



1918.

 PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS:
REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

Brought up by Mr. Treasurer, December 11, 1918, and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.

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REPORT.

A meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts was held on Wednesday, the 11th December, 1918, to consider certain applications received by the Honourable the Treasurer from three Local Bodies for additional loans.

The Treasurer reminded the Committee that circulars had been sent to all the Local Bodies informing them that applications for loans should be sent in prior to the 30th June in each year, and that these applications should be made upon printed forms detailing such information as the Committee necessarily requires, and should be accompanied by plans and specifications, and a copy of the proposed Bill.

Early in the Session three applications had been received in proper form, and were referred by the House to, and dealt with by the Committee, and reported upon to the House. In each of these cases the Bills have already been passed by both Houses, and a Bill has been brought in reappropriating a balance of a former unused loan vote towards the new loans, and it was thought that the work of the Committee and of Parliament was concluded for this Session so far as it concerned Loans to Local Bodies. The Committee fully realised that it is most inconvenient to have applications made by Local Bodies during the closing days of the Session, and quite contrary to the practice which had been laid down. There was also an absence of much information of an explicit nature which had been required in other cases. The time allowed for investigation was too short, and the consideration by Parliament of three fresh Bills, each containing new proposals, and the introduction of a new Loans Bill to empower the Government to raise the required moneys in order to provide the moneys for the loans asked for would also become necessary, and that at a period of the Session when the financial business had been completed so far as the House of Assembly was concerned. It is also pointed out that certain Standing Orders framed to give due notice to those interested would have to be suspended if the measures are to be considered by Parliament this year. In fact, the applications themselves had not even been referred to the Committee by the House.

The Committee, however, having regard to the urgency of the applications, resolved to proceed with their consideration on the understanding that a precedent should not thereby be established, and now leave it to the House to decide whether it will proceed with the Bills.

The applications were as follows:—

- (1) Application from the Evandale Water Trust for an additional loan of £1000.

The Honourable the Premier (Honourable W. H. Lee), who was present, informed the Committee that a deputation from the Trustees had waited upon him, and informed him that it had become necessary to instal a new pumping plant if the residents in the Water District are to continue to receive a proper supply of water. The Committee resolved to recommend the application to the favourable consideration of the House, provided that the rating power be increased to 3s. 6d. in the £, and that a Sinking Fund of £2 per centum per annum upon the fresh advance be prescribed.

- (2) Application from the Zeehan Municipal Council for an additional loan of £3500 in connection with its Electric Lighting and Power Scheme.

In 1916 this Council was authorised to borrow £6500 for certain extensions of its electric lighting schemes. Orders have been placed for machinery now in course of delivery which, consequent upon the enhanced cost and additional freight, war risk, insurance, and other expenses, will cost £9000, added to which the cost of additions and alterations to buildings has absorbed £830.

The Committee resolved to recommend the application to the favourable consideration of the House on the ground that the Municipal Council had committed itself to the expenditure, and had already paid to the contractors the sum of £3960 on account of the machinery, and that the supply of power was urgently required by the tributers engaged in mining in and around Zeehan. It was further stated that the greater part of this machinery would be required even when the King River Scheme is completed.

- (3) Application from the Leven Municipal Council for an additional loan of £1000 in connection with the Ulverstone Electric Lighting Scheme. (This application was made verbally by Mr. E. Hobbs, M.H.A., who informed the Committee that in the course of extending its lighting operations the Council had overdrawn its banking account, and now desired to borrow from the State in order to liquidate the overdraft and make provision for further necessary extensions.)

It was resolved to recommend this application to the favourable consideration of the House.

N. E. LEWIS, Chairman.

No. 1 Committee Room,
House of Assembly,
December 17, 1918.