

SHANGHAI HARBOUR'S GREAT NEED

Dec. 10.

A period of three years has now elapsed since the Committee of Consulting Engineers on the Shanghai Harbour Investigation concluded their conference and presented their report and still nothing has been settled as to the adoption of their recommendations. The works they proposed would take several years, from the time of commencement to produce useful results and, owing to the delay in starting, there is every possibility that a highly critical state of congestion may arise soon after the present political turmoil has sufficiently subsided to encourage trade. Even in 1923 the increased volume of shipping entered had already greatly exceeded the conservative estimate of increase made by the Committee.

The immense losses incurred during the first year of the new cycle by floods and civil war should influence the officials to promote all and any endeavour to increase the prosperity of the country. China has now a large export business and is a large consumer of foreign imports and the Shanghai harbour scheme will aid the transport of both exports and imports. The short-sighted policy, which is allowing the harbour at Tsingtao to remain undredged and the harbour at Chefoo to be encroached upon, if applied to Shanghai would inflict great losses upon thousands of Chinese consumers, producers and merchants.

The bogey of "sovereign rights" which is always invoked whenever expansion of foreign inter-

ests is mooted has no place here, since the scheme is based upon the co-operation of China with the foreigner. No foreign loan or national concession is required and the facilities offered by the scheme would be open to Chinese as much as to foreigners. Rumour has it that the land required for the development of Government wharves is regarded by the provincial officials as their perquisite and that they are selling it left and right for what it will fetch. It is to be hoped that this is not the case since, apart from the fact that by treaty much of this land was put under the charge of the River Board, it would be a clear case of depriving the Government of immense future values for the purpose of present paltry gains. The case of Chefoo raises a fear that this may actually be the case in Shanghai and the public would like to know what is the truth.
