

require a crisis in municipal or national affairs to enlist his interest, or stimulate anything more than the most superficial activity. When legislation touches his own business, he springs into the political arena with the agility of a panther and fights his battle to the bitter end. It is not a question with him what is best for the whole people. He has but little regard for the rights of others. The results of such tactics have been amply illustrated in the United States during the past forty years. We are blind, indeed, if we cannot read the signs of the times.

The farmers of Ontario do not like to be told that they, too, are not public spirited, and yet, it is true. For illustration: Years ago the system of statute labor was inaugurated on the supposition that the farmers living and having property on a highway, would, because of their personal interest in it as well as their public spirit, keep the road in good condition and improve it from year to year. This was an easy and convenient method of "working-out" a part of the taxation on their land. The Dominion Government assumed the responsibility for the support of the militia and the provinces were allowed to delegate the spending of the annual per capita assessment for national defense to the municipal authorities. In rural Ontario this poll tax was also added to the statute labor. What has been the result? The system has failed and failed miserably. The farmers have not only defrauded the nation, but have cheated themselves. By the vast majority road work has been interpreted to mean "gentle exercise in the open air." They have done just as little work as possible, consequently the highways of Ontario are a reproach to our whole people. In the few counties where the system has been changed by the appointment of a road supervisor, the statute labor computed at fifty cents a day, and the same farmers employed to do the actual work of road making, the immediate improvement of the highways has been marked. Comment is unnecessary. Innumerable other illustrations might be given. For instance, the attitude of the agricultural classes in years past toward the Ontario Agricultural College and Experimental Farm, their present attitude toward the rural schools, toward the matters of forest denudation, tree planting and the destruction of weeds on roadsides, and toward the proper support of the Canadian militia. It is the spirit of selfishness that controls the actions of men who manifest their unwillingness to make some sacrifice of time and money for the general good. One of our leading educators says that extreme selfishness is the result of dense ignorance—certainly a selfishness that outweighs self-interest and public necessity combined must be extreme—yet, for a generation or longer we have been boasting of the excellence of our educational system. Is it