

VILNA HAS FIGURED IN POLES ASPIRATIONS FOR SEVEN CENTURIES

(By Associated Press)
DANZIG, Dec. 13.—Vilna, which the former Russian general, Zeligowski, recently occupied with troops of the Polish army, has figured in the aspirations of Polish expansionists for nearly 700 years. The Free State of Danzig is interested in the outcome of the campaign for possession of the city because it is felt here that Vilna must be the strategic point upon which will always hang the issue of peace or war. (The League of Nations decided at its first assembly in Geneva to send an international force to Vilna to enable the people of that city to decide what their nationality shall be.)

What its possession means to the Poles is indicated by recounting some of its turbulent history. Vilna was founded by Prince Godim, of Lithuania, who reigned from 1315 to 1340 and, with Kiev, it formed an important part of Southern Russia. Godim and King Wladislaw of Poland united in a war against the order of the German Knights, but it was not until nearly 100 years later that the two countries established a common reichstag. This was at Horodlo on the Bug river and here the rulers of the two lands co-operated in deciding all important issues.

Union in 1569. There was a complete union of Poland and Lithuania in 1569, as far as all state affairs were concerned and this continued until the end of the eighteenth century. Although Lithuania was divided into six governmental subdivisions in 1795 and was under the rule of Russia, a writer in the Danzig Zeitung says Vilna's sympathies remained with Poland.

Vilna was occupied by Russian "red" troops in the summer of last year and twice changed hands during the Polish-Russian campaign this year. It has been called the capital of Lithuania but the writer in the Danzig Zeitung says the number of Poles in and around Vilna probably would decide the issue in Poland's favor.

PLANES FOR HONDURAS.

(By Associated Press)
TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Dec. 13.—Two American aviators have arrived in Honduras with American-built flying machines bought for the War Department. They are engaged for a certain period to teach flying and how to care for the airplanes. It is expected that in peace times the machines will be used for the transportation of mails over the country, where railroads are very scarce and roads very bad.

CITY HAS PRESIDENT AND PARLIAMENT



Left to right: Dr. Sahm, General Hayking and Sir Reginald Tower.

The city of Danzig, declared a free or international city by the peace treaty, has a president and a parliament patterned after a national government. Dr. Sahm is its first president. Sir Reginald Tower is high commissioner of the allies in the city regime and General Hayking is commander of the allied troops there.

Get-Rich-Quick Bubbles That Have Burst

By HARLEY MATTHEWS

The Curse of the Flower of Gold

See the tulip, its head bowed on its slender stem, gracious in its beauty, yet there have been wars which have not brought in their train such want and misery for humanity as has that flower. It was not to blame, unless beauty is a sin. Men's avarice, the cause of many disasters was to blame.

The tulip was first brought from Turkey, the fountain of so much woe for the world. Conrad Gesner seeing it in a garden in Constantinople, about the middle of the sixteenth century, thought how fine it would look among the flowers of his native Holland. So in the year 1559 we hear of it in a conservatory at Augsburg, belonging to Counsellor Herwart. Everybody that saw the new flower admired it. Wealthy Dutchmen sent to Constantinople and paid enormous prices for the bulbs.

In a few years tulip cultivation had become the fashion. It was just as much a mark of taste to have a collection of tulips as a picture or antique collection is amongst the well-to-do of today. As always happens the craze passed to the middle class. Everyone, no matter his station in life so long as he had money, wanted tulips. To possess a bloom became the ambition of the poor. Tulips were few in Holland, and with this sudden demand

prices soared dizzy. People began searching the country for them, paying whatever was asked. In a year's time the price was \$1,000 a bulb, and men bought as many as they had money for. So valuable had they become that to deal in them it was found necessary to devise a new standard of weight. Diamonds are sold by the carat of 3 1/5 grains. But tulips were sold by the perit—a fraction of a grain.

New varieties were being introduced that brought higher prices still. The Admiral Liefken, weighing 400 perits, was sold for \$2,500, and a Semper Augustus of only 200 perits was thought to go very cheap at \$2,000. Trading in tulips was now a regular business. But

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few merchants could afford to carry a stock of them.

New arrivals in the country were astonished at the zest of the new business. So we can understand the bewilderment of Jan, the sailor just back from a voyage to the East he helped take up some of the cargo to a warehouse on the quay. "At last," the merchant chuckled at the silks and rolls of cloth were unpacked. "Here, have you had your breakfast, yet," he asked of the sailor just turning away.

Jan shook his head, "No."

"Then take this red herring," the grateful merchant said, and drew a fish from a cask. Now Jan loved onions, and, seeing a few bulbs lying on a pile of velvet as he went out, he put one in his pocket, sure that the merchant in his generous mood would not begrudge an onion. It was a fine morning and he sat on the quay steps to eat his breakfast. The herring was excellent, and as he nibbled at the onion he could not remember ever tasting anything like it before. Suddenly he heard an uproar behind him. "There he is!" someone shouted. He looked up, onion in hand, and saw a crowd of clerks from the warehouse, the merchant among them. He swallowed the last of the onion. "My Semper Augustus!" the merchant screamed. "He has eaten it!" The people flocked around and looked down at the sailor amazed at his madness.

"To prison with the rogue," the merchant ordered. But even when charged with felony, the sailor did not rightly understand how so much bother could be made over one small bulb. "Cool!" his gaoler told him, one day during the three months he lay in gaol. "You have eaten an onion worth 5,000 florins."

In 1636, so great had the traffic in tulips become, that they were sold on the Stock Exchange at all the principal towns in Holland. Prices went soaring still higher, and people who had bought tulips early, and now sold made fortunes. Stock jobbers began manipulat-

ing the market and made huge profits buying at the ebb and selling at the flood. Noblemen, farmers, lawyers, doctors, maidservants, even chimney sweeps hung about the Exchanges for a chance to buy their tulip. People thought the craze would last forever, and it would spread all Europe, when Holland would have a corner in the bulb. The country would become richer than could have been hoped for before.

Indeed it seemed as though this dream would be realized. Foreign speculators began coming in, and tulips were sold on the London and Paris Exchanges. In Holland wages and the prices of necessities rose, for deluded by their dreams of wealth, people had ceased working. Still the traffic in tulips went on. At the Stock Exchanges large and profitable deals were celebrated by banquets; and emblems of the source of this new luxury, tulip blooms looked down on the scene from their tall vases.

The prudent saw that this frenzied speculation could not last forever. The rich were now only rearing tulips for profit. More and more people realized that some would lose heavily. The realization became general and prices fell.

Then in Haarlem a man refused to take ten tulips he had agreed to buy six weeks before. The news caused a general retrogression in prices. Soon all over the country, buyers refused to complete their contracts at any price. In the panic people rushed to the Exchanges with their tulips offering to sell at what they gave for them—but there were not buyers at a quarter that price. People rushed here and there trying to induce their neighbors to buy, but they, too, wanted to sell. A wall of despair went up. Those who had sold out at the top of the market left the country to invest their money elsewhere. Chimney sweeps who had counted themselves rich in tulips now went looking for chimneys again. Wages fell, and there was little employment for industry had become disorganized. Aristocrats and mer-

HOUSTON QUIZZED REGARDING EXPORT RESTRICTIONS MADE



Secretary David F. Houston, photographed while appearing before the committee.

Secretary of the Treasury Houston, sharply criticized from various sources for his peremptory course in shutting off exports to European markets, recently appeared before a joint session of the house and senate agricultural committees to give his views on the matter.

chants begged in the streets, left with a few bulbs that nobody wanted.

Public meetings were held, but words and blows passed at them and little was decided. The courts refused

to compel buyers to complete their purchases. "We have no jurisdiction in gambling debts," the judges said. Resolutions of meetings and government decided certain courses, but they came to nothing.

Children cried in hunger, old women stooped to toll again, husbands and wives quarreled, murders were done in the streets at night. All blamed the flower, and none his avarice.

The crash in Holland had been heard at Paris and London. In both places the tulip delirium, just commencing, vanished, and people turned to their ordinary businesses with little loss.

But Holland took years to recover from the blow to her public credit and the lack of production at the height of her dream of wealth. Yet, even to this day a Dutchman still prizes a tulip over any other flower and will pay a high price for it. It is still to him what it was to his forefathers—the flower of gold, though no doubt the circumstances will ever be wanting to make another tulip-mania.

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