

country. This is scandalous, iniquitous, unworthy of the Canadian people when one thinks of the great market we have for our goods over there.

If I say anything which is not complimentary to the government—

Mrs. NIELSEN: You will lose your seat.

Mr. LEADER: May I say to the hon. member that I do not believe that I shall lose my seat; it would take more than that to make me lose it. But if I say anything of that kind, it is not because I want to do it. I would rather support the government any time.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): If they bring down good legislation.

Mr. LEADER: If I offer any criticism, it is constructive and it comes from a friend.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): They will not believe it, though.

Mr. LEADER: I hope that anything I say will be regarded in the light of constructive criticism even though it may appear derogatory to the government of which I am a supporter.

I have never been impressed with the government's wheat policy. I think it is recognized by the people of this country that the present government are not friendly to a wheat board. I make that statement without fear of contradiction. I believe they will say, when we get back to normal times we will drop all these obstacles to the sale of wheat and return to the old system of selling our grain. I believe that most members of the government will admit that is a correct statement of their views, but in order to prove the statement I have made I shall run over one or two of the actions of this government since they came into power in 1935.

We—and I now put myself in a class with the government—inherited a wheat board—originally it was a grain board—with provision for an initial payment of 87½ cents basis No. 1 northern Fort William, and also participation certificates to the producers. In our first year of office—I say this, not egotistically, but as being in the same boat as my hon. friends on this side—by order in council the government put in that notorious 90 cent restriction, which did not allow the wheat board to function until the price of wheat fell to 90 cents a bushel or lower. The result, of course, was that the wheat board did not function that year because the price of wheat was above that figure. I do not understand why the government took that action. I think it was an unfriendly act towards the wheat board.

In 1937 there was no amendment and the same conditions prevailed. In 1938 the initial

payment was cut from 87½ cents to 80 cents a bushel. Under the conditions that prevailed at that time, perhaps that could not be construed as an unfriendly act to the wheat board because the price of wheat was very much lower. Then in 1939 the initial payment was again lowered to 60 cents a bushel, the price that appeared in the original bill, but by action in the house it was raised to 70 cents a bushel. Hon. members, however, may remember that last year I supported the 80 cent price, and I found it was my duty as I saw the light to vote against the government because they did not maintain that price. Then they removed the so-called advisory committee who were supposed to confer with the officers of the wheat board in all their deliberations. The hon. member for Weyburn referred to that in the speech he made in the house a few days ago, and I can concur in the remarks he made at that time. I look upon the action of the government in about the same light as does my hon. friend, and 90 per cent of the people of western Canada regard it in the same light. But I will give the committee a better authority than myself or the hon. member for Weyburn. I will give unimpeachable authority from no less a person than the Hon. Mr. Motherwell. Speaking in this house last year he said, as reported at page 3768 of *Hansard*:

So we had these two serious blunders, neither of which was friendly towards the wheat board; in fact, they were positively unfriendly. I think, from what we have seen and heard, there can be no doubt that a large section of the cabinet is opposed to the wheat board.

I wonder if Mr. Motherwell was right. If he was right, then I want to tell the minister that he has his work cut out for him if his advisers in the government are unfriendly to the wheat board.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Absolutely right.

Mr. LEADER: I shall not quote more than that; that is by the way. I shall, however, refer to some matters that have been brought up by some hon. members to-night. Several hon. members have referred to the grain exchange and the hon. member for Wood Mountain (Mr. Donnelly) defended it. I will not take it upon myself either to defend or to criticize the grain exchange. I believe that the exchange in the past performed a necessary service, but in my opinion it has outlived its usefulness. I will make the bald statement that under present conditions the government should close the grain exchange, and I believe the great majority of the people for whom I speak would agree with me. That may possibly be offered as a criticism of the government now that they are going to continue the exchange and allow it to function.