

◆ Why did the power of the monarchy stay so high?



"I'm glad to see that the king was still the most powerful person in the country in 1500. All those people who said I was a bad king because I agreed to Magna Carta and gave away the king's power to the barons were wrong... very wrong!"

ACTIVITY

The picture below shows you the reasons why the power of the king stayed so high throughout the Middle Ages. When you have had a good look at it, turn to the opposite page and look at the medallists. Do you agree that these were probably the most important reasons why kings stayed powerful during the Middle Ages?

Kings are God's deputies on earth. Kings are chosen by God to rule over us. At his coronation the new king is anointed with holy oil to show that his power came straight from God. Anyone rebelling against the king is also rebelling against God.

The king is by far the richest man in the country. He can collect taxes whenever he needs money for war. Nobody else has a fortune to rival the king's.

The king has officials all over the country. They send him news as quickly as possible so that he knows what is going on and can stay in control.



RELIGION

WEALTH

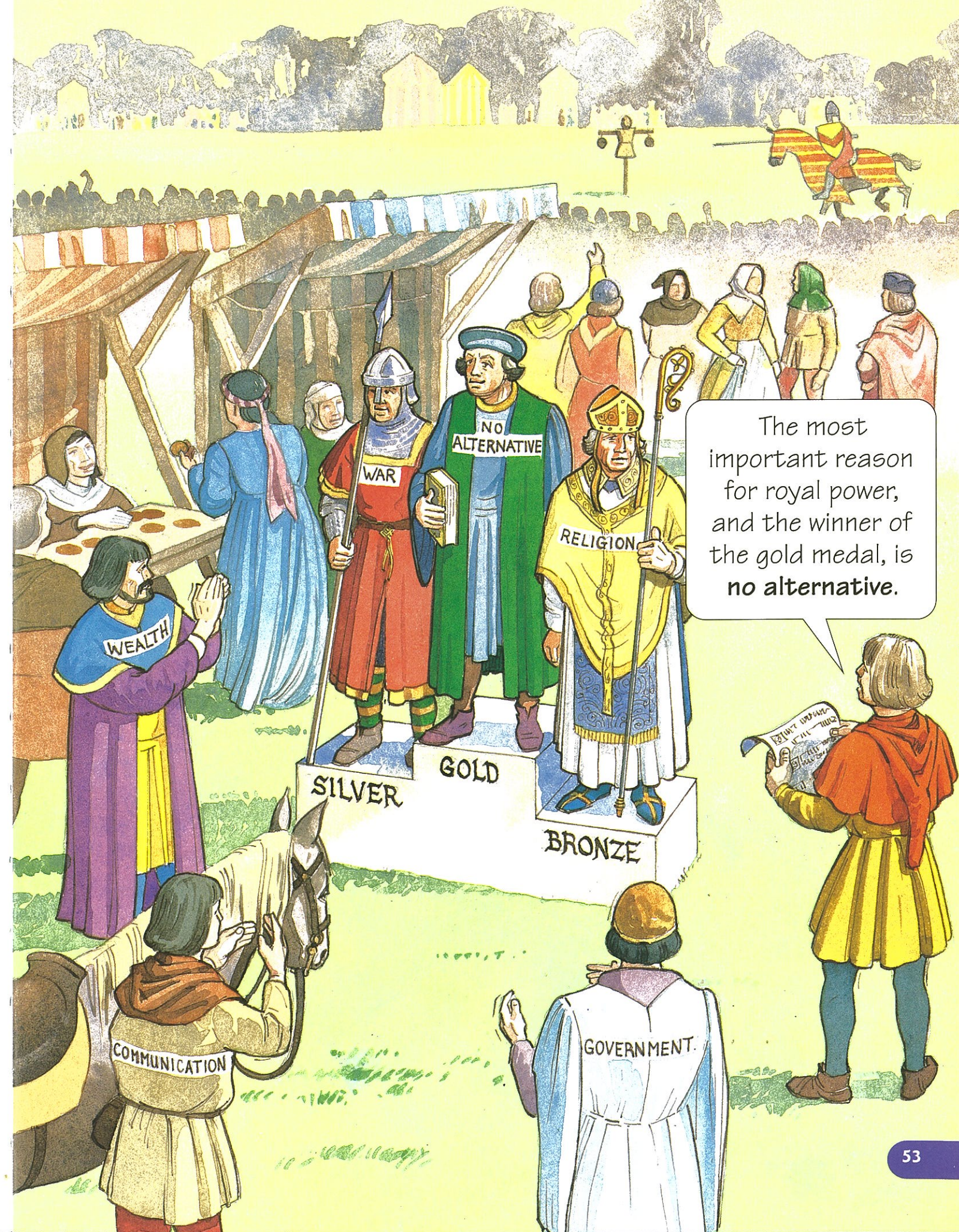
WAR

GOVERNMENT

NO ALTERNATIVE

The country is often at war. We need to defend our land and we need one man to lead and organise our armies. To fight wars we need an heroic leader, not a committee, to decide what to do.

No one can think of any other way of running the country. If a king is deposed he is still replaced by another king! Every country has a king. If only I could think of another system, but I can't.



The most important reason for royal power, and the winner of the gold medal, is no alternative.