

chau, so well known for its advanced land policy:—"At first they opened a port and built around it, and then they had to move to another site. The population is scattered, and the Government reserves much land for future public needs, making roads, &c., cost more. The population is about 1,500 foreigners and 30,000 Chinese. The silk industry is the greatest. Land is rated at 6 per cent. of its (capital) value, and I believe this is on all land. Land is owned and bought and sold. When land is sold the house and lot are put on separate bills. If the Government is afraid the house is put too high, an appraisalment is made. These sales give the value of land for future rating, also for that neighbourhood. As this is a military colony, more money is spent than is raised locally. The Consul told me there was no land speculation at all. Mr. Schmidt, director of the Shantung Railway, told me that the great fault, largely due to the Government reserves, was the scattered residence, making all kinds of communication so difficult and costly."

The principles of the Single Tax have also been applied to Tsingtau, and Mr. Macklin promises to give us a report of the working of the system there.

THE LAND SYSTEM OF ANCIENT PERU.

(From the TIMES South American Supplement, 28th February.)

It is an interesting fact that the system of small land holdings, so much under discussion in England to-day, should have been in existence long ago as the basis of the social life of an empire upon the remote and inaccessible slopes and plateaux of the Andes. The traveller, as he journeys over the rugged mule-trails which are the only means of communication in the uplands of Peru, observes that many of the hill-slopes are covered with small terraces, built up on the lower side with rough stone walls and filled in with earth for purposes of cultivation. These are the "andénes," as the Spaniards termed them after the conquest of Peru. They are small holdings, which were made under the Inca régime and apportioned among the inhabitants according to the size of their families. For the inhabitants of this vast area embodied in the countries known to-day as Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and part of Chile were an agricultural people and had developed an extensive use of the soil such as is unknown among modern manufacturing nations. I have journeyed and camped among these ruined and depopulated "andénes" in the remotest parts of the Cordillera and at great elevations, in some cases 16,000 ft. or more above sea level, up to the regions of perpetual snow. This, of course, is greatly above the line of maize—the only cereal known to the ancient inhabitants—but potatoes and quinoa grew even in such inclement regions. In numerous situations ruined castles exist, surrounded by these small terraced plantations, and at sunset, when the mists of evening roll up from the deep gorges, the scene becomes striking and romantic.

THE LAWS OF THE INCA EMPIRE.

The laws which governed the Inca Empire were remarkable. The principal ones related to the land, distribution of labour, payment of taxes, support of the incapable, and intercourse between citizens. The land laws enforced the extension of cultivation in every possible direction, whether in the valleys and plains or on the rugged hill-slopes, the latter requiring terracing in the way shown by the "andénes." In those situations where it was necessary the lands were irrigated by long channels bringing water from the streams of the Cordillera, and this work was done by "engineers" appointed by the State. Having been made available for cultivation, the land was carefully surveyed and measured, each province and village by itself, and divided into three parts. The first part was set aside for the Sun; the second was the property of the Inca; and the third was for the inhabitants of the locality. Every individual received a measure of land sufficient for his work and maintenance, and a further measure for each member of his family. It was compulsory to work the land; persons who neglected to do so, or failed to irrigate at the appointed time, were punished. An invariable order was observed in the cultivation of the divisions. First the areas assigned to the Sun were cultivated, secondly those belonging to the incapable, orphans, widows, the aged, and the sick, as also the holdings belonging to persons absent on military or State service. Then the workers attended to their own lands, the neighbours freely assisting each other when necessary. Lastly, the lands which formed the property of the Inca were cultivated, for the law was that the welfare of the subject or citizen should invariably take precedence of that of the Sovereign. No one was allowed to buy or sell land, as it reverted to the State when ownership failed.

In addition to his labour on the land each inhabitant was obliged to perform a certain amount of work for the State, in the making of roads, bridges, temples, palaces, &c. Taxes were paid partly in labour on the land, as described above, and partly in the manufacture of clothing, shoes, arms, and other articles for distribution by the State to the infirm and incapable and to the soldiery. These articles were made in the provinces where the raw material was obtainable, for the law declared it unjust to demand from a taxpayer anything that could not be produced in the locality in which he lived. Begging was considered disgraceful and was prohibited under pain of punishment. Every man was required to know how to weave and make his own clothes and to supply his ordinary wants.

With regard to the produce of the lands of the Sun and the Inca, it is not to be supposed that this was recklessly used by the State or devoted to the aggrandisement of its favourites. Great storehouses and granaries were erected in each district, wherein all surplus food products raised and all articles manufactured by way of tribute were stored. These stores were drawn upon for the needs of the State under strict surveillance; they were also used in times of stress or famine when the supplies of the people became exhausted. The State's control and distribution of these goods and supplies were marked by little of the corruption which often attends similar transactions in modern times. An instance of favouritism which met with speedy punishment is recorded in Inca history, when a certain superintendent was hanged because he had ordered the land of a relative, a rich chief, to be cultivated before that of a poor widow.

The laws concerning neighbourly assistance and intercourse held an important place in the code. In addition to the system of mutual help between individuals, neighbouring villages were obliged to render one another aid in harvesting and building, as is the practice to-day among the descendants of these people, the Cholos of the Andes. As to neighbourly intercourse, it was enacted that the people of each locality should meet and feast together every few weeks, so that amity should be maintained and relaxation afforded. The work of cultivating the lands belonging to the Sun and the Inca was looked upon as a most honourable task, and was carried out with feasting and rejoicing. Many ceremonies, too, attended the various seasons. The temples were maintained with the greatest reverence and care, and indeed the remarkable stores of gold which the Incas possessed at the time of the conquest were largely in the form of decorations in their places of worship.

CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

The people, naturally, were not all equal in rank; there were numerous grades of civil distinction and position; and as large armies were maintained and were constantly in the field military rank was an important social factor. The noble families consisted of those allied to the Royal house of the Incas and the heads of conquered tribes. But the great underlying principle of the whole system was the recognition that every citizen had a right to a livelihood, and therefore a right to a tangible portion of the land and its resources. There was no unemployment. Every man could receive in exchange for whatever he made other articles which he needed. Thus one man might make bread and another boots; and boots could be exchanged for bread through the Government storehouse. There was no poverty or idleness, because under the system of organisation provision was made for the well-being of all, the infirm or incapable being a public charge, and work, in accordance with the capacity of the individual, being compulsory.

The people had attained a high pitch of scientific knowledge. They built bridges, smelted metals, wove cloths, constructed hydraulic works, and raised megalithic structures such as are still among the most remarkable antiquities in the world. They determined the solstices, and worshipped the "Unknown God." What this civilisation might have developed into had it not been destroyed by the Spanish invasion it is impossible to say. But it was shown that a system of small holdings could be made to afford the basis of life for a whole people; that under this system, aided by a general State control and distribution of natural and cultivated resources, it was possible to prevent destitution and unemployment; and, further, that the State could carry on this work free from bribery and corruption. Even to-day the natives of the Andes—greatly reduced in number since the conquest—live their lives upon their small holdings in absolute independence of the outside world, keeping their llamas, whose wool affords them material for making their clothes, cultivating their potatoes and alfalfa, and asking nothing from the Spanish civilisation of the republics which politically control them.