ONTARIO LEGISLATURE.

FOURTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION.

TUESDAY, Jan. 25.

PETITIONS.

Mr. Blezard—Of the County Council of Peterboro', praying that an Act may pass to relieve them of liabilities in respect of certain railway by-laws.

Mr. Gibson (Hamilton)—Of the Hamilton and North-Western Railway Company, praying that an Act may pass to authorize the issue of bonds.

Mr. Crooks—Of John Barwick *et al.*, of Blandford, praying that the Act before the House respecting St. Paul's Church, Woodstock, may not pass.

Mr. Near—Of the Niagara District Pomona Grange; Mr. Paxton, of the Township Council of Uxbridge; Mr. Patterson, of the Township Council of Vaughan; Mr. Baxter, of the Township Council of North Cayuga; Mr. Robertson (Halton), of the township of Nelson; Mr. Wigle, of the Township Council of Anderson; Mr. Near, of Elisha Graybell, and others, of Welland; Mr. Nairn, of Jebial Marlatt, *et al.*, of Elgin, severally praying for free markets.

Mr. Waters—Of the County County of Middlesex, praying for amendments to Municipal Act respecting culverts; of the same, praying for amendments to the License Act respecting license fund.

Mr. Gibson (Huron)—Of J. J. Foster and others, of Windsor; Mr. Laidlaw, of James Mannell and others, of Drayton; Mr. Gibson (Hamilton), of Hamilton Temperance Reform Club, also of Robert Evans *et al.*, of Hamilton, severally praying for amendments to the License Act respecting the hours of closing hotel bars.

FIRST READINGS.

Mr. Mowat—A Bill to amend the Act respecting the registration of co-partnerships of business firms.

Mr. McCraney—A Bill to amend the Municipal Act respecting drainage.

THE JUDICATURE BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill to consolidate the Superior Courts. The object of the Bill, as they knew, was to simplify the administration of justice and to do away with the existing anomaly of the wide difference between courts of law and equity. The origin of Courts of Equity arose out of the necessity in England of finding some way of mitigating the severity of the common law. The Judicature Act of England was introduced in 1873 and amended in 1875, and had given great satisfaction there. The value of that system was attested by its success in England. The changes effected by that Bill were so important that it had been called a legal "revolution." It 1877 the system was introduced into Ireland, and he failed to see any just grounds by which he could justify delay in introducing it into Ontario. Some thirty years ago the State of New York adopted a code of this kind, and although no human device could be perfect, yet no one thought of going back to the old system. A consequence of the improved system in England was that suits were got ready so much earlier, and the judges were now able to get through with the business. Here they would have no such difficulty. He did not propose to go into the details of the Act, as that would be best discussed in Committee. The Act was considerably improved since its introduction last session. The most striking changes and improvements he would briefly enumerate. The conduct of certain classes of cases was restricted in the Bill of last session to the Court of Chancery, whilst the Bill as it now was gave an equal jurisdiction in all cases to the Courts of Common Law. Another feature introduced into the Bill provided for the inspection of sheriff's and other offices of the Superior Courts. A change was also made which related to the subject of appeals. Appeals were made now when the sum involved in litigation was not large. The Bill proposed to limit appeals to the Ontario Court of Appeal to the sum of $500 in some cases, and $1,000 in others, and to the Supreme Court of Canada to $2,000—this latter because that was the limit in Lower Canada. The Provinces had limited appeals to the Privy Council, and he saw no solid objection to their limiting appeals to the Supreme Court. As a general thing it was best for suitors to be content with less appeal power. There were some typographical errors in the Bill which he noticed, and to which he would again refer.

Mr. MORRIS said this Bill was an adaptation of a plan which had been already adopted in England, and which had given satisfaction there. A prejudice existed in the minds of some people against it, but he thought the sentiment of the country was in favour of the principle of the Bill now under consideration. The gentlemen on his side of the House would give it careful attention, reserving to themselves the right of criticism and amendment. He was dubious as to their right to limit appeal to the Supreme Court, and it was uncertain how the Supreme Court would regard that alteration.

The Bill was then read a second time.

SETTLEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Mr. YOUNG moved for an address to the Lieut.-Governor praying for a return of any correspondence or papers, not hitherto brought down, which may have passed between the Governments of Ontario, of the Dominion, or of Quebec in relation to the final settlement of the accounts of the late Province of Canada. He wished to have steps taken to bring that tedious affair to a close. He wanted the matter kept before the country. He had understood that after the decision of the Privy Council it would have been settled long ago. Another reason why they should have a settlement was that without one they could not come to a definite conclusion as to the Provincial finances. He had no doubt that the Treasurer had done all in his power to conclude a settlement. But the matter required direct attention, as it was an urgent one.

Mr. WOOD said that the hon. gentleman stated it was strange that accounts of thirteen years' standing should remain unsettled, but it was known that arbitration had occurred between Ontario and Quebec on the subject. It was also a