

those inquiries, if I could suppose that honourable members had read any considerable portion of that report; but, as it cannot be supposed that such has been the case, I must endeavour, as briefly as I can, to state the grounds upon which the committee came to their conclusions.

The materials from which the committee formed their opinions, were of the best possible description. They were chiefly official documents, furnished by the Colonial Office, consisting of despatches, reports to and from the governors of the penal colonies, and criminal returns. Numerous witnesses were examined; but in order to avoid any cavil as to the credibility of those witnesses, not one fact of any importance has been stated by the committee in their own report, which is not corroborated by official documents. And for the same reason, in the observations which I shall make to-night, I shall confine myself almost entirely to those documents.

The first subject of which I shall speak, is the nature of transportation, and the condition of the convict under that punishment. Transportation is a compound punishment, consisting of three distinct elements: banishment from this country; compulsory labour in a penal colony; and the various punishments by which that compulsory labour is enforced. It is not necessary at present to say anything of the effects of mere