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# The Whitney Government and the Public School Question

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From: Address of  
**HON. W. J. HANNA, Provincial Secretary**  
Delivered at Courtright, Ontario, on  
**Saturday, January 11th, 1908.**

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Mr. Hanna, at the meeting of the electors held in Courtright on the evening of Saturday, January 11th, spoke of the policy of the Whitney government on the Public school question as follows:—

Mr. Whitney in Opposition gave his pledge to the people that should he come to power he would devote himself to the task of improving the schools of this province. What were the conditions to which his government succeeded? For many years we had in this province a Public school system that was good enough on dress parade, but was not producing satisfactory results in the Public schools. It was put on exhibition at the World's Fair in Chicago and elsewhere, with the explanation of how the work of the Ontario Public school was directed to fitting the pupil for the High school and the collegiate institute; and the work of the High school and collegiate institute was, in turn, directed to fitting the student there for the University, a completely organized system whereby the children of this province were put in as clay at one end of the machine and came out all of the same shape and form at the other, and under high pressure all

the time, beginning with monthly examinations and ending with monthly examinations; beginning with natural qualifications that if developed by a teacher who had time and opportunity and a system that admitted of it would give the pupil with ordinary application high standing in a particular field, but ending with these high natural qualifications checked and reduced to the level of the student's weakest subject.

## Mandate to Mr. Whitney

While the government that we succeeded refused to admit defects, and insisted that the system was all that they claimed for it. Mr. Whitney, in Opposition, long maintained that the system was carried altogether too far, and that the work of the rural Public school, should as far as possible, be made complete in itself, since 95 per cent. of the children of the province never get beyond the Public school. He advocated this on the platform prior to the last general election; and when the votes were counted found himself with an unmistakable mandate to proceed to carry out in power what he had advocated in Opposition. Was the government made rea-