

KUARY 17, 1906.

THE NATAL RISING.

DEFENCES OF THE COLONY.

[From "The Tribune" Correspondent.]

PIETERMARITZBURG, Feb. 16th.

I have had an interview with the Hon. Thomas Watt, Minister of Defence, on the subject of the defences of the Colony. The Minister states that supernumerary mounted corps are to be formed throughout Natal, which all men able to ride and shoot will be invited to join. The farmers everywhere have gone into laager, owing to the proximity of armed natives. The field force has been ordered to fire on all armed natives. On the arrival of the Duke of Connaught here, the Government will open negotiations for the retention in Natal of a large Imperial force.

[REUTER'S TELEGRAM.]

PIETERMARITZBURG, Feb. 16th.—At Ixopo, High Flats, and Impendhle, the Europeans have been scared, and have formed laagers. No Europeans have, however, been attacked, and their property is safe.

RIGHTS OF THE NATIVE: A SUGGESTION.

[From A Correspondent.]

The disturbances in Natal are stated, somewhat vaguely, to be caused by members of the Ethiopian movement. Ethiopian sentiment would be probably more correct, the sentiment that voices itself all over South Africa in the aspiration "South Africa for the Ethiopians." We, Dutch and English, mineowner and labour man, have been acting a play in South Africa, the stage has been brightly lit, and our heroes and villains have strutted and strutted upon

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The disturbances in Natal are stated, somewhat vaguely, to be caused by members of the Ethiopian movement. Ethiopian sentiment would be probably more correct, the sentiment that voices itself all over South Africa in the aspiration "South Africa for the Ethiopians." We, Dutch and English, mineowner and labour man, have been acting a play in South Africa, the stage has been brightly lit, and our heroes and villains have strutted and walked upon it. We have even introduced a Chinese interlude. And the audience, the vast dark audience, has been watching and trying to understand.

The Richmond outbreak is not a very great thing, nor is the mission to England for the purpose of claiming political rights for coloured men a great thing. But many small things occurring together are making the question of the natives a very gigantic thing. Even now, if we are wise enough to see it, the question of the political and economic status of coloured men is of enormously greater importance than any other South African question. The method of solution of the problem is perilously simple, for it comes to those elementary human likes, dislikes, justices, and injustices where reason fails before prejudice. South African coloured men are paid inferior wages, live under inferior conditions, and are regarded as inferior beings. South African coloured men object to inferior wages, resent (to the point of murder sometimes) inferior conditions, and do not feel themselves inferior men. The Colonial white man believes the native inferior in order to justify the payment of an inferior wage, and points to the labour of his ill-educated, ill-paid, ill-fed, and ill-clothed "niggers" as proof of this inferiority. The same arguments would justify slavery.

The solution is not only equal political rights, but equal economic. We must not only give the native the vote, insisting on a certain minimum of education as qualification, but guarantee to the native a decent minimum wage. We must deliberately take in hand the levelling up of the standard of living of all natives. Many agricultural labourers in Cape Colony and the Orange River Colony are paid only 10s. a month, given a starvation allowance of food, and allowed to sleep in any old mud-hut. One black man I knew was paid 10s. and got 8oz. of bread and one pint of black coffee as his daily ration. He was, in consequence, thin, lazy, and stupid. And out of this income he had to pay £1 12s. a year poll-tax and municipal location tax. Out of conditions such as these arises the aspiration "South Africa for the coloured South Africans." Natives are very gentle people, very patient people. If we can convince them of our desire to help them they will not be inconsiderately hasty in resorting to force. But we must convince the Ethiopian movement of our bona fides, must leave off