

there was a shortage of Native labour, the Government must legislate to force the Natives to the farms whether the farmers were prepared to pay wages or not."

SHORTAGE OF LABOUR ON MINES AND FARMS : A COMMITTEE APPOINTED.

On 18th December last *Reuter* Pretoria reported that an inter-departmental committee had been appointed, representative of the Native Affairs, Mines, Railways and Agricultural Departments to investigate European and Native labour resources in South Africa and in a later report stated that "The principal matter for investigation will be the Native labour resources of the country, and how far a redistribution can take place so as to make up the shortage of about 10,000 Natives on the Rand mines, as well as the shortage on the farms."

The position which it was desired to rectify was that there was a shortage of Native labour on certain farms and at the gold mines and at the same time a surplus of Native labour in the towns. It is evident that, notwithstanding the high cost of living and relatively low wages obtainable in the towns, a large number of Natives prefer to take their chances in the towns to going to the gold mines or up-country farms. What can be the reasons for this preference ?

THE REASON WHY NATIVE LABOURERS PREFER TOWN WORK TO THE GOLD MINES

Many—in some parts at least of the country the great majority—of the Native labourers who flock to the towns have already worked in the gold mines. They are not returning to the mines because they know that prolonged work in the gold mines is ruinous to health. They fear miner's phthisis and consumption. This is an entirely reasonable anxiety, as reference to the Miner's Phthisis Commission's reports will show.

This explanation of the men's preference for the towns is borne out by the Medical Officer of Health of East London who says (last *Annual Report* p. 14) "Twenty-eight per cent of the year's notifications of Tuberculosis