

House of Refuge—County of Lambton



THE House of Refuge for the County of Lambton is situated in the Township of Sarnia, just outside the limits of the Town of Sarnia.

Farm.—The farm occupies sixty acres of light soil, which cost \$5,500. It is now in a good state of cultivation and well fenced; the front has been set out with ornamental trees and an orchard has been started.

Buildings.—The buildings consist of the House of Refuge 120 x 40 feet, with rear wing 24 x 36 feet; a bank barn 45 x 65 feet, and frame chicken house.

The main building, which was opened in 1896, presents a fine appearance. It is constructed of white brick with two flats above the basement. The basement provides for the kitchen, laundry, store-room, a dining-room for men and one for women, a men's day room, water closets, lock-up and boiler room.

The kitchen contains two of Doherty's electric steel ranges, which give good satisfaction. The store-room is fitted with a most convenient and commodious refrigerator and the men's smoking room contains several comfortable lounges, which are usually occupied.

The building is lighted by electricity and heated by steam generated in boiler from the John Abel Engine Works, Toronto. The system works well and is economical, about sixty tons of coal having been consumed during the past winter.

The laundry contains stationary tubs and a stove for boiling clothes. Water for laundry and bathing purposes is heated in a large upright boiler connected with the kitchen range. Some of the basement floors are wood, others are made of concrete. The first floor is divided by a centre hall, the office and reception room being on either side of the main entrance and keeper's apartments in the rear wing. The same space is provided for men and women; the bed-rooms are suitable for three or four

beds each; the first floor will accommodate 28 and the second floor about 50 inmates. Rooms set apart for hospital wards in rear wing were not convenient and are now used as bed-rooms for men. Water closets and bath rooms are to be found on each flat. Some additional expenditure is necessary to improve condition of the floors around the closets. The bedsteads are iron and straw ticks are used. The keeper's apartments consist of parlor, dining-room, pantry, bath and three bedrooms.

Barn.—The barn is situated a short distance from the main building, and provides the usual stable accommodation. This is now being altered to make it more convenient for present requirements. The farm stock consists of 8 cows, 2 horses, hogs and chickens. Calves are usually raised on the farm. The keeper also keeps one horse used for family driving, which is boarded by the county. The main building provides for the separation of the sexes, but the location of the rooms and the separate yard for women adjoining the barn could be improved by removing them to the other side.

Inmates.—The institution has accommodation for seventy-five inmates. The largest number in the house at one time has been forty-nine. There are at present thirty-two inmates—27 males and 5 females—all of whom are old or incapable of doing much work. In this respect the general character of the inmates varies to some extent from those in other similar institutions.

Hospital.—The county council grants \$500 annually to the Sarnia Hospital and one bed therein is retained for the use of inmates from the House of Refuge.

Drainage and Water Supply.—The Town of Sarnia supplies the free water, and drainage from the farm and institution is through a sewer, which is not sufficient in the spring or during heavy rains, when the sewer fills, causing the water to back up.