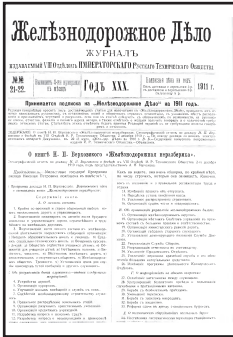




# Self-Propelled Cars on Russian Railways



## News from the archives

A note in *Zheleznodorozhnoye delo* [Rail Business] journal published in 1911 offered to its readers news about first feasibility study commissioned to build self-propelled cars or, in modern terms, railcars. It was supposed that several models with different engines (including electrical one) will be tested. Despite long discussions about economic efficiency of such vehicles as compared with ordinary multi-coach trains, one could witness rational declarations about their suitability for suburban and city transportation on the routes with smaller passenger turnover.

**Keywords:** history of transport, self-propelling coach, railcar, suburban traffic.

A special commission formed under the Ministry of Railways, under the chairmanship of a member of the Committee of the Management of Railways, N. K. Hoffman, completed the development of technical conditions that must be met by the new self-propelled cars proposed for construction. Initially, it is planned to order 10 self-propelled cars with different engine systems (electric, steam and internal combustion). After testing, self-propelled cars with a better engine system will be ordered for the needs of state railways both for servicing suburban traffic and for

replacing local trains with them in those areas where the appointment of individual trains seems to be unprofitable («*Vestnik putei soobshcheniya*», Iss. 5, 1911).

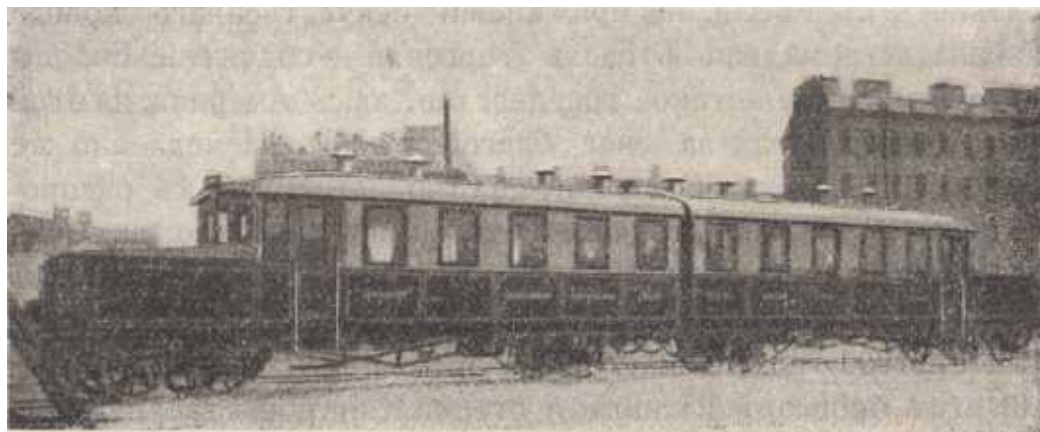
We welcome this initiative, which was probably undertaken thanks to the initiative of Moscow–Vindau–Rybinsk Railway Society, which arranged the same two-carriage train to be used for traffic, as an experiment, on its Tsarskoye Selo line, with a battery electric motor.

As for the Imperial Russian Technical Society, the first report in VIII Department of our Society on steam self-propelled cars was made by

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The text of the article originally written in Russian is published in the first part of the issue.  
Текст статьи на русском языке публикуется в первой части данного выпуска.



*New electric battery car of Bryansk plant.*



pastvu.com/202069 uploaded by 1qa2ws

*Rzhev station of Moscow-Vindau railway.*

N. I. Tchaikovsky back in 1881, on October 21, i.e. more than 29 years ago (see «*Zheleznodorozhnoe delo*» of 1882, p. 3). This was the first type of separately riding cars for short branch lines and main lines. Such cars in Russia have not received wide distribution, mainly due to our exclusive view of passenger traffic, in terms of its unprofitableness, and of passengers as cargo to be transported, if possible, without loss, and not as individuals who conduct the whole life of the country, including formation of real cargo, the transportation of which is profitable for the railways. The aforementioned exceptional view requires large trains to reduce unprofitability, while the convenience of the population, in general, increases with the grown number of trains per day and with their

distribution by hours of the day in accordance with local interests. Establishing the most successful correspondence in implementation of these two principles – the requirement of economy and the requirements of life – is the subject and art of operating railways.

«*Zheleznodorozhnoe delo*» contains a lot of information about self-propelled cars and local trains: 1883, pp. 212 and 294; 1884, p. 280; 1888, p. 79; 1889, p. 123; 1890, p. 278; 1893, p. 443; 1896, pp. 31, 136 and 162; 1902, pp. 31, 198 and 362; 1905, p. 28; 1908, p. 73; 1909, p. 63.

**(*Zheleznodorozhnoe delo*  
[Rail Business],  
1911, Iss. 8, P. 54; Iss. 25, P. 184) ●**