

imprisonment, and place him in close contact with habitual criminals.

Nearly 77 per cent. of the total number of Natives convicted last year were convicted of statutory, revenue or municipal offences. Nearly 63,000 were convicted under the Native Taxation Act, and nearly 60,000 under the Native Pass Laws. Convictions under these two heads alone totalled 123,000, as against only 82,423 convictions for, such common law offences as theft, assault, breach of the peace, stock theft, faction fighting, housebreaking and riotous behaviour.

Some measure of compulsion is, of course, necessary, and there seems to be much in favour of the suggestion that defaulting Natives should be sent to work camps where they can earn sufficient money to meet their liabilities. It is to be hoped that the Departmental Committee will evolve a scheme on these lines, which, while operating less harshly upon the Native community, will be none the less effective in preventing them from evading their responsibilities to the State.

There is much to be said for the old system whereby Native areas were visited every year by tax-collecting officers. This system not only achieved more prompt payment but it established closer contact between the Bantu people and the authorities. Natives were able to seek the advice of these officers, bring forward their many troubles, and obtain sympathetic guidance. To-day they have to leave their kraals and walk, sometimes great distances, to the nearest magistrate's court to pay their tax.

A return to the old system would remove much unnecessary hardship.

Making Criminals

The method of collecting Native taxes has been strongly criticised lately and public attention has been drawn to numerous cases of hardship.

This agitation has served a good purpose, for the Government has now decided to appoint a departmental committee to inquire into the present method and to receive representations from everyone interested.

The most serious aspect of this problem is the appalling number of Natives committed to gaol each year for non-payment of their taxes. This form of punishment does nothing but degrade the race, remove from the mind of the Native any dread he may have had of

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