

I do not know whether it is an injury to Mr. Dechène to say that he was disconfited ; but there is not one man in a hundred who would not wager that Mr. Taillon's rejoinder was a refreshment, as pleasing as unexpected, for the poor members, whom the mathematical dissertations of the orators strong in figures, doubtless disposed to yawn.

In the preceding pages I have spoken of Mr. Taillon as a politician. It is fitting that I should add a word regarding his career at the Bar. First of all I shall notice a fact worthy of the attention of lovers of paradoxes.

There is no question but that the legislator, more than any one else, must possess the temperament of the juriconsult, and that nothing is more adapted to mature legal acquirements, and one's store of juridical knowledge, than the preparation of laws. If need were, I could cite great names in support of my proposition, such names as that of Chancellor d'Aguesseau ; but it is evident that the task of comparing the different systems of legislation, the necessity imposed upon one to take existing laws into consideration and to endeavour to foresee the debates which the omission of a single word in the text of an act will give rise to, are eminently well adapted to form jurists. And, nevertheless, from the time that the man of law crosses the threshold of our legislative chambers — rare exceptions apart — he commences to lose interest in matters connected with his profession.

Nevertheless this paradox provides an easy solution, and it is only necessary to closely examine the working of the parliamentary machine to find the key to the enigma. In fact, although the primitive, and, so to speak, natural function of a legislature should be to make laws, Parliament, in England as in the colonies, has assumed or usurped another function which has not been long in becoming the most important. Parliament has constituted itself the judge of the administration of public affairs, and the supreme arbiter of the destinies of the ministry. It is in controlling this administration that the work of the member of the House really consists, and it is work of such an absorbing nature that it seems to-day to engage all his attention. Laws are frequently the work of men who are not members of the Legislature. The latter votes