

RESOLUTIONS RELATIVE TO CHINA.

There remain certain Resolutions relative to China which are not embodied in any formal Treaty. The first of these provides for the establishment by the Powers of a Board of Reference to which questions arising out of the last-mentioned Treaty shall be referred. The second Resolution appoints a Commission to consider and report upon the expediency of abolishing in China that system of extra-territorial jurisdiction which withdraws the subjects of foreign Powers from the local jurisdiction of the Chinese Courts. The third Resolution is in favour of the abandonment by the Powers of the present system by which foreign post-offices are maintained in China. The fourth Resolution is an undertaking by the foreign Powers to withdraw all foreign troops from Chinese territory so soon as the Chinese Government has made satisfactory provision for the protection of the lives and property of foreigners in China. A Commission is appointed to report upon the conditions in China in this respect, and to advise the Powers as to the action that may be properly taken. A fifth Resolution imposes restrictions on the establishment and use of radio-stations in Chinese territory by foreign Powers. A sixth recommends the unification of the whole railway-system of China under Chinese control. A seventh urges upon the Chinese Government the necessity of reducing the size and cost of the Chinese military forces. An eighth provides for the publication by all the Powers of all treaties or other agreements already made or to be hereafter made between themselves and the Chinese Government, and also for the publication of all contracts now in force or hereafter to be made between nationals of any Power and the Chinese Government which involve any concession, franchise, option, or preference with regard to railway-construction, mining, navigation, electrical communications, or other public works or public services, or for the sale of arms or ammunition, or which involve a lien upon any of the public revenues or properties of the Chinese Government. Two final Resolutions relate to the protection of the Chinese Eastern Railway and the responsibility of China towards the foreign stockholders and creditors of the Chinese Eastern Railway Company.

GENERAL.

Questions of interest and importance arise as to the constitutional and international significance of the representation of the oversea Dominions at the Washington Conference. Suggestions have been made in certain quarters that by permitting the presence of the self-governing dependencies of the Crown at international conventions such as those of Versailles and Washington those Dominions have in some manner acquired a new international status—that they are now recognized for international purposes as independent States, although in their constitutional relations they remain portions of the British Empire. It is not easy to attach any definite meaning to this suggestion; but, whatever its precise significance may be, there seems no foundation for it in the facts as to the Washington Conference. The true significance of the presence of representatives of the Dominions at that Conference is not that those Dominions have acquired for either international or constitutional purposes any form of independent status, but that they have now been given a voice in the management of the international relations of the British Empire as a single, undivided unity—relations which were formerly within the exclusive control of the Government of Great Britain.

It is to be noticed that the invitation of the American Government to attend a Conference at Washington on the limitation of armaments and on Pacific questions was an invitation to the Government of Great Britain and to the other seven Powers—namely, France, Italy, Japan, China, Belgium, Holland, and Portugal. There was no invitation to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or any other Dominion of the Crown. The Government of every State so invited to Washington was left at liberty to send such and so many plenipotentiary delegates as it thought fit. The British Government thought fit to send seven, and to appoint four of these on the recommendation of the Governments of the overseas Dominions. These seven constituted jointly the British Delegation representing the British Empire, just as four plenipotentiaries represented France, and three represented Italy.