

private individuals or coteries of individuals popularly known as trusts? Or is it the outcome of education, experience and advancing civilisation?

These are questions the future alone can answer. But advocates of public ownership will point out that the Post Office Department is run at a profit, therefore the government can handle large business in a business-like manner. They will point out that the success attending the guaranteeing of the bonds of certain railways is proof that the government can easily finance large projects. They will also point to the Temiskaming railway and possibly even make minor mention of the Intercolonial Railway.

On the other hand, it may be asked if the present prosperity is not partially to blame for post office department surpluses; if management is not what bond subscribers are looking for and if they would be willing to furnish capital for a project liable to change its management and most of its employees once in five years; to be run in fact by relays of servants whose chief qualifications were their political services to the party in power. They will ask if the Temiskaming Railway owes its prosperity to public ownership or to the mineral discoveries at Cobalt, or its public ownership discovered Cobalt? If even a greater prosperity than the present can make the Intercolonial more of a dividend producer and less of a home for the poor relations of prosperous politicians?

It is out of the West that new things must come. It is the home of people who believe in "taking a chance"—who have "taken a chance." It is for the older and more settled provinces to realise that public ownership is now to the fore as an issue. It is for them to view it from all sides and to finally determine whether it is to be regarded as the inevitable or simply as a fad fitted to the needs of politicians rather than provinces.

THE present situation in France is explained by the despotism of Louis XIV. and by the Revolution. The despotism taught Frenchmen to regard the government as the State, and they have never forgotten the lesson. The government for them represents all the political interests of the nation; it controls the machinery of the courts and the civil service; it guarantees all rights and privileges. We regard our individual liberty as something virtually independent of the government, which public opinion will assist us in safeguarding. In France the State is so anxious to secure to each individual his rights that it carefully hedges him around, and supervises his conduct and that of his neighbours. This well-meant paternal interest easily becomes tyranny. Furthermore, we have no great fear of our governments; when we disagree with them, we organise public meetings and begin an agitation on the lines which centuries of political struggle in England have suggested. In the end we elect a new set of men, with a definite mandate. In France there is no such organized and expressive popular opposition. In fact the government generally goes to the country only when it has carried out some policy; it can then urge that its defeat will overthrow the republic. It is readily believed, because the voters identify it with the State.

The Revolution has also been a factor. It took the property of the church and finally persecuted those who could not accept its religious opinions. Into the chaos which resulted, Napoleon brought order by the Concordat with the Papacy. The church property could not be recovered, and so in compensation the state was to pay the clergy. The state was to have a voice in the choosing of the bishops and cures, so that the work of the Revolution might not be undone. It was acknowledged, too, that Roman Catholicism was the religion of the majority of Frenchmen, not in the sense that it was to be the sole religion tolerated in the country, but in

order that the religious confusion of the preceding period should be ended.

The attitude of the French authorities, unfortunately, rendered such a solution impossible for them. Anyone who has followed the debates during these last years knows how strongly opposed to Christianify the government and its supporters have been. They have sought to banish it from the schools and the state. No better evidence can be found of this than the fact that the hostility of French Freemasons to the Christian faith has cut them off from the organisation in English-speaking countries. It will not do for the government to assign fear of the church as its motive. Undoubtedly some churchmen clung too long to their royalistic sympathies, for they, too, have had their memories of the Revolution. But the government has never offered any proof in recent years of any attack upon the republic, though it has had all the courts and officials at its disposal. The Vatican, which it now denounces as the great foe to France, ordered the French clergy years ago to accept the Republic loyally. In fact the government has no case when it has itself nominated the bishops. It could not ask more, and if they have turned from it, it must surely be at fault. Its real error has been its failure to trust its opponents, to invite them by its own confidence and just dealing to co-operate for the national welfare. Were all the charges against the church true, the government would not be safeguarding the republic by maltreating any class of French citizens. The Republic might better perish than allow its representatives to commit one act of injustice or oppression.

It is often asked how could a Christian church so lose its hold upon the people as to make this attack possible. The Revolution affords a partial answer. At the outset it had no thought of attacking a religion, but as passions were aroused, the whole position of the church was assailed. Possibly the harm done then has never been repaired. But the nineteenth century has presented its own religious difficulties, particularly in the intellectual phase. These, more conservative people, try to work out with patience and respect for tradition. But the French are nothing if not logical and thorough-going in thought; they bring things at once to a conclusion. They cry: "Christianity is out of date. Away with it. The future belongs to science, and we must not hamper our progress by maintaining a creed outworn." Of course they cannot be merely destructive. Just as the Revolutionists erected the negation of God into a system, for the people had to believe in something, so now they impose some socialist or other creed. They are mastered by brilliant ideas, which scarcely permit of practical application, but in the hope that all will participate in these, they override individual convictions. We are less intelligent, we make mistakes and meddle, but thereby we have come to know the value of adjustment and compromise.

The present situation is not all dark. It will strengthen the hands of moderates, like M. Pibot, who will do justice to all parties. The passive resistance is in itself a sign of good sense and sound political judgment. All those here who sympathised with the passive resistance in England will of necessity sympathise with those who are opposing the law in France in precisely the same fashion. Some conception of the real meaning of liberty will grow up out of the struggle. The spy-system itself suffered a blow, when it was known during M. Combes' premiership that the government was constantly informed whether army officers and their wives and children attended the services of the church. M. Combes, who was the head and front of the anti-clerical movement, had to be surrendered by his party to the general indignation at this scandal. So now, if the government goes too far, it will contribute in the end to a settlement of the difficulty. All fair-minded men will be brought the more quickly to recognise the highest interests of the nation.