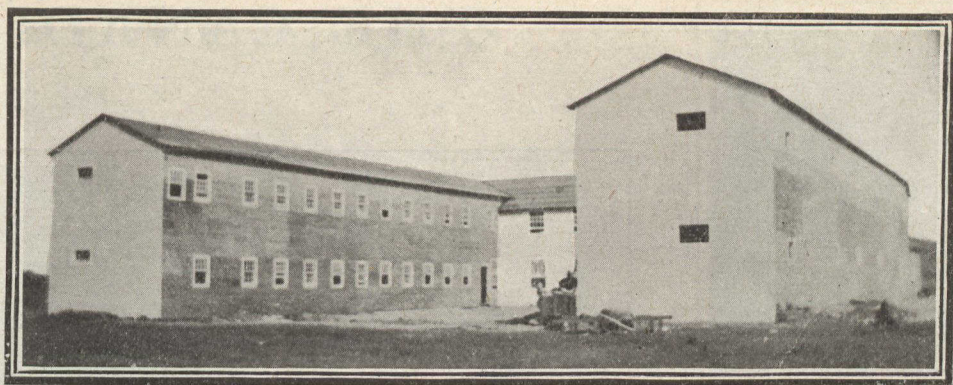




Temporary Sleeping Quarters at Guelph Prison Farm

Hanna the Roosevelt of Ontario

By MAIN JOHNSON

Prison reform has never been quite a dead issue since the days of John Howard. But there are more prisons in the new world to-day than there were in England when Howard reformed the English prisons. Most of these prisons either are or have been in need of reform. The CANADIAN COURIER has published a number of articles during the past two years dealing with prison reform. The issue of February 8, 1908, contained a short summary of the Cleveland farm colony administered by Mayor Johnson of Cleveland. December 5, 1908, contained an

article by Mr. Joseph Downey, M.P.P., dealing with "Our Attitude Towards the Criminal." In the same issue was an appreciation of the work of Mr. J. A. Leonard, who in the Mansfield Reformatory is working out a scheme of moral reform similar to that now being enacted by Hon. Mr. Hanna in Ontario; and on January 2, 1909, appeared a further article by Mr. Downey dealing with "The Employment of Prisoners." The article on this page, however, is the first to deal with the scheme of prison reform in Canada.

It is always interesting to see a public man at play. If you can see him at work and at play at the same time, it is all the better. This was the recent experience of a fewfortunates, who, by invitation of Hon. W. J. Hanna, spent twenty-four hours with him at the new Provincial Prison Farm at Guelph. The man behind the prison reform movement, which has culminated in this new institution is the Provincial Secretary himself.

Hon. W. J. Hanna is one of the ablest and most popular men in the Ontario Cabinet. After the trip to Guelph, no one who was there, could doubt for a moment, the causes of this popularity. Mr. Hanna in the short space of one day and a night showed that he was strenuous, earnest, democratic; a man of varied and intense interests, and a human being with a great heart.

Hanna has been called "The Roosevelt of Ontario." Hanna does resemble Roosevelt in at least one admirable feature. Both are men who do things—active statesmen, who have definite plans, and who set to work to carry them out.

It is in connection with the Prison Farm that Hanna can be seen at his best to-day. Three years ago he outlined a scheme of prison reform, which would do away with the confinement and degradation of a barred prison, and substitute something which would appeal to a man's better nature; in short, a reformatory for a prison. At that time he hinted that a farm would be the ideal solution.

Now, only three years later, his scheme is in full working order. Nothing less than a revolution has been accomplished. To anyone who is acquainted with life in Central Prison, with the high stone walls, the armed guards, the separate cells, the isolation of the prisoners, it would seem as if he was in More's "Utopia" if he were transplanted to Guelph.

In that remarkable dream-book written in 1516, More declares the idea of punishment or reformation to be "nothing else but the destruction of vice and the saving of men." He advises that prisoners

be so treated that "none is hopeless or in despair to recover again his former state of freedom by giving good tokens and likelihood of himself that he will



One of the rare instances when Hon. Mr. Hanna has been known to be "on the fence."

ever after that live a true and honest man."

In Guelph you may see the "boys" (for that is the name given to the prisoners there), living all together in a light, airy building, sleeping in well ventilated dormitories, eating the best food in a breezy, clean dining-room, working at the various duties of a farm, and doing construction work on the property. The handful of guards are foremen rather than sentinels.

This in brief outline is Hanna's Prison Farm. Great is the interest which he takes in it. All day long he tramped over the 800-acre farm with his guests.

"You soon get a proprietary interest in a place of this kind, you know," he said, but without a note of apology.

Three times in one day did he make almost a

complete circuit of the grounds, and that, too, in spite of the fact that he had been in court in his capacity as lawyer at Sarnia the night before until nearly midnight.

Colonel Hugh Clarke, M.P.P., was one of the guests, and Mr. Hanna was most anxious to show him three herds of Holsteins, of which he is exceedingly proud. Up hill and down, through underbrush, over fences, through turnip field and long rows of cabbages, in and out of thickets, he led his guests to see those cattle. They were in widely separated parts of the property, but before he was finished, Mr. Hanna had found them all, had pointed out their good qualities, and had beamed with delight when his guests praised them.

Mr. Hanna was also enthusiastic about the fields which had been sown in the spring. Many a time during the day he stopped suddenly, and said, "Now, boys, I don't know whether you know it or not, but that is a good crop."

After the tramp was over, he went for a swim with the rest of the party in the Speed River, which is a beautiful, tempting stream as it runs through the farm grounds, and the cabinet minister made just as much noise, and had just as good a swim as anyone. In fact, here, as everywhere, he was the leader.

That night, before his guests went to sleep in one of the dormitories of the "prison" which had been prepared for them, Mr. Hanna came in to say good-night. He sat on the foot of one of the beds, joked and laughed with the other men, and was as one of themselves. There is nothing of the snob about Hanna.

The real interest of the trip, however, was his attitude towards the "boys" who were serving a term in his prison. Everywhere he went, he treated them with the greatest respect. During the day, he met many of them on his walks, and he would always have a greeting for them.

"Well, boys, how is that stone coming out now?" he asked some of the men at work excavating stone from the extensive quarries on the property.

Again, "That is splendid work you are doing here," he said in encouragement to some of the boys digging out drains in a low part of the land.

"Come to see me to-night, and I shall talk to you then," he said to one man in whose case he was interested, and who in his estimation was deserving of a shortened sentence.

"Isn't it fine to see those men playing there without any profanity or dispute?" he said. "It is certainly worth while to try to make something of these fellows."

It is hardly necessary to say that these "fellows" think that there is no one like "Mr. Hanna." No wonder! He has organised this institution, which has taken them out of the cells of Central, and placed them in the comparative happiness of Guelph.

It is not to make them happy, however, that Hanna has made this innovation. They have to work hard, they are under salutary discipline, but they are being trained in self-restraint, and are being raised from the hopelessness of the criminal to the hopefulness of the man who has been treated with kindness, and who is going soon to be given another chance.

When you consider that this Prison Farm scheme is only part of Hanna's work; when you consider that he is a busy lawyer, and above all, the Provincial Secretary, in charge of the administration of the license acts, and many other important branches of routine work, you will begin to realise that Hanna is one of the big men of the province.

It is no wonder that rumour has said repeatedly that Borden wants Hanna at Ottawa. It is also not strange that the Premier of Ontario is very loth to let go such a tower of strength.



One of the Cells on the Prison Farm.



Mr. Hanna knows how to work with his coat off.