



ON THE OPERATION RESULTS OF RAILWAYS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

In order to be able to determine the advantage of foreign railways over the Russian, if such an advantage exists, it is first of all necessary to establish an angle of view under which these railways should be compared in their positions, functions and results.

Such angles of view for a comparative criterion can be:

1) ratio of total extension of the railway network to the population density and the zone served by them;

2) average length of individual main lines of the network, both maximum and minimum;

3) ratio of the number of rolling stock to a unit of track, reduced to a common denominator;

4) annual return on the network per unit of track;

5) size of the activities of railways, i.e., their annual freight and passenger «traffic»;

6) size of annual normal and increased flow per unit of track;

7) in relation to the benefits and amenities of freight customers of the railway network;

8) in relation to the amenities, comfort and safety of passenger traffic;

9) in relation to the growth of the size of basic costs and repayment of construction capital per unit of track;

10) in relation of generated by railway networks to the capital;

11) in relation to services rendered by railways to the state;

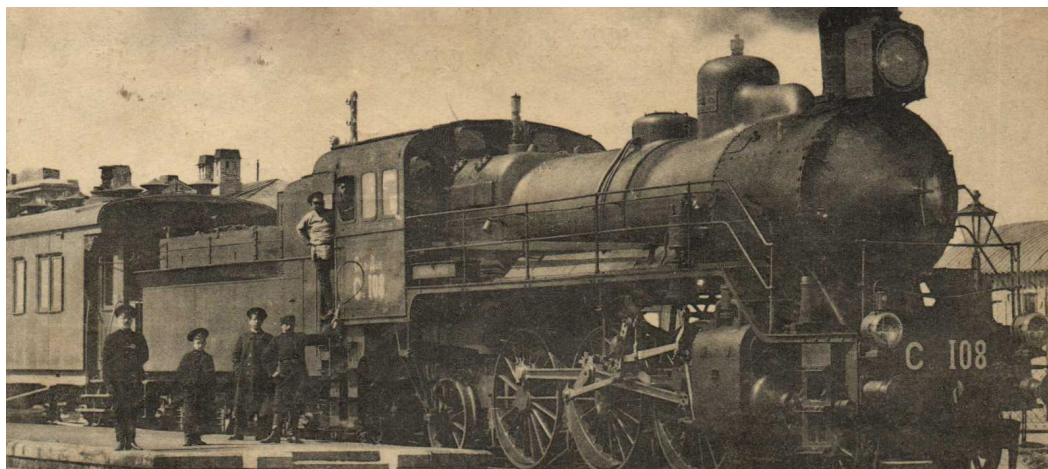
12) in relation to the total costs annually required by the railways from the treasury and the country in the form of assets or non-repayable subsidies;

13) in relation to a greater or lesser culture level as well as discipline of railway agents, as well as their condition and efficiency.

As for judgments about the advantages of one foreign railway network over another only on the basis of the results of the railway tariff system, which gives some or other results, then without the above indicators more or less in aggregate, any criterion will be one-sided and controversial.

Statistics and periodic reports of railway enterprises of different countries give, to some extent, eloquent figures characterizing the railway management and economy in one or another country.

An indiscriminate assessment of the merits or shortcomings of the railway business, on the basis of only one or a small number of the above indicators, and without adding meters to the same denominator – easily involves an unintentional mistake, the more stubborn that it is based on individual, albeit valid indicators, but without





taking into account other influencing indicators.

Therefore, in order to more accurately determine the place that currently belongs to the Russian rail network among the other European networks, it is necessary to understand this issue, with a parallel analysis of the above-mentioned comparative indicators of the conditions of activity: Austrian, French, German, British and Swiss railway networks, and then to make, according to the revealed data, the conclusions.

The unevenness and disparity in the publication of reports on the operational results of the railway networks of European countries makes it difficult to make comparisons between these results, but even more difficult is the comparison – the variety of forms of these reports. In this case, there are fully completed reports only for 1906, and therefore one must take into account the estimated assumptions for 1907 and 1908.

According to the size of the railway network in Europe by the beginning of 1908, Russia ranks second, second only to Germany in this respect.

With respect to the extension of its rail network to the population of the country, Russia is closest to approaching Italy, which counts 5,1 km of railways per 10000 inhabitants, whereas in Russia there are 4 km per the same 10000 inhabitants. In relation to the number of rail ways to the area of the territory, Russia accounts for 100 sq. kilometers of only 0,9 km of rail lines, while in Italy this ratio is 5,7 km, and in Belgium 25,4 km for the same 100 sq. kilometers.

Although, judging by the ratio of total length of the railway network to the number of people living on the entire territorial area of the country,

Russia would have to take one of the last places among all European states, but such a comparison cannot be recognized as correct. When assessing both the population and the periphery of the country in relation to the area served by railways, this area should be considered not on the political and geographical borders of the country, but only on the areas of the country really served by the railways, and, with this unconditionally correct viewpoint, the extension of our network relative to the area, as well as the population, will increase significantly. This should be taken into account in the comparative conclusions.

In this excursion, we will only review general financial and commercial results of exploitation in the states: Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Prussia, France and Switzerland, as the countries most suitable for comparative conclusions – with the results of the operation of Russian railways. These materials, compiled according to a different program and not in the same fullness, do not make up for all the data that are desirable for a comprehensive comparison. But these, so to speak, sketchy information about the results of railway operation in different countries can already give everyone as much as he can take.

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