

BECOMING AN AMERICAN

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that making the process slow and difficult would tend to prevent the passing of bad laws. In justice to them it must be said that a very great majority of all laws passed either by Congress or our state legislatures are of such kind that, if enforced, they would be helpful to our citizens.

Other legislative bodies are county courts and city councils. These, however, are limited in their powers to such duties as appropriating money and directing work for the districts which they represent.

The powers of the two houses are much the same, altho the senate has some powers the lower house does not have. For example, its consent is necessary to ratify treaties and for certain important appointments to office. On the other hand, all bills relating to raising money for the support of government or to expending money, must be first introduced in the lower house, altho the senate may amend them. Altho the chief function of Congress is the making of laws, it also aids in the process of amending the Constitution, it may be called on to choose the president or vice-president, and it has the power to impeach officers of the executive and judicial departments. Certain definite powers have to do with the national money and with patents, taxation and commerce. Powers not directly conferred on Congress by the constitution are reserved to the states. Furthermore, there are powers implied in the constitution, that is, not directly mentioned but implied in the statement that Congress shall make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the powers named, which have been frequently used for the advancement of our country. It is thru such implied powers that Congress has purchased land, as in the case of Alaska, has expended money for canals, as in the case of the Panama canal, and has maintained certain forms of education in the states, as in the case of agricultural courses offered in many of our high schools.

Surely the making of law is the most responsible function of government. We can not live together peaceably in society without rules of conduct based on just and fair dealings. Without such rules, neither life nor limb nor property would be safe and anarchy would prevail.

Man came to appreciate this fact very early;—hence we find laws even amongst the lowest savages. Usually these were little more than customs; however we do find well organized codes of laws dating far back in history. Examples are the laws of the Hebrews given in the Old Testament and the old Roman laws of Justinian which fill many volumes. Our laws are largely founded upon the old English laws which date back several centuries.

Laws were fewer and simpler formerly than they are today; hence they were more easily understood and more generally respected. It seems, tho, that we have come to an age of numberless laws, to an age when there seems to be no end of laws and lawmakers. When, apparently, many men think they have done their chief duty toward their country when they have helped in enacting a new law. This condition is not a healthy one. We have come to have so many laws

that there is growing up a disrespect for law. We must always bear in mind that the backbone of our governmental system is law and that when law disrespect becomes common and strong our very national existence is in danger. Hence many people earnestly believe that there is very grave need today for a return to the deeper law respect of the early days of our nation. To do this, we must teach in both home and school to better advantage the need and value of law. We must enforce in both institutions a firmer control. We must help to bring about in our communities a stricter enforcement of law. We must insist that the use of trivial technicalities to free dangerous criminals from the necessity of punishment shall cease and we must demand sterner and more certain punishment for law breaking.

Upon those of us who are citizens and upon you when you become citizens, rests this great responsibility. In no better way can you serve your adopted country. Such policy may even be the means of saving it.

Loyalty to Your Country

BY COMING to the United States you have chosen a worth-while undertaking — that of becoming a GOOD AMERICAN.

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