

Dr. Macklin went on to describe what he and others had been doing to prevent land speculators from holding land out of use in the part of China he was particularly interested in. A tax of 6 per cent. is imposed on land values. If after three years a man does not put his land to use, the land tax is increased to 9 per cent. If he still continues to hold it out of use, the tax is again increased to 12 per cent.; and so on till the tax amounts to 24 per cent. They had also started a colonisation scheme as part of the famine relief. Every two or three years a flood comes and destroys the crops. The people are in the power of the landlords, who take even as much as six-tenths of the crop of rice. The landlords store the rice in great granaries, and when the famine breaks out they hold on to their stocks of rice till they can exact an exorbitant price for it. On the outbreak of famine the plan adopted by charitable people was to give money to the sufferers, but this was found to be really helping the landlords, because the people bought rice from them at an enormous price. The charitable organisation then hit on the plan of buying grain when it was cheap, and supplying the people with it, and in this way they broke up the rice ring. The next step was to set the famine refugees to work to mend the dykes and pay them for their work. But even that did not do much good, as the people were really being pauperised. The Red Cross Society appointed a surveyor to make an investigation of the famine region, and estimate what it would cost to thoroughly drain it. As the result of the drainage works which were carried out land went up in price from £1 to £10 an acre. There was a record of a thousand years of famine in China, and nothing had been done to prevent it, but he expected great results from the scheme here referred to.

Dr. Macklin and Professor Bailie explained to Sun Yat Sen their scheme for helping the famine sufferers by giving them land to cultivate, and Sun Yat Sen expressed his approval of it. All the leading Statesmen in China are in favour of the scheme. The Civil Governor had given Dr. Macklin permission to tell any man who wanted land to squat on any piece of Government land, and he added that the man would be given a title to it. The Civil Governor was most emphatic in his denunciation of landlordism. His idea was to buy out landlords and give the land to the people, but Dr. Macklin explained to him that it would be better to tax the landlords heavily, and then they would soon get rid of their land.

China, he said, is not over populated, as so many people think. There are about 169 persons to the square mile, whereas in England there are about 500, and in Belgium and some parts of Germany the number is about 800. What the Chinese want is not more land but fewer landlords, and better methods of agriculture. In Nankin all the educated people, besides the Governors, Civil and Military, are in favour of Dr. Macklin's scheme for helping the people by putting them on the land. The Chamber of Commerce is also helping them with money. A few months ago the leading men of Hankow expressed a wish to start a colonisation scheme on Dr. Macklin's lines. They have made a beginning with three thousand acres of land. It is suggested that the mines of China should be held by the State and heavy royalties charged on the output. The royalties are supposed to be worth 160 millions sterling.

THE WAR AND THE LAND QUESTION IN DENMARK

An interesting article under the above heading, from the pen of the editor of the Danish monthly single tax review, RET, first published in the organ of the Danish small-

holders, HUSMANDEN, has been reprinted as a pamphlet and widely circulated in Denmark. The author, Mr. S. Berthelsen, points out how, on the outbreak of the Danish war of 1848, the Danish Minister for War, Tscherning, "rose in the Council Chamber and declared that as the State now called upon the young men of Denmark to defend their country with their life-blood, so the State owed it to its young men to secure to every one of them a piece of their native soil whereon to set up a home of their own."

A provisional order was consequently issued by the King in Council on May 5th, 1848, authorising the expropriation of the necessary land for the erection of houses for such persons as might require them and who were unable to find them at the usual rent in the district where they worked. There is no doubt that this admission by the King of the right of the common people to a share in their native soil contributed enormously to the patriotic fervour which seized the people and led them gladly to make the great sacrifices required of them.

This provisional order was confirmed by Parliament at the end of the war in 1850, and remains law to this day. But action under it was taken only in a few instances, and it became a dead letter. That it did so was partly due to the fact that it was badly drafted, partly that it gave both too much and too little—too little land, and too many obligations in the way of building. The interesting fact remains, that at a time of grave national stress the Danish ministry did not hesitate to use the land question as a recruiting agency, and that all parties united in passing the bill of 1850 into law. Defective as the measure proved, it laid down clearly as a principle of Danish law, that the compulsory powers of the State ought, under certain conditions, to be at the disposal of every citizen to secure a site for a home, and that all rights of ownership in Danish land are subject to such right of expropriation for the benefit of individuals.

Mr. Berthelsen takes the opportunity to urge on the present Danish Government, faced with the mobilisation of its national army to protect Denmark's neutrality against all comers, once more to take up this question of the people's rights to a share in their native land and land values. The newspapers, he says, are filled with appeals for books and magazines, warm garments and other comforts for the soldiers. Laws are being hurriedly passed through Parliament and huge sums voted for the defence of the country. But what, he asks, would more effectively fire the spirits of the nation than to read one day in the papers that when the war is over every man will be assured of the right, on reasonable terms, to a plot of his native soil? Give the people the right to a home, and they will, if need be, give life itself in its defence.

We commend the suggestion to the British Government in general and to Mr. Lloyd George in particular.

C. W. S.

UNITED STATES

The September-October number of the SINGLE TAX REVIEW contains an excellent report of the Second Annual Conference of the New York State Single Tax League. We tender our heartiest congratulations to our New York friends on what was evidently a most successful conference, and one that shows the most satisfactory progress. In addition to the report and papers read at the conference the REVIEW contains much interesting information of American doings, including a report of some of the Hon. George Fowlds' meetings during his visit to the States.