

system the only way we will get real progress is by persuading people as to the wisdom of any step which may be taken, and we must go forward step by step. The sure way to destroy progress is to say, "I will not support a forward step because it does not go all the way I want it to go." That seems to be the attitude which has been taken by some of my hon. friends in regard to these bills.

And that brings me to the question: Are these bills good or are they not? Is this a forward step? Let us first consider the bill to amend the wheat board act. Under the act as it now stands, the government of the day is left free to set any initial price it wishes for wheat. When I hear some of my hon. friends say they are going to vote against the bill because they want a higher price than 70 cents, then I say this: If this measure is defeated in the house they are not attaining an 80-cent price, for the government of the day or any government that succeeds it can set a price as low as 40 cents a bushel or lower if it wishes.

Miss MACPHAIL: They would not be a government long.

Mr. TUCKER: When hon. members vote against this bill they place it in the power of the government to do that very thing. But if they vote for the amendment now before us they will be sure that the price will not be less than 70 cents.

Why, if I had as low an opinion of the government as my hon. friends of the Social Credit party and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, if I thought the government were out to betray the west, I would certainly think they would probably set a price lower than 70 cents. I would want to see that this bill went through so that they could not put it lower than that amount.

But my hon. friends rise and say that the government are betraying the west and are not to be trusted; that although they have the power to-day to set the price even at 30 cents a bushel, whereas this bill proposes to tie their hands and to say they cannot set it at less than 70 cents; yet, because my hon. friends mistrust the government they will still leave them power to set the price at 30 cents and not tie their hands at 70 cents.

I do not follow that logic. My own attitude is that when this parliament has the right under this bill to say that the price must be 70 cents this year, 70 cents next year and 70 cents the year after, that the minimum price shall be at least that much, and that, no matter what happens, we are sure that is the basic price for wheat, then I know the same thing will not happen after this amendment

goes through as happened in 1932 when the farmer in western Canada had to sell, as I did myself, good wheat for as low as 19 cents a bushel. I know we are being guaranteed against that happening again. My hon. friends who say they are voting against this amendment are leaving themselves open to that very thing happening again, and for that reason I cannot follow their attitude.

Then there is this further feature: We know that in western Canada we grow a wheat of high gluten content, a wheat which can be grown only in semi-arid countries, or areas subject to crop failures. One of the real things we have needed, one of the things my father wished for and I have wished for, since I lived on the western plains, was some measure of security by means of crop insurance against periodic crop failures due to drought. This government comes forward at the present session and gives us that measure of security as part of its general policy.

I am satisfied that this measure alone, Mr. Speaker, means more to the future security of the people on those western plains than any single measure hitherto passed in any session of parliament since confederation. And my hon. friends say that they will vote the government out because it wishes to set the initial price at 70 cents instead of leaving it to be set later at any price, and that they would put it in a position where it could not put this policy of crop insurance into effect. When I go back to western Canada I will tell my constituents that those who would have killed the wheat board amendment would in doing so have destroyed the government and destroyed the acreage bonus bill and destroyed the hope of some security that western Canada had from it. I will remind them of 1911 when because some people in the west were not willing and able to see clearly the way their best interests lay, they helped destroy the Laurier government when it was giving them some real measure of help in its reciprocity agreement, although perhaps it was not ready to go as far as they wanted it to go. I say to my hon. friends from western Canada, to the members of the Social Credit and Cooperative Commonwealth Federation groups: If you try to destroy this government by voting against the 70 cent amendment and call on us from western Canada to join with you in doing that, if we answer your call we will destroy the government and lose the whole program. I ask my hon. friends: Do you think we should do that?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Sure.