

TAKE AWAY KNIVES

LOCAL ITALIANS SHOULD FOLLOW GOOD ADVICE

GIVEN BY CHIEF JUSTICE SIR
W. MULOCK

At the Steel Plant Many Italians
Have Been Disarmed by the
Officials There.

It would be well if our local Italian Colony would take to heart the advice of Sir William Mulock, and decide to not carry weapons. Sir William recently sentenced a young Italian, Grecco, to death for murder. He had had a knife handy and had used it in a fit of temper.

An official at the steel plant tells the Star that, contrary to the general opinion, Italians are not quarrelsome. The trouble is they have not been taught to use their fists in a fight, as Anglo Saxons do, and the great majority of their stabbing affrays are not serious, and are not intended to be.

"We have taken dozens of knives from Italians at the steel plant," said the official, "and they give them up good naturedly enough. In fact they do not object at all if all are treated alike. 'You taka my knife; taka John's too,' is what one man said, and it expresses the whole feeling. As long as all knives are taken no one objects."

Chief Justice Mulock's letter should be brought to the attention of the Italians here. It was addressed by his Lordship to Mr. Scarrone, the court interpreter:

"Dear Sir,—In view of the awful consequence of Guiseppe Grecco having a knife in his possession at the moment when he felt an impulse to attack Reirzo, I would ask you to take steps for the organization of a moment among the Italians of Hamilton and vicinity, having for its adoption by them of a determination to cease to carry knives, or any other weapons that might be used to the injury of others.

"No one in Canada has the right to take the law into his own hands, and when a man so transgresses he not only does wrong to another but brings down serious consequences on his own head. Your fellow-countrymen, having in their veins the hot blood of the south, are emotional, and easily excited, and frequently, acting upon the impulse of the moment, make use of weapons at hand to injure others. One of the results of such criminal practice is to prejudice Italians in the minds of all law-abiding citizens. No responsible Canadians carry revolvers, knives or other weapons. They know the law of Canada will take care of their rights, and your fellow-countrymen should follow this example and abandon the carrying of dangerous weapons as being unlawful and unnecessary.

"In some parts of Canada I have been told many classes of workmen decline to work along with Italians, lest, on some trifling occasions, when passion is aroused, the latter may make unlawful use of the knife. If a feeling like this takes possession of the country it may frequently prevent Italians obtaining employment and thereby seriously prejudice their interests.

"If such a sentiment becomes established in Canada it will in all probability spread to the United States and in this do untold injury to the Italians themselves. At this moment their unfortunate compatriot, Guiseppe Grecco is lying under the shadow of death in the Hamilton jail, awaiting the day of execution. In due time his case will come before the Governor-in-Council for consideration, and I observe from the public press that Mr. O'Reilly, his counsel, intends appealing to the Governor-in-Council for a commutation of the sentence. The decision to be reached rests with the Executive alone.

"Do your countrymen desire to save Guiseppe Grecco's life? If they do it occurs to me that when Grecco's case comes up for consideration by his Excellency the Governor-in-Council, if it were shown that Grecco's fellow-countrymen had organized a movement for the abolition of the practice which has brought him under sentence of death, and had individually pledged themselves to further such movement by precept and example, they might in this way strengthen the appeal for a commutation of the death sentence, and perhaps turn the balance in his favor.

"I therefore would urge you, without delay, to bring this most important matter before your fellow-countrymen, with a view to a consideration of the question, and I would ask you to assure them that in my opinion their adoption of the course above suggested will, in every respect to their advantage.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) WILLIAM MULOCK."

L. P. Scarrone, Esq.,
Interpreter of the Court,
Hamilton, Ont.

Mr. Scarrone has replied to Sir William Mulock, thanking his Lordship on behalf of the Italians of Hamilton for his generous idea, which will be placed before a meeting called for Saturday next.