

that if any such agreement was made you have laid yourself liable to prosecution under that Order. It prohibits the entry into any such agreement.

Yours truly,
(Sgd) T. W. Crothers,
Minister of Labour.

The member for St. Antoine (Sir Herbert Ames), who was telling us so much about the way our finances should be conducted, knows that the burning question among the labouring classes is the high cost of shoes. As a matter of fact, I believe that the hon. gentleman knows more about the manufacture of shoes than he does about finances. The other day a man with only one arm came into my office and said to me: "McCoig, the shoes for the child that I am sending to school to-morrow cost me \$3, while the shoes that I bought for his brother five years ago cost me only 98 cents." A cattle merchant who was standing by said: "I can assure you, Mr. McCoig, that the price of hides is practically the same as it was five years ago." Is it not time that this matter was taken up by Parliament and an investigation held? Many children were kept home last winter because their parents could not buy shoes for them. If it is true that millions of dollars worth of hides are stored throughout the country, should not the Government see that these hides are manufactured and that our boys, the great asset of this country, are supplied with shoes in order that they may be enabled to get an education?

I say this because I believe these are matters that have very little to do with the prosecution of the war, but they have a great deal to do with the peace and harmony which we hope will prevail in this country. At this particular time we lack a Postmaster General. Demands are coming from all parts of the country that the postal service be improved. We have requests for better pay from postmasters whose labours are greater than they ever were before. The mail carriers in the cities are also asking for better pay, and above all, the mail carriers on the rural routes of this country, who accepted contracts at a time when the cost of living was not as high, as it is now, have been compelled by the Government to fulfil the duties required of them. I do not mean to cast any reflections upon the Acting Postmaster General (Mr. Doherty), but I believe the duties of the Post Office Department are such that we should have in this House a man who would give his whole attention to the department so as to ensure that the proud position that Canada

[Mr. McCoig.]

has in the past occupied, as far as our mail service is concerned, will be continued in the future.

The other night when the proposition was before Parliament to exempt the men who were producing on the farms of this country, I supported that amendment. My reason for doing so was that we had received letters and pamphlets up to as late a date as the 28th of March, signed by the Prime Minister, asking for greater production. I have here a resolution, passed in the provincial legislature, moved by Sir William Hearst, and seconded by Mr. Proudfoot. I believe it to be perfectly in order to read a portion of it:

Resolved, That we the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognising as we do the grave and anxious crisis which confronts Great Britain and France owing to the acute shortage of food in these countries, and the momentous issues that are thus placed in jeopardy, hereby affirm our resolve and determination to do everything that lies in our power to sustain Great Britain and her Allies in the bitter struggle that lies ahead. We realise that the world shortage of food, together with the fact that the destruction of shipping prevents Great Britain drawing supplies from Australia and South America, compels that country and France to depend almost entirely on Canada and the United States for the necessary food to maintain her armies and her civilian population. We desire to express our willingness to assume to the full our responsibility in this perilous emergency. Ontario has with a true spirit of patriotism and unselfishness risen to every demand hitherto made upon her by the war, whether for men, money, munitions or food, and must not fail now in doing her part in meeting this new and grave crisis. At a time when the whole civilian population of Great Britain is on meagre rations, when even the soldiers' rations have been reduced, and when France is threatened with famine, it behooves all the inhabitants of this favoured province to examine closely their individual responsibility and privileges, and resolve upon making unprecedented efforts to increase food production.

The resolution goes on further, but that is the important part of it. This is the report of a statement that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Crerar) made to the livestock men from the West. It is copied from the Globe of November 8, 1917:

Mr. Crerar assured his hearers that it was not the intention of the Government or the Militia Department to conscript men whose experience rendered their services more valuable on the farm than at the front.

On account of these requests to produce, from the Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, from the Prime Minister of the Ontario and the leader of the Opposition in that legislature, and with this assurance given by the Minister of Agriculture, many of the farmers have made arrange-