

# THE JESUITS' ESTATES BILL.

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## THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE.

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### TO THE PEOPLE OF ONTARIO.

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The passing of the "Act Respecting the Settlement of the Jesuit Estates" by the Québec Legislature, following the incorporation of the Jesuit Society, compels all who love their country to take earnest thought as to the most effective means of maintaining our civil and religious liberties, and preventing the encroachments of ecclesiastical authority.

We emphatically disclaim any desire to interfere with the free exercise of their religion on the part of our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens. The influences to which we are opposed threaten the rights of Roman Catholics no less than of Protestants. Were claims like those advanced in this Act to be put forward on behalf of any Protestant church or its rulers, we would unhesitatingly take the same stand on behalf of freedom from ecclesiastical domination.

The grounds on which we protest against the Act in question are mainly the following:

1. It recognizes a right on the part of the Pope to interfere in the administration of our civil affairs, which is derogatory to the supremacy of the Queen and menacing to the liberties of the people. There can be no mistaking such language as the following: "The Pope allows the Government to retain the proceeds of the sale of the Jesuit estates as a special deposit, to be disposed of hereafter with the sanction of the Holy See."

2. It places \$400,000 of public funds at the disposal of the Pope for ecclesiastical and sectarian purposes—an appropriation of public money contrary to the whole spirit of British and Canadian legislation, unjust to the Protestant minority in Quebec, and subversive of the religious equality which ought to exist.

3. It permits the withdrawal of the whole of the proceeds of the Jesuits' estates, valued at over two millions of dollars (\$2,000,000), with the exception of sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), offered for Protestant education, from the educational fund of the Province, though these estates had been devoted by the Crown "inviolably and exclusively to the education of the people."

4. In granting the common of Laprairie by way of commemorating what the Procurator of the Jesuit Fathers terms "that glorious concordat, the effecting whereof would be associated with the name of your (Mr. Mercier's) Government as soon as the Holy Father has ratified it," the Act opens up a wide field of future demands on the part of the Jesuits. The Procurator states the effect which he anticipates from the "concordat" in the following terms: "That is, that the establishments of the Jesuit Fathers in this Province are always allowed in accordance with their deserts, and, if they ask for it, to participate in the grants which the Government of this Province allows to other institutions to encourage teaching, education, industries, arts and colonization." Undoubtedly, therefore, we have not heard the last of the claims of the Jesuits: