

THE UNREST IN NATAL. 17.11.06
TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TRIBUNE."

Sir,—Having had considerable experience with the natives in Natal, may I encroach upon a small space in your valuable paper with reference to the trouble at present existing through their refusal to pay the poll-tax? We all know that, as a class, the Kaffir is about as ignorant and pig-headed as it is well possible for human being to be; but in this case he is not quite so ignorant but what he knows that his people outnumber the white population at present in Natal by something like 10 to 1. In these circumstances, he is not unnaturally (and, perhaps, not wrongly) under the impression that the tax is an imposition so far as they are concerned, inasmuch as for every £1 received from the Europeans we extort nearly £10 from them. Again, the tax was sprung upon them without fair warning, and had the meaning of it been thoroughly explained to the chiefs of the various tribes in the first place I feel certain this trouble would never have arisen. And further, one must not lose sight of the fact that a pound to a native means very much more than it does to a white man, bad as things undoubtedly are out there just now. The average Kaffir, although born lazy and hating work like poison, is of a thoroughly contented, happy, and peaceful nature, and would be the last man in the world to "kick" unless he really thought he was being trampled on, as is now the case.

Would it not have been fairer, taking into consideration, firstly, that South Africa is purely and simply a black man's country, and secondly, their vastly superior numbers over the white population, to have imposed a poll-tax of 10s. for each adult Kaffir, as against £1 for each adult European?

Had this been done, they would have seen the justice of it and willingly paid it without any murmur or trouble.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
R. H. LEE.

Frederick Colwill, an ex-police sergeant, was committed to the assizes at Cardiff yesterday charged with stealing 6lb. of meat from a charity for the relief of the poor. It was stated that the time of the alleged theft Colwill was on duty at the Central Police Station. A complaint was made to an inspector, to whom it was said Colwill confessed that he had taken the meat because he was hard pressed.