

tariffs—regardless of the rates specified in the franchises.

The London municipal election of the 2d proves to have been the greatest victory for progressive government in the history of the council. It was at the same time a stunning rebuke to the jingoes, who had run their campaign on imperial lines. Until within ten days of the election the progressives lacked confidence. So they neglected seats which they might have carried. But as it was, they won 86 seats out of 118. The overwhelming character of this victory may be appreciated by comparing the distribution of council seats between progressives and moderates (radicals and conservatives) since 1889:

	1889.	1892.	1895.	1897.	1901.
P .....	71	84	59	70	86
M .....	47	34	59	48	32
P. Maj.....	24	50	00	22	51

This election is in effect carte blanche authority from the people to the progressives to sweep away some of the worst monopolies of London; and unless the tory majority in parliament interferes, the popular mandate will surely be obeyed. There is, moreover, encouragement in the election for the true progressives of this country. It is indicative that public opinion has recoiled from the brute patriotism which carried the British and American elections last fall.

Buffalo has a free water question under discussion. It came before the council last week upon a motion for a public hearing on the proposition to abolish the water rates and distribute water to consumers free. The matter was made a party question, and the resolution was voted down—13 republicans voting against it and 12 democrats voting for it. It was argued by the democrats that the support of the water system by general taxation would lessen the burdens of water consumers by distributing the cost of water supply more equitably. That is, that the increase in taxes upon tenants and home owners would be less than their exemption from wa-

ter rates, thus relieving them; and that the difference would be made up by higher taxes on vacant lots, which now contribute nothing to the support of the water system, though the water system enhances their value. A free water issue in any large city would result in a good deal of needed enlightenment, if thoroughly discussed. Was that the reason the Buffalo republicans voted against discussion?

An expensive jingo policy and an empty exchequer have produced a fiscal problem in England, and tariff duties having been proposed as the best solution, because they cast the burden of taxation upon the masses without letting them know they are taxed, an opportunity is offered the British protectionist to raise his voice once more in the land. How familiar it sounds to us of this country. Here is the complaint of one protectionist member of parliament:

England has become the dumping ground of Europe; and now we are getting to be a dumping ground for America, too.

Strangers to protectionist terminology might suspect from this that England has become a dumping ground for the world's garbage. But not at all. What the member of parliament complains of is her becoming a dumping ground for the good things of the world that go there because her people want them and wouldn't go there but for that. Think of a householder complaining that his house has become a dumping ground for groceries, dry goods, clothing, carpets, fuel and luxuries of all sorts! What cause would he have for complaining? Wouldn't he say, "Let 'em dump?" Why shouldn't a nation say so, too?

The British tory leaders who are advocating an extension of the customs tariff, argue that the people pay such taxes without knowing that they pay them, and that this promotes good feeling at home while expensive imperial policies are carried out abroad. They are right. All indirect taxes have the virtue of soothing the taxpayer. They are to plundering

governments what chloroform is to plundering house breakers. This is the reason they were recommended by that eighteenth century Frenchman whose theory of taxation methods was that they should conform to the principle of "plucking the geese in such manner as to get the most feathers with the least squawking." To point the moral properly, it must be remembered that in our own country almost all taxes, national, state and local, are indirect. Under the operations of this system our largest class of taxpayers are called and call themselves nontaxpayers. They pay their taxes "all unbeknownst" in the prices of what they buy.

Something which seems to be entirely new in American legislation has been proposed by Representative Crafts in the Illinois legislature. Mr. Crafts has put his proposition in the form of a bill, which provides "for an expression of opinion by electors on questions of public policy at any general or special election." The bill is short enough for quotation in full:

Section 1. Be it enacted, etc., That on a written petition signed by five per cent. of the registered voters of any incorporated town, village, city, township, county or school district, or one per cent. of the registered voters of the state, it shall be the duty of the proper election officers in each case to submit any question of public policy so petitioned for, to the electors of the incorporated town, village, city, township, county, school district or state, as the case may be, at any general or special election named in the petition: Provided, such petition is filed with the proper election officers in each case, not less than 60 days before the date of the election at which the questions or question petitioned for are to be submitted.

Sec. 2. Every question submitted to electors shall be printed in plain, prominent type upon the official ballot, to be used at the election at which the question is to be submitted, in form as provided by law.

Only one criticism of this bill occurs to us. Instead of requiring the question to be printed upon the official ballot on which the names of candidates occur, it should be printed upon a separate ballot to be handed to every voter with the regular ballot. This