

Wednesday, March 11th

distribute the burden of highway maintenance.

Mr. Biggs expressed concern, however, for the fate of the bus services of Ontario under the added impost of a gas tax, and thought that the Government might consider a revision of the seating capacity tax which they already contribute to Government coffers. He knew of sections where school children had to rely entirely upon such service for attendance at school.

Highways Expenditures.

In the matter of highways expenditures, he thought the Treasurer unfair in placing at \$47,000,000 the highways expenditures of the last five years, when of that amount \$20,000,000 was returnable by municipalities and the Dominion Government. And, moreover, he said, the general statement of a 50 per cent. reduction in the cost of highways since the advent of the Ferguson Government was misleading, inasmuch as pavements varied as to types of construction.

The Headlight Nuisance.

After urging a readjustment in the manner of designating various types of highways, Mr. Biggs urged legislation to do away with the glaring headlights noticed, and declared himself pleased with Hon. G. S. Henry's announcement that such was the Government's intention. He commended the "stop street" principle adopted in Hamilton as a splendid means of safeguarding traffic.

Thomas J. Mahoney (Conservative, South Wentworth) had some criticism of the retail Hydro stores selling electrical appliances, particularly on the easy-credit terms. He also thought the cost of education was beginning to bear too heavily on rural people, and gave instances of how the assessment of his own township had increased since 1911. He compared highway construction costs of last year with the cost in the former Government times, quoting figures to the advantage of the present Administration. Last year's cost was about \$20,000 a mile, he said, while the costs in Wentworth County before that had been at an average of \$70,000 a mile.

Wants Probe Continued.

Aurelien Belanger (Liberal, Russell), after calling upon the Government to probe to the bottom the partial revelations respecting Home Bank secret payments, said that members took up the time of the House in talking tariff, which was a Federal affair. He then turned his attention to English-French schools, and criticized the practice of taking pupils from their own local schools to attend the fifth class at these other institutions. Instead of helping, it was hindering the efficiency of the bilingual schools, he argued. He also thought great care should be shown in law revision, as the last attempt had resulted in unexpected complications in separate school administration.

T. A. Thompson (Conservative, North Lanark) moved the adjournment of the debate.

BIGGS AND IRELAND MENTIONED IN BILLS

Exempted From Penalties for Sales to Government While in Office

MORE EXPLANATIONS MADE

First, second and third readings were given in quick order yesterday afternoon in the Legislature to the bill exempting from all penalties, including the loss of their seats, incurred by W. H. Ireland, Conservative, West Hastings, and Hon. F. C. Biggs, Progressive, North Wentworth, they having inadvertently been in receipt of public funds while they were members of the Legislature.

In addition the bill contains a clause of general effect that where lands, etc., are taken by the Government from members of the Legislature, and where the price is set by a Judge, the members affected will not come under the penalty provisions, but they shall not be permitted to vote on these specific matters in the House. The Lieutenant-Governor may give assent to the measure today.

Progressive Leader Raney made a statement respecting Mr. Biggs's position which arose when the Highways Department took over a corner of his farm in putting through a new road. The cause of action arose when Mr. Biggs was Minister of Public Works and Highways, and he at that time refused to discuss the matter with the Government at all, standing aside and taking no part. When the new Government came in he told the department to go ahead and determine what the remuneration should be. The department, in February, 1924, sent him a cheque for \$395.40, which cheque was produced yesterday, still uncashed. Mr. Raney contended that this was not a matter of contract with the Government, but technically it might be a violation of the act.