

GRAND HOTEL, PARIS, 6th February, 1893.

Hon. MACKENZIE BOWELL,
Minister of Trade and Commerce,
Ottawa.

DEAR MR. BOWELL.—In continuation of my letter of the 31st ultimo, I have to report that I called at the Colonial Office on Tuesday, the 1st instant, and saw Mr. Meade, the Permanent Under Secretary, who informed me that that department entirely approved of the draft treaty, and that it had gone back to the Foreign Office with the suggestion that it be referred to the Board of Trade.

I had an interview the following day with Sir E. Grey, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who stated that the Foreign Office quite approved of the draft, that they did not see any reason for referring it to the Board of Trade, and that no time should be lost in having the necessary authorization to sign sent forward.

A communication from Sir E. Grey, copy enclosed, intimating that this had been done, reached me late on Friday afternoon, the 3rd instant, and I telegraphed immediately to Sir Joseph Crowe, in these terms:—

"Please inform Lord Dufferin, instructions so forwarded to-night, authorizing signature of treaty and letter. Leaving for Paris to-morrow morning at eight. Would be greatly obliged if arrangements were made so that signature could take place Monday."

I arrived in Paris on Saturday evening, and learnt from Mr. Austin Leys, at the Embassy, that M. Develle, the Foreign Minister, in order to meet my wishes, had kindly arranged a meeting at the Quai d'Orsay, for the signature of the treaty to-day at half-past four.

I also supplied M. Hanotaux the same night with the English text of the treaty as revised by the Foreign Office in London, as it was desirable that it should be in both languages, and the papers will be drawn up accordingly.

Mr. Palmer repeated to me yesterday your cable message of Saturday, the 4th instant, which reads as follows:—

"Letter twenty-first received this morning; impossible to decide until further information reaches us as to what proposals are specified in the drafts. Cable what position is as to cheese."

My despatches which have already been sent to you will fully explain the point upon which you appear to be in doubt, and I expect that the draft of the treaty and the proposed letters accompanying it will also be received by you today.

The questions of the reduction by Canada of the duty on French books, and of the concession by France of the minimum tariff on cheese, were both left in the French propositions for the consideration of the Government of Canada and of France, and as the Dominion refused to make the reduction on French books, France declined to extend minimum tariff treatment to Canadian cheese.

The draft letters in connection with the treaty will show you that it is proposed by France, in addition to the present treaty, to grant the minimum tariff on cheese, provided Canada will reduce the duty on paintings, prints, engravings, drawings, and building plans from 20 to 5 per cent. But I have every reason to believe that the reduction from 20 to 10 per cent on these articles will obtain for Canada the minimum tariff on cheese.

The memorandum which I have sent to you on the question of cheese (see my despatch of January 31st) will, I think, convince you that it would be greatly to the advantage of Canada to meet that proposition on the part of France and to adopt promptly the arrangement by a simple exchange of notes by the plenipotentiaries of the Governments of Great Britain and France.

I am so glad to be able to tell you also that I have succeeded at the last moment, and after some difficulty, in inducing the French Commissioners to add wood pavement in the piece (No. 129 in the French tariff) to the list of articles of Canadian origin to which minimum tariff treatment will be conceded.