DURING the years of the 1740's disturbances between the Scotch-Irish and the Germans on the frontier were frequent and sometimes bitter. The Germans not only were aware of their own interests but also began to look to their rights, which they determined to maintain. In these clashes the government generally showed, though sometimes indirectly, a more favorable attitude toward the Germans than toward the Scotch-Irish. About 1743, when York and Cumberland Counties were organized, the proprietors in order to prevent such disputes gave orders to their agents to sell no lands in York and Lancaster Counties to the Irish and also to make advantageous overtures to the Irish settlers in Paxton, Swatara, and Donegal Townships to induce them to remove to Cumberland County. The offers, which were liberal, were accepted by many. While it is true that the government felt that the Irish would do well as frontier defenders, it is evident too that the government was interested enough in the Germans to desire them to be left undisturbed in their industry and on their fertile lands.

In a discussion of the Germans' political activities and the way their favor was sought for political reasons another important aspect of the bitter political struggle between Governor Thomas and the assembly should not be overlooked. This phase concerned a pesthouse or lazaretto. In January, 1738/39, Governor Thomas said to the assembly: "This province has been for some years the asylum of the distressed Protestants of the Palatinate, and other

parts of Germany, and I believe it may with truth be said that the present flourishing condition of it is in a great measure owing to the industry of those people; and should any discouragement divert them from coming hither, it may well be apprehended that the value of your lands will fall, and your advances to wealth be much slower; for it is not altogether the goodness of the soil, but the number and industry of the people that make a flourishing country."

The condition of such Germans as had arrived lately, the governor urged, had caused a very just alarm; and had the province been provided with a pesthouse at a proper place, the evils which had arisen might have been entirely prevented. The "Law to Prevent Sickly Vessels coming into this Government" had been strictly executed. Masters of such vessels had been required to land the sick passengers at a distance from the city of Philadelphia, whence these passengers were conveyed at their own expense to the houses of people in the country who were willing to receive them.

The assembly, as it replied to the governor three days later, believed that the "flourishing" condition of the province was due only in part to the importation of Germans and other foreigners; the chief reasons, it said, were the lenity of the government and the sobriety and industry of the first settlers of the province and of other British subjects inhabiting it. As to the evils resulting from the arrival of sickly Germans, it added, the law in regard to sickly vessels was to be strictly enforced "until it will better suit the Circumstances of the Province to make a further provision for or Security against Accidents of this kind."

Three years passed, but the assembly took no action in regard to the suggested pesthouse. "Several of the most substantial Germans, now Inhabitants of this Province," Governor Thomas told that body, "have joined in a petition to me, setting forth in substance, That for want of a Convenient House for the reception of such of their Countrymen as, on their Arrival here, laboured under Diseases Contracted in a long Voyage, they were obliged to continue on board the Ships which brought them, where

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9 Id., IV, 315. Ibid., vol. iv, p. 315.
10 Jan. 5, 1738/39.
they could not get either Attendance or Convenience suitable to their Condition, from whence many have lost their Lives; And praying that I would recommend to the Assembly the Erecting of a proper Building at the public Expence, not only to accommodate such as shall arrive hereafter under the same Circumstances, but to prevent the future Importation of Diseases into this City, which has more than once felt the fatal Effects of them."

The governor indicated that he had observed this necessity soon after his arrival in the province in 1738 and had been led by the lack or disapproval on the part of the assembly to hope that a building would be provided as soon as the circumstances of the province should admit. "I am not insensible," he charged, "that some look with jealous Eyes upon the yearly concourse of Germans to this province, but the Parliament of Great Britain see it in a different Light. . . . And indeed every Man who well considers this matter must allow that every industrious Labourer from Europe is a real addition to the wealth of this Province. . . ."

Although the governor may have been sincere and thoroughly earnest, it must be remembered that a political dispute was going on and that he may conceivably have been bidding high for the support of the German element. At any rate, the assembly responded vigorously. First, it pointed out, proper execution of the laws might have prevented the spreading of "infectious Dis,tempers"; second, at no time since 1738 had the state of the public treasury been such as to permit the desired building; and third, "Who they are that look with jealous eyes at the Germans, the Governor has not been pleased to inform us, nor do we know. Nothing of the kind can be justly attributed to us, or any preceding Assembly to our knowledge . . . the Legislature of this Province . . . have generally, on application made to them, admitted the Germans to partake of the Privileges enjoyed by the King's natural born Subjects here, and as we look upon the protestant part of them in general to be Laborious, Industrious people, we shall cheerfully perform what may reasonably be expected from Us for the benefit of those already amongst Us, and such who may hereafter be imported."
Thus the controversy grew; the arguments, as in most disagreements of the kind, begat other arguments which begat still others. As the altercation increased in volume, it became more and more acrimonious. Charges of untruth, imposture, hypocrisy, tyranny, and faction disgraced the addresses and replies of the governor as well as of those of the assembly. The governor held up the enactment of necessary laws, and the assembly held up the governor’s salary. Finally Thomas remarked, “Enough has been said of our Apprehensions of the great and frequent Importations of Foreigners.” “We are of the same opinion,” answered the assembly. The Germans now formed a large proportion of the landholders of the province, and, what was more to the point, they constituted a large proportion of the voters who must determine the character of the next assembly. The governor approved the pending bills, and the assembly voted him fifteen hundred pounds. Among the laws enacted at this time was one providing for a lazaretto or pesthouse.

This long struggle to win or hold the political support of the Germans was echoed in the bitter dispute between Governor Morris and the assembly during 1755. The governor charged that the house had “taken great pains to infuse into the minds of the people, particularly the Germans, that the Government have designs to abridge them of their Privileges and to reduce them to a State of Slavery. This may and will alienate their affections from His Majesty’s Government ... and render all the Foreigners among us very indifferent as to the success of the French attempts upon this Continent, as they cannot be in worse Circumstances under them than you have taught them to expect from the King’s Government.” To this statement in particular the house rejoined, “Can the Governor possibly expect that anybody will believe them [these charges]? Can he even believe them himself?” They were, it said, a “virulent calumny destitute of all truth and probability.”

The supposed inculcation of such beliefs among the Germans, coupled with the German numerical strength, alarmed the English, causing them to be afraid that the Germans might in the near

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80 Ibid., vol. iv, pp. 510-559.
81 Ibid., vol. iv, p. 614.
82 Ibid., vol. iv, p. 638.
83 Ibid., vol. vi, p. 621.
84 Ibid., vol. vi, p. 631.
future not only enact laws of their own making but in addition make the colony a German province.  

These fears proved groundless, for as a rule the conduct of the Germans was quite satisfactory. The proprietors themselves believed them to be without real foundation, but they cautioned their officers to discourage any criticism of the Germans by pamphlets or other means unless good provocation therefor could be shown.

Benjamin Franklin, who was an especially prominent member of the English group or party, was greatly aroused because the Germans' political propensities did not agree with his own; he was provoked to an extent surprising for one so suavely diplomatic. In 1753 he wrote Peter Collinson: "I am perfectly of your mind that measures of great temper are necessary with the Germans, and am not without apprehensions that through their indiscretion, or ours, or both, great disorders may one day arise among us . . . they behave submissively enough at present to the civil government, which I wish they may continue to do, for I remember when they modestly declined intermeddling in our elections, but now they come in droves and carry all before them except in one or two counties . . . In short unless the stream of importation could be turned from this to other colonies, as you very judiciously propose, they will soon so outnumber us that all the advantages we have will, in my opinion, be not able to preserve our language, and even our government will become precarious. . . . They begin of late to make all their bonds and other legal instruments in their own language, which are allowed good in our courts, where German business so increases that there is continued need of interpreters; and I suppose within a few years they will also be necessary in the Assembly so that the one half may know what the other half is doing." Indeed, before the Revolution important legislation was invariably to be ordered printed both in English and in German.

Various means of meeting what was considered the German problem were advanced at this time. One was education designed to give the general mass of country Germans inland proper views of public and individual interests. It was proposed that faithful Protestant ministers and schoolmasters be sent among them and

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85 John F. Watson, op. cit., p. 475.
86 Works of Franklin, Jared Sparks, ed. (Boston, 1836-1840), vol. vii, pp. 71-73.
that the children be taught the English language. In the meantime the government was to suspend the right of these Germans to vote for the members of the assembly, require that all bonds and other legal writings be made in English, and allow the circulation of no newspapers or almanacs unless accompanied by English translations.

Frontier conditions, however, tended to show the Germans in a favorable light as defenders of the province, not likely to subvert the government or unite with the French. At first the doctrine of nonresistance led them not to participate in the great struggle between the French and the English. But when settlements were attacked by the French and Indians, the Germans were among the foremost sufferers, especially in Berks and Northampton Counties, and as the atrocities increased, their indifference quickly disappeared.

In 1755, when the frontier settlements of Germans in Pennsylvania were being raided, several hundred Germans marched to Philadelphia to demand measures of defense. They brought along a number of the bodies of murdered friends, mutilated and scalped, and displayed them at the doors of the Assembly Hall. While this gruesome exhibition caused a great sensation, the government had provided no militia for the protection of the province; because of a factious dispute the assembly withheld means of defense as a way to force taxation of the proprietary estate, even though reports of Indian atrocities were coming in almost daily. For this position the assembly deserved to be censured. The Germans had full right to feel aggrieved since their own lives and the lives of other people were being made the pawns in a political controversy. They "complained that no measures had been taken to avert the calamity... demanded arms and finding the necessity of some legal means to compel men to join in the defense of their property, signed an application for a Militia law." "This address," wrote Daniel Dulaney, "had been presented, and lain in the Lower House for some time before the purport of it was...

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87 Watson, op. cit., p. 475.
88 Frequent letters from Conrad Weiser, Muhlenberg, and others, now preserved in the Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, bear evidence of this fact.
89 Rudolph Cronau, German Achievements in America (New York, 1916), p. 27.
publicly known. However, a copy of it having, by some means or other, got abroad for which the Lower House discharged their door-keeper, and the members having expressed their dislike of the style of the application for a militia law, every one was enraged against the Quakers.”

Symptoms of a civil convulsion appeared. The assembly was greatly embarrassed, for military law would destroy all Quakerism. But the multitude had to be soothed. The assembly did not know how to give up its insistence on taxing the proprietary estate, and yet nothing could be done without appropriating money. Even though the matter of militia law was most important, consideration of it was postponed. Finally, as an expedient to obviate the difficulty in regard to the money bill, the decision as to the propriety of taxing the estate was left to the crown. In the meantime the Penns had pledged for the defense of the province a contribution of five thousand pounds—ten times as much as the taxes on the estate would yield. The assembly thereupon passed a money bill for sixty thousand pounds. A militia law also was enacted, and the Germans were among the first to take up arms in defense of the province.

In general, the Germans were on good terms with the provincial government; pleasant feelings were mutual. No testimony of this fact could be more significant than that of Conrad Weiser, who urged upon his fellow Germans, who had been “kindly received and defended by the Governors of this Province,” a spirit of cooperation with the provincial government to show their gratitude “for so many Benefits they have received.” Occasional alarms against the Germans were sounded, as in 1717 and again in the excitement of 1727. These flurries quickly blew away. The provincial authorities favored the Germans where they could; they allowed them easy purchase terms for lands, and the board of property winked at the settlement of German squatters on unpurchased farms as long as the Indians did not complain. The provincial government adopted no truly restrictive measures

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91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
against German immigration. Naturalization was granted fairly promptly and sometimes most gladly. The government did not deny these people the privileges of observing their own customs, practicing their own religions, or using their own language, which in fact was actually recognized to be as official for the Germans as English was for the English. By 1740 or earlier the German settlers because of their large numbers occupied such a position of importance politically that their favor was courted by the contending factions or parties in the government. Whatever the Quaker or other officials thought of their intelligence and culture, they recognized the Germans as a desirable element. Although the provincial government and some of the people were at times apprehensive concerning them, their attitude never really developed into opposition. By 1754 the provincial government had become fully aware of the political strength of the Germans, but in no instance had it set up restrictive measures against them. The relations of the provincial government and the Germans had been and continued to be mutually friendly.