

# THE NEW CHINA.

The Chief Secretary of the Chinese Imperial Railway Talks of the Railroad Development of the Future.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 8.—I give you today an interview which I have just had with Mr. John C. Ferguson, the chief secretary of the Chinese imperial railway administration. This is practically the ministry of railways of the Chinese government, with which all the home and foreign syndicates have to deal. The ministry has the same place as one of our great government departments, and its head, who ranks about as a cabinet officer, is Sheng Kung-pao, one of the ablest, wealthiest and most progressive of Chinese statesmen. Sheng is, in fact, the successor of Li Hung Chang as far as international standing is concerned. Born wealthy, he has always been largely interested in the leading commercial enterprises of the empire. He was one of the original stockholders of the Chinese Telegraph company, was for many years the director general of the Chinese Merchant Steam Navigation company, and was, up until the time of his father's death, when he retired to go into mourning, minister of commerce, having been made such on the death of Li Hung Chang. Sheng Kung-pao owns the largest cotton mill in Shanghai, and he is also director general of the Hanyang iron and steel works, with which are

"I have understood that another line is being built, from north to south, nearer the sea."  
"You refer, I suppose," was the reply, "to the concession given to the Anglo-German syndicate. That line has been planned, but construction has not yet begun. It will run from Tientsin down through the western part of the Shan-tung province, along one of the old freight routes, until it strikes the Grand canal, and will then go along the banks of that canal to Kiangling on the Yangtze river. That project is a very important one, for the road will form one of the great trunk lines connecting the northern trade of the empire with that of the Yangtze, and its traffic will be equalled only by that from Hankow to Peking."  
"That road," continued Mr. Ferguson, "will connect with the line which passes through Chunan-fu, the capital of Shan-tung, the province on the seaboard of which the German colony of Kiaochow is situated. It will be connected with the roads that the Germans are now building from Kiaochow bay into the interior, and it will aid in opening up the large coal fields of that region. The Germans have already built a line from Kiaochow to Chunan-fu. The first through train passed over it about two months ago, making the run from Kiaochow to Chunan-fu in 12 hours. The time required by the old methods of travel was from



RAILROAD BUILDING IN CHINA IN 1904.

(From a Photograph Secured for the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

a number of railroads either building, surveying or in prospect. One trunk line will go southward from the Yangtze, connecting with the Anglo-German syndicate line. It will be constructed from Nanking to Shanghai. It is to be built by a British corporation and that soon. Indeed, the line is now being surveyed preparatory to beginning its construction. This road will pass through some of the most populous parts of China. It will connect Shanghai and Nanking with Soochow, and it will probably be extended southward to Hangchow, another great city, one of the centers of the silk trade. It will be an especially interesting line to foreigners, as it starts from Shanghai, the

city at which all tourists call. The road from Shanghai to Wusung, which the Chinese have already constructed, will form a part of it."  
"What the French are doing."  
"But, Mr. Ferguson, have not the French some Chinese railway concessions?"  
"Yes, they have extended their lines from Tonking, their great province south of China, across the borders of Yunnan and Kweichow. These two Chinese provinces are noted for their mineral deposits. They are rich in coal and iron, and they have great copper mines, out of which for thousands of years the copper cash, used all over

China, has come. The country is very rough and mountainous; but its mineral resources are such that the French line will pay."  
"OPENING UP A NEW WORLD."  
"But how about western China, Mr. Ferguson—I mean the country beyond the gorges of the Yangtze-Kiang?"  
"That is a very important region, and it is comparatively unknown to the rest of the world. It has a rich soil and vast mineral wealth. There are a number of syndicates which have been endeavoring to secure concessions for railroads there, and especially for a road to go from Hankow up through

the mountains to Chungking, the chief trade center of the Szechuan province, and on to Chengtu, the capital. This country has been cut off more or less from the rest of China by the mountain ranges which border it on every side. It is true that both the Yellow river and the Yangtze have their sources in that region, but their course through the mountains is so full of rapids that navigation has been impossible and the country has had to live upon itself."  
"Will not the railroad aid greatly in bringing the Chinese people together?"  
"Yes, they will probably result in it breaking up of the dialects in the various districts, in uniting the people of the various provinces, and in creating a national spirit. The empire has been so divided by natural barriers, by differences of language and by the lack of intercommunication that the various provinces seem as different as the states of Europe. When the railroad now projected, are in operation, the several elements of the Chinese nation will begin to know one another better, they will become firmly united in business and trade and the unity of the empire will be on a much firmer basis."

"Where are to be the great railway centers of China?" I asked.  
"It would seem that they will be situated where the chief trade centers are now," said Mr. Ferguson. "First, take Canton. It has been a trade center for hundreds of years and as the terminus of the trunk line from Canton to Hankow, it will grow more rapidly than ever. It is situated near Hongkong, where the most of the imports from Europe and some of those from the United States are now entered, and it will continue to be a great distributing point for that place."

"Going northward, Shanghai will hold its own as a trade center in the railway development of the future. It is so near the sea that nearly all the big ocean steamers call there, and it is the terminus of the steamboat traffic on the Yangtze and of the steam launch traffic of the vast system of canals from the region about. It is already a good manufacturing place and its mills will grow in number and size. Another center will be Hankow, which might be called the Chicago of the future China. It lies almost as far inland as Chicago, and it has the broad and deep Yangtze Kiang connecting it with the sea. It will be midway on this trunk line from Peking to Canton, thus

giving it railroad communication with nine of the provinces of central China. Hankow has two sister cities, Wuchang and Hanyang, which are of great size. There are already cotton mills there, and large iron and steel works. In the center, and from it roads will radiate in every direction. Since the Boxer trouble it has been growing by leaps taken away, and a broad carriage road has been made in its place. Indeed, Hankow will always be one of the chief trade centers of the empire."

"Just one word more, Mr. Ferguson," said I. "Are not the Chinese changing in their opposition to railroads?"  
"To a great extent, yes," replied the chief secretary to the railway administration. "Those of the people who have had an opportunity to use the railroads realize their advantages and are anxious to see the construction go on. As soon as a road is built people farmers and workmen, take the advantage of it and it is patronized in every way. During the Metropolitan exposition held last year at Kaifeng-wei, the capital of Honan province, thousands of students used the railway from Hankow northward to Shenyang, and then terminus of the line. At Shenyang they had half of their journey to make and the only means of travel was by mule carts. They found that the second half of their journey would cost them from 20 to 30 times more than the first half, and that instead of having comfortable cars they should have to ride in dirty carts through the rain over almost impassable roads. As a result 5,000 or 6,000 of the students refused to undergo the hardships of the rest of the journey and went back by rail. Those students who went on might have written essays against railroads. Today they will be among the most ardent advocates of our modern methods of transportation."

"No," concluded Mr. Ferguson. "I think the better class of the Chinese are now in favor of the railroad development of the empire. There will always be more or less opposition at the start from the people owning property through which the lines are to run, but this is an incident of construction rather than a fixed opposition to railroad development."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



SHENG KUNG PAO,

Director General of the Chinese Imperial Railway.

connected large mining interests in coal and iron.

Mr. Ferguson is a Massachusetts man, who went to China shortly after his graduation at Boston university to be president of the Nanking university. He acted as such for 10 years and then took the presidency of the Nan Yang college at Shanghai. He was founded by Sheng Kung-pao. While there he so aided the Chinese in important negotiations with the foreign powers that they persuaded him to give up his educational work and enter the service of the government. For the past two years he has been connected with the commission for the revision of treaties between China and foreign countries, and he is now a member of the syndicates constructing them. He has come to this country on behalf of that administration, and has, I am told, been very successful in his mission. He knows all about the modern movements in China, and perhaps more than any other American about the new projects for railways there and the prospective railway development of the empire.

In response to my question, Mr. Ferguson said:  
"The Chinese government has for some time realized its need of railroads, but it has not been able to raise sufficient capital to construct them from among its own people. It has had to borrow, and in order to do so has been obliged to issue government bonds and to mortgage the railways projected to the syndicates constructing them. This has required time, and the country is far behind in its railway development. Some small lines have been constructed, and such lines are profitably managed. One line runs from Shanghai to Wusung, and others connect coal mines with the waterways. These have been built with Chinese capital, but the great trunk lines are yet to be made, and they will be constructed on borrowed capital raised by issuing government bonds."

**NORTH CHINESE RAILROADS.**  
"But there are already a number of roads in northern China," Mr. Ferguson said.

"Yes, there is a line running from Tientsin to the Kaiping coal mines and to Shanhaikwan, at the end of the great wall, and also one from Tientsin to Peking. The first road to be opened was to the Kaiping mines, connecting those mines with Tientsin and the mouth of the Pehi river. That line has been in operation for nearly ten years, and it has now been pushed on northward so that it connects with the Chinese-Eastern railroad, which comes down through Manchuria from the Trans-Siberian road to Port Arthur. This same road goes via Tientsin to Peking, so that one can travel directly from St. Petersburg to Peking by rail. It gives Peking railroad connection with every part of Europe."

"Another important railroad in north China," Mr. Ferguson continued, "is the line from Peking to Hankow. This great trunk line is being built by a Belgian syndicate. It was extended from Peking to Tientsin before the Boxer outbreak, and it has since been built as far south as the Yellow river. The Belgians have been also working on the construction from Hankow northward. More than half of that part of the line is completed, and it is expected that it will reach the Yellow river by the end of the present year. Then there will be a direct line from Hankow to Peking, broken only by the Yellow river. This will have to be bridged, and plans for the bridge have been prepared, although the actual work of bridge construction has not yet been commenced. The Yellow river has often been called 'China's Sorrow.' It is noted for its shifting sands and its changing course, and it will be difficult to properly bridge it. It will be done, however, and we can then send cars from Hankow to any part of Europe."

"The lines planned to open up this rich country," Mr. Ferguson continued, "are naturally laid out so as to connect with the trunk lines on the north of the Yangtze. One of the chief ones—indeed, I say the most important of all—is the concession of the American-China Development company to build a trunk line from Hankow to Canton, thereby connecting the chief industries and some of the most fertile parts of south China with the trunk line from Hankow to Peking, of which I have already spoken. This road will start from Wuchang, the capital of the province of Hipeh. Wuchang is situated directly opposite Hankow and for that reason the line is called the Canton-Hankow line, or in Chinese the Yuchan line. This road runs through three provinces, connecting three great capital cities, all centers of official and commercial life. Canton, for instance, has a population of a million and a half, and it is the busiest city in China. It is close to Hong Kong, the chief British seaport of that part of the world, and it is so connected by waterways that it can send goods to all parts of the province of Canton and by the West river and its canals into Kwangsi. In addition to the manufacturing and agricultural possibilities of this country, are the large mineral deposits which are found along the line of the Canton-Hankow road. The land is rich in coal, iron, copper and antimony. Indeed, the greater part of the antimony of the world now comes from that locality."

"When will this American road be completed?" I asked.  
"I think the work will be steadily pushed," said Mr. Ferguson. "About 40 miles of track have already been built northward from Canton. Further construction work is now being done, and if this is carried on with vigor the line should be finished within four or five years. It ought to be very profitable."

"But there are important lines further east, are there not?"  
"Yes," said Mr. Ferguson, "there are

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