

not have bought the honour with his own money, or have mortgaged it by taking large sums from interested sources, or tied himself up to his party machine by drawing on the campaign fund. But that does not happen. The superior citizen takes it out in criticizing. What follows? Often the party has to nominate a rich man and he is bled. If he spends all that money for nothing but the pleasure of being a statesman, the superior citizens who vote and do nothing else get a better bargain than they deserve. If he is carried by funds which are supplied to him—those funds do not come from heaven; they largely come to him by the other route. The larger political party subscriptions are the only instances that I know of where men give—shall I say something for nothing? No one would seriously make such a suggestion.

The get-rich-quick idea that spread all over the civilized world in recent years is largely responsible for the failure in self-governing countries of the stockholders as a body to do their full duty as citizens in selecting, and especially in supporting our public men. Who worries about the numerous things done by governments in many constituencies throughout the country? The average business man, who does not look forward to becoming an office-holder, pays no attention; thus he professionalizes the party worker, he narrows the public opinion of his district, and then he thanks God he is not as this party heeler. We see many things occurring which should not be, but very rarely has anyone taken the trouble to speak out. And yet we all think that we are of a pretty high type of citizenship.

Taking it all in all, the country gets far better members of parliament than it deserves. The standard of ability and special knowledge is distinctly high. The standard of honesty in the pecuniary sense is very good; remarkably few members of Parliament leave public life richer than they entered it. But our political system makes a most imperfect use of their real ability and their real public spirit. There are good men in our permanent service, but the political party system of controlling them certainly has failed to give the best results. Why? Well, very largely because of lack of public opinion and public spirit. There are inherent weaknesses anyway in parliamentary government. There is a terrible tendency to pay attention to powers of talk rather than to powers of work. We have listened with delight to candidates for political office indulge in invectives against the opposite party. We have looked for volumes of talk and we got them. We have preferred the man skilled in verbal acrobatics because he was entertaining, just as some are drawn to church by the sermon rather than for the worship of their Maker. We have heard the expressions—"the keen wit," "the biting sarcasm," "the adroitness with which he turned the debate"—and