

ary revenues, such as the rents of Crown Lands, the profits of administering justice, the ancient port dues, and the like. Parliament, of course, had no chance of touching this revenue, which came to the King's treasury without its aid.

' EXTRAORDINARY ' REVENUE

But, happily, the English monarchs of the later Middle Ages never succeeded (except in rare periods) in living on this ' ordinary ' revenue, but were constantly obliged to ask Parliament to supplement it by grants of ' extraordinary ' revenue, *i.e.* taxation, mainly direct. Then came Parliament's chance; and though the move of 1377 was not immediately repeated, it was not forgotten, and, after the Restoration of 1660, Parliament resorted to it fully and freely, particularly when Charles II scandalously wasted the large sums voted for the carrying on of the Dutch war. Since that time, the practice has developed so greatly, that it has enabled Parliament, and more particularly the House of Commons, which, shortly after 1377, succeeded in establishing its pre-eminence in all matters of finance, to bring under review and criticism almost every conceivable act of the Crown's Ministers, by refusing to vote a particular item in the financial scheme of the year (or ' Budget ') until that act is explained and justified.

THE ' CABINET SYSTEM '

Parliament was, therefore, proceeding on well-prepared ground, when it made its final and successful bid for complete control of the Executive in the early eighteenth century. The circumstances were favourable. The new Hanoverian line owed its throne entirely to the choice of Parliament, which, in the Act of Settlement of 1700, ignored the claims of the elder