

The Conference began with the submission of the Anglo-French plan, the main features of which were understood to be: a 10 per cent. preferential tariff; a loan of £10,000,000 raised, in the main by France, and guaranteed by Great Britain; and, some form of financial control that should promote real recovery and prevent such abuse of the loan as had happened in the past.

*April 7th.*—The Four-Power Conference adjourned, having failed to reconcile the differences of opinion which had shown themselves as to the policy to be pursued and a *communiqué* was issued stating merely that the Committee appointed the previous day had examined the details of the main proposals and a report of the proceedings would be made to the Conference the following day.

The chief question before the Committee was, whether the proposed Conference of Danubian States should be limited to five States (omitting Bulgaria) or widened to include the four Powers, and on this no agreement could be reached; Germany and Italy holding out for the latter alternative. The proposal for the nine-Power Conference was formally put forward by Signor Grandi and supported by Germany and Great Britain, but the French refused to accept it. The German delegate announced his Government's readiness to offer, without stipulating for reciprocity, a general preference in all goods, etc., to Austria, and a similar preference in agricultural produce to Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

*April 8th.*—The Four-Power Conference was concluded and a *communiqué* issued stating that the four Governments had agreed that the situation of the Danubian countries required prompt and concerted action on the part both of those States and of other countries if it was to be put on a sound basis; as a result of the deliberations a number of economic points had emerged which called for further examination, and "the impending meetings at Geneva next week would, in any case, prevent the immediate continuance of the present discussions, and in these circumstances each of the four Governments has agreed to address to the other three as soon as possible a considered statement of its views on the points reserved and on the best mode of further advance."

The Stationery Office published a Survey of the Import Trade of India during the nine months ending December 31st, 1931, prepared by the Department of Overseas Trade.

*April 11th.*—The Government published a White Paper (Cmd. 4056) containing the correspondence with the Irish Free State Government, i.e., the statement with regard to the Oath of Allegiance communicated by the Free State High Commissioner on March 22nd; Mr. Thomas's despatch to Mr. de Valera of March 23rd; Mr. de Valera's reply dated April 5th; and the British despatch of April 9th.

The first-named asserted that the Oath was not mandatory in the Treaty; that the Free State Government had the right to modify their Constitution as their people desired and anything affecting the Constitution was a purely domestic affair. The decision to abolish the Oath was "final and irrevocable." Mr. Thomas's reply emphasised the Government's contention that the Oath was an integral part of the Treaty. As regards the Land Annuities the Government's view was that the "Free State Government is bound by the most formal and explicit undertaking to continue to pay the Annuities to the National Debt Commissioners, and the failure to do so would be a manifest violation of an engagement which is binding in law and in honour on the Irish Free State."