

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

THE JESUITS ESTATES ACT.

AN incident which occurred at the meeting of the Ottawa Presbytery, shows that there are those who do not object to the Jesuits Estates Bill, because they approve of State aid being given to religious bodies. As no person, not even the bitterest of Anti-State Churchmen, objects to the State aiding religious bodies, this reason seems somewhat irrelevant. Those who decline to condemn that obnoxious Act because they approve of the State giving aid to the Church, mix up in their minds two propositions that are so wholly distinct in principle as to be without any relation the one to the other. Take an every day illustration. A person, say Mr. A., is robbed on the street by Mr. B., a foot pad, who gives the stolen money to a needy friend. When arraigned the thief declares that he stole in order to be charitable. Now if any one who takes the above ground as to the Jesuit Estates Bill, heard this case as a Justice, he would say to the prisoner, "Go in peace, good man, I cannot condemn your giving money to the poor!" The prosecutor would angrily tell him that he was not asked to judge an act of charity, but an act of theft. So, in all kindness, we tell those who support the Jesuit Bill because it gives State money to a religious body, that they were not asked to condemn the gift of property by the State to a religious body, that was only a sequel of what was censured, just as the thief's act of charity was only a sequel to his crime.

The thing condemned in the Jesuit Estates Bill is not the gift of property by the State to a religious body, but the recognition by the Government of Quebec of the Pope as a power having civil jurisdiction in Canada. That the Jesuit Act does recognize this power is demonstrable from the Act itself. The Pope when the question was laid before him, at once asserted that he had the absolute ownership of the property in question, which we in Canada know was vested in the Crown of England. Mr. Mercier, indeed, had no more to do with this property, except as the official representative of the Crown of England, than any other citizen. He did not go as a loyal man would have done to the Queen, the real owner, and humbly ask for a disposition of the property agreeable to the wishes of those of Her subjects who desired to secure it. No! he ignored the Queen's ownership, he treated Her Sovereignty with contempt. He ostentatiously, with a rebel's spirit, set at nought the fact of this Canada of ours being a British possession. With his back turned upon the throne, and a curl of contemptuous, Rielistic, scorn at the Queen's authority on his lips, he bent at the foot of an alien power, the Pope of Rome, and paid a mere Italian bishop the homage of a subject as he sought from him the privilege and the authority which the Crown of England alone had the power to confer. Mr. Mercier may thank his stars that he lives in this land of lip protestantism, and lip regard for civil

liberty, and in this age of latitudinarianism. Had he lived in England in its days of glory, and as a Minister of the Crown done this thing, he would found short shrift in the Tower, and a traitor's just doom.

When the Pope was thus asked to dispose of the property of the Crown of England, he virtually replied, (see the Act), "This property is my own, I am the civil superior of the Crown of England, it is true that Canada was conquered and secured by British valour, but as a Canadian Minister has declared, that was, "only an accident." Sell the property Mr. Mercier, and, as I am the owner, you will of course hand over all the proceeds to me." The Pope's demand for the whole proceeds to be paid over to him would have sent a loyal man home in a rage of indignation. But Mr. Mercier did not resent this insufferably audacious assertion of sovereign rights supreme over those of the Queen of England, by the Pope. Not at all! He was the Queen's Minister it is true, but he allowed his Royal Mistress to be thus flouted, and Her authority ignored without a word of protest—with doubtless a quiet sense of satisfaction. But, although the Pope was persuaded to relinquish his claim to the whole proceeds of the sale of this property of the Crown of England, he was recognised as its actual owner by the Mr. Mercier, by the very act of his giving up to the Pope after he had made this claim, which Mr. Mercier did not deny, the absolute right to dispose of English Crown property!

Mr. Mercier is the modern "Unjust Steward." He was agent of the Queen, he held Her Power of Attorney to sign deeds for transferring Her lands. He needed the help of the Jesuits. The Jesuit's King, the only King they recognise on earth in temporal or spiritual matters is the Pope. They sent Mr. Mercier to him, the Pope at once spurned Mr. Mercier's official rank as Queen's agent. Mr. Mercier received the insult without protest. The Pope asserted his ownership of the land which Mr. Mercier knew to be the property of and which he held in trust for the Queen. He told the Pope he had the Queen's Power of Attorney, then under the Pope's direct, personal orders, Mr. Mercier, Minister of the Crown of England, executed a deed, the Jesuit's Estate Act, transferring the property of the Crown to the Order of Jesuits and others who are the representatives and part of the family of the Pope. Thus Mr. Mercier admitted the Pope's civil superiority, and gave to the Pope by legal process, which his Office as Crown Minister enabled him to execute, that property which the Pope claimed to own but which he could never have legally possessed but for Mr. Mercier, having by an act of treachery conveyed it to certain members of the Pope's family.

There is not on record a fouler story of official treachery than that which tells how the Crown Minister, in a British Province, possessed by his official position of certain lands, lands held by him in trust for the Queen, took advantage of that official position to deprive the Crown of those lands and vest them absolutely for the advantage of and under the direct com-

mands of a foreign potentate—the Pope of Rome.

Had the transfer been made to a friendly neighbour of Britain, the crime of Mr. Mercier would have been the same. But there attaches to Mr. Mercier's Act an especial foulness of guilt by the fact, that he took by a breach of trust a jewel from the Crown of our Queen in order to deck the regalia of an Order, which by the law of England is declared to be an outlawed enemy of the British realm!

Those who defend the Jesuit's Estates Act on the ground that Mr. Mercier had the power to pass it, simply declare their belief that there is no harm in a Trustee using his power as Trustee to rob the person whom he represents under his trust. That is all!

Those who defend the Jesuit Estates Act on the ground that it is simply a case of State aid being given to a religious body, declare their belief that if a thief steals in order to help the poor—say his own poor family, there is no harm in such a crime. Those who refuse to protest against the Jesuit Estates Act because they say it only affects another Province, proclaim their belief that this country is not a Dominion, they refuse to recognise Canada as a unit, as a corporate body, they are like a man's right hand saying, "What care I if the left hand is poisoned—let the left hand take care of itself." Such persons declare that the honour, and rights, and sovereignty of the Crown may be insulted, infringed upon, ignored in Quebec, without that honour, those rights, that sovereignty being affected in Ontario! Such loyalty is a miserable sham. Is the transference of Crown property in Quebec to the Jesuit's not an Ontario question? Pray are the Jesuit's merely a Quebec Order? The Crown property given them by Mr. Mercier is really owned and controlled by the General of the Order in Europe. There are too, Jesuit's by dozens in Ontario whose influence has already debauched the once free electorate of that Province. Ontario needs to watch these men closely. Some of her noble sons lay in their North West graves, victims of treason. If the blood of those heroes is not on the heads of the Jesuits, the Order should look to its laurels, for those most familiar with their work in treasonable intrigue and civil strife might well be excused swearing that the North West rebellion bore all the marks of Jesuit handicraft. Riel, mark well, Riel is the hero-martyr of the Jesuit party. Had there been no Riel there would have been no Jesuit Estates Act—his traitor spirit shines in every line of that infamous document.

The Jesuit policy is squeezing out the life of the Church in Quebec, drop by drop. It has begun this process in Ontario, there will soon be a number of parishes where the Church will be quietly crushed. Churchmen who stand aloof from this great question because it is a political one, declare, in effect, that so long as their pockets are not rifled, nor their business, nor domestic affairs interfered with—that, really, nothing interests them. Their country, their Queen, their Church, may all go to the dogs so long as they have peace, make money, and live the life of a dumb animal, heedless of