



"Too much government? Just what would you cut out?"

THIS FAMILIAR QUESTION, raised by those who are uncritical of government-guaranteed welfare, security, and prosperity, has baffled many a student of libertarian ideals, often leaving him speechless and humiliated.

And well it might; for any individual would find it virtually impossible even to list the multitudinous activities of the federal government, not to mention those of the 50 state governments and the more than 120,000 regional, district, and local governments. Certainly no audience, much less the questioner, would wait for a discussion of these manifold activities. The immensity of such a task is reflected in this fact: To give one hour's consideration to each \$1,000,000 in the 1960 Federal Budget alone would consume all of a person's working time until about 2000 A.D.!

Even if such a chore could be completed, the real question would still remain: Just what would you cut out? However, if the principles of limited government were understood and accepted, then, by definition, all activities not qualifying would be eliminated. The limited government concept:

- *Government should defend the lives and property of all citizens equally. This means protecting willing exchange and restraining unwilling exchange; suppressing and penalizing fraud, misrepresentation, predatory practices; invoking a common justice under written law; and keeping the records incidental to these functions. Government's legitimate purpose is to codify and then inhibit all destructive actions while leaving all creative and productive actions—including welfare, charity, security, and pros-*

perity—to citizens acting voluntarily, privately, cooperatively, or competitively as they freely choose.

The concept of government outlined in the Declaration of Independence holds that man is endowed by his Creator with certain unalienable rights, among them the right to life and the right to liberty. Thus endowed with freedom of choice, each individual is presumed responsible for his own life and the development of his potentialities—within the limits of noninterference with the equal rights of every other peaceful person. Personal accountability further presumes responsibility for the products of one's creative efforts—the means by which life is sustained—and establishes a basis for the private ownership and control of property. Consistent with the ideals of self-responsibility, personal freedom of choice, and private property, is the free market method of voluntary exchange whereby individuals help themselves through serving others. Possessing economic freedom, each person may practice compassion and charity with what is his own. This leaves to government (organized force) the very limited task of defending life and property and preserving the peace.

Once this basis for limiting government is accepted, it is possible for a person to test any present activity of government at whatever level by a precise standard which tells him whether that activity is a proper function of organized police force. It is a matter of reasoning logically and deductively from our Declaration's premise that man's right to life and liberty is derived not from the State but from his Creator.

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