

thing to do at least with keeping members in the House while the legislation was being enacted and I recall distinctly when Sir Thomas White introduced the legislation reducing freight rates on agricultural implements to western Canada points, and I can assure my hon. friend that at that time there was no obstruction on the part of the Liberal party to that small concession being given to the western farmers.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I suppose Sir Thomas White told the truth at once. If the opposition could get that, there was no necessity for obstruction.

Mr. FORKE: Mr. Chairman the hon. member for West York (Sir Henry Drayton) has referred to interruptions preventing him from getting along with the business of the House. It is very difficult for an ordinary member to interject even a few remarks when the hon. gentleman is engaged in a disputation. Although I do not want to interrupt, I certainly want an opportunity to speak once in a while during the debate. We have occupied pretty nearly an hour discussing a simple question which the hon. member has asked the Acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb), and which apparently he is not going to answer, yet the hon. member has plied the same question backwards and forwards for at least half an hour anyway. I wonder who is wasting the time of the house. I have got on my feet scarcely half a dozen times but members to my right have remarked about my obtuseness and the difficulty of getting anything into my head. But that does not hurt me when I consider where it comes from. Indeed I think it a slight personal tribute that those hon. gentlemen take the trouble to make such remarks. I should like some information on this change of tactics by my hon. friends to my right during the last day or two. For weeks we listened here to their woeful tales of the way in which our manufacturers in Toronto, Brantford and Hamilton were going to be ruined, in fact they were already going out of business; now it seems that these hon. members have completely turned around and are of opinion that those very manufacturers whose misfortunes they so much deplored are getting too many good things altogether. I do not know what has happened to bring about this change of front. I think it is pretty well recognized in the House to-day that the success of our manufacturing industry depends to a very large extent on the prosperity of the prairie provinces. As everyone admits that without further argument why so much disputation if there is any chance of a little reduction in freight rates on agricultural imple-

[Mr. Robb.]

ments? Such a reduction will help everyone—manufacturers and others—all along the line. I think we all realize that the great question before the country to-day is cheaper transportation, and unless freight rates are brought within reach of the western producer, we are not going to see very prosperous times in Canada for some time to come. I am very pleased to know that there may be a chance of a reduction in freight rates on agricultural implements to the West, but I am quite willing to wait until the proper time comes for that announcement to be made by the government. I do not see what is to be gained by having the question asked so repeatedly all this afternoon. Let us get on with the business of the House.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: In answer to the last remark of my hon. friend (Sir Henry Drayton) as to whether there is an understanding between the government and the implement makers that the Crownsnest pass rates will go into full effect, I might say there is no such understanding. The only understanding between the government and the implement makers is contained in the records that have already been brought down.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: That is all the information I have been asking for.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What I wanted to make clear when I spoke a moment ago was that parliament is free to deal with the question of freight rates as it may think best and has up to the end of the session to take action. If my hon. friend asks me whether there is an understanding in respect to freight rates, I tell him there is no understanding. The really important thing, as the hon. member who has just taken his seat (Mr. Forke) has said, is: How in fact is the budget affecting the industries which it is intended to affect; how is it affecting them and of what advantage is it going to be to the country? I happen to have in my hand a letter which is quite pertinent on this point. It comes from the sales manager of the John Deere Manufacturing Company, Limited, and has been sent out to their agents. It is as follows:

WELLAND, ONT., May 14, 1924.

Dear Sir:

Re Price Revision Effective by the Budget of April 11.

We are now able to pass on to the trade the benefits that the new budget will enable us to do, as set out in the schedule of price reductions attached hereto. There is every reason to face this new price situation with great enthusiasm because we are able to give the consumer this price reduction that he has been looking forward to. This now imposes the responsibility upon the user of farm implements to allow no further postponement of buying more freely what he requires in farm implements, enabling himself to produce at lower cost and to once more enable