

negotiations had taken place in Canada, (apparently quite independently of the Home Government), though the German Consul in Montreal, and Lord Grey, anticipating questions by the Colonial Office on this irregular arrangement, wrote Lord Elgin to assure him, on Sir Wilfrid Laurier's authority, that they were only unofficial talks and were not likely to result in any change in existing commercial arrangements. In a letter dated March 26, 1906, Grey wrote:

In case reports reaching England that my Ministers are negotiating with the German Consul with the view of altering the tariff, I wish to inform you that I have enquired from Sir Wilfrid Laurier whether there is any authority for these reports, and he has assured me that although the German Consul has had talks with him, and with Mr. Fielding, the Minister of Finance, these talks give no reason to believe that there is likely to be any change in the commercial relations between the Dominion and Germany.

I have informed Sir Wilfrid Laurier that His Majesty's Govt. expect to be kept informed of any formal discussions on any matters of importance between the Dominion Govt. and local Consular officers. He readily agrees with the reasonableness of this expectancy and has assured me that he will keep me fully informed if at any time there should be matter to communicate.(1)

When, however, in 1910, further discussions on tariff and trade matters were held with the German Consul in Canada, which resulted in a bilateral tariff agreement, the Colonial Office took a rather dim view of this procedure, and on March 30, 1910, Lord Crewe wrote unofficially to Lord Grey:

With reference to my despatch No. 222 of 30th instant, as to the provisional Agreement between Canada and Germany, Sir E. Grey has suggested that,

(1) Grey of Howith Collection. Vol.13. Folder 8. (Document 003530).