

PUBLIC SCHOOL MORALS.

THE Hon. Mr. Justice Street recently, in replying to the presentment of the grand jury at the assizes, made some suggestive remarks, which will no doubt be read with interest by the friends of education in this Province. The grand jury referred to the number of serious crimes, committed by youths, which had come before them, and while commending the establishment of industrial schools for the reformation of erring youths, expressed in their views the desirability of such legislation as would prevent the further importation of the class of children now being brought out from the "slums" of the European cities.

His Lordship said:—"I am glad you have called attention to the prevalence of crime among the youths in Hamilton, and that you have taken so much interest in suggesting something you think may be a remedy for it. I have been looking into the history of the young men convicted of some of these serious crimes at the present assizes, and I find that it is not imported criminals at all, as a rule, that, in fact, with one exception, they were all young fellows who had been brought up in the city of Hamilton, and who have been educated at the Public schools; so that, if these are a fair specimen of the criminals who were causing the outburst of crime in Hamilton, the remedy you suggest of prohibiting the importation of people from other countries is not going to help it. It is necessary to look nearer home, and consider whether the system under which these children are brought up is the system that is most likely to make good citizens of them. I am very much afraid I have a strong conviction myself that it is not. These young fellows were sent to the Public schools where they are never taught,

as far as I understand, any principles of morality at all. They were simply taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and a smattering of other things, but they are not taught the difference between right and wrong. My impression of the way in which a great many children are brought up in the schools of this country is; that they grow up without any idea that a thing is right or wrong, and if they are found out in the commission of an offence they are very sorry they did it. Of course it is hard to suggest a proper remedy, but still we have four or five boys who have been brought up at your Public schools, which have been so highly commended, and here they are convicted of these abominable crimes. I am very much afraid that your suggestions are not going to help as long as we do not take better care in teaching our own children the difference between right and wrong."

—*Mail and Empire.*

We publish the above extract to call attention again to the strong feeling there is among our public men, especially our judges, respecting the proved inadequacy of the instruction given in our public schools in morals. Upon this question, judges have spoken frequently. We have no doubt but that the country will accept their testimony as that of competent and faithful witnesses. "On reading the remarks of Mr. Justice Street, we were surprised and disappointed; "We have four or five boys who have been brought up at your public schools, which have been so highly commended, and here they are convicted of these abominable crimes." The public schools in Hamilton have been deservedly held in high repute for their efficiency.

The work in them is thoroughly and systematically done from the in-