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*Le Ministre de Grande-Bretagne à Berne, E. Grant Duff,  
au Chef du Département politique, A. Hoffmann*

N

Bern, August 28, 1915

The recent proposal of the Swiss Government conveyed to the French Ambassador by Mr. Dunant in his letter of the 23rd instant<sup>1</sup>, to restrict exchanges with Germany and Austria-Hungary to stocks in Switzerland which are the property of those Governments appears to offer a basis for removing the last difficulty in the way of concluding the negotiations between the Allied Governments and the Federal Government with regard to the proposed «Trust». It will be evident to Your Excellency that it is imperative that His Majesty's Government should know the quantities of the stocks of those commodities which the Federal Government thus propose to release in exchange with the Central Empires. I have the honour to request Your Excellency to furnish me, as soon as possible with the necessary data.

In making this communication to Your Excellency I am directed by Sir Edward Grey to say that for the purposes of such an agreement His Majesty's Government could only consider as «*belonging to the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments*» such stocks as were actually the property of these Governments and were in Switzerland on June 30, 1915.

I am also instructed to ask Your Excellency what proof the Federal Government are prepared to offer that the stocks of commodities in question were actually the property of the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments and not of private individuals.

I have also the honour to state that the contemplated exchanges could not include:

- 1) Rice.
- 2) Cotton which has entered Switzerland since March 11, 1915.
- 3) Sulphur.
- 4) Tanning materials.

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1. Cf. n° 144.