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May 8th,1900.

Hon. G. G. Curtis,

Sec. Wisconsin Tax Commission.

Sir:

I regret to say that it is quite impossible for me to answer the questions in the category enclosed in your letter of April 13,1900.

To do so intelligibly would require an analysis of the most intricate and subtle system of taxation known to any civilized nation. No reasonable man could make such analysis without seeming at times to reflect unfavorably on the policy or administration of the French government.

Having been recently subjected to public censure by the State Department, for having intimated that the consumption of wine in France decreased during the years 1896-1897-1898,--and that there was a popular belief that wine was sometimes adulterated, the ground for such opinion implied a doubt of the infallibility of French statistics, I cannot risk any farther publication of this sort against which I have no remedy.

Of course I understand that such public scourging was printed without any investigation of the fact, and may have been quite unintentional, but one does not like to give his superiors any opportunity to make a football of his reputation whether unintentional or otherwise.

You will therefore, kindly excuse me from answering questions which might directly or inairectly involve some imputation that the policy or administration of the French government or some official thereof, is not or has not always been absolutely above criticism.

I send this through the State Department, because our consuls are forbidden to correspond with any citizen of the United States or any official not connected with the State Department on any subject of an economic, commercial or agricultural character having any reference to the conditions prevailing in the country where he resides, and I wish to show myself entirely subordinate to such requirements.

Regretting my inability to be of more service to you, I am dear Sir,

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
Albert G. Tourgee
U.S. Consul, Bordeaux.