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SUPPLEMENTARY RETURN

(51b)

To an ADDRESS of the HOUSE OF COMMONS to His Excellency the Governor-General, of the 15th March, 1893, for copies of correspondence and other papers in relation to an Agreement entered into between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the President of the French Republic, regulating the commercial relations between Canada and France in respect to customs tariffs.

OTTAWA, 20th March, 1893.

GRAND HOTEL, PARIS, 7th November, 1892.

DEAR SIR JOHN ABBOTT,—As arranged with you, I left London by the club train at three o'clock on Thursday and arrived here the same night. I had previously telegraphed to my private secretary, Mr. Just, to inform His Excellency the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, when I would reach Paris.

Sir Joseph Crowe called on Friday morning to inform me that they had learnt that His Excellency would receive a communication that day from the French Government fixing the day and hour of the first meeting. He also told me that he had ascertained definitely from the United States Minister that no action had been taken up to the present time in regard to the arrangement made by his predecessor, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, respecting the concession of the minimum tariff to the United States on several articles, as the Chambers so far had not adopted it. It appears that having been made a "Projet de Loi" instead of a decree, the action of the Chambers is necessary to give it effect.

I called at the Embassy on Saturday and was shown a letter which had just been received by His Excellency Lord Dufferin from M. Ribot, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a copy of which is inclosed, saying that he would be glad to receive us at the Foreign Office on the following Monday at 4 o'clock, and that he had designated M. Hanotaux, Director of Commerce, to represent the French Government in the pour parlers, and that he had requested his colleague, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, to delegate for the same object one of the functionaries of his Department. Mr. Austin Lee, the Second Secretary of Legation, informed me that His Excellency would present me to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the day and at the hour named. Sir Joseph Crowe very kindly called upon me at 11 o'clock this morning and we discussed fully the line to be taken in opening the negotiations, and a little before four we proceeded together to the Foreign Office, where we were shortly afterwards joined by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, who presented me to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Lord Dufferin and I explained to His Excellency the object of our mission. We were received with great cordiality and were assured by him that it would receive the best attention of the French Government.

Sir Joseph Crowe and I were then placed in communication with M. Hanotaux, M. Pallain, the Chief of the Customs Department, and M. Roume, another high departmental official, and we discussed with them the questions at issue until after 6 o'clock.

I explained that the Dominion of Canada being desirous of obtaining more favourable trade relations with France, Her Britannic Majesty had conferred plenary powers upon His Excellency the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava and myself for the purpose of endeavouring to negotiate a Treaty relating to trade between