

*Travelling Allowances and Expenses.*—Where items under the heading of “ Travelling allowances and expenses ” were expressed in lump sums your Committee requested from the Departments concerned a further explanation. Your Committee is of the opinion that in future estimates the item “ Travelling allowances and expenses ” should be elaborated and explained by either marginal or foot notes.

*Departmental Balance-sheets.*—Owing to the constant and repeated demands of the Public Accounts Committee for several sessions past, and of your Committee, it is pleasing to note that the majority of departmental balance-sheets are available at a much earlier date than formerly, but to afford a proper consideration of the public accounts by Parliament greater expedition is still required.

*High Commissioner's Office (London).*—Colonel G. F. C. Campbell, C.M.G., attended before your Committee and addressed members on the functioning of the High Commissioner's Office in London, and with great detail explained the position concerning the salaries of the staff thereof. It will be remembered that Colonel Campbell made a thorough investigation into the working of the office, on behalf of the Government, while he was in London in 1920.

*Stationery, Paper, &c., and Office Requisites.*—Concerning this item as shown in the estimates of expenditure at page 169 (Printing and Stationery Department) at £52,000, your Committee made inquiry as to how the sum is to be expended. For the information of Parliament, your Committee considers that this item should in future estimates be explained by either marginal or foot notes, and is further of the opinion that the amounts to be expended in local purchases and in London by indent should be also set out.

*Stores Control.*—Besides investigating the system of stores control which obtains in the Working Railways Department, your Committee also summoned the Secretary of the Stores Control Board (Mr. F. J. Brooker) before it to explain the system of control which has been brought into operation by the setting-up of the Stores Control Board. Mr. Brooker also attended subsequent meetings and assisted in your Committee furthering its investigations concerning the control of stores by the Departments. The system of control has resulted in economy, because of the very favourable contracts which the Stores Control Board have been fortunate in securing, and also by its “ tightening-up ” of the issue of stores, &c., by departmental officers.

*Departmental Motor-vehicles.*—All witnesses appearing before your Committee were closely examined on the use of departmental motor-cars for purposes other than official work. Your Committee is of the opinion that all motor-vehicles owned by the Government Departments should have a distinctive designation, so that such motor-vehicles will not be put to private use.

*Trading Departments.*—Your Committee is of the opinion that where an item in the estimates is to be expended in trading, the fact as to whether the previous year's undertakings produced a balance or a deficit should be shown by either marginal or foot notes.

During its consideration of the estimates thirty-three resolutions were agreed to by your Committee, and copies of the same have been forwarded to the Prime Minister (the Hon. J. G. Coates, M.C.) and the Minister of Finance (the Hon. W. Nosworthy). Twelve of such resolutions requisitioned for returns, which were duly furnished for the information and consideration of members of the Committee.

In conclusion, your Committee desires to record its appreciation of the fact that, because of the representations which have been made by the Public Accounts Committee during the present Parliament, the estimates of expenditure are now set out in a more elaborate and lucid way than formerly, and also that the matter of departmental balance-sheets is now receiving more attention than previously.

30th September, 1925.

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