refunded to the Exchequer. But these differences on both sides are not sufficient to impair the utility of the account as showing the state of finances and the current receipts and expenditure of the Government.

In these colonies no such institution as the Exchequer exists, except so far as the "Public Account," first established by Victoria, and since adopted by some other colonies, may be considered to represent it. If it were determined to adopt a uniform system of account by all the colonies, it would have to be settled whether the receipts should include receipts paid into the hands of collectors all over the colony, or such only as were paid into the Bank at the seat of Government; and, similarly, as regards expenditure, whether it should consist only of payments out of the Public Account at the Bank up to the end of the year, or should include those made subsequently on account of, and under the authority of the votes for, the year; and, if the latter, then to what period the accounts should be kept open. As the law and practice is different in the different colonies, and moreover is constantly changing, an agreement on the latter point is not to be hoped for: but there is no reason why a separate account, similar to the Exchequer account, should not be published by all the colonies, in which a common principle should be adopted in stating the account, without interfering with the existing system of account in each colony. I would respectfully submit that the question is one which might form a subject for consideration at the next Intercolonial Conference, or which might indeed possibly be arranged mutually between the various Governments by correspondence. Until this is done no satisfactory or accurate comparison can be made of the financial transactions in the different colonies, because the words "revenue" and "expenditure" do not mean the same things in all.

Before leaving the question of accounts, I would call attention to the English appropriation accounts, which are required by the Imperial Act, 29 and 30 Vict., c. 39, to be annually rendered to Parliament. These accounts are prepared by the departments charged with the expenditure of the votes; and they will be found on examination to contain a memorandum setting forth the cause of every over-expenditure on every vote, and every item of a vote in the Estimates, together with a report from the Controller and Auditor-General on each vote, stating the net saving or excess, the balance to be returned to the Exchequer, and the receipts from sources outside the grants; and certifying that the latter have been paid into the Exchequer. It is only by examination of these Appropriation Accounts that a full idea can be formed of the elaborate machinery provided by Parliament for preventing the over-expenditure of the sums appropriated for the public service. The result is apparent in the very small percentage of excesses.

On the Cost of the Treasury and Audit.

The cost of the Treasury and Audit Offices in each of the Australian Colonies, as it appears on the published accounts for the year 1878–79, may be stated as follows:—

(1.) The Audit Offices.

		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales—	Auditor-General	900 0 0	
	Salaries	5,489 10 4	
	Contingencies	1,680 17 6	
			8,070 7 10
Victoria—	Commisssioners	2,500 0 0	
	Salaries	5,702 1 5	
	Contingencies	1,277 15 6	
			9,479 16 11
Queensland—	Auditor-General	800 0 0	
	Salaries	3,487 10 0	
	Contingencies	1,106 8 11	
			5,393 18 11