In 1916 the main line of the Amur railway from Kuenga to Khabarovsk was divided into 24 versts neighborhoods, for each of which one senior (spare) road master was assigned.

The cost of the newly born railway exceeded a quarter of billion rubles (264 mln.) The cost of the eastern section alone to the Treasury was 73 mln. rub. However, it was not just because of the scale of the expenditures and of the technical difficulties that the construction became one of the most important state enterprises. The Amur railway had a great value for strengthening the position of Russia in the Amur region: it was built with the labor of Russian, civilian and convicts, almost without the participation of foreign workers, with brilliant results. The construction of the road was finished ahead of time, tens of millions of rubles in wages remained in Russia, and at the same time thousand workers, drawn from European Russia to the Amur region, became acquainted with this territory, and many of them settled here.

In 1910 a special expedition was dispatched to the Amur region for exploring the land reserves of regions adjacent to the Amur railway, and methods and means of their successful population and exploitation. The expedition was headed by N. L. Gondatti, later the Amur region governor general. In the expedition there were included representatives of different departments and specialists in soil-botanical, agricultural, statistical, hydrotechnical, forest, road and geological disciplines. As a result of two-year long field works, extensive economic descriptions of the Far-Eastern regions were collected. On the basis of these materials a general plan of the population of the Far-Eastern outskirts, in particular of the region, which directly gravitated towards to the Amur railway, was outlined.

The expedition revealed that these lands had all preconditions for successful population. The first place among its natural riches belonged to ores and minerals (gold, coal, iron, clay, graphite, marble); the Amur was rich in fish reserves. In the railway region there were more than 2 mln. dessiatines of forest suitable for commercial development. At the same time, in spite of the public opinion about the absence of sufficient agricultural land reserves, the inspections demonstrated the possibility of settling not less than 300 000 ploughmen in the railway region to the east of the Zeya river.

When they just started the construction of Siberian railway, the Government disbursed 14 mln. roubles to assist the industrial development of the localities adjacent to the railway, and in 1897 the monetary fund was increased by 9,7 mln. roubles. From 1912, Far Eastern migrants would get relocation loans — up to 400 roubles per household. Under the order of the Siberian Railway Committee, they were provided with tools and household items. This contributed to the fastest development of the Amur land.

B. F. Burkova, S. P. Chuykova (Khabarovsk). Based on the materials from the Far Eastern Railway History Museum

PHOTO HUNT

EM4-004 and EM4-006 "Sputnik" EMU trains are about to open the regular high-speed service between Moscow and Mytishchi, February 14, 2004, Yaroslavsky terminal (photo by V. Lavrov)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

GULBENE–ALUKSNE: 80 YEARS IN TIMETABLES

Gulbene–Alūksne narrow gauge railway is the last surviving "splinter" of a vast narrow-gauge "empire", which once covered a large part of the territory of present Latvia.

The Livland access tracks (this is how this narrow-gauge system was originally called) were built in 1902 and were opened in 1903. Initially the line went from Estonian town of Valga (where it was connected to the Pärnu access tracks), through Ape, Alūksne, and Gulbene (Vecgulbene) to Pļaviņas (also known as Stukmani and Stokmanhof). In 1902 from the East, from Pytalovo (Jaunlatgale), there came a narrow-gauge branch to Sita, which in 1916 was prolonged by the Russian troops through Gulbene to Ieriķi. In the same year the section of Livland tracks from Gulbene to Pļaviņas was altered to the wide gauge (line Pytalovo–Ieriķi followed the case in 1921)

The Livland access tracks were nationalized in 1918. In 1923, a detour line was built from Valga to Koikküla on the Estonian territory (through Kaagjärve), that reduced the distance by 2 km and gave Estonia a direct access to Koikküla. By the way, it was this section that the trains used when Estonia and Latvia joined the USSR. The construction ended, and destruction began. Valka–Ape line and the detour section were closed on 2 June, 1970, Ape–Alūksne line — in 1973. The remained line Gulbene–Alūksne belongs to the joint-stock company "Gulbenes–Alūksnes Banītīs", and works as a tourist railway.

We propose to your attention the train timetables for the Livland access tracks in the different years of their existence.

The timetables have been taken partially from Estonian, and partially from Latvian sources. Unfortunately, these sources do not always adequately reflect the timetables on the other side of the border.

Related Links

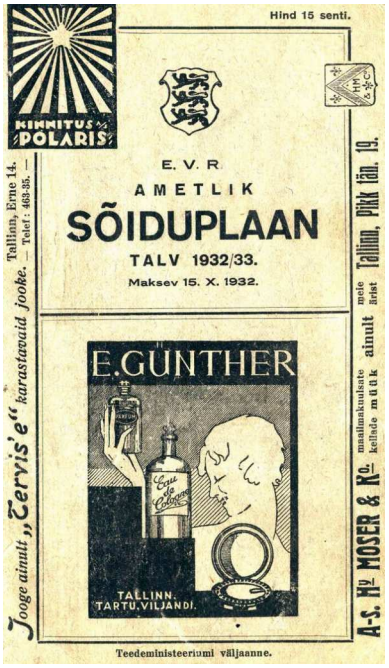
- http://www.banitis.lv "Banītīs" (The official site of Gulbene–Alūksne railway)
- http://parovoz.com/narrow/LV75.php "Latvian Narrow Gauge Railways (750 and 1000mm)" ("Younger Brother" Encyclopedia)

Compiled by D. Zinóviev (Boston)

km	↓ Station	1924	1932/33			1937/38			1962		1964	
	Train →	N5	N49	N5	N51	N5	N19	N7	N955	N957	N961	N965
	Latvia											
112	Valga Lat.	14.50	...	17.15	...	...	...	15.30	...	...	...	...
101	Žuldini	15.14	...	—	...	...	...	15.55	...	...	...	...
	Estonia											
110	Valga Est.	...	1.30	...	17.50	...	...	...	12.50	22.10	0.40	11.45
100	Kaagjärve	...	1.57	...	18.20	...	...	...	13.11	22.31	1.01	12.05
?	Lepa	...	—	...	—	...	...	...	13.22	22.42	1.12	12.17
92	Koikküla	15.48	2.26	18.11	18.50	...	...	16.19	13.32	22.52	1.22	12.27
?	Pügeri	—	—	—	—	...	...	—	13.40	23.00	1.30	12.35
86	Laanemetsa	—	2.42	—	19.06	...	...	16.35	13.50	23.10	1.40	12.45
83	Taheva	16.22	3.03	18.34	19.25	...	...	16.44	14.07	23.27	1.57	12.53
78	Hargla	—	3.16	18.42	19.39	...	...	16.57	14.19	23.39	2.13	13.09
74	Saru	—	3.30	—	19.53	...	...	17.10	15.00	0.20	3.07	13.44
70	Mõniste	17.10	3.40	19.07	20.03	...	...	17.21	15.18	0.38	3.27	14.04
?	Mõtuse	—	...	—	...	...	...	—	15.29	0.49	3.38	14.15
	Latvia											
61	Ape (Ope)	18.00	...	20.07	...	3.20	13.44	18.06	15.45	1.05	4.35	14.45
58	Laicene	—	...	—	...	3.27	13.52	18.14	...	...	—	—
51	Vaidava	18.38	...	—	...	3.44	14.14	18.35	...	...	—	—
43	Alsviki	—	...	—	...	4.45	15.41	...	...	...	—	—
34	Alūksne	20.00	...	—	...	4.27	15.17	19.23	...	...	—	—
?	Vejini	—	...	—	...	—	—	...	...	...	—	—
22	Paparde	20.44	...	—	...	4.53	15.45	...	...	...	—	—
?	Dunduri	—	...	—	...	—	—	...	...	...	—	—
15	Kalniena	21.08	...	—	...	5.08	16.15	...	...	...	—	—
11	Stāmer(ien)e	21.25	...	—	...	5.17	16.30	...	...	...	—	—
?	Purini	—	...	—	...	—	—	...	...	...	—	—
5	Birze	—	...	—	...	—	—	...	...	...	—	—
0	(Vec)Gulbene	21.50	...	0.05	...	5.35	16.50	...	...	...	7.15	17.20

km	↓ Station	1981/82				2004		
	Train →	N961	N963	N965	N967	N691	N693	N695
	Latvia							
34	Alūksne	3.10	10.10	15.50	20.00	7.50	15.20	19.50
?	Vejini	—	—	—	—	8.04	15.34	20.04
26	Umernieki	—	—	—	—	8.13	15.43	20.13
22	Paparde	3.37	10.37	16.17	20.27	8.22	15.52	20.22
?	Dunduri	—	—	—	—	8.27	15.57	20.27
15	Kalniena	—	—	—	—	8.40	16.10	20.40
11	Stāmeriene	—	—	—	—	8.52	16.22	20.52
?	Purini	—	—	—	—	9.01	16.31	21.01
6	Birze	—	—	—	—	9.07	16.37	21.07
0	Gulbene	4.25	11.25	16.05	21.15	9.15	16.45	21.15

km	↓ Station	1981/82				2004		
	Train →	N968	N962	N964	N966	N692	N694	N696
	Latvia							
34	Alūksne	0.35	9.10	14.50	19.30	7.30	14.55	19.30
?	Vejini	—	—	—	—	7.15	14.40	19.15
26	Umernieki	—	—	—	—	7.05	14.30	19.05
22	Paparde	0.04	8.39	14.19	18.59	6.55	14.20	18.55
?	Dunduri	—	—	—	—	6.50	14.15	18.50
15	Kalniena	—	—	—	—	6.39	14.04	18.39
11	Stāmeriene	—	—	—	—	6.27	13.52	18.27
?	Purini	—	—	—	—	6.17	13.42	18.17
6	Birze	—	—	—	—	6.10	13.35	18.10
0	Gulbene	23.15	7.50	13.30	23.15	6.00	13.25	18.00



km	↓ Station	1924	1932/33			1937/38			1962		1964	
	Train →	N6	N50	N6	N52	N8	N18	N6	N958	N956	N962	N966
	Latvia											
112	Valga Lat.	8.25	...	8.35	...	7.00	...	...	...	...	...	...
101	Žuldini	7.55	...	—	...	—	...	—	...	...	...	...
	Estonia											
110	Valga Est.	...	6.24	...	23.05	...	...	...	6.36	19.45	7.16	17.39
100	Kaagjärve	...	5.59	...	22.40	...	...	...	6.16	19.25	6.56	17.19
?	Lepa	...	—	...	—	...	...	...	6.04	19.13	6.44	17.07
92	Koikküla	7.33	5.32	7.43	22.10	6.16	...	...	5.54	19.03	6.34	16.57
?	Pügeri	—	—	—	—	—	...	...	5.45	18.54	6.25	16.48
86	Laanemetsa	—	5.09	—	21.42	5.59	...	...	5.35	18.44	6.15	16.38
83	Taheva	7.00	4.58	7.20	21.30	5.50	...	...	5.28	18.37	6.08	16.31
78	Hargla	—	4.35	7.12	21.07	5.37	...	...	5.10	18.16	5.52	16.06
74	Saru	—	4.21	—	20.52	5.24	...	...	4.58	18.04	5.36	15.50
70	Mõniste	6.05	4.10	6.49	20.40	5.14	...	...	4.21	17.17	5.11	15.15
?	Mõtuse	—	...	—	...	—	...	...	4.07	17.02	5.01	14.56
	Latvia											
61	Ape (Ope)	5.18	...	6.20	...	4.47	9.36	23.01	3.50	16.45	4.45	14.40
58	Laicene	—	...	—	...	4.05	9.30	22.55	...	...	—	—
51	Vaidava	4.20	...	—	...	3.48	9.14	22.40	...	...	—	—
43	Alsviki	3.50	...	—	...	3.16	8.53	22.24	...	...	—	—
34	Alūksne	3.24	...	—	...	2.56	8.34	22.08	...	...	—	—
?	Vejini	—	...	—	...	...	—	—	...	...	—	—
26	Umernieki	—	...	—	...	...	7.55	21.42	...	...	—	—
22	Paparde	2.21	...	—	...	...	7.40	21.33	...	...	—	—
?	Dunduri	—	...	—	...	...	—	—	...	...	—	—
15	Kalniena	1.46	...	—	...	...	7.22	21.20	...	...	—	—
11	Stāmer(ien)e	1.31	...	—	...	...	7.06	21.10	...	...	—	—
?	Purini	—	...	—	...	...	—	—	...	...	—	—
6	Birze	—	...	—	...	...	—	—	...	...	—	—
0	(Vec)Gulbene	1.00	...	2.15	...	...	6.40	20.50	...	...	2.00	12.00

HUMOR

THE WAY THEY CATCH MOLES
or Mr. Suvorov's Railway Wonders

— The dead with scythes stand along that road. And silence. . .
From the film "Elusive avengers".

. . . If they declared a competition for the amount of disinformation in books about railways, then the first place, undoubtedly, would be given to the well known writer Victor Suvorov, specifically, to the chapter "Operation Bridge" from his book "Liberator". However, you be the judge. . .

Thus, the chapter "Operation Bridge". Mr. Suvorov tells us about how "in year 1967. . . it was necessary within a record term, for instance, in one hour, to build a railroad bridge across the Dnieper and to use it to pass trains, loaded with military equipment, and tank columns." And, certainly ". . . all engineers involved in the bridge design — independently! — stated that it was impossible to build a floating bridge, even with load capacity of 1500 tons, in such short time." Did they say this?

Information to Think About

"In the Thirties, as a result of the Industrialization of the country, the gradual technical reequipping of the Army Corps of Engineers occurred. For example, the Corps received. . . heavy pontoon equipage N2P (floating bridge with load capacity from 16 to 60 t.), light pontoon equipage NLP (floating bridge with load capacity up to 14 t.), *special pontoon equipage SP-19 (floating bridge for trains)*. . . "

"The rapid technical development of the Corps of Engineers in the postwar years was the result of the comprehension of the experience of the application of the Corps in the course of the war. . . River-crossing means were significantly developed: pneumatic and composite boats, the more advanced pontoon equipage TPP, *railway pontoon equipage PPS*. . . " (my italics — O. I.)

Yu. G. Veremeev, "History of the Russian Army Corps of Engineers," brief overview

Thus, 30 years prior to the described events, floating bridges for the trains already entered into service of the Soviet Army. After the WWII, a new pontoon equipage was designed, because the axle loads increased in the in 1950s! But in the 1960s, the axle loads did not grow anymore, and, respectively, the available park of pontoon equipages could in no way become obsolete by 1967. However, in spite of this. . .

"Of course the Soviet Army did not have a proper bridge!" — declares v. Suvorov, and expert in engineering technique, with the confidence. So, allegedly, ". . . they decided to use only empty railway cars, and send not a tank column next to the train, but track column, empty, too." But this is not yet as ridiculous, as it's going to be further. . .

"Only one major problem remained: how to ship the locomotive, which weighs 300 tons?" 300 tons??? Where did they get a 300 t. loco in 1967? Come on!

What should be the thrust needed to pull Suvorov's consist that weighs 1500 tons? Let us assume the consist was formed of empty universal four-axle boxcars. One boxcar weighs 23,5 t., the axle load is, respectively, $23{,}5/4 = 5{,}875$ t.

The train speed on a floating bridge can be taken from the Russian Railway Troops Web site (http://www.fsgv.ru): 15 km/h. Hence, according to the rules of tractive calculations, the basic resistance of a four-axle boxcar is:

$$0{,}7 + (8 + 0{,}1 \times 15 + 0{,}0025 \times 152)/5{,}875 = 2{,}41$$

plus the incline resistance. Let's consider a typical middle Russian incline: 9 thousandths (well, if it were a model bridge, then they could make a groove in the river bank). What is the answer? $1500 \times (2{,}41 + 9) = 17\,115$ kg, or 17 t. Let's throw in some more thrust and make it 20 t, just to be safe. Depending on the traction power, one will need a machine with the coupling weigh of only. . . 70–100 tons!

Information to Think About

The weights of different locomotives in the USSR in 1967, capable of developing thrust of 20 t. or more:

Locomotive	Thrust	Weigh
2TE10L (1 section)	25,7 t.	129,3 t.
TE3 (1 section)	20,2 t.	126 t.
TEM1	20 t.	124 t.
ChME3	23 t.	123 t.
M62	20 t.	116,5 t.
TGM3 (shunting mode)	20 t.	68 t.

One could find data about the Soviet tractive rolling stock in any provincial library in the USSR. Those from abroad could use Jane reference book. In that greenish jacket, if I'm not mistaken; we had them even in the reading hall of the VNITI library. . .

Moreover, locomotives with tractive weight of 300 tons were not manufactured in the USSR: neither in 1967 nor ever before. But they were manufactured. . . in the United States of America!

Information to Think About

US locomotives with the weight of ca. 300 tons:

Locomotive	Wheel Arrang.	Weight
4000	2-4+4-2	345 t.
H-8	1-3+3-1	329 t.
M3-4	1-4+4-2	317 t.
AC-11	2-4+4-1	299 t.
L-97	2-3+3-2	286 t.
EM-1	1-4+4-2	285 t.

Well, it's like in that anecdote: "Stierlitz, where did you learn to shoot so well?" — asked Müller. — "In the DOSAAF (*All-Union Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army, Air Force, and Navy*!" — quickly answered Stierlitz and thought, if he did not say something in excess. "How much does a locomotive weigh?" — "300 tons!" — quickly answers V. Suvorov. And, in contrast to Stierlitz, does not even think. . .

OK, let's read further, there it is still something even more interesting:

"Naturally, an idea arose to reduce the weight of the locomotive, as much as possible." Really? An idea? Whose idea? The solution in this situation is simpler than the simple: split the train into several sections and pull each one using a TGK2 — its weight is just 28 tons, lighter than a tank. Why think? But wait!

"Two locomotives, the main and the doubler, were urgently altered." Let's focus our attention on this phrase. No, we don't question the necessity of altering anything. The fact is that if a train is pulled by two locomotives, then no one will calls them "the main" and "the doubler". Even in the cases when it is necessary to add some power to a train (for example, during the full-scale tests), it has a totally different name: "the covering locomotive." Just Suvorov's reference. . .

But this is still nothing compared to what follows:

"Everything possible steel detail was replaced with an aluminum one. The boilers and the fireboxes were replaced. The tenders of the steam locomotives were completely empty, with neither coal nor water, just a very small barrel of the maximally caloric fuel, perhaps the aviation gasoline or kerosene." It turns out that in 1967, according to Victor Suvorov. . . steam locomotives were used for an absolutely critical mission!

Information to Think About

In 1967, diesel and electric locomotives handled 92,4% of the total freight traffic.

I.e., by that time almost all steam locomotives in the USSR were either at the reserve bases or in industry. Something does not tally. . .

And not just does not tally. Let's read this pearl again: "Everything possible steel detail was replaced with an aluminum one. The boilers and the fireboxes were replaced." What locomotive details can be replaced by the aluminum? Handrails? Cab? Perhaps. But what does it meant "to replace the boiler and the firebox?"? First, the fireplace is a part of the boiler, but that's not that important.The main problem is that the boiler defines everything else: the dimensions of the steam engine, suspension, even the wheel arrangement. So, to replace the boiler means, strictly speaking, to design a new locomotive.

However, was there someone in 1967 who could design and build the boiler and the firebox, if all the needed equipment had been dismantled ten years ago?

But Mr. Suvorov is so excited, that he does not see the larger trouble: "The tenders of the steam locomotives were completely empty, with neither coal nor water, just a very small barrel of the maximally caloric fuel, perhaps the aviation gasoline or kerosene." Why did they need a tender, then, if "a very small barrel: could be suspended at the sides of the boiler? This is called "tank locomotive." Huh? And again: before writing these lines, the author of "Liberator" might have glanced into one more absolutely not secret booklet. . .

Information to Think About

Specific combustion heat of different substances (kcal/kg):

Gasoline	10 500–11 200
Kerosene	10 500–11 000
Jet fuel TS-1	10 250
Crude oil	10 400–11 000
Burning locomotive oil	9500

A. S. Ekhnovich. "Physics and Technology Reference Book." A handbook for students.
"Machine building." Encyclopedic reference book.

So that "keg" was definitely not enough, since the jet fuel produces just a little more heat, than the usual locomotive oil.

To summarize: "Hitherto, no one of the foreign guests turned his attention to the strange fact that there was no smoke from the locomotive pipe." Sure, where would the smoke come from, if there was no locomotive?

Information to Think About

Floating bridge — a bridge on floating supports (pontoons, rafts, barges). It is built across wide and deep rivers, where permanent support bridges are technically complicated or unprofitable.

"Large Railway Dictionary".

Somewhat earlier Suvorov writes: ". . . whatever the construction of the bridge is, everyone who will work on it, must work as acrobats under a circus cupola." Uh-huh. . . ! A floating bridge in principle cannot be high above the water, or otherwise it will be unstable. The folks just need to be strong. And know how to swim.

In general, Victor Suvorov knows as much about bridge as he knows about "aluminum" locomotives with a keg of kerosene. Nevertheless Mr. Author continues to describe events, reporting totally prodigious details:

"The leaders of the Party and the Government, and numerous foreign guests, who observed the construction of the gigantic bridge, simply did not expect that it was built for railway communication, and when a locomotive entered the bridge, they harmoniously began applauding."

In order to pass a train across the bridge, one had to at least lay a railway branch to the bridge, to lay railway tracks on other bank of the river, and to lay the track on the bridge. And yet the Party leaders and the numerous foreign guests did not surmise, that the bridge is a railway one! Probably, they were all looking at the piles. . .

". . . From the sagging of the bridge heavy slow waves

went to both banks of the river and, after being reflected, they came back to the bridge, and smoothly shook it from side to side." Well, this is discovery in the wave theory! The waves from a long bridge, built **across** the river, must go **along** the river! And look: first, the waves went from the bridge to the bank, then they were reflected, then came back. . . and only then the bridge began shaking! But it did not shake when the train entered the bridge. Well, Suvorov did not read a physics reference book. . .

"Three frightened figures of the engineers instantly appeared on the roof of the locomotive." Thus, according to Suvorov, there are three engineers at a locomotive – but no firemen. But this is not so important. It's important that in the case of a danger the locomotive crew will jerk anywhere, but not to the roof. Did they abandoned the controls and climbed the roof? This can be done only in one case: if they solidly decided to go to the bottom of the river together with the locomotive. "The locomotive meanwhile, slowly swinging, with the engineers on the roof, continued its difficult way." Respected railroaders, reading these lines! Would anyone of you earnestly think that in a moment of danger it is safer to sit on the roof, but not in the cab, ready to stop the train? No? That's what I thought.

"Subsequently, those frightened engineers were skillfully removed from all photographs and films about the famous operation." Well, it is understandable. The Reader, do not search for the engineers, fearlessly climbing the roof, instead of holding the controls. There is an explanation of why they will not be there.

Well, why do I keep comparing Suvorov to Stierlitz? Mr. Suvorov in no way manifests the professional qualities of the heroic Standartenführer in his opus about the bridge. That one suffered, risked, verified the information: were there the negotiations in Bern and Lozanne, or was it all gossips. But here, the ardent exposer of the Soviet expansion did not even glance into a school reference book on physics. He resembles the other character of the same series: agent Klaus, listening, to all gossips and stupidities. Someone talks about pontoon piles, someone else — about aluminum locomotives, someone — about the engineers on the roof. And Suvorov would put it all in his report, without evaluating the content: *they* will be figure out, who talked what and was its permissible or not.

Victor Suvorov also wrote about railway greasers in the rear of the enemy. . . However, about this next time.

O. Izmerov (Bryansk)

PHOTO HUNT

341 km milepost at Yaganovo–Malino stretch of the Big Moscow Loop Railway, April 24, 2004 (picture by I. Grotov)

RELAX

THE HEREH TALES
Here and There

Far, far away, in the Screaming mountains, there flowed the river of Sitting. On the bank of the river, there was a small town of Hen. People also called it Sitting Hen, to tell it from all other hens.

In the town, there scurried about the harbor little steamships, big dirty barges, and fishing boats. They carried fish, salt, flour, oil, and other useful goods. But the main cargo in the harbor was timber.

Far, far away, high in the Screaming mountains, bearded lumberjacks fell giant trees with axes and with saws. Then they cleaned branches of these trees and sent them to the harbor of Hen by railway. So, our story is about that railway.

The railway had been built very, very long ago, when they hed been neither steam locomotives nor gasoline locomotives. Sad tired horsies clicked on the ties and pulled trolleys with timber. But one day everything changed: a big dirty steamship brought two shiny little black steam engines to the town of Hen!

— Neigh! — Said the horsies. — At last we will have some rest!

— Hurray! — Yelled the bearded lumberjacks. — At last we will chop even the largest trees!

— Bravo! — Yelled bearded Mr. Piston-Fireboxman, the Chief of the Road. — At last I became a Real Chief!

And only the little engines were not happy. They knew that the hard work awaited them.

They unloaded the little engines from the dirty but warm hold of steamship to the bank of the river, and put them on the rails. It was raining and drizzling out there. The little engines were cold, and wet, and sad. Then a bearded man with a bucket of white paint came and drew numbers on the booths of the little engines: “One” and “Two”. That’s how the little engines got their first names.

Next day four more bearded men came to the station of Hen. These were the Engineers and the Firemen of the little engines. The Engineers and the Firemen climbed up into the booths. The stokers made fire in the fireboxes. The Chief of the Road, Mr. Piston-Fireboxman, said: “Well, good luck!” The Engineers let the brakes go and pulled the levers. The little engines whistled, and went into the mountains to pick up trolleys with timber: first number “One”, and then number “Two”.

I need to mention that halfway from the station of Hen to the camp of the lumberjacks there was a siding, a simple siding, without a name. At this siding the train that was going upward, would wait for the train that was going downward. At the siding there lived an old Switchman, who was for his entire life was switching two turnouts: one before the siding, and one after the siding. The Switchman lived in a cabin right in the middle of the siding, in between the track that went up into the mountains, and the track that went down to the station of Hen.

That morning the Switchman, as always, was switching the turnouts. Mr. Piston-Fireboxman, the Chief of the Road, gave the Switchman a call and told him about the new little engines. The Switchman had never seen any steam engines, and he was greatly surprised when he saw the little engine number “One”, creeping upward and pulling a consist of empty trolleys. The little engine whistled to the Switchman as if he were his old good friend. The Engineer waved to the Switchman, and the train crawled into the mountains.

Not even half and hour passed, as the second train crept up from the town of Hen — this time, pulled by the little engine number “Two”. The Switchman forgot to put on his glasses, and he did not note that there was another number drawn on the little engine! He decided that the number “One” had unnoticeably gone down and was now climbing back into the mountains. The little engine number “Two” also whistled to the Switchman as if he were his old good friend. The Engineer waved to the

Switchman. . . And then down came the little engine number "One"! It pulled a long train with timber.

The little engines stood next to each other, and the Switchman found himself in the middle. He looked first to the left, then to the right. To the right, to the left. To the left, to the right. To the right, to the left. So he was turning his head, until the telephone rang. That was the Chief of the Road asking why hadn't the Switchman switch the turnouts, and where were the engines?

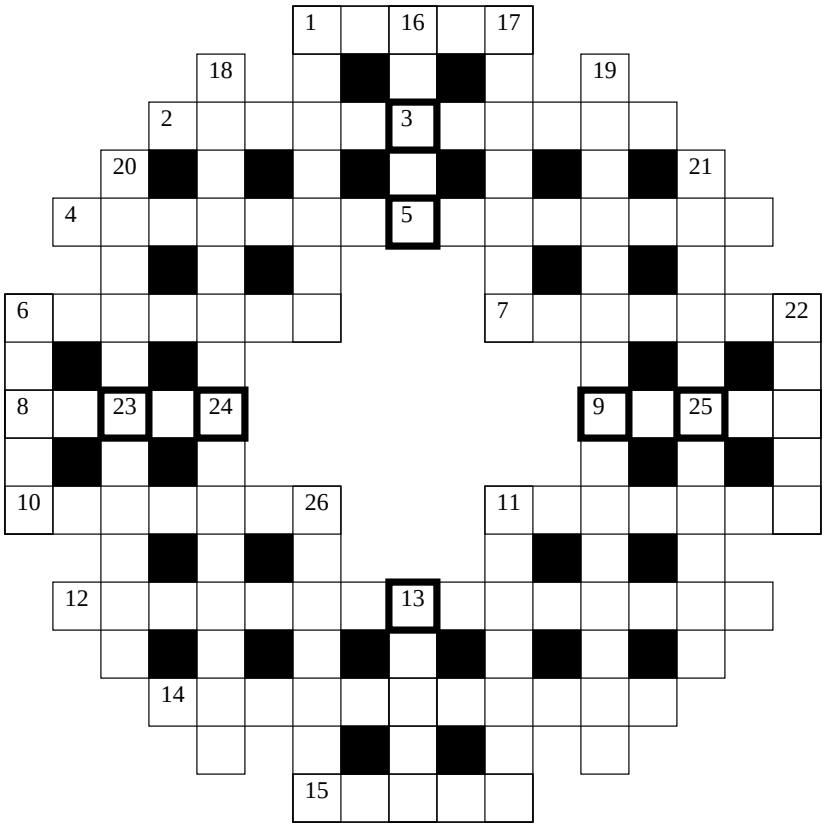
— It's here, Chief! No, there! No, here! It's here, and there, and here, and there. . . I am lost! — Yelled the Switchman.

— Wonderful! — said the Chief of the Road. — Amazing names for our little engines!

And the Chief of the Road commanded the bearded man with a bucket with white paint to write the new names of the engines on their booths: "Here" and "There". And then he gave a cookie to the Switchman. So that he would not be upset.

S. Los' (Moscow)

DIAMOND CROSSING



Horizontally:

1. Вид пассажирского транспорта. 2. "Поезд-призрак". 3. Мастер по ремонту, настройке различного электрического оборудования. 4. Профессия, не будь которой, существование современных железных дорог было бы затруднительным. 5. Крупная станция Октябрьской ж. д. и Санкт-Петербургского метрополитена. 6. Именной поезд сообщения Москва–Варшава. 7. Узловая станция в Тверской области. 8. Автор фундаментального труда о советских локомотивах. 9. Багаж пассажира. 10. Устройство, применяемое, в частности, при смене вагонных тележек. 11. Коллектив железнодорожников. 12. Работник железнодорожного транспорта. 13. Прибор, применяемый при прокладке новых железных дорог. 14. Устройство для накопления энергии с целью её последующего использования. 15. Станция на Карельском перешейке.

Vertically:

1. Карликовый локомотив. 6. То, что у локомотива не сзади. 9. Машинист, Герой соцтруда, один из инициаторов стахановского движения. 11. Один из основных персонажей американских "железнодорожных" песенок. 13. Деталь паровоза. 16. Первая часть перевода словосочетания "железная дорога" на казахский язык. 17. Предшественник железной дороги. 18. Один из руководителей партизанского движения в Великую Отечественную войну в Белоруссии, руководитель подпольной группы на оршанском ж. д. узле. 19. Сумма, за которую в 1990-е гг. продавались на лом рельсы разобранных УЖД. 20. Неотъемлимая деталь интерьера купе пассажирского вагона. 21. Полоса земли, предназначенная для передвижения. 22. Станция в Воронежской области. 23. Навигационный прибор, абсолютно бесполезный на железной дороге. 24. Станция в Московской области. 25. Одно из основных минеральных богатств Кольского полуострова, вывозимое по ж. д. 26. Тупиковая станция в Грузии.

Compiled by D. Zinóviev (Boston)

OUR COVER PAGE

FLOATING BRIDGES FOR THE WARSAW PACT

If one attentively looks at a map of Poland, then he can find two bridges across the Vistula and Wieprz rivers in the area of Dęblin, a large railroad hub located at the intersection of Warsaw–Lublin and Łuków–Radom lines. The bridges, especially the Vistula bridge, used to be important strategic objects in the times of the Warsaw Pact when our relations with the West were not quite warm.

To back up the bridge and enable rapid restoration of communication in the case of its destruction, there was built an interesting object in the of of the town of Puławy, in between Dęblin and Lublin.

One can see well on a topographic map of this region that a railroad line branches off the Łuków–Radom line between the stations of Dęblin and Pionki in the southeastern direction and turns to the Vistula near Puławy. On the opposite side of river, the line continues and gets connected to the line from Warsaw to Lublin in Puławy. It is tempting to asserts that once there was a bridge here.

But there was. . . no bridge! The tracks were layed down to the very waterline of the Vistula on both sides. In the case of necessity a pontoon bridge was erected across the Vistula; the pontoons lay in immediate proximity to the river. Such a bridge was built at least once, during military maneuvers, and a consist of loaded gondola cars successfully crossed the river. Right on the banks of the river there stand two supports that were used for fastening the bridge. (*This is how they build floating bridges, Mr. Suvorov! See pp. 32–34. — Ed.*)

The times have changed, and there is no Warsaw Pact anymore, and Poland is in the NATO; the bridge pontoons were taken away, but the access roads to the Vistula remained, although partially dismantled. The left bank of the Vistula is relatively high and, besides the main river bed, there is one more creek, which the railway crossed on a dam (there was a pipe in the dam).

In 2002, the notorious flood happened in Europe. The unprecedented tide of water washed away the dam and the tracks. . . The results of the flood are depicted in the entirety of their tragic splendor on our last cover page.

D. Fokin (Moscow)

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THE SEMAPHORE

COVER PAGE