

Traveling Through Soviet Siberia

By B. SKOU

The author is the Philippine representative of Parke, Davis & Company, manufacturing druggists, and he and his sister have but recently returned to Manila, via Siberia, from a vacation in America and Europe. Mr. Skou's are the latest data available on traveling through Russia.—Ed.

"It can't be done, on account of the war," they told me in Europe when I expressed my desire to return to the Philippines by way of Siberia. "Reserve passage," they said, "via Suez, at once. The boats will be overcrowded." This time it was our London office speaking; I had arrived there from New York when the Chinese-Russian conflict over the Manchurian railway was reported to have grown serious.

I had returned to Manila from Europe twice by the Suez route. Wishing to vary the monotony if possible, I clung to the idea of Siberia and made no steamer reservation. At least I should have a visit with my people in Denmark before deciding, I thought, and so put the matter off.

In Denmark I spent four delightful weeks living the simple life of a European peasant, on my father's little farm.

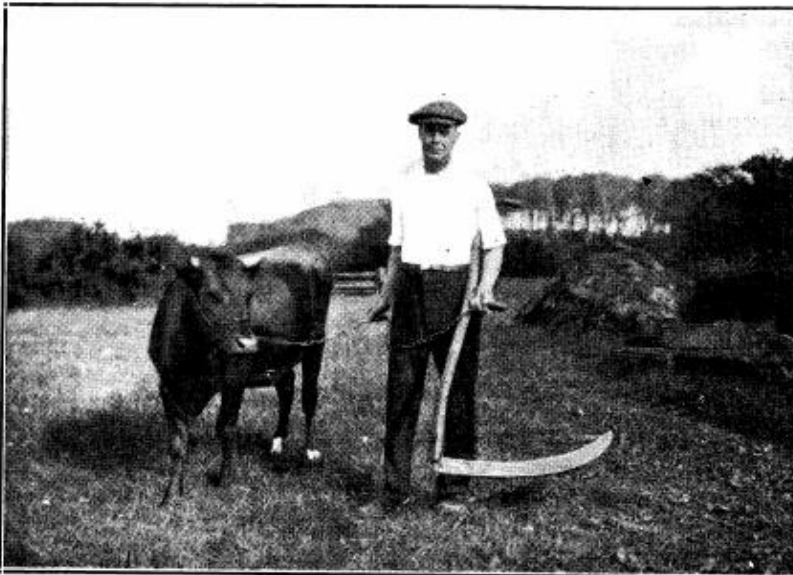
On the farm I made a discovery which may interest other persons of northern blood who have been living long in the tropics. It is possible to readjust one's self to the climate of the north by manual labor. Stay away from the stove, and keep warm by working. Circulation, breathing and endurance will daily improve. The muscles will harden, and the chilly air become pleasant.

Danish newspapers, when I was there, recorded terrible happenings in Siberia; everyone told my sister and me that Red Russia was bad enough to get through in time of peace, and impossible in time of war. But in the face of all this discouragement we went to Hamburg to inquire.

No, it was not possible to go by rail all the way to Shanghai, as usual; we could only go to Vladivostok, first class, for 800 marks per ticket. A Japanese steamer connected with the train, and from Japan it would be easy to get trans-

portation to Manila. It was necessary to get Polish, Russian and Japanese visas on our passports, the Russian visas we were two days in getting and they cost \$11 each.

Two trains leave Berlin each week for Moscow. We left Berlin 36 hours ahead of time in order



B. Skou, author of the accompanying travel notes, regaining health on his father's farm in Denmark

to visit Warsaw, Poland. The city is a disappointment, but Polski food is the best I have eaten anywhere and is cheap. After a frightfully dusty day's travel from Warsaw, we arrived at the Russian frontier, the town of Niogoreloje, at dusk. Baggage was examined with varying thoroughness; the foreign money of some of the passengers was counted, and the passengers received certificates allowing them to take it out of the country. Others were asked if they had any Russian money, which it is unlawful to bring into Russia.

Cameras are allowed, but must not be used at railway stations except in Moscow. Everybody changed money at the government exchange at the official rate, one ruble, ninety kopeks per dollar. The government keeps the rate up artificially, the present value of a ruble being not more than 20 cents. We had no trouble whatever in getting over the border.

The sleeping cars were a surprise to us. Nothing more elegant or comfortable could be expected, but possibly the Soviet government had merely requisitioned them from their rightful owners at the time of the revolution. The roadbed was as uneven as it could possibly be. The train made the 9,328 kilometers to Vladivostok in nine days and 22 hours, an average of 39 kilometers per hour. We ran down two cows, also a herd of sheep of which we left five dead. Two cars broke down en route; one was repaired, the other left behind. Passengers from the abandoned car were crowded into the others still in the train. A young German was billeted in the compartment of an American missionary lady, and both had to make the best of it. On an earlier train a Russian woman had to share the compartment of a German for several days. It is the custom of the country, it seems, and perfectly all right, but the victims of these involuntary companionships have to stand considerable razzing from their fellow-passengers.

Dinner on the train cost 1.75 rubles. It consisted of a generous portion of soup, usually cabbage soup, with a big piece of boiled meat in it; fish, generally sturgeon; meat, and dessert, generally stewed fruit of inferior quality. In Russia a huge plate of sour rye bread, and in Siberia graham bread, the slices cut more than an inch thick, was on the table. The meals were wholesome and substantial.

The train stopped several times daily from 5 to 20 minutes at stations where boiling water could always be had free of charge; and everybody bought teapots and brewed their own tea on the whole trip. There were restaurants, such as they were, at the bigger stations, and stores where a few of the absolute necessities of life could be purchased through a small window. In the Ural mountains semiprecious stones and ingenious birchwood pieces were also for sale, sometimes cheap, sometimes at a high price. Most of the Russia we passed through is as flat as a pancake. Siberia is more mountainous. Few trees other than birches and conifers are seen. In central Siberia the birches were turning yellow from the night frost—around September 10. A huge valley was flooded and innumerable stacks of hay stood in a foot of water. Distress will reign there this winter.

In Siberia the people seemed better dressed and more intelligent than in Russia proper; crowds were often at the stations, sitting or standing quietly and showing no animation. There were few smiling faces. Many of the men were in long boots, while some of the women were barefoot; in Russia, clumsy shoes made from straw were common and furs were in evidence everywhere.

We spent three hours in Moscow, with a guide; had lunch in a workers' restaurant and strolled around the Kremlin, within which the Central Government carries on. We visited the fantastic church of Ivan the Terrible, with its nine spires—each a small chapel. When it was finished, Ivan asked his Italian architect if he could duplicate it or possibly make a better one. On being answered in the affirmative, Ivan had the man's eyes put out to make sure the church he had just finished should be his masterpiece. We were fortunate in reaching the Church of the Redeemer at noon, for we heard the wonderful

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Through Soviet Siberia

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choir-singing which in Russia takes the place of organ music. The paintings are of the finest, especially that of Joseph and the Child, inside the massive dome. From the top of the church we saw the hill where Napoleon stood and watched the burning of the city; it was to commemorate his retreat that the church was erected.

A view of Moscow with its many churches and the Kremlin is strongly suggestive of the magic cities described in the Arabian Nights. There is nothing like it; the desire to see it again will haunt one a lifetime.

Contrasting with the splendors of the past is the shabby, ragged population—the unspeakably decrepit carriages, the rattling old taxies, the streets paved only with rough cobblestones, and the general lack of repair in everything. A few public buildings are going up and a few streets are being asphalted. Provincial towns have Moscow's shabbiness with little or none of its grandeur. The houses are mostly built of logs and are unpainted. There are no gardens and no flowers in the windows; the streets are clouds of dust when dry and pools of mud when wet. Some of the fields around the villages were so full of weeds that only portions of them had not been harvested.

The Russian government—communism? If anyone believes it in fact the ideal it is theoretically, let him go to Russia and see its practical results. He will see a blighted people—the most miserable of all the white races. I had never been in Russia before, and was there less than two weeks, but it is plain to see that though the country has rallied somewhat from the depths to which it sank during the revolution, it is still far below the pre-revolution standards. It is still drawing upon the meager reserves left from that period in order to keep going at all.

The upper and middle classes have been destroyed, only the working class has benefited. The peasants, the backbone of the Russian people, are worse off than ever. The taxing

power is used for the ulterior ends of state; I was told that if a peasant has more than one horse or more than one cow, he is forced, by taxation, to dispose of the surplus animals. His surplus grain is requisitioned by the state; he has no hope of owning the fields he cultivates and satisfying his hunger for land.

Bank deposits are encouraged, but depositors may only make withdrawals to satisfy pressing

GOODRICH BUYS HOOD RUBBER CO.

Union of Companies to Make Goodrich Footwear Leader.—Acquisition of the property, assets and business of the Hood Rubber Company at Watertown, Mass., by the B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company of Akron, as ratified the last week in August by Hood stockholders and directors, brings together two of the pioneer rubber companies of America, effects one of the most important mergers in the entire history of the rubber and tire industry, and makes Goodrich one of the world's largest manufacturers of rubber footwear as well as a figure more conspicuous than heretofore in the production of tires and other rubber commodities.

The consolidation brings a well earned respite to one of the industry's pioneer and prominent figures—Frederic C. Hood, the founder and president of the Hood Company and one of the founders of the original Rubber Club of America, parent organization of the present Rubber Manufacturers' Association.

Founded in 1896 the Hood Rubber Company has multiplied its factory capacity thirty times, has become the outstanding corporation in the rubber industry in New England and has the largest single rubber footwear factory in the world.

The present Hood properties at Watertown, as acquired by Goodrich, include 96 acres of land, more than 60 factory buildings with a combined floor space of nearly 50 acres, one of the largest rubber chemical and research laboratories in the industry and production facilities for the daily manufacture of nearly 100,000 pairs of footwear, 3,600 pneumatic tires and 7,000 tubes,

needs, such as those of illness. It is too bad that communism should have been experimented with upon such a gigantic scale; it is to be hoped that very soon Russia will discover what truth it may contain and be able to discard its errors. Passing from Siberia into Japan is like coming out of a desert into a garden, or turning from a land of decay and lost hope to one of life and opportunity.

150 solid tires, 50,000 pairs of rubber heels and 15,000 pairs of rubber soles. The consolidation gives Goodrich an annual sales volume exceeding \$175,000,000 annually. Hood sales in 1928 were approximately \$30,000,000 while those of Goodrich were nearly \$150,000,000. It also makes Goodrich an outstanding figure in the rubber footwear business, adding production facilities for nearly 100,000 pairs daily to the Goodrich footwear plant in Akron with its capacity of nearly 25,000 pairs daily.

In connection with its expansion program Goodrich has made numerous important changes in executive personnel. President J. D. Tew has announced the appointment of J. H. Connors, former president of the Republic Rubber Company at Youngstown, as general manager of the Goodrich mechanical division, in charge of manufacturing and sales.

First Vice-President T. G. Graham is assigned additional duties as he takes over complete management of the manufacturing and sales of tire division, and in addition continues in charge of the health and production control departments.

T. B. Farrington, in charge of the factory service division, in addition assumes charge of processing and machine development work. President Tew retains control over the research laboratory and original equipment divisions, with J. W. Schade head of the laboratory and H. C. Miller in charge of original equipment, reporting direct to him.

Total assets of the Hood Company last December 31 were \$34,080,750 and current assets were \$21,743,000. Current liabilities were \$4,041,270. Net working capital was \$14,917,280. At the close of 1928 Hood showed an operating

loss of \$29,797 and a total loss of \$1,478,104 this loss consisting principally of crude rubber inventory reductions. Goodrich in 1928 showed an operating profit of \$9,014,360. Its total assets on Dec. 31, 1928, were \$117,071,002 and its current assets exceeded by \$53,000,000 its current liabilities of \$13,250,000. Hood officers include Frederic C. Hood, president; H. Gage-first, vice-president; A. B. Newhall, vice-president; Donald T. Hood, treasurer. Good production activities will be continued as in the past, with the entire Hood factory operating as a separate unit, Goodrich officials announce.

Mr. Hood on August 20 issued the following statement to Hood tire dealers:

"Despite persistent rumors to the contrary, Hood tires of the same high quality, are and will be available to you through regular shipping points, under our regular contracts. The alliance of this Company with the B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company, one of the oldest and most reliable companies in the industry and known for its quality products for years, will give to the makers of the tires you are selling the benefit of the knowledge and experience of the producers of the famous *Silvertown Cord*, and is your assurance that you may continue to sell and recommend Hood tires as usual without hesitation."

I often think a sculptor is

A very lucky cuss;
Who never need to dread demise
Like all the rest of us.

For when he sees his end draw nigh—
As soon or late it must—
The boulder, all he has to do
Is make a face and bust!

My lover makes me wretched
On the level;
He takes my heart and twists it—
He's a devil.

I'm never sure he's faithful—
Well, what of it?
At least he keeps me guessing—
And I love it!