

purpose of being expended by the local authorities on roads, bridges, and public works within their respective districts; and further, we shall ask Parliament to agree to one uniform land law, whereby the public estate, subject to classification, shall be sold at uniform prices throughout the Colony, whether on a system embracing free selection, deferred payments, or otherwise.

Sir, I wish it also to be understood that, if administrative reforms and reduction of expenditure can be effected to an extent which may allow of any increase of the proportion of 20 per cent. referred to, such proportion shall have the benefit of it accordingly.

On this subject I desire to add that, while the circumstances into which the Colony has been permitted to drift render it imperative that the Land Revenue should be dealt with as we have just proposed, my colleagues and myself fully recognize that one of the most legitimate objects to which that revenue ought to be applied is to render available for settlement the particular locality from whence it has been derived; in fact, this ought to be regarded as one of the main conditions upon which the purchase-money is paid. We are therefore of opinion that, in apportioning the Public Revenue throughout the Colony, such condition should be kept faithfully in view.

Before proceeding further, I may be permitted to say that the Government looks forward to being enabled to submit to this House next session well-considered proposals, based upon sound data, whereby important districts may be opened up and connected with the main railway lines by means of branch lines, to be constructed out of the proceeds of the land, which will be rendered valuable and accessible by such branch lines. There are at present, as honorable members are aware, extensive areas of public territory throughout the Colony which are unavailable for settlement, and which must continue to be so until rendered accessible by railways or roads. This is a matter in respect to which the Government looks with favour upon the action that has been taken during the present session by private members. We are of opinion, however, that it is a subject which, in the future, ought to be dealt with by the Government, and we shall be prepared to devote to it that consideration which its importance deserves.

#### MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF MAIN LINES OF ROADS AND BRIDGES.

The Government has daily, since in office, had brought under its notice the necessity of taking some steps to protect and keep in repair the main roads and bridges of the Colony; and although, by the legislation of last year, the Counties were created to do this work, I regret to say they have been unable in too many cases to grapple with the difficulties of the task thereby imposed upon them; and if the Government, after due consideration, find it to be to the interest of the Colony that it should undertake the work, it will not fail to do so, even if a portion of the subsidies payable to any local bodies benefited by any particular road or public work may have to be diverted for that purpose.

#### REDUCTION IN DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE.

Some interest has been excited by that portion of the Hon. the Premier's Statement which had relation to a reduction in the salaries of Ministers. There is a very laudable curiosity abroad as to the extent and nature of these proposed re-