Sir THOMAS WHITE: May I point out that the item to which the hon. member refers was struck out in 1916, and No. 267a inserted, which is the item we are dealing with?

Mr. McMASTER: The word of explanation that I wished is on this point. It was thought advisable a few years ago to have crude petroleum of the specific gravity of .8235 come in free. Now we find it is considered wise to allow petroleum of .7900 specific gravity to come in free, but apparently crude petroleum of other specific gravities will not come in free. What is the explanation of the change? Is it to protect some special interest?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I am informed by the Commissioner of Taxation that it is because the lighter oil could not be obtained that the change was made. There is no question of protection so far as I am aware.

Mr. ARCHAMBAULT: The fact that the oil cannot be obtained does not seem to be a very good reason.

Mr. ROBB: In opposition to the amendment moved by the hon. member (Mr. Archambault), the Minister of Finance says that he requires the money and that he is not prepared to accept the amendment because it will interfere with his revenue. May I submit to the minister that he is penalizing, more than any other interest in this country, the Government itself in the person of his confrère the Minister of Railways (Mr. J. D. Reid), who has a highway proposition now before the House? If we are going to encourage good roads and if the Dominion Government are going to require the oil for the purpose of good roads, very naturally the Dominion Government will pay. Therefore, the minister is only taking money out of one pocket and putting it into the other. Under these conditions he might very well consider the amendment.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I am sorry it is impossible for me to do so, and I can call the attention of the hon. member (Mr. Robb) to the fact that we are dealing in this item with crude petroleum, not a manufactured article at all, and that is all that has been dealt with in the tariff before, so far as I know.

Mr. JACOBS: The minister says that he cannot agree with the amendment of the hon. member (Mr. Archambault) because there would be a considerable loss of revenue under this item. Can we have some idea as to what the estimated revenue would be?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I have not the information. I was speaking generally with regard to loss of revenue from the dropping of the seven and-a-half per cent war tax duty. If the revenue is considerable, then we should obtain it. If, on the other hand, it is inconsiderable, there is not very much weight in the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Archambault) negatived.

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: I understand there is a reduction in the duty on tea of three cents per pound. Last year a duty of ten cents per pound was imposed upon tea, and the tax was made retroactive so that importers and wholesale traders had to pay the ten cents per pound on the tea they had in stock at that time. I have a communication from an important firm in Quebec, asking me to urge upon the minister the advisability of drafting the same clause as regards retroactivity in favour of the traders this year as it was against them last year; that is to say, they should be reimbursed three cents per pound on the duty they have paid on tea they have actually in stock. The demand is a fair one, and I would ask the minister to give it his consideration.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I am sorry that we could not consider that favourably. In some tariff revisions consideration is given in case of goods that are in bond, but with the article held in store and throughout the country, we do not think it practicable to give effect to the suggestion. I am informed that, as regards goods taken out of bond, no provision has ever been made in any tariff revision for making an allowance.

Mr. JACOBS: With respect to tariff items Nos. 27 and 28, item No. 27 is "coffee when not imported from country of growth," three cents and seven and-a-half per cent British preferential; five cents and ten per cent on intermediate tariff, and five cents and ten per cent on general tariff, and contrasting this with item No. 28, when coffee is imported direct from country of growth, the rates are different. These are two and-a-quarter cents, three cents and three cents, respectively. What is the theory by which the rates are different when the coffee is imported direct and not direct?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: The principle involved is one which has been recognized for many years and, I think, by several administrations. The object is the national interest of Canada, that is to say, that the