

evident. The pending investigation into the bribery charges will be watched with interest all over the world.

From the tone of Secretary Gresham's official letter to the U.S. Senate, in response to its inquiry, as well as from that of the leading papers, so far as we have observed, with the exception of some of the more jingoistic Republican journals no difficulty need be apprehended from the United States, should Great Britain wish to carry out the wishes of New Zealand in regard to the future of Samoa. Secretary Gresham informs the Senate that the present government of Samoa is not autonomous, but "in substance and in form a tripartite foreign government imposed upon the natives and administered jointly by the three treaty powers." Mr. Gresham describes this, with implied disapproval, as the "first departure from our well-established policy of avoiding entangling alliances with foreign powers." The circumstances of the case show clearly enough that there is at least no commercial inducement for such departure in this case. Samoa is over four thousand miles distant from the nearest American port. Of two hundred merchant vessels which arrived at the Island during 1887, only six carried the American flag, and the total valuation of their cargoes was but \$60,000. Nor do more recent Treasury reports give any intimation of increase. So far as appears, the only other supposable motive for the interference of the United States in the affairs of the Island is the protection of a naval post which is theirs by purchase, and which can, of course, be taken care of in the same way as those in other quarters of the world, in the government of which the Republic claims no voice. It is pretty certain, therefore, that the question raised by the request of New Zealand will have to be settled practically between Great Britain and Germany. The Germans are said to be by no means popular in Samoa. Their success in colonizing has not hitherto been such as should make them anxious to try their hands in this remote and not very promising locality. Moreover, in view of Great Britain's possessions in those waters, she is by no means likely to consent to hand this Island or group of islands over to any foreign nation. The alternatives will then seemingly be the *status quo*, or annexation to New Zealand.

"The most iniquitous part of his (Sir William Harcourt's) scheme," says the *New York Tribune*, "that which plunders everybody with an income exceeding \$2,500 for the benefit of everybody with an income under \$2,500, passes without challenge." The reference is to the fact that even Mr. Balfour approves of this part of the British Budget proposals. This very common way of looking at the graduated income tax is decidedly misleading. It quite ignores the true principle which underlies such a measure. That principle may or may not be absolutely sound, but no fair opponent

of such legislation can ignore it. It is that, as by far the greater part of the expenditure of any modern state is for the protection of property, it is meet that property should bear the chief part of the burden. From this no corollary can be plainer than that the members of any civil society should bear the expenses of Government in proportion to the amount of benefit gained, *i.e.*, of property to be protected. It might not be hard to show further that the responsibility and expense for such protection increases in proportion to the amount of the possessions. The safeguards necessary to the protection of a property worth a few thousands, are trifling in comparison with those needed for that of the owner of millions, probably invested in various places and forms. It may be replied that as every citizen derives more or less of advantage from civil government, so no one should be wholly exempt from the contributions which are levied for the support of such government. But that argument, whatever weight it may have in a free-trade community, has little in one which collects the larger part of its revenue under a tariff system like that of the United States or Canada, where the taxes are so arranged that the larger percentage is usually paid by those who purchase the cheaper classes of goods, *i.e.*, the poor. Under such a system it may be argued with great force that nothing is fairer than that those incomes which do not rise above what is necessary to secure a comfortable living for their families should be exempted from direct taxation upon that amount.

The report, published in the *Toronto World* one day last week, of the investigations made by a representative of that paper with regard to the reduced price of gas in the city of Cleveland, must, in the nature of the case, have a personal interest for every householder in this city. Among the facts which may, we suppose, be accepted as undeniable, one stands out prominent and very significant. The citizens of Cleveland are supplied with gas for lighting and other purposes at prices from twenty to twenty-five per cent. less than those which are exacted from citizens of Toronto. Yet it is alleged on what seems to be good authority, that both of the companies which manufacture and supply the gas are still prosperous. Nor is there anything improbable in that statement, when we consider the enormous increase of consumption which is sure to follow from a large reduction in price of a commodity which is not absolutely a thing of necessity, but which every citizen would gladly use could he afford to do so. Let us suppose that the Toronto Gas Company should announce that from and after a given day the price of gas for all purposes in the city would be reduced thirty per cent. from the present prices. Can any one doubt that the announcement would be almost immediately followed by a great increase in the

number of citizens using gas for lighting, cooking and heating purposes, and that there would also follow a large increase in the quantity used by those whose houses are already supplied with it? It is really surprising that the shrewd managers of the company which has the monopoly do not, as a matter of business enterprise, determine to try the experiment. This is not, we suppose, the way with monopolists. As to the possibility of the city being able to compel the reduction, under the existing agreement, it would be rash to express too confident an opinion, without fuller knowledge that is at present available. The general, perhaps we might say, practically universal opinion is that the limitations of the contract in respect to the disposal of excessive profits are systematically violated in the spirit, if not in the letter. Certainly the representations now before the Council demand the most careful investigation.

The fiat has gone forth, the cohorts are being mustered and drilled, and for the next four or five weeks the sound of political war will be heard all over the Province of Ontario. The situation is somewhat peculiar in that there is, so far as we are aware, no one important question of principle, or even of policy, to divide the combatants. It is, to a degree unusual even in local politics, a personal contest. The names "Liberal" and "Conservative" are still used, but they no longer have a distinct meaning in Provincial affairs. From present indications the case will be different in the next Dominion election, in which the watchwords "Protection," on the one hand, and "Free-trade," or "Tariff for Revenue only," on the other, may not unfitly be appropriated by the old parties. But this issue seems unlikely to have much prominence in the Ontario contest. It is questionable whether an analysis of the speeches and votes of the representatives of the two parties in the local Legislature, during the last few sessions, would not justify the Opposition in laying claim to be the more liberal and progressive of the two. Nor, when we come down to the mere personal issues, is it easy to find any broad line of demarcation? The most diligent efforts of the Opposition, during the session just closed, have failed to substantiate any very serious charges of wrong-doing against the Government. The injustice of the system of payment by fees, and the opportunities it affords of rewarding party services all too liberally from funds which should be regarded as public property, were, it is true, pretty clearly shown. So, too, was the unfairness of the special method adopted to secure the return of a supporter from the City of Toronto. But in these and other cases, the Government have shrewdly given way so far as to remove the chief ground of complaint, while their general record is appealed to with confidence. On the whole, it is difficult to say in what respect