

scribe the limits of state action.¹ The government's most important duty is that of protecting the citizen and his property, and this necessitates the administration of justice in a cheap and rational manner.² Education is one of the things for which the state should make provision, and that on the ground that a civilized government, being better qualified to fix educational standards than the mass of the people, is capable of offering them a better education than they would of themselves demand.³ Freedom of contract implies ability to decide one's own interests, and since this capacity is absent in children and persons of unsound mind and the like, the state quite properly interferes to protect them.⁴ Public charity is a duty which the government must fulfil, and has much more beneficial results as a state function, if wisely administered, than those flowing from private relief of indigents.⁵ His general maxims are unfavorable to an extension of state control. There should be no governmental interference with free agency, unless it is so necessary as to recommend itself to the general body of citizens as essential. Any increase in the functions of government is an increase in its authority and influence, and this is *prima facie* an evil. Every fresh duty imposed upon the government is a duty imposed upon a body already overburdened, and the result is inefficient work. Finally, the inferior interest that characterizes governments in the discharge of their duties more than counterbalances the increased facilities that they have at their command. "Government management," in short, "is proverbially jobbing, careless and ineffectual."⁶

In the half century that has elapsed since the appearance of Mill's Principles, civilized states have steadily extended their sphere of action, and their different national budgets have increased at a rate altogether out of proportion to their increase in population. Thus state railway and telegraph systems have been established, tramways, waterworks, gasworks and public libraries added to municipal property, sanitary living enforced, and an almost innumerable number of restrictions imposed on the liberty of individuals. On the surface, at least, Leroy

¹ Principles, Bk. 5, Ch. 11, ¶ 2.

³ Ibid, ¶ 8.

⁵ Ibid, ¶ 13.

² Principles, Bk. 5, Ch. 8, ¶¶ 1 and 3.

⁴ Ibid, ¶ 9.

⁶ Ibid, ¶¶ 2, 3, 4, 5, 11.