

Citizens to Blame For Bad Government

Written Specially
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THE people of any land can overthrow civil evils whenever they want to, and can have a government as good as they themselves make it, or as bad as they suffer it to become. There is hardly a community in Canada where the law-abiding people are not in the majority. They are usually quiet, however, while the other side are so vociferous as to deceive some into the idea they are stronger than they are, but they do not count for much against the united efforts of the law-abiding. They are always active, though, and average citizens become active only occasionally. The power of corruptionists is obtained through the indifference of good citizens. Bad citizens are united; good citizens are divided—that is the trouble. If good citizens could be induced to join hands in patriotic endeavor the bad would be shorn of their strength and be powerless to accomplish anything. Lawbreakers are always organized, and work while good people sleep; but once the latter are aroused they are invincible.

The government of the nation, state, and city, rests upon the active morality of the average individual. In proportion as that morality is strong, the

consequences. In a country like ours each individual is a constituent part of sovereignty. Some may think if the government were left entirely to you public evils could not exist. But you have a portion of the responsibility now. If you are unfaithful with part, would you be more faithful with all? He that is unfaithful with a portion cannot be trusted with the whole. If each citizen were to leave the remedying of public wrongs to someone else nothing would be accomplished.

The state protects the citizen and the citizen must protect the state politically as well as financially, and his civic duties are as morally binding as his taxes. If each man were to think that he is only one among many and that it is unnecessary for him to pay taxes because there will be plenty without him, the state would be bankrupt if it could not enforce payment. If every man were to reason that among so many his influence for good is not needed, then the state would be bankrupt politically and we would have a government of the few rich enough to buy official favors.

There is sometimes too much of a disposition on the part of some to allow others to do the face sweating in civic affairs while they do the bread eating. Our government in theory



Buck and Bright.

government is good; when the average morality is low, the government must be inferior. When good citizens attend to their civic duties their civic energy is represented in good officials; when they are careless, their slothfulness is represented by corrupt officials. The character of the government depends entirely upon the will of the majority, and no government is better than a majority of its voters. If each individual were to attend to public affairs every good official would have behind him the aggressive morality of his constituents, which would confront every bad official and say to him, "No further shalt thou go." Lawbreakers do not care for laws so long as they control officials and politics. They do not know good from bad; all they know is politics. When they are everywhere that lawlessness is bad politics, the question of good government will be near solution. The people can teach them that.

Teach the people and make them exercise their civil duties is a matter of supreme importance. In a republic form of government all power rests in the crown and delegated to the people. Civic indifference is not fraught with such grave

gives more rights than any other, but some think so little of their obligations to the general welfare that they are often indifferent to being robbed as long as they do not feel the effects directly and are among the many.

There is a constant conflict between law and lawlessness, right and wrong, evil and good, in every sphere of life. The wrong must always be fought against; the ideal of good must be fought for. The bad thrives of its own accord and feeds on its own wickedness. The useful grain must be sown and cared for else the weeds will choke it out, while the thistle, scattered by chance and cared for by accident, will flourish anywhere. So the good in government does not exist by accident, but must be nurtured by good citizens, who must likewise contend actively against the vices that creep into government. It is one thing to be against wrong; it is quite another thing to fight wrong. One is a non-combatant that never won a cause, the other a soldier in the fight. Good citizens need to become more aggressive. The man that is afraid to show his colors and stand in the open against evils is of little benefit to good government.

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