

BUDGET CONTROL

*An Introduction to the Financial System of
New South Wales*

By

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AUSTRALIA:
ANGUS & ROBERTSON LIMITED
89 CASTLEREAGH STREET, SYDNEY

1931

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By the same Author

SHADOWS AND REALITIES OF GOVERNMENT
CITY GOVERNMENT BY COMMISSION

WHOLLY SET UP AND PRINTED
IN AUSTRALIA BY
HALSTEAD PRINTING COMPANY
LTD., ALLEN STREET, WATERLOO
1931

REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL
POSTOFFICE, SYDNEY, FOR TRANS-
MISSION THROUGH THE POST AS
A BOOK

OBTAINABLE IN LONDON FROM
THE AUSTRALIAN BOOK COM-
PANY, 16 FARRINGTON AVENUE,
E.C.4.

TO
L. V. B.

“There was never anything by the wit of man so well devised,
or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not
been corrupted.”

—Preface, *Book of Common Prayer*.

PREFACE

For an understanding of the methods and principles of Australian Finance, most people have turned to English writers for guidance, because our system has been modelled upon that of England. Anyone familiar with the writings of Bastable, Higgs, Young, Hawtrey, and Hills, will recognize the debt which the present writer owes them. But reliance upon them may lead the unwary Australian reader into pitfalls. We often use the same term to describe officials, funds, and practices; as for example, the Auditor General, accounting officers, or collections in aid. But the English description is not accurate for Australia. Again, the English Treasury is not only differently organized from our own, but it possesses an equipment which enables it to exercise controls over finance with which we are unfamiliar. Each system again has its Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, but each committee works on different lines.

Modern government is as much an art as a science, and we are constantly being thrown back upon the methods by which men seek to achieve their purposes. Indeed, it has become a commonplace that the form of an organization vitally affects results. This is peculiarly true of our financial system. In explaining the machinery of this financial system, and throwing into relief the methods by which we work it, I have hoped to provide material for constructive reform. A good

commencement has already been made by the measures initiated by the Hon. B. S. Stevens, M.L.A., who was Treasurer in this State during the years 1928-1930. But these reforms need to be consolidated and extended.

While I have described our system in non-technical and popular language, I hope I have not sacrificed accuracy for the sake of simplicity. In this, I have had much help from my friends and former colleagues in the Public Service of this State. The Auditor General, Mr John Spence, has read the greater part of the book in manuscript, as has also Professor Copland. The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Mr W. R. McCourt, has read the chapter on parliamentary procedure. The Registrar of Funded Stock at the Treasury, Mr G. Schauer, has read that on borrowing. While their advice and assistance have smoothed my path, they must not be held responsible for any opinions I have expressed. Of the many others to whom I am indebted for help, I should like to mention Mr W. S. Collier, Senior Auditor at the Audit Office, Mr T. D. Kelly, Expenditure Accountant at the Treasury, Colonel R. H. Beardsmore, Chief Accountant of the Lands Department, and Mr C. R. Chapman, Under-Secretary of the Treasury.

Finally, without the co-operation of my colleague at the University, Mr G. V. Portus, I am afraid that the preparation of this material would have occupied much longer time than it has.

F.A.B.

*University of Sydney,
March 1931.*

CONTENTS

WHAT THE SYSTEM IS - - - - -	I
The Growth of Expenditure. The Budget System. Political and Administrative Officials. The Treasury and the Auditor General. The Public Accounts Committee.	
THE ESTIMATES - - - - -	14
Their Significance. How They are Prepared. Treasury Revision. The Budget Committee 1928. The Form of the Estimates. Classification of Services. Business Undertakings. Collections in Aid. Supplementary Estimates. Loan Estimates. The Sufficiency of the Control. Suggested Reforms. A Bureau of General Administration.	
WHAT PARLIAMENT DOES AND HOW IT DOES IT - - -	38
The Party System. Payments in Anticipation of the Appropriation Act. The Objections to Delaying the Budget. Supply Acts. The Procedure for Dealing with Finance. Committee of Supply. Committee of Ways and Means. The Estimates in the House. The Appropriation Bill. Taxation Bills. A Criticism of the System. Some Suggested Reforms.	
HOW THE GOVERNMENT COLLECTS, KEEPS AND SPENDS OUR MONEY - - - - -	67
The Sources of Income of the State. The Collection of Money. Banking Arrangements. Checks and Balances. The Expenditure of Money. Safeguards by Law and Convention. Expenditure Without Authority. Audit. Public Accounts Committee.	
FUNDS AND FINANCE - - - - -	89
The Essentials of a Satisfactory System. The Problem of Business Undertakings. Consolidated Revenue Fund. Special Purposes (Revenue) Fund. Closer Settlement Fund. Sydney	

Harbour Trust Fund. Government Railways and Tramways Fund. Road Transport and Traffic Fund. Metropolitan Transport Trust. Newcastle and District Transport Trust. The Effect of Separate Funds. Assigned Revenues. Special Deposits Account. Special Accounts. General Banking Account. Personal Accounts of Settlers. The Proposed Income and Expenditure System of Keeping State Accounts.

HOW WE BORROW AND MANAGE OUR DEBT - - - - 120

Borrowing Policy. A Loan Act. (A) Funded Debt (a) Debentures (b) Funded Stock (c) Other Funded Stock (d) Inscribed Stock (e) Gold Bonds (f) Treasury Bills. (B) Floating Debt (a) Ministerial Certificates (b) Overdrafts and Advances (c) Commonwealth Treasury Bills. (C) Contingent Liabilities. How Loans are Raised (a) London Loans (b) New York Loans (c) Local Loans. The Financial Agreement and Its effect on Borrowing. Underwriting. State Sinking Funds. Sinking Funds Under the Financial Agreement. Repayment of Loans. How Loan Moneys are Dealt With.