

Supply Bills. In the latter case large sums are placed, for a time at all events, at the absolute disposal of the Ministers of the day. In the former the expenditure of the money granted is limited to specific purposes named in the Bill, and therefore control is so far possible.

In the Appropriation Act the votes are embodied in the clauses instead of being placed in Schedules. The Estimates are not included in the Act, but the votes are taken in great detail. Those of 1880, for example, were 749 in number, besides 183 votes on the Supplementary Estimates for 1879.

Except for moneys belonging to the Trust Funds, all expenditure is voted out of the Consolidated Fund, which includes land revenue. Another Ways and Means Account has been recently created called the Surplus Revenue Account, which consists of the excess of revenue over expenditure, derived mostly from land sales in former years, and which the Government has determined shall be spent on public works and not on current services.

The Loan Acts of late years have been separate and permanent Appropriation Acts, and contain the same clauses as in the Appropriation Act, enabling the Treasurer to issue and pay moneys under the Governor's warrant for the purposes specified in the Act.

The votes are never shown in account as exceeded. Any such excess is provided for out of the Treasurer's Advance Account, and is included, as has been said, in the Supplementary Estimates.

Credits to votes are not allowed. Cash coming in from sales of goods or otherwise is brought to account as Miscellaneous Revenue. The only case in which a vote is credited is where an advance has been made to an officer for the payment of salaries and a portion is refunded.

#### VICTORIA.

The financial year in Victoria ends on the 30th June, and Parliament has usually, of late years, met in May. On one occasion—in 1876—the meeting was delayed till July. The Estimates have usually been laid on the table in July or August, when the Financial Statement is made. In the year 1880, owing to Ministerial changes, the Statement was not made till the 25th of October; and the Estimates were not then before Parliament. The Appropriation Act is not usually passed before December, and it has sometimes not been passed before the following April.

By the Audit Act of 1859, it was provided that the appropriations should expire at the end of the financial year, except for payments coming due under any contract entered into during such year, for which the votes were kept alive for twelve months longer. By an amending Act in 1872, this extension of the Appropriation Act was abolished, and the votes were made to apply only to such services as might come in the course of payment during the year; thus adopting the English system of finance.

This, however, was again altered by an Act recently passed in 1880, which keeps the Appropriation Act alive for services of the year for two months after its close. In practice, this is held to apply only to money earned and due before the end of the year.

The reason which has been given for this recurrence to an obsolete system is that, where the payments are closed on the last day of the financial year, it is open to the Treasurer to include or exclude, at his pleasure, certain expenditure, and so manipulate the finance of the year for political purposes. Thus, in the case of moneys out on imprest, he can charge them as expenditure because issued, or may exclude them as not being accounted for. Apart, however, from the fact that there is no difficulty in defining by law how such imprests shall be charged, as is the case in New Zealand, it is not clear why the same objection may not apply to the 31st of August, or any other day on which the account is finally closed, as to the 30th June. One year with another, the sums excluded from the year's