

their families and paying their tax. The Medical Officer of Health of East London in his last Annual Report speaks of "the large number of unmarried Native males who enter the area looking for work." Such men, failing at first in their search for work, are yet not criminals. Still less are those who have paid their tax and left the receipt at home.

The effect of both the *Native Labour Regulation Act* (1911) and the *Masters and Servants Acts* is "to import penal consequences into what in common law is a purely civil contract." (Economic Commission's Report, p. 39.) Breach of contract is made a penal offence.

Breach of the Pass Law is another offence for which many Natives are imprisoned.

Methods such as these of increasing the Native convict population are open to criticism as being in themselves oppressive. Now, however, that the Government is advertising its readiness to supply convict labour to farmers who cannot themselves attract voluntary labour, the matter assumes a still more sinister aspect. It is forced labour in a peculiarly disgraceful form.

The latest returns, (year 1928-29) show that in the twelve months 43,937 Natives were brought before the Courts for breaches of the Pass Laws, 59,912, for failure to pay tax, 24,660 under the Masters and Servants Acts, and 18,731 under the Native Labour Regulations.

THE NATIVE VIEW.

The view of moderate Natives on this subject was well expressed by Mr. Seloape Thema (*Reuter*, Bloemfontein, Dec. 6, 1929) "The European had the right to be in South Africa, and had rendered the country signal service in bringing the blessings of civilization, but what the Natives objected to was that the Europeans exploited the Natives and the wealth of the country, while the Native was doomed to everlasting servility. . . While the Natives were landless, vast tracts of the country were lying waste and uncultivated. The farmers, said the speaker in referring to the labour question, ran to the Government for everything. When there was a drought they . . . invoked the assistance of the Government. . . . When