

Mr. Meighen is, of course, quite right when he says in the closing passage of his letter that the duty of an Opposition is not adulation of a government. He is quite wrong when he suggests that adulation of the government is the main concern of *The Leader-Post*. This newspaper has not hesitated to criticize the government now in office when it has felt that such criticism was constructive and justified.

With Mr. Meighen's definition of what constitutes constructive criticism we also disagree. When he says that any criticism "which results, or is designed to result, in better work" is constructive, he is simply arguing that the end justifies the means. Is not that precisely the argument which the dictators applied to deeds in their cruel climb to power?

No critical utterance is then destructive if in his opinion it "is designed to result in better work." The right of decision as to design presumably remains with him. Under such an interpretation he can, of course, justify all the belittling things he has said in the past about Canada's war effort. It is admittedly a very convenient definition. The Oxford dictionary is not quite so accommodating on the subject. There, destructive criticism is defined as merely negative, refuting without amending. It is criticism which tends to overthrow, disprove or discredit. It was in that sense that we used the word originally. Obviously the borderline between the two types of criticism is indistinct. The one can be helpful both to effort and morale. The other can be damaging. We as a newspaper frankly admit that we have perhaps not always been constructive in our criticism. But we have tried to be. And surely it is not too much to expect of an intellect such as Mr. Meighen's that his criticism should be directed in a manner calculated to create rather than to tear down. Particularly is this true in time of war when there is an exaggerated sensitiveness as to what is positive and what is negative. This week's discussions in parliament amply demonstrate this truth.

There is this further consideration: subversive elements have already demonstrated that they are quick to grasp at every straw the wind casts in their direction. When a man of Mr. Meighen's standing infers that capitalism is the only thing worth fighting for, he gives to such elements a wedge which they can quickly wield as a weapon to widen the gap which now separates the various schools of thought on social problems. That he is sincere in his desire to strengthen the effectiveness of the war effort, no one doubts. He is a patriot through and through. It is not his motives which are in question. It is his methods.

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Toronto, March 10, 1941.

The Editor,
"The Leader-Post,"
Regina, Sask.

Dear Sir:

I have just read your editorial of March 7th dealing with my second letter. The answer to its less important features is fairly obvious, but you have been not ungenerous with your space, and I shall be brief.

You say the war is being fought to preserve our liberty. I agree. You say that as part of that liberty the British people (and ourselves) should have the right to decide for socialism if we want to. I agree.

What I say is that if we are to embrace socialism, which means the end of liberty, either by our own act or by having it forced upon us from within—a method always hitherto effective in other countries—then there would seem to be no reason why we should sacrifice the best of our manhood in the process of preserving a liberty which is at once to be thrown away. In this subject I have some interest.