

the rights of Ontario against the Dominion or against any other Province.

(11) To enforce all laws enacted for the protection of public morality with firmness and impartiality.

(12) To maintain the efficiency of our system of education, and to administer the same in the interests of the whole people, irrespective of class or creed.

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All this formed a large task, and there were some who doubted the ability of the Government to carry out the programme. In six months, as we shall show, the work, so far as the Government is concerned, has been practically accomplished. But not only has the Ontario Government faithfully fulfilled the task thus set for itself, but it has performed much more. The fisheries service has been remodelled and perfected since the judgment of the Privy Council defining the rights of the Province in that connection. A Bureau of Labor will, in accordance with legislation passed, be immediately established for the purpose of publishing information regarding statistics relating to employment, wages, hours of labor, co-operation and strikes. A resolution was passed making it obligatory on the Government to see that the current rate of wages shall be paid to workmen of all trades on work done by contract or otherwise for the Province.

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One of the most important pieces of financial work done by the Legislature during the session was the passage of an act extending the scope of loan companies. Formerly the loan companies were confined in their business to the loaning of money on real estate. In times of depression in the real estate markets the companies not only found their sources of revenue very much contracted, but they made serious losses. The measure in question allows these companies to make loans on the public securities of the Dominion or the Provinces of Canada, and upon the terminating debentures of industrial companies and railways, and upon chartered banks, certain restrictions being mentioned in connection with the last-named collateral. This was considered a very opportune piece of legislation. It was necessary to extend the scope of

the loan companies' business so as to place those corporations upon a better footing. Not only are many Canadians dependent for private incomes on the dividend disbursements of the loan companies, but our credit in the British markets, where there are large amounts of loan companies' debentures outstanding, is in a measure at stake. This, therefore, was wise and useful legislation.

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During the latter part of the recess of 1899 careful attention was paid to the framing of measures to be brought down in accordance with the promises made by Mr. Ross when he was appointed Premier. Soon after the House met the report of the Financial Commission was laid on the table. It showed the exact financial position of the Province, reported a substantial cash surplus, and while approving of the general financial system in vogue, made valuable recommendations concerning the methods of keeping the accounts of the Province. It also gave a comprehensive and concise statement of the receipts and expenditures of Ontario since Confederation.

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The drainage aid act, designed to reclaim a large amount of waste land for the purposes of agriculture, and to undertake large works of drainage and complete other drainage schemes which it would not be fair to ask the municipalities to carry out, has become law, and will operate to the general advantage of many parts of the Province.

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The discussions on the West Elgin commission emphasized the fact, previously known, that the members of the Government and their supporters deplored as much as anyone else the irregularities that have taken place, and showed that good progress is being made by the commission. The election bill provides for certain amendments that will effectually prevent the repetition of the irregularities that have taken place, and provides adequate penalties for offenders. The Government, in common with all Liberals, is anxious to preserve the good election record the Liberal party has so long enjoyed. In the debate on this bill it was shown that during the last quarter of a century or more since the Liberals have been in power in this Province, according to the official returns, out of 734 returning officers appointed in connection with elections the conduct of only one has been