

The small group of Republicans in that Opposition developed a feverish activity, openly conspired with Beirao's enemies in the Cortes, and through a system of reckless obstruction rendered vain all efforts to legislate for the good of the country. It is commonly believed, however, that Beirao would have finally triumphed if the scandalous story of the Sugar Monopoly on the Island of Madeira had not come to light. An English company, as is known, had secured this monopoly through a Government protection suggesting startling stories of graft. The Premier promised to appoint an investigating commission to delve deep into the iniquitous corruption charged, but his enemies in the Cortes refused to vote for his inquiry, as they claimed that the Commission would use every means to whitewash Luciano de Castro, the leader of the Progressist and a personal friend of Beirao's, who was deeply mixed in the scandal. This de Castro and many of his political friends were compromised in the other affair of the Credit Bank of Portugal.

This bank, known under the title 'Compañia General do Credito Portuguez,' was an official institution. Through a system of false balances and in defect of vigilant control, the Bank Directory allowed the payment of large dividends to stockholders, which were altogether at variance with the small profits accruing from its business. When, as was naturally to be expected, the knowledge of the real condition of things came to the public, a violent uprising against the responsible parties occurred. The scandal was the topic of bitter complaint in the Cortes and in all Portugal. The people clamored for information regarding the manner in which large sums entrusted to the bank officials had disappeared. Honest investigation speedily showed that millions had gone into the pockets of the Bank Directorate. It was proved, too, that this body for some time back had been made up of ex-Ministers and powerful politicians, who, being forced out of official place and thus deprived of political sources of easy income, had made up for their loss by ruthlessly robbing the small depositors, who had trusted their all to the bank.

To put an end to further exposures of de Castro by his enemies, Beirao asked permission to adjourn the Cortes and to await the result of a new election. King Manuel refused to stand for this programme, since Parliament had not yet voted the Budget for the year 1910-1911, and thus we in this poor land find ourselves in a desperate strait indeed. It will be difficult at this juncture to find in Portugal a leader powerful enough to gather about him a parliamentary majority upon which he may rely in his efforts to save us from the crisis. The Republicans are valiantly proclaiming that it will be impossible to find a way out of the evil situation. They argue that the days of the monarchy are numbered. Meantime the friends of order hope, and, as I have assurance, expect, that the young King Manuel will meet success in his efforts to restore peace to our troubled land.

LIQUIDATION SCANDALS IN FRANCE

Under the heading, 'Where is the Milliard?' the London *Tablet* of August 27 deals as follows with the latest report of the liquidators of the Church property in France:

The liquidation of the property of the dissolved religious congregations in France is still proceeding. How long and costly is the process is already known to our readers; and the Report of the operations for the year 1909 which has just been published in a Green Book signed by M. Barthou, Minister of Justice, and M. Coehery, Minister of Finance, contains little or nothing to encourage the hopes of those who were deceived with promises of a handsome nucleus for an old-age pensions fund as a result of the transaction. M. Waldeck-Rousseau gained votes and support for his Associations Law by pointing to the milliard of the congregations; M. Combes, his successor, dissolved the congregations wholesale, and the process of the liquidation of their property was entered upon with the promptitude that marks the itching palm. But instead of money being poured into the Treasury as the produce of this gigantic robbery by statute, the liquidators began to pile up debts in the shape of Treasury loans for legal expenses. Meanwhile, the liquidators and their agents were drawing large sums for their labors, whilst the milliard which M. Waldeck-Rousseau had dangled before the eyes of the electors at Toulouse was receding further and further into the dim distance. Grave misgivings were naturally aroused; awkward questions in the Chamber produced in 1906 a promise of an annual report on the transactions, but so unsatisfactory was the first instalment that early in 1908 M. Clemenceau was compelled to grant a Commission of Inquiry into the whole affair. A hideous series of revelations followed, and M. Briand insisted on quarterly accounts being rendered by the liquidators and immediate payments of the sums they received into the Treasury. As a result of the stricter supervision thus set on foot it was discovered that M. Duez, the liquidator of several important congregations, had been guilty of wholesale defalcations and irregularities. At first his resignation was accepted on the plea of 'reasons of health'; but a little later, yielding to the demands of the Senatorial Commission and to the representations of the man's successors, who refused to go on with their work until his irregularities had been cleared up, M. Briand had to order M. Duez's

arrest. The investigation into Duez's transactions is not yet concluded, but the Report just issued shows that he is not alone in his guilty practices. Thus, M. Vernhet, an ex-liquidator of the Congregation of Notre Dame and other congregations, is found to have presented accounts in such serious disagreement with those of his successor that they are being made the subject of a searching inquiry. Another, M. Desrumeaux, who was entrusted with the winding up of the property of the Ursulines at Amiens is being prosecuted; a third, M. Duret, is charged with unnecessary delay in his work; whilst a fourth, M. Auréan, has been sent before the Court of Correction on a charge of abuse of confidence. Such a result is in no way surprising, for these men were appointed mainly on account of their political guarantees. But the murder is now out, and Ministers have been compelled to admit the fact by taking the business out of the hands of these harpies and placing it in the charge of the Director-General of Estates. Long before this the old pretexes for the defence had been abandoned. There was no more talk now of the milliard of the congregations; M. Briand had even found it necessary to avow that M. Waldeck-Rousseau's estimate, backed though it was by a portentous volume of statistics collected for the purpose, was exaggerated and inexact. All mention of the nucleus for old-age pensions was dropped; and the expensiveness and protracted length of the liquidation process was laid at the door of the religious and of the heirs of the original benefactors who had the audacity to defend themselves in the courts of law.

If we now turn from the doings of the liquidators to the results of their operations we find that, in spite of the increasing strictness of Government supervision, the product is strikingly incommensurate with the magnitude of the transactions. During the year covered by this fourth Report, 406 cases were dealt with. The receipts from the disposal of the property involved and from other sources amounted to 20,880,672 francs. Against this has to be set an expenditure by or on behalf of the liquidators of no less than 15,992,484 francs. Thus there would appear to be a gross sum of nearly five million francs on the right side of the account, but against that, it seems, has to be set a matter of nearly three million francs by which the net product of these 406 transactions is reduced to 1,520,118 francs. If we add this sum to those of preceding years we shall find how very far we still are from the promised milliard. During the first years that the liquidators were at work until 1906, instead of there being a balance on the right side of the account there was actually a deficit of 372,347 francs. The year 1906 produced a profit of 520,003 francs; in 1907, 2,575,846 francs were netted; in 1908 a sum of 2,691,289 was obtained. Thus the year covered by the latest report shows a drop of over a million francs in the net profit, but here it must be remembered that the number of liquidators was less by about a hundred than that of 1908, when it was 505. People may well wonder how it is that the result of a winding up of property on so gigantic a scale has been so little profitable. But the answer is still the same—dishonest officials bent upon feathering their own nests, bloated fees to Radical and Socialist counsel and lawyers, and all sorts of curious payments to hangers-on. The Report sets down the fees of counsel at 211,386 francs, but then there is another sum of 487,615 francs in which other payments to counsel are included. Then the payments to creditors are lumped down at 11,712,147 francs, whilst a sum of a million and a half has gone in the repayment of Treasury advances. Nor can the amounts expended on behalf of the former members of the congregations who are left without means of livelihood, or for the support of those who were formerly taken care of by the congregations be said to add much to the sums which have been frittered away in legal processes. In the maintenance of the indigent poor who lost their homes when the congregations were dissolved, 41,264 francs have been expended; 16,814 francs have been devoted to the same purpose on behalf of former members of the communities; and a further sum of 407,807 francs has gone in grants in aid to other members. Finally, it may be noted in this connection that the expenditure account contains a sum of 24,296 francs, which is simply set down to 'other charges'!

But these complicated accounts, with their mass of details, will delude nobody into thinking that the transactions of the year covered by the Report are beyond reproach. It is surely a matter of some significance that whilst giving debtor and creditor sides of the account, M. Barthou leaves it to the readers of the Report to make out for themselves the net profit to the Treasury on the year's work. Such studied silence would seem to show that the result was not one to which even the most optimistically-inclined Minister would care to give unnecessary advertisement. Besides the extravagant costs of the process, another reason for the small net profit on the liquidations has always been the low prices at which the property has been sold. The present report affords an example of this in the case of a hospital belonging to the Recolletines of Merville, which was knocked down to a bid of 7001 francs! There is another point of some interest attaching to this institution: the liquidator actually scrupled to carry out the legal process against it. It appears that the official regarded the place as excluded from sale by the provision of Article 18 of the Law of Association in favor of houses set apart for a purpose of public charity, and that he stood out against the order for its liquidation until the civil

'Best for the money!' Hondai Lanka Tea is full of Quality and Delightful Flavor. It goes furthest.

'Naething new?' Ma certes, 'Cock o' the North's a new pleasure tea folks wha hinna tasted it!