

There appears to exist a state of mind among many of our people, which regards the government, the state or the public as a thing apart and separate from themselves—an abstraction whose interests are opposed to those of the ordinary man and woman—a monster always oppressing and taxing and legislating about them for purposes of its own, with which the individual either has no concern or by which he is wronged.

In a section of the population which I trust is even more limited, the attitude assumed towards the government or public is one which seems to justify the ordinary citizen in taking advantage of it whenever he can, in being governed in his relations to it by moral standards infinitely lower than are recognized in dealings between himself and his fellow man. In a word, not only is there an absolute lack of identification on the part of the people of themselves with the community, but this unfortunate feeling of antagonism engenders a regrettable readiness to treat the public harshly if not dishonestly, to consider it not improper or discreditable to take advantage of it in business transactions, and to abstain from all participation in what has become known as politics.

If the average citizen could be made to realize that the state or government is merely the aggregation of the individuals who compose it, that each citizen is interested in its welfare and prosperity, that the taxes which it raises are paid by him and by his fellow citizens, that the money which the State expends is the money of the people of the State, that its indebtedness is their indebtedness, that the laws which it enacts are made not only by them but for them and must be obeyed by them, and if a sense of this responsibility were impressed upon the minds of the public, I venture to think a large step would be taken towards a higher and better standard of public administration and government.

It may be that, as a relic from the days when laws were made by kings and despots and imposed upon the common people without their previously having been consulted, this mental attitude to which I have referred may be due.

In this Province, it is not three-quarters of a century since the divine right of the people to govern themselves was recognized. That is a brief period to obliterate the traditions of centuries of oligarchical and despotic rule; but with modern enlightenment and education the time should, it seems to me, have arrived when