

necessary power to enable them to consider it.

Mr. LAURIER—They say they are prepared to renew the proposals they made before, in the letter of the 27th November, which is kept back.

Mr. TUPPER—I am referring to the official reply.

Mr. LAURIER—That is in the official reply.

Mr. TUPPER—I am not referring to the correspondence which preceded it.

Mr. LAURIER—That is in the official reply.

Mr. TUPPER—This is the official reply :

“ While continuing their proposal—”

Some hon. members—Hear, hear.

Mr. TUPPER—My hon. friends seemed to be ignorant of that when they were discussing the matter, and now they want to have added to that the contents of a proposal of a certain date. Surely they are not so barren of argument, surely they are not so weak in their contention, as to add to the letter of Mr. Bayard, and to force the people of Canada to suppose that we have refused to consider a proposal which is not before the people, and is not in writing. What does the hon. gentleman mean by saying that this refers to a proposal made before that date?

Mr. LAURIER—He says distinctly that the American proposal was made on the 27th November, and that the proposal of the British plenipotentiaries was made on the 4th December, and then that there was a reply on the 7th December, and that is kept back.

Mr. TUPPER—Then the hon. gentleman wishes the people to imagine that that proposal was what he thinks it was. Is it not a little hasty on their part to ask the house to vote want of confidence in the Government because they imagine—and we know that they have imagined very curious things—that a certain proposal was made? What form of denial does the hon. gentleman want? Does he charge this Government now with suppressing a document relating to trade? Does he charge this Government now with doing a dishonorable, a foul, a cowardly act? Does he seek to bring his party to vote on a charge like that? I ask the hon. gentleman does he make that insinuation?

Mr. LAURIER—I made no insinuation of any kind. The papers have not been laid before us. But I say the hon. gentleman has no right to say that they made such an offer of unrestricted trade, when it is proven that the American plenipotentiaries made

an offer which was refused by the Canadian commissioners.

Mr. THOMPSON—The hon. gentleman has been told time and again that the whole question in relation to trade was now on the table of the house, and the paper which the hon. member for Pictou has just read is to this effect: while renewing our proposals of such a date we decline to consider any trade negotiations relating to the fisheries.

Mr. LAURIER—Surely the hon. gentleman does not mean to say that we have the proposals of the American commissioners? We have the proposals of the British commissioners and nothing more.

Mr. THOMPSON—I mean to say that the hon. gentleman was told time and again that Sir Charles Tupper had asked the consent of the American plenipotentiaries and of Sir Lionel West, to lay on the table of the house everything relating to proposals looking for trade relations between the two countries, and he has done so; and it is disingenuous then to contend that the proposal that is referred to here, but which is not before the house, has any relation to trade at all.

Mr. TUPPER—I am glad I brought this subject up. I am glad now to know upon what material the hon. gentleman is acting when he makes this sudden change of base upon an entire supposition that has no foundation in fact. If he does not take the statement made by the Canadian representative, perhaps he may be able to believe Mr. Angell, one of the American commissioners, who makes a statement in entire accordance with the statement just made, that that proposition was refused absolutely. If my hon. friend had allowed me to continue, I think I could have satisfied him that no matter what theory might exist in reference to that proposal there was nothing in it of the nature the hon. gentleman imagines. The reasons that would prevent Mr. Bayard or any representative of the American Executive from making such a proposal as is contemplated. Now, what are the words:—

“ While continuing their proposal heretofore submitted—on the 30th ultimo,—and fully sharing the desire of Her Britannic Majesty’s plenipotentiaries to remove all causes of difference in connection with the fisheries; the American plenipotentiaries are constrained, after careful consideration, to decline to ask from the President authority requisite to consider the proposal conveyed to them on the 3rd inst. as a means to the desired end, because the greater freedom of commercial intercourse so proposed would necessitate an adjustment