

extreme, that they went through every column of additions in their quest of frauds. They were sublime martyrs of arithmetic; they would send back a statement of accounts to a superintendent of army stores because they had detected an error of two farthings made two years previously. So the French administration is the most incorruptible service that ever accumulated wastepaper on the surface of the globe; theft, as His Excellency observed just now, it all but impossible in France, and malversation a figment of the imagination.

"Well, where is the objection? France draws an annual revenue of twelve hundred millions, and she spends it; that is all. Twelve hundred millions come into her cash-box, and twelve hundred millions go out. She actually handles two milliards four hundred millions, and only pays two and a half per cent to guarantee herself against leakage. Our political kitchen account only amounts to sixty millions; the gendarmerie, the law-courts, the prisons, and detectives cost us more and do nothing in return. And we find employment for a class of men who are fit for nothing else, you may be very sure. The waste, if waste there is, could not be better regulated; the Chambers are art and part in it; the public money is squandered in strictly legal fashion. The real leakage consists in ordering public works that are not needed, or not immediately needed; in altering soldiers' uniforms; in ordering men-of-war without ascertaining whether timber is dear or no at the time; in unnecessary preparations for war; in paying the debts of a state without demanding repayment or security, and so forth, and so forth."

BAUDOYER. "But the employé has nothing to do with leakage in high quarters. Mismanagement of national affairs concerns the statesman at the helm."

THE MINISTER (*his conversation being concluded*). "There is truth in what des Lupeaulx was saying just now; but" (*turning to Baudoyer*) "you must bear in mind that no one is looking at the matter from a statesman's point of view. It does not follow that because such and such a piece of ex-