



TAKE ME TO THE HIMALAYAS...

New in the railway policy of China. — According to The China Gazette, disputes arose between the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French envoy over the construction of a railway from Liang-Chou-Fu, near Pakhoy, to the Western River. The Chinese decided to build this railway on their own, contrary to the contract, according to which the construction and operation of this line should be carried out by the Chinese-French company. Further, the nobility of the province of Shen-Xi and Ganfu bothers about the permission to build the railway Tai-Yuan-Fu (Nan-Si) through Si-An-Fu (Shen-Xi) to Lan-Chou-Fu (Tan-Su). This is due to the promise of the viceroy of these provinces to transfer the concession to the Belgian syndicate.

One of the Chinese princes set out to buy the Beijing–Hankow railway from the hands of the Franco-Russian-Belgian syndicate. To pay the mortgage debt of the named railway, a huge sum is required, which his Highness offered to gather from the inhabitants of the islands of southern China. A person who will collect the necessary capital is promised to procure the title of duke (*«Vestnik Putei Soobshcheniya», Iss. 44, November 3, 1907*).

On construction of the Baghdad railway. — The English press in India attaches great importance to the arrival of Emperor Wilhelm in England and expresses the opinion that this visit can have a great influence on the resolution of the issues about the Baghdad railway and about the participation of England in this construction. *«Times of India»*, discussing this issue, notes that Germany's proposals for participation in the construction of this line should be considered very carefully and impartially. The old terms, under which the participation was offered to England, were ridiculous. The newspaper says that the only acceptable conditions would be those which would include English control over the section of the line between Baghdad and the sea (*«SPb. Vedomosti», Iss. 244, November 3, 1907*).

Prices for railway rolling stock. — The Commerce and Industry Newspaper reports prices for rolling stock, which currently exist in Russian car and locomotive plants on orders of our railways. Normal freight cars with brake cost — 1.350 rubles, the same without a brake — 1.165 rubles, platform of the improved type brake — 1.366 rubles, the same without a brake — 1.181 rubles, refrigerator cars — 3.230 rubles, luggage cars — 6.692 rubles, passenger four-axle cars of the 3rd class — 12.800 rubles, goods locomotives of a normal type (weight of a locomotive 2.922 poods, weight of a tender 1.159 poods) — 34.210 rubles, the same without a tender — 28.100 rubles, four-axle passenger locomotives with a four-axle tender (3.093 and 1.062 poods) — 37.513 rubles, four-axle passenger locomotives with a four-axle tender (3.058 and 1.762 poods) — 39.163 rubles, locomotives of the type of Eastern Chinese railway (4.005 and 1.115 poods) — 45.100 rubles, five-axle locomotives of the same railway (4.118 and 1.342 poods) — 19.577 rubles and five-axle locomotives of the «changed» type of the same railway (4.118 and 8.342 poods) — 50.144 rubles. The latest figures show how large the costs are required in improving the traction of the railways (*«Noviy Krai», Iss. 237, November 6, 1907*).

This last instruction should, it seems, be added: «When these improvements, being one-sided, ignore the progress of technology in other, even related spheres and the general need to reduce costs. It would be desirable to have also the prices for rolling stock in the countries bordering with Russia».

«Toy» railway in the Himalayas. — The hot climate of the valleys of the Hindustan Peninsula often affects very unfavorably the health of Europeans living here; therefore, the families of English-speaking officials and negotiants living here, as well as officers of the Anglo-Indian army, are looking for comfortable, cooler terrains, where sometimes they move to improve their health. Such places are the hills of the Himalayan mountains and in particular —





the place Dar-Teeling, called the pearl of the Himalayas. Rising several thousand meters above sea level, near the Ganges valley, not far from the main peaks of the Himalayas, Everest and Chinchin-chung, and being an excellent resort, Dar-Teeling has so far been little available to the European, due to the steepness of the mountains and the primitiveness of the modes of movement.

The British have recently decided to eliminate this inconvenience by arranging a railway connection between Dar Teeling and Siligver, a city located at the foot of the Himalayas, in the Ganges valley. When building a road that does not pursue commercial purposes and therefore does not promise special revenues, it was necessary to observe the savings. Therefore, the English engineers, abandoning the projects of expensive mountain lines of the Swiss type, came up with a cheaper railway. They chose a track width of two feet for this line, using, however, massive rails, so that, despite the small track width, it was possible to use a fairly strong locomotive for the traction of trains. In accordance with the miniature track width, the cars are also small in size, which is why they called the whole road «toy-railway»: the cars are lower than human height and only three passengers can sit on the

bench. To the train, a steam locomotive with a machine of 70 forces is coupled. Since the cars are fixed to each other so that they can become one to the next at any angle, and the axes are located at a close distance, the entire train can easily pass along curves of a very small radius.

When constructing the roadway, engineers completely abandoned the arrangement of large bridges and tunnels. The line goes partly along the caravan road, partly along a narrow path carved into the mountainside, and along the route the train makes a lot of bends, turns and zigzags. According to an eyewitness — a correspondent of the newspaper «Neue Freie Presse», traveling along this road delivers an unspeakable pleasure to the lover of nature («Pravit. Vestn.», Iss. 250, November 17, 1907).

The 2-foot-wide track in reality does not represent any innovation for the British. Suffice it to recall the Festiniog railway, built in 1832 and described in «Zheleznodorozhnoe delo» in 1886, pp. 256 and 277. It is mainly built for the transportation of the plate. The British are richer than us, but they do not disdain the lighter types of railways, when this seems necessary and sufficient.

(Zheleznodorozhnoe delo.— 1908.— № 7.— p. 63). ●