nstitute with the Wilberforce Educational nstitute. and to amend the Act incorporating the Wilberforce Educational Institute.

Mr. Monteith—To consolidate and amend the Act incorporating the Stratford and Huron Railway Company, and the Acts renewing and amending the same.

The following Bills were read a second time :—

Mr. McManus—To incorporate the town of Orangeville, and to define the limits thereof.

Mr. Code—To amend the charter of the Bathurst and Tay River Macadamized Road Company.

Mr. Meridith—To amend an Act intituled "An Act to incorporate the London, Huron, and Bruce Railway Company," and an Act intituled, "An Act respecting the Lond n, Huron, and Bruce Railway Company, and to extend the powers conferred upon the said Company, and for other purposes."

## ELECTION TRIAL LAW.

Attorney-General MOWAT moved the second reading of the Bill to amend the laws respecting the election of members of the Legislative Assembly, and respecting the trials of such elections. He said the legislation we had had on this subject had been very valuable, as had been shown during the last general election, as compared with that for the House of Commons in the matter of expense, and the prevention of corruption of all kinds. The object of this Bill was to perfect that legislation. There was no doubt that, notwithstanding the improvements effected in the law, there was more money expended at some of the Ontario elections than was at all desirable. Most of the improvements which he proposed to incorporate in the Bill have been suggested to him by his judicial experience in the matter of elections, and had been suggested by him to the late Attorney-General, in pursuance of a beneficial practice which prevailed among judges of calling the attention of the Government of the day to defects in the law which their judicial experience pointed out to them. The principal amendment which he proposed was the introduction of the audit system which prevailed in England, some provisions in respect to the trial of elections, and some with reference to the scrutiny of votes at trials. To the first of these he attached a great deal of importance. Its provisions were taken substantially from the law as it has existed for some years in England The substance of the proposed amendment was that all election expenses should be paid by the candidate through an agent, whose name should be communicated to the proper officer, and published so that everyone should know who was the agent. Through him the money of the candidate was to be dispensed; and it was further required that all the money should be paid through this agent or agents; that the candidate should dispense nothing but his own personal expenses; that all accounts should be sent within one month to the agent, and a detailed account should be sent within a short period afterwards by the agent to the returning officer. The accounts were to be open to inspection and an abstract of them published The object of this was to prevent any secret spending of money at elections, in order that candidates might know that no money might be spent which would not be made known afterwards. Money had been spent in direct acts of corruption, but more had been spent in indirect acts of corruption—had been paid over under pretence of some quite legal proceeding while the object was corrupt. The knowledge of the fact that the law required the publicity of all money spent would have the effect of preventing the expenditure. With respect to the trial of elections, the principal provision which this Bill contained was one which provided that the candidates should be liable to oral examination before the trial He attached immense importance to this, and he was sure that every one who had been engaged in election contests would see the great value of this amendment. The object was to ascertain what the facts were, so far as an examination would enable them to be shown, before the expense of a trial was gone to. This would in many cases prevent the expense of a trial. He then quoted, as an example of the benefits which would arise from this provision, the South Grenville election trial, at which trial both parties were under the belief that a large amount of money had been spent by the opposite party. The trial proved that, on the contrary, it was one of the cheapest elections which had ever been conducted in the Province, and that neither of the candidates had spent a single cent. If these gentlemen had been examined before going to trial an immense expense would have been saved The trial lasted for a fortnight, and during all that time the Court House was filled with witnesses, and in the end, to save expense, the parties came to a compromise. He explained the advantage which arose in the Court of Chancery by the use of this system of oral examinations before trial. Another amendment to the old Bill proposed to do away with the expense attendant on the present system of scrutiny of votes. The witnesses summoned from all parts of the Riding in many cases numbered over two hundred, and the expense and inconvenience entailed was, of course, very great. It had occurred to him, and the suggestion had been approved of by the legal gentlemen present at these trials to whom he had spoken, that it would answer all practical purposes and greatly reduce the expense if the scrutiny for each township or municipality should take place in the municipality itself, so as to avoid the necessity of all the witnesses going down to the county town. No one could fail to see that the saving from witness fees would be very great indeed, and he did not think any hon. gentleman could suggest a more effective and less expensive mode of obtaining an effectual scrutiny than the one he proposed. The Bill provided that the judge should be at liberty to go himself if he pleased to the different townships, or to send a competent barrister to perform that duty for him, a power of revision remaining with the judge. The barrister would have power to decide upon the validity of the votes as he went along, or to state at the time that he reserved judgment for the opinion of the judge. These were the principal amendments, but there were a few minor ones which he proposed to make in the statute of '71 as to what constituted "corrupt practices." By that statute it was enacted that a candidate guilty of corrupt practices was to be debarred from election or holding office under the Crown for eight years, but that Act did not discriminate between corrupt practices of great moral turpitude and those of lesser importance, such for instance, as wearing a ribbon as a badge. He proposed to enact that corrupt practices in this sense should consist of "bribery, treating, and undue influence, or any of such offences as are defined by this or any Act of this Legislature, or recognized by the common law of the Parliament of England." The Bill also proposed that an affidavit should be taken by the assessor that he had not valued any property too low for the sake of depriving its owner from having a vote; also, that persons under the present law rendered incompetent to vote shall be incompetent to act as election agents. There were several other provisions of minor importance in his Bill which he need not refer to specially. He would be greatly surprised if the House did not agree with him that there would be considerable improvements on the old election law.

Mr. RICHARDS said he had listened to the explanations of the hon. Atty.-General with regard to the Bill with attention, and he thought some changes could be made with benefit. He wished to point out that the expenses of an enquiry were greatly increased because the voters' list was not considered final, and he thought it would be advisable to make the voters' list final.

Mr. CAMERON was sure that all the gentlemen who usually went with him on that side of the House would be disposed to give the Atty.-General every assistance in their power for the purpose of making a perfect Election Bill motion to prevent bribery and corruption at elections. Now, he did not think the Bill had received quite as much consideration from the Atty.-General as one would suppose, after the experience he had had as judge in disputed election matters. With regard to the provisions of the Bill, The first provision prohibited the furnishing or providing of refreshments or drinks except at the house of the candidate. Now, in cities, what was to prevent the furnishing of refreshments at private houses? He thought there should be no exception of that kind whatever, for that method of supplying refreshments would be quite as objectionable as if they were provided at an hotel or tavern. With regard to the provisions relating to the assessor, he thought as much mischief could be done by a too high assessment for the purpose of giving a party a vote. It was provided that an assessment should not be made too low, but it did not provide that an assessment should be made too high. In reference to the question of expenses, his view was that no candidate should employ an agent. He was of opinion that the candidate only should spend money, so that he could be compelled to swear to the expenditure. Money after