

possible to change it now and I do not think it necessary to do so. The manufacturers will get the benefit of it after September 1st and in view of what I have stated as to the shipments of agricultural implements prior to that date I do not think it is an important question to-day. That is as I understand the situation. Besides the reduction can only be made on the order of the Board of Railway Commissioners and this date has been decided upon as the date upon which it shall come into effect. I am afraid the question could not be reopened.

Mr. ROBB: That makes it clear that it will be of no advantage whatever to the farmers this year. I suppose this understanding about September first was arrived at in fairness to the men who had already shipped machinery, or would ship during June, July and August.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: The manufacturers will lose to a certain extent by reason of the date not being fixed earlier. My hon. friend (Mr. Robb) says that this reduction in the freight rate will be of no advantage to the farmers because it does not go into effect until September 1st. I submit he is wrong as to that. We are seeking to bring down the cost of agricultural implements. This bringing down of the tariff, it has been contended, will give an advantage to the Canadian farmers because American-made implements will be entered at the lower rate of duty. The reduction of the freight rates was to put the manufacturer in as good a position as his American competitor. The advantage, whatever it may be, will come to the farmer not immediately by reason of the reduction in freight rates, but by reason of the reduction in the duty, and we are able to give that reduction in duty by reason of bringing about for the manufacturer a reduction in freight rates which puts him on the same basis as his American competitor. The tariff changes come into effect as of June 6th, but the reduction on freights will not take place until September 1st. The hon. gentleman (Mr. E. Lapointe) who raised the question was speaking, not on behalf of the farmers, but on behalf of a manufacturer of agricultural implements. They alone are concerned in the question as to when this reduction comes into effect, but as far as the farmer is concerned he will get whatever benefit will come from the reduction of the tariff on June 6th.

Mr. McMASTER: In the few remarks I made upon the Budget I pointed out to the minister that if these freight rates from Ontario points were reduced to western points and were not reduced to eastern points there would be a discrimination against the farmers whom I have the honour to represent in this House. I see the Commissioner of Taxation energetically shaking his head. Do I understand from that, that the minister, in collaboration with his advisers, has decided to do the fair and decent thing with the eastern farmers and to arrange with the railways the same reduced rates in agricultural implements proceeding in an easterly direction from the point of manufacture?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I answered that, I thought, fairly when the resolution was in Committee. My hon. friend chanced to be absent from the House, but I will be glad to repeat the explanation. The reason we were justified in asking that freight rates should be reduced was because the freight rates from Chicago to the Canadian West were lower than from competing points in the East.

Now, that is not so. The rate from Chicago to Nova Scotia is not lower than the rate from Toronto to Nova Scotia. The rate from Chicago to Regina or Winnipeg was lower than the rate from Toronto or Montreal to Regina or Winnipeg. The only rate situation which required to be dealt with was the Western; with regard to the Eastern, there is water competition, as was pointed out the other day. The Eastern farmer gets precisely the same benefit from this tariff reduction as the Western farmer. Whatever advantage accrues to the farmer, comes from the reduction in the tariff, not from the reduction in the freight rates, because the manufacturers get the benefit of the reduced freight rates to offset the reduction in the tariff. If my hon. friend is right in his contention that the price of agricultural implements is higher by reason of the duties that have been imposed, then if we reduce those duties the price will drop to the farmer. Therefore, the Eastern farmer gets the benefit of that reduction just the same as the Western farmer, if my hon. friend is right, that what is taken off the tariff must reduce the price of the article.

Mr. McMASTER: I thank the minister for completing his explanation, which I did not hear in its entirety before. I am still unconvinced; in fact, I am very much convinced that it is highly improper legisla-