

WHAT MR. HANNA DARE NOT DO.

It is all very well for party journals like *The Mail and Empire* and *The News* to protest against even the suspicion "that Mr. Hanna is in league with the liquor interests." They do protest too much, and in terms too nearly identical to be convincing. Their language is too vague, too evasive, to deceive even themselves. The Provincial Secretary's own conduct during recent weeks is his own unanswerable condemnation. Were he innocent he would dare to do what becomes an innocent man. His refusals make all his protestings but so much make-believe.

Mr. Hanna does not dare to let the truth—not a skillful affidavit, but the whole, straight truth—be told. His refusal, the refusal of the Government, the refusal of his panicky supporters in the Public Accounts Committee to allow evidence touching Mr. Snider's interference in Scott Act campaigns in January last, was defensible only on the presumption that flat denial would have been given to one or other of the contradictory statements to the Press and to Parliament by the Provincial Secretary himself.

Mr. Hanna does not dare to deal honestly with Mr. Snider, any more than he dares to deal honestly with Mr. Taylor. If Mr. Snider, who is an official under the Provincial Secretary, deserved Mr. Hanna's "repudiation," he deserved also dismissal. If Mr. Snider is not dismissed it is because his interference with Conservative temperance voters in the Scott Act campaigns was at Mr. Hanna's suggestion. Mr. C. E. Steele, who has held most of the responsible offices in the municipal Council and in the Conservative Association in Welland county, speaks the truth as every open-eyed Conservative sees it:

"Mr. Snider represented himself to me as representing the Provincial Secretary's department. He stated he was visiting the county for the purpose of explaining to the Conservative voters the undesirability of passing the Canada Temperance Act. . . . In fairness to the Government there is only one course open—namely, the dismissal of an official who would so far go out of his way as to interfere with a local issue in which he, as such official, had no right to interfere, and particularly in going so far as to throw the weight of the Government in favor of the liquor interests. . . . If the Government will not permit investigation into Mr. Snider's conduct I fear a great many temperance Conservatives will be compelled to believe what they would be reluctant to believe—namely, that the Government sent him there and authorized him to do what he did."

But the Government does not dare to dismiss Mr. Snider, does not dare any more to "repudiate" him, does not dare to allow him to give public testimony, for, under oath, he would tell the truth about a conference after hours in Mr. Hanna's office, who else was there, and whom he represented, the Provincial Secretary's own actions in the matter, and why a Minister of the Crown "repudiated" his own official in the Press and afterwards "ate crow" in Parliament. Mr. Hanna is as much afraid of Mr. Snider under oath as of Mr. Taylor under oath. Either one could shatter the last figment of his reputation for even ordinary street truthfulness. He dare not take that risk.

And Mr. Hanna and the Ontario Government do not dare to allow the charges presented by Mr. C. M. Bowman in the Legislature to be investigated by a Royal Commission of Superior Court Judges. Such an investigation would turn the searchlight round to expose the "deal" with the liquor interests, the "deal" in Huron, the visit of the Huron liquor men to Toronto not long ago, their threats, Mr. Hanna's suspicious evasion, and the final conditions under which "friendly relations" between the liquor interests and the Ontario Government were renewed. Such an investigation might also definitely determine how much more or less than \$500,000 the liquor interest will raise to fight the anti-barroom policy and the Liberal candidates in the coming Provincial elections.

And yet the newspaper defenders of the Provincial Secretary would rend the heavens with their denunciations of the suggestion "that Mr. Hanna is in league with the liquor interests." The man and the Government that do not dare to do any one of the things innocence, honesty, and integrity would at once demand are in sore need of cuttle-fish protection. They shun the light of judicial investigation for one adequate reason: "because their deeds are evil."
