

PREFACE.

One of the most important duties of the state is to provide for the education of the children who will some day be its masters. Democracy with all its good and evil must be accepted as the basis of modern government. Though here and there a philosopher may scoff at the "suffrage of the plow," yet social order and stability must henceforth depend on either the tolerance or the good will of the masses of the people. The time when a small educated class could safeguard the glories of civilized life and the arts by the use of physical or moral force, is rapidly disappearing. Therefore, it is a self-evident fact that the state ought to teach its future citizens the worth of our civilization and the ways of preserving it from impairment, and of assisting in its progress. We must no longer, as those of an earlier age, walk calmly over the surface underneath which slumbers the volcano of popular passion. The fruits of centuries of toil are too precious to be exposed to any possibility of injury. There must be a means sought for training our people in social and civic responsibility.

Government is the foundation on which the splendid fabric of our civilization is upreared. Therefore, it is a subject about which the pupils in the schools should receive very definite instruction. In the present little book an effort is made to present the elementary facts about our system of government in the simplest form, so that those who do not pass beyond the senior grades of the public school or the junior grades of the high school, may go out into the world with some adequate conception of what will be their duties and responsibilities as Canadian citizens.

Montreal, Jan. 1, 1909.