black trackers; but that a native police force was required was more than he was prepared to admit.

MR. MILES: He never said that a native police force was necessary in the Maranoa. What he said as to the force, which was far beyond him now, was that he was in a position to speak to the efficiency of the officers.

MR. DOUGLAS: He did not say that the honorable member had said so. He was only questioning as to the necessity for a native police force in the Maranoa District. Now, so far as he was informed, and from what he knew of the interior, he did not think that such a force was necessary in the Warrego either. A party of whites with two or three black trackers would, he believed, be preferable. Then again, as to the Dawson, which was the scene of some great outrages by the blacks, though such a force might have been necessary there at one time, he did not think the necessity now any longer existed. Proceeding further north, in the Leichardt District, to the Peak Downs, the Mackenzie, and Belyando, where the honorable the Colonial Secretary was interested, the honorable gentleman, he thought would not assent that a native police force was necessary there; but that he would as soon be without any protection. Coming to the Burdekin and the Flinders districts, as those were newly settled districts it might be necessary to have native police in those districts, though in some parts of the Flinders District, he was not prepared to say that such a force was required. It was only the other day, at any rate not long ago, that a memorial was presented from the inhabitants of Bowen,

asking the Government to appoint a native protector in that district, and allow the blacks to come into Bowen. The late Government, to whom the application was made, felt that it was not desirable to comply with the memorial, as they feared that the probable result of allowing the blacks to enter Bowen would be the occurrence of collisions between them and the white population. At the same time, they informed the officer in command of the native police there, that his actions would be narrowly scrutinized, and that he had better be careful as to what he did in the way of what was called dispersing the blacks. He was also warned that, if he was found making unnecessary use of his power, he would be instantly dismissed. It seemed to him, therefore, that the question as to the necessity for a native force was removed to the case of the Burdekin. Of course, he admitted, that in other places any force that might be organised, should be accompanied by trackers. But take the Morinish. He would ask if it was necessary to maintain a native force there where there were so many white settlers?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There were none there now. There were till lately, but not now.

MR. DOUGLAS: Then as to the Cape Diggings, were they to have black troopers there?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The people there have asked for them.

MR. DOUGLAS: Well, he thought, that if a native police force was sent there they would be likely to produce more evil than good. They would go out hunting other blacks and killing them; and some unfortunate diggers would suffer the penalty of retribution. Now, in his opinion, the localities in the colony requiring such protection were limited; and even where protection was required, would it not be better to organise some system of self-protection? Settlers might organise themselves for their own protection, and it would be desirable to confer certain powers upon them for doing so. He did not think it would necessarily involve much expense. The inhabitants of a district could elect from among themselves a protector for aborigines. Such a person would enjoy the confidence of the inhabitants, and being endowed with certain powers to protect the aborigines, would also secure their confidence, though in cases of emergency he would have to act against them. At the Cape Colony, and Kafraria, there was a system of self-protection in force. Certain people in the districts had the power of calling out all the rest of the inhabitants for the protection of any particular quarter. Now, if the inroads of the blacks became so serious as to endanger the European settlers, might not powers be given to the people of any district to protect themselves in that way. He thought, therefore, that upon all those grounds—but

chiefly on the ground of the demoralising influence of the native police force, who were nothing less than human blood hounds—apart altogether from the protection of the European settlers—they should do away with that force, and employ a force in their place more in consonance with the recognised rules of law, order, and civilization.

Mr. WALSH, in reply, said that the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Francis, had objected to his having entered into the merits of this question when moving for information; but he could tell that honorable member that, so far as his experience in Parliament went, it was invariably the custom for honorable members, in moving for information, to state their reasons for doing so; and if they minced their language in any way they would be chargeable with a want of candour. An honorable member, in moving for such returns was, in reality, making insinuations; and it was, therefore, fairer to those likely to be affected by the returns being produced, to state fully and distinctly the reasons for asking for the returns. The honorable member had spoken as if this was his (Mr. Walsh's) case, for he said he would have strengthened his case if he had acted otherwise; but he could inform the honorable member that it was not his case at all; but that the case was one which lay between his fellow-countrymen and their consciences; and he hoped the case would not want strengthening by any acts of his. When he tabled the motion, he had little idea that it would have led to such a lengthened and valuable debate; but that it had done so sufficiently shewed the benefit of the question being amply opened when the motion was proposed. He entirely disagreed with the honorable member for the Leichhardt as to the necessity for a native police force. He repudiated the idea that Englishmen could not do without savages to protect them. He repudiated the idea that Englishmen had so far degenerated that they could not protect themselves without the assistance of savages. He repudiated the idea that they required, for their protection, to obtain the assistance of those whose weapons were the tomahawk and the scalping knife. If the native police force, whose conduct occasioned many of the outrages by the blacks—if they continued that force for the protection of their fellow-countrymen when a better means of protection could be given them, they would be guilty of murdering their fellow-countrymen; for there had been scores of white men whose lives had been taken in consequence of the doings of this force. Two out of every three murders committed upon the whites had been aggravated by the native police themselves. He was able to speak upon this point with confidence, because it was at his instance that the native police was first brought down here. But what had been the result? Before the native police were introduced into the Burnett District, murders

of white men were infrequent compared with what took place afterwards. He did not believe that for twelve months before the native police came down, more than six white men were killed in the Burnett District; but in a short time after, when the officers were drinking themselves to death, and the black police were demoralising the blacks of the district—and he was too well aware of the fact—twenty-one white people were murdered; but that was partly because the whites depending upon the native police were not themselves sufficiently careful to provide against attacks by the blacks. As to the massacre at Hornet Bank, it also occurred after the native police came into the district. The native police were on the ground within twenty-four hours of the massacre; and as to the murder of Mr. Wills and his people, the native police were supposed to be on the ground protecting it, but they were not. Now, if they had really been a protecting force, they would have been on the ground. Then, as to his own station, he had never had any trouble with the blacks, except when the native police were on it. On no other occasions was he ever troubled by the blacks. His own experience went to shew that the native police aggravated the disorders they came to prevent; and God alone knew the crimes which, through the native police, rested upon the shoulders of the colonists. It was a harrowing picture that was drawn of the murder of the Wills party; but if the blacks who had been murdered by the whites could rise up, what would be the tales they would have to tell of the outrages of the whites and of the native police! The Government, he knew, were in the possession of letters informing them of cases of outrage and rapine against the blacks by the native police; and would honorable members consent to encourage and prolong such outrages? The wild blacks were humane in comparison with the native police, whose doings were invariably hushed up by the settlers where their deeds were done. It was to this shielding of the native police that so much injury to the property of whites was to be attributed. Such protection from punishment had a most demoralising effect upon the troopers. Let honorable members only look at the case of Mr. Dutton's station. He could produce letters now from a gentleman, asking him not to go on with this motion; because, if he did, it would get him into a scrape with the blacks. Never had such massacres of the whites occurred till attacks were made upon the blacks by the native police. He would ask honorable members to say if they did not think there were some good grounds for considering that the native police force had been worse than useless as protectors of the people. He should be delighted if this debate should lead to the doing away with the force. He knew it was their duty to protect their fellow-colonists wherever they were located, and the further they were

removed from the settled districts, the more was it their duty to protect them. It was because he felt that the native police did not protect the settlers, and because they had failed in many other respects, that he urged upon the House to take the matter into their hands this session. He cordially agreed with the honorable member for the Warrego, that many of the ills complained of were owing to the worthlessness of the officers. He believed that one good officer with a dozen old women would be able to keep the blacks in order; but it was because of sending officers who overstepped their duties, that the outrages by the blacks were committed. If they sent men in charge of the force, of the stamp of Mr. George Murray, they would never have to make but one acknowledgment on the subject, and that would only be that they still maintained an illegal force. He had scarcely ever spoken to an intelligent officer of native police who had not told him that he very much disliked the native force, and that he would rather have a few white men with a tracker or two—that with half a dozen white men and a tracker or two he would protect the outside settlers much better. A young, intelligent, and admirable officer had admitted to him, not long ago, that there was no occasion for shooting the blacks. That officer had had the protection of what was probably now the most dangerous district in the colony—the Burke District—and he had told him that, except in one instance, he had never had occasion to fire on the blacks, and even then he only fired off one gun over their heads. There was to be no opposition, he believed, on the part of the Government to the motion; but he regretted the honorable the Colonial Secretary did not accept the resolution in a better spirit than he did. He trusted, as he had said before, that the House would insist upon some steps being taken this session that would cause the settlers to be protected by a legal force.

Mr. SANDEMAN said that, before the motion was put, he wished, in explanation, to correct one statement which the honorable member for Maryborough had made. The honorable member was wrong in stating that the Horner Bank murders occurred after the arrival of, or were attributable in any way to the presence of, the native police. It was owing to their absence from that part of the country, and the repeated unheeded applications for their assistance, that the murders in question took place. He could speak from practical knowledge—from having been in the neighborhood shortly after that brutal occurrence. He hoped that no hasty steps would be taken with regard to this force. Those most deeply interested in the matter, the residents in the outside districts, should have some voice in the abolition of so necessary a force, for which they were so heavily taxed. He was willing to assent to the establishment of an amalgamated force of white and black troopers; but he felt confident that it would

be a fatal mistake to do away with the black troopers entirely.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not know what the honorable member for Maryborough meant when he complained about the spirit in which the Government had received the motion. He could only say that he would produce the papers as speedily as possible, and he did not know what more the honorable member could desire. He might say that the Commissioner of Police was so anxious to have the papers produced as soon as possible that he sent up the originals. When he ascertained that the Commissioner had done so he ordered the papers to be returned to be copied.

The motion was agreed to.