

Good Citizenship

IF CITIZENSHIP is the foundation for our civic and social structure, the structure is insecure until intelligent training for citizenship becomes general. The man or woman in America who is permitted to assume the position of a citizen, without training, is a liability to the nation. No person should be given the rights and privileges of citizenship without a proper and adequate understanding backed by a definite and honest purpose insuring the discharge of citizenship obligations.

The superficial question-and-answer formula which touches briefly upon historic facts is proving as inadequate as any other of the innumerable short-cut methods by which hundreds of thousands of people have been given certificates of citizenship—a share of stock in the American governmental enterprise. Even the ability to quote the language of our Constitution is no guarantee of fitness for citizenship.

Only an intelligent conception of the principles upon which our government is founded and the knowledge that is essential to the cultivation of a sincere and loyal devotion to American ideals and national institutions can render an individual qualified for naturalization and citizenship.

Intelligent citizenship is good citizenship. It is an insurance of loyalty to state and nation as much as it is to community and home. It contributes to constructive thought and action and carries out the plan for the consummate good of all. Intelligent citizenship means greater interest in civic affairs. It is the most effective weapon against irrational and unsound tinkering with government. It is the antidote of radicalism. It is the only gilt edge security by which Uncle Sam can hope to keep his assets of a sufficient value to offset his liabilities.

Upon the shoulders of the intelligently informed citizen rest the burden of responsibility for keeping America on the right course. Adequate training for citizenship should become a matter of far greater importance than the formal naturalization of an alien who is deficient in American intelligence.

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