

In New South Wales, as has been said, no excess appears in the accounts, because they are paid for out of the Colonial Treasurer's advance, and are not included in the accounts at all; but are provided for in the Supplementary Estimates of the following year.

Much the same process serves to exclude excesses from the accounts of Victoria; and, although the detailed account of expenditure is in the form of an Appropriation Account, that is to say, the appropriations are printed alongside of the expenditure, no over-issue is shown.

In Queensland the "Orders in Council authorizing expenditure in anticipation of legislative sanction," are reported by the Auditor-General to have been during the year 1879-80—On Consolidated Fund, £62,126 4d.; and on Loan Expenditure, £21,431 17s. 3d.; the former being a little under 4 per cent. of the expenditure.

In South Australia, for 1878-79, the expenditure in excess of votes was £67,606 19s. 5d., and "Initiative," £3,060 12s. 9d.; in all £70,657 12s. 2d., equivalent to a little over 4 per cent. of the expenditure.

In Tasmania, the excess on the votes was £19,291 6s. 7d., or nearly 5 per cent of the expenditure. But the Auditor-General reports a "return of ordinary expenditure for the year 1879, not provided by Parliament," and another "of special expenditure, not provided by Parliament," which together amount to £35,244 19s. 2d. But a part of this expenditure at all events, apparently, is included in the Appropriation Account, as voted. Should this amount, however, be over-expenditure, in addition to the excesses shown in the Appropriation Account, the ratio of unauthorized would be over 13 per cent. of the expenditure.

In New Zealand, the excess in 1879-80 was £13,266 2s. 10d. on Consolidated Fund Services, which does not reach $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the expenditure for the period. But the total unauthorized expenditure on the Consolidated Fund often greatly exceeds the amount. In 1876-77 it was £31,796 4s. 1d., and in 1877-78 it was £78,442 16s. 1d.

In the English accounts for such years as I have been able to examine, the votes to cover "deficiencies of former years" are very small. In the year ending March 31, 1878, the excesses on votes were £12,814, out of an expenditure of £58,852,947.

General Remarks on the Accounts.

It has been shown that the accounts in the different colonies differ from one another in several important particulars. But they differ also in this respect, that the words "revenue" and "expenditure" do not mean accurately the same in all as applied to any given period. Thus, the revenue of the year sometimes means the revenue received throughout the whole country; sometimes the revenue paid into the chest at the seat of Government; sometimes the revenue received within the year; and sometimes that on account of the year, whether received within it, or in part at a later date.

The word "expenditure" is subject to a similar latitude in interpretation. Sometimes it means the payments made out of the chest during a year, but sometimes includes those made on account of the year—in some cases within three months, and in some cases as much as twelve months afterwards.

In constructing any account it must be determined for what purpose it is wanted; for the figures to be dealt with may be arranged and classified in different modes, so as to display the information required. In public accounts there are two objects in view. First, to prove the correctness of the account; and secondly, to afford information to the public as to the financial condition and government of the country. The General Balance-sheet is designed to meet the first object, but is of little or no use in affording public information. It is not generally intelligible, except to professional accountants; and not always even to such, because the technical names used as headings often fail to convey to any one not