

gradually lost their ancient traditions of independence; and the city ceased to rank even with the other Hanseatic towns of Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck, which retained self-government inside the German Reich.

The Paris Peace Conference.

4. The problem of Danzig was discussed at the Paris Conference by the Commission on Polish Affairs, which on the 12th March, 1919, recommended unanimously that "both the town and port [of Danzig] should be given to Poland in unrestricted ownership." This recommendation was supported by the following arguments:—

- (a) "The legitimate aspirations of the Polish people for an outlet to the sea, as endorsed by Allied statesmen, cannot be fulfilled unless Danzig becomes a Polish port."
- (b) "The interests of 1,600,000 Germans in East Prussia can be adequately protected by securing for them freedom of transit across the Corridor; whereas it would be impossible to give an adequate outlet to the inhabitants of the new Polish State (numbering some 25 million) if this outlet had to be guaranteed across the territory of an alien and probably hostile Power."
- (c) "The interests of the German commercial population of Danzig will be best served by the development of Danzig as a Polish port."
- (d) "The trade of Danzig has been deliberately stifled by the policy of the Prussian Government, and the removal of the artificial restrictions at present in existence will result in a great increase of population. This additional population will in the natural course of things be composed of Poles, who occupy practically the whole of the hinterland, for which Danzig is the only adequate port."

5. The commission's proposals were adopted by the Supreme Council, only in so far as they involved the separation of Danzig from Germany. Opposition to the proposal to include Danzig in Poland was offered by Mr. Lloyd George, on the ground that it involved the transfer of an excessive number of Germans to Poland. Mr. Lloyd George had against him the whole of the remainder of the Supreme Council, and of the expert advisers both in the Commission on Polish Affairs and in his own staff in Paris. He persisted in his opposition, however, for reasons discussed in the memorandum on Polish Pomerania (Pomorze) (see *The Polish-German and Polish-Czechoslovak Frontiers: Annex III*,^(*) paras 7-9); and the result of his attitude was the establishment of the Free City.

Status of the Free City.

6. Under articles 100-108 of the Treaty of Versailles the Free City, though the title Free State was deliberately avoided, was given many of the attributes of sovereignty. Most of the powers and rights of the Prussian Government passed to that of Danzig, which then controlled its own customs, taxes and police; its imports and exports, its currency and its prices; its law courts; and the entry and exit of foreigners and their nationalisation. The city was placed "under the protection" of the League of Nations; although the Treaty of Versailles did not indicate how such protection was to be carried out. A constitution for the city was to be drawn up by the city's representatives, in agreement with a High Commissioner to be appointed by the League of Nations. This constitution was to be placed under the guarantee of the League. The Principal Allied and Associated Powers undertook to negotiate a treaty between Danzig and Poland, under which: (1) Danzig was to be included in the Polish customs frontiers; (2) Poland was to have free use of all waterways, docks, &c.; (3) and (4) Poland was to have control of the Vistula and railways within the city's territory, and the right to develop and improve them; (5) there was to be no discrimination against Polish citizens or persons of Polish speech; (6) Poland was to be responsible for the conduct of Danzig's foreign relations.

7. *Criticism of the Settlement.*—The German Government, in their observations on the Draft Treaty of Versailles, of the 29th May, 1919, protested against the severance from Germany of this "purely German Hanseatic town," described the settlement as "the intended national oppression of Danzig," and maintained that it would lead to "a continuous state of war in the east." They declared that "economic measures had been taken to make all communication

(*) Foreign Office Print: Poland, February 12, Section 10.