and a longing for peace, their most precious right, the power of the purse.

At the estates of 1484, however, after the death of Louis XL, there was a kind of awakening. The deputies of the three orders united their efforts in perfect harmony in the hope of regaining the right of periodically sanctioning taxation. They voted the *taille* for two years only, at the same time reducing it to the amount which it had reached at the end of the reign of Charles VII. They even demanded, and obtained, the promise of the Crown that they should be summoned again before the expiry of the two years. But the promise was not kept, and we do not find the States-General summoned again till 1560. There was then a first interruption of 76 years in the working of the institution, while the absolute monarchy was establishing itself. But there was a revival of its activity in the second half of the 16th century caused by the scarcity of money and the quarrels and wars of religion. The estates of Orleans in 1560, followed by those of Pontoise in 1561, and those of Blois in 1576 and 1588 were most remarkable for the wisdom, courage and efforts of the deputies, but on the whole were lacking in effect. Those of 1588 were ended on a regular *coup d'état* effected by Henry III., and the States summoned by the League, which sat in Paris in 1593 and whose chief object was to elect a Catholic king, were not a success. The States-General again met in Paris in 1614, on the occasion of the disturbances which followed the death of Henry IV.; but though their minutes bear witness to their sentiments of exalted patriotism, the dissensions between the three orders rendered them weak and they were dissolved before having completed their work, not to be summoned again till 1789.

As to the question whether the States-General formed one or three chambers for the purposes of their working, from the constitutional point of view the point was never decided. What the king required was to have the consent, the resolution of the three estates of the realm; it was in reality of little import­ance to him whether their resolutions expressed themselves in common or separately. At the States-General of 1484 the elections were made in common for the three orders, and the deputies also arrived at their resolutions in common. But after 1560 the rule was that each order should deliberate separately; the royal declaration of the 23rd of June 1789 even stated that they formed three distinct chambers. But Keeker’s report to the *conseil du roi* according to which the convocation of 1789 was decided, said (as did the declaration of the 23rd of June), that on matters of common interest the deputies of the three orders could deliberate together, if each of the others decided hy a separate vote in favour of this, and if the king consented.

The working of the States-General led to an almost exclusive system of deliberation by committee, as we should say nowa­days. There were, it is true, solemn general sessions, called *séances royales*, because the king presided; but at these there was no discussion. At the first, the king or his chancellor announced the object of the convocation, and set forth the demands or questions put to them by the Crown; at the other royal sessions each order made known its answers or observations by the mouth of an *orateur* elected for the purpose. But almost all useful work was done in the sections, among which the depu­ties of each order were divided. At the estates of 1484 they were divided into six *nations* or *sections,* corresponding to the six *généralités* then existing. Subsequently the deputies belong­ing to the same *gouvernement* formed a group or bureau for deliberating and voting purposes. Certain questions, however, were discussed and decided in full assembly; sometimes, too, the estates nominated commissaries in equal numbers for each order. But in the ancient States-General there was never any personal vote. The unit represented for each of the three orders was the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée* and each *bailliage* had one vote, the majority of the deputies of the *bailliage* deciding in what way this vote should be given. At the estates of the 16th century voting was by *gouvernements,* each *gouvernement* having one vote, but the majority of the *bailliages* composing the *gouvernement* decided how it should be given.

The States-General, when they gave counsel, had in theory only a consultative faculty. They had the power of granting subsidies, which was the chief and ordinary cause of their convocation. But it had come to be a consent with which the king could dispense. We have seen how permanent taxation became established In the 16th century, however, the estates again claimed that their consent was necessary for the establish­ment of new taxation, and, on the whole, the facts seem to be in favour of this view at the time. But in the course of the 17th century the principle gained recognition that the king could tax on his own sole authority. Thus were established in the second half of the 17th century, and in the 18th, the direct taxes of the *capitation* and of the *dixième* or *vingtième,* and many indirect taxes. It was sufficient for the law creating them to be registered by the *cours des aides* and the *parlements.* It was only in 1787 that the *parlement* of Paris declared that it could not register the new taxes, the land-tax and stamp-duty *(subvention territoriale* and *impôt du timbre),* as they did not know whether they would be submitted to by the country, and that the consent of the representatives of the tax-payers must be asked.

The States-General had legally no share in the legislative power, which belonged to the king alone. The States of Blois demanded, it is true in 1576, that he should be bound to turn into law any proposition voted in identical terms by each of the three orders; but the king would not grant this demand, which would not even have left him a right of veto. In practice, however, the States-General contributed largely to legislation. Those who sat in them had at all times the right of presenting complaints *(doléances),* requests and petitions to the king; in this, indeed, consisted their sole initiative. They were usually answered by an *ordonnance,* and it is chiefly through these that we are acquainted with the activity of the estates of the 14th and 15th centuries. In the latest form, and from the estates of 1484 onwards, this was done by a new and special pro­cedure. The States had become an entirely elective assembly, and at the elections (at each step of the election if there were several) the electors drew up a *cahier des doléances* (statement of grievances) which they requested the deputies to present; this even appeared to be the most important feature of an election. The deputies of each order in every *bailliage* also brought with them a *cahier des doléances,* which was arrived at, for the third estate, by a combination of the statements drawn up by the primary or secondary electors. On the assembly of the estates the *cahiers* of the *bailliages* were incorporated into a *cahier* for each *gouvernement,* and these again into a *cahier général* or general statement, which was presented to the king, and which he answered in his council. When the three orders deliberated in common, as in 1484, there was only one *cahier général·,* when they deliberated separately, there were three, one for each order. The drawing up of the *cahier général* was looked upon as the main business *(le grand œuvre)* of the session.

By this means the States-General furnished the material for numerous *ordonnances,* though the king did not always adopt the propositions contained in the *cahiers,* and often modified them in forming them into an *ordonnance.* These latter were the *ordonnances de réforme* (reforming ordinances), treating of the most varied subjects, according to the demands of the *cahiers.* They were not, however, for the most part very well observed. The last of the type was the *grande ordonnance* of 1629 *(Code Michau)* drawn up in accordance with the *cahiers* of 1614 and with the observations of various assemblies of notables which followed them.

The States-General had, however, peculiar power which was recognized, but was of a kind that could not often be exer­cised; it was what might be called a constituent power. The ancient public law of France contained a number of rules called “ the fundamental laws of the realm *(lois fondamentales du royaume),* though most of them were purely customary; chief among them were the rules of determining the succession to the Crown and those forbidding the alienation of the domain of the Crown. The king, supreme though his power might be.