



NEWS REPORTS

From the consular reports. — *Russian competition for foreign rail shipments.* The competition of the Russian iron industry in Romania, as reported by the Austrian consul in Bucharest, has made tremendous progress recently. Following orders of locomotives at St. Petersburg plants, orders for rails were delivered to plants in Mariupol. In recent times, the Romanian market has got as suppliers: the Chantier Naval plant in Nikolaev, as well as the railway materials plants in Tver. It was noted everywhere, says the consul, that the Russians represent the best offers, using which Russian plants are likely to sell the stocks accumulated due to overproduction of recent years. In Vienna, the success of Russian competition is explained by the following circumstances. Since the Russian-Japanese war and the internal turmoil that followed it, the sale of Russian industry to domestic needs has decreased in many industries. In view of this, many factories turned to forced exports. Among these factories are Russian car-building plants. Proposals of Russian plants, however, exclude any profit. Yesterday, for example, according to Vienna newspapers, the Russian car-building industry received a new order for Serbian state railways. The order is determined at 3 million francs for 531 cars. At the meeting of the German steel trust «Stahl-verkverband», by the way, it was reported that Russian competition for export orders very sensitively undercuts prices. Austrian, Hungarian, German, Belgian and Russian factories took part in the Belgrade auction. The cheapest offers were submitted by Russian car-building factories. The prices offered by the Russians were 30 % and 40 % lower than the Austrian and Hungarian proposals. Such low prices of Russian factories are thought to be due to special concessions (?) to designated plants by the Russian government («*Torgovo-Promyshlennaya gazeta*», No. 140, May 7, 1908).

About Moscow circular railway. — In view of appearance of the notes about the uselessness of Moscow circular railway in the periodical press, the Railway Administration, through the

«Informational Bureau», gives a lengthy explanation, which tells the story of appearance of the railway and concludes with the following:

At present, the circular railway passes through sparsely populated areas, which do not provide any significant amount of cargo and passengers, and therefore does not require immediate growth of local traffic. In view of unavailability of some sorting stations and connecting branches at the points of junction of Moscow junction to Circular railway, it can only serve the transfer of goods between certain railways of Moscow junction. With the completion of work related to construction of Moscow circular railway, we should expect such an acceleration of cargo transfer and reduction of useless idle time of cars in Moscow junction, which will undoubtedly pay back the costs incurred for construction of a new line («*Novoe Vremya*», No. 11699, October 6, 1908).

Responsibility of switchmen and new apparatus of Mr. Polkovnikov. — There is no doubt that the life of passengers on railways, especially on Siberian one, is entirely in the hands of the smallest railway employee, the switchman. Each train, passing through the switches that are in the full and uncontrolled disposal of the switchman, can always be directed to a dead end or to a busy road. It's enough to make just one wrong turn of the balance of the switch to make the trains collide or fly down the slope and turn into piles of ruins.

There are also such cases that, tired of their 12-hour duty, one switchman falls asleep on the switch and the other from the opposite end of the station tracks, absent-mindedly, takes the train to the station on the wrong route; the collision of trains, as it was at the junction of Anzhersk took place; collision on the station Marianovka also happened for almost similar reasons.

Such crashes that occurred before, forced to think about the situation, and assistant to the head of Siberia railway Mr. Polkovnikov managed to set up an apparatus, showing in the office of the duty agent at what position was

the switch through which the train had to pass, and locking the switch instantly.

With assistance of the head of Siberia railway, engineer I. K. Ivanovsky, Mr. Polkovnikov was allowed to apply his invention at st. Mezheninovka and to prove its suitability. This week the apparatus will be set up, and experiments will be carried out in the presence of the commission.

The apparatus acts by electric current and locks the switch, so that without the permission of an agent on duty at the agent's station, it is impossible to transfer it, that removes all responsibility for the position of the switch from the switchman (*«Sibirskaya Zhizn»*, No. 199, September 18, 1908).

Our morals: 1. Wild lynch law. — At the 67th verst of Nizhny Novgorod railway, near Pavlovsky Posad, a crowd of nagging guys from the village of Nazarina found fun by throwing stones at telegraph poles and breaking insulators. The crossing guard Avdeev began to persuade the mischievous to stop this occupation, but they pounced on the guard with beatings. To help Avdeev his brother-in-law Berdin ran; in vain, trying to take Avdeev away from the guys, he finally began to urge the girl who was with the guys to give the names of the main bad guys; she refused, and Berdin hit her. Then the guys snatched the revolvers and, making several shots, ran into the village and began to tell there that the crossing guard shoots, prevents them from walking and injured the girl with them. People gathered, and a crowd of 200 people, armed with sticks and stones, under the leadership of the village headman Gorokhov, headed for the crossing booth. All the glasses in the windows of the guard booth were instantly broken, and then, having broken in, the crowd broke all the things of the watchman, and pulled out Avdeev and his brother-in-law, and the beating was repeated; Avdeev's wife was also beaten. At Pavlovo station it became known about the defeat of the crossing booth. From there two gendarmes came who found the massacre in full swing. Not wanting to join the mob in a futile fight, the gendarmes took Avdeev away, as the embittered mob told the gendarmes that if the watchman was not removed, they would tear him to shreds. The guards were immediately summoned to the scene, at the sight of whom the crowd had fled, but several instigators, and among them the



headman, were detained (*«Golos Moskvy»*, No. 232, October 7, 1908).

2. «Free-riders»-fiends. — On October 4, in the Moscow postal train No. 4, Nizhny Novgorod railway conductor Smirnov, who checked the tickets, found a company of ticketless young people on the platform of one of the cars. The conductor warned them that at the next station he would submit them for additional fee. Ticketless people grabbed the conductor and, shaking, threw on the track as the train was going. Smirnov hurt himself terribly and lay unconscious on the roadbed for a long time; having come to his senses, he somehow dragged himself to Koloksha station, where he announced what had happened. Soon the train was given despatches about detention of hooligans, but they managed to escape (*«Golos Moskvy»*, No. 232, September 7, 1908).

Crazy driver. — The other day, on the freight train en route from Volokolamsk to Moscow, the train driver suddenly became ill with an acute mental disorder. Ignoring the station signals, he at full speed, without stopping, flew 80 versts.

Assistant driver, trying to stop the train, almost paid for it with his life. The driver wanted to throw him off the locomotive. The catastrophe was warned only because of the resourcefulness of the assistant driver, who approached the lunatic and shouted: «We are going to a dead end». The latter instantly stopped the train (*«Moskva»*, No. 1, October 20, 1908).

(Zheleznodorozhnoe delo [Railway Business], 1908, No. 43, p. 268).

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