

THE LEGISLATURE'S SESSION.

Ontario's Legislature has passed through its first session since being "orphaned" by the departure of Mr. Ferguson to London, and the result is not as appalling as was expected. Queen's Park's condition without "Dictator" Ferguson was too serious to contemplate, in the opinion of some of the politicians. But the fears were largely unwarranted. The worst that happened, probably, was the return of a measure of freedom of speech among the rank and file on the Government side. Some of the Tory members "spoke out in meeting" quite freely and criticized Government bills. The new Prime Minister, Mr. Henry, apparently was not worried thereby, and, though overwhelmed by Departmental duties, he passed through the session with enhanced prestige in piloting bills, if not adding to his reputation as a Parliamentary speaker. He is largely a silent Leader, but knows what is going on. He also showed firmness and a capacity to say "No" beyond the expectation of House members.

It was, in fact, an important session for all three Leaders. Mr. W. E. N. Sinclair, House Leader of the Liberals, gained in influence, and was especially effective in getting the Agriculture Committee busy as a real working body which gathered information and reported conclusions in a non-partisan manner. Mr. Sinclair was also the first to suggest the creation of a special committee to study taxation problems during the recess. Here, indeed, is a worthy field, with various phases of overlapping and confusion to be adjusted. Hon. H. C. Nixon, Leader of the Progressives, and a former member of the Drury Cabinet, blossomed out as a man of courage and initiative, taking part in many debates and influencing important legislation. The larger part played by the two Opposition Leaders is a new phase of Provincial politics which must be advantageous to the Province at large.

Financial matters caused general concern, with a deficit for the past year and a larger one in sight for the current year. A new small tax on the capital stock of corporations operating in the Province and an increase in liquor prices are two means taken to meet the recurring deficits, but the outlook for Provincial finance is not bright. If the Dominion Government implements the promise of Mr. Bennett before the last election, that Ottawa will pay nearly the whole of the old-age pensions for all Provinces, Ontario will be saved nearly \$8,000,000 outlay for this purpose, following the fiscal year ending Oct. 31 next.

The new Welfare Department has been