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side. From the frontier of the USSR the highway followed a slope to Lake Kosogol in Mongolia.

4. Beginning at the Bystraya Village, the highway followed the left bank of the Irkut River which flowed into the Angara River below Irkutsk. At Kharadaban it crossed the Irkut via a bridge. The stretch of highway from this point towards its end crossed a spur of the Sayan Range of the Tunkin Mountains. The highway lies over loose ground easily washed out during the spring and summer months, the period of greatest precipitation, and therefore was in bad condition. Additional difficulties in travelling over the highway were encountered on the winding section near Kharadaban which had steep rises and drops and, in the winter was covered with ice.
5. The Tunkin highway was of great strategic importance. It provided a short and convenient route not only into Mongolia but also into China. This was attested to by the cargoes which moved along the highway in spite of its unimproved conditions. Cargo moved from Kultuk Station to the border of Mongolia and then to the landing docks at Turta on Lake Kosogol in Mongolia. From Turta it was transported by water to the docks at Khaytagol on the southern end of Lake Kosogol. Two steamers ferried the cargo, one was an old Mongolian steamer and the other had been brought from the USSR in a dismantled condition in 1932. During the winter, cargo was transported over the ice by trucks.
6. The highway was used by both horse and motor transport. Horse transport was chiefly used during the winter. Food, textiles, ready-made clothing, consumers goods in general, as well as a great number of disassembled one-axle frame carts were carried over the road into the Mongolian People's Republic. The carts were manufactured in the USSR for Mongolia as replacements for carts in use there, which were very heavy and had octagonal wheels tightly sealed to the axle that produced enough noise to be heard several kilometers away. On the return trip to the USSR, the horse transport brought carcasses of wild goats and wild boars.
7. Motor transport carried goods from Kultuk Station for transshipment at Kyren. From Kyren the goods were moved by horse transport. Special shipments of well-joined and nailed-down crates were carried over the highway to the docks at Turta. These crates were described as "tea kettles". This aroused sharp curiosity among the drivers because of the large number and the excessive weight, also because it was necessary to handle the crates with special care. The drivers removed a board from a crate that had been damaged during transshipment and found that the "tea kettles" were gun shells moving to China. The highway provided the shortest route to one of the most vulnerable spots in the USSR - the section of the Transsiberian railway lying along the southern end of Lake Baikal, where the Transbaikalian and eastern areas may be cut off from the USSR. This danger became less acute when a railroad was built along the northern end of Lake Baikal in 1937.
8. The difficulty of transporting over the old highway, the necessity of increasing its traffic capacity, and the great political importance of the highway, forced the authorities to carry out the modernization of the existing old highway. A survey was made in 1932 and plans for the new highway were drawn up. The new highway was projected as a 3rd class road following the old highway and utilizing the bridges and improved sections of the old highway.
9. The width of the highway, including the shoulders, was planned to be 8 meters. The roadway was to be 6 meters wide. The maximum grades were to be 7%. The road was to be covered with gravel to a depth of 17 centimeters and have a crown.
10. The length of the highway, from Kultuk Station to the Mongolian border, was 110 kilometers and from the border of the USSR to the Turta docks, 14 kilometers, a total of 124 kilometers. The highway crossed six large rivers. Old wooden bridges were utilized for three of these rivers. At the 40th and 100th kilometer marks, girder type bridges were used and at the 60th kilometer mark a crossbar brace bridge. There were plans for three additional crossbar brace type bridges to be constructed at the 20th kilometer mark over the Bystraya River, at the 90th over the Bol'shoi River and at the 91st over the Malyy Zamgisan River. The length of the bridges varied between 50 and 150 meters.

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11. In the area of Obrub, at the 95th kilometer, the highway follows the slope of a mountain range at an elevation of 40 to 45 meters above the Irkut River level. From the Mondy village to the Mongolian border lies the maximum upgrade stretch. From the crest of the Tunkin Mountain range, the highway began to descend to Lake Kosogol on the Mongolian side of the border and reached the maximum downgrade on the last three kilometers before the Turta docks.

Financing the Construction

12. The financing of the construction of the highway was carried out by the USSR government. An estimate for the whole length of the highway, including the sections located in Mongolia had to be submitted to and approved by the Main Administration of Highways. No shortages of funds were experienced except for one instance when credit was temporarily withdrawn because of a delay in the presentation of a financial report on the construction. 50X1
13. Mongolia did not share in the expenditures of the construction. In fact Mongolian participation was absent not only in the financial arrangements but also in the technical supervision and advisory capacity. The USSR built the road according to its own plans and behaved as though it were at home.

Technical Supervision of the Construction

14. The builders and technical supervisors had before them a task of building a new highway without interrupting the flow of traffic along the old highway. While the horse transport, which moved only during the winter months, continued very satisfactorily, the motor transport was in terrible shape. Deep mud in the spring and fall, heavy rainfall in the summer, and the unfavorable contour of the road created great difficulties for motor transport. Trucks became mired, motors went dead on steep upgrades, and many vehicles were put out of commission.
15. The construction crews were at a loss as to whether they should build a new highway or make essential repairs to the existing old highway so as to keep traffic moving. It was necessary to make repairs to the old highway and also necessary to keep a separate crew of workmen ready to pull out trucks that became stuck in the mud, sometimes marooned for several days, and to escort them over dangerous sections of the road. All this had to be done with a limited and poorly qualified labor force. The difficulties of technical management were very real. However, an order had been issued that traffic was to continue in spite of everything and that the new highway was to be built. Disobedience to the order, for any reason whatsoever, meant imprisonment in a concentration camp at best.
16. The construction project was based on the necessity of using local materials, lumber and stone. All the buildings on the highway were to be out of wood. The paving of the roadway was to consist of gravel, limestone and shale. The latter pulverized so easily that sections of the road became dusty and wore out rapidly. All work was to be done by hand without any machinery. The lack of tools was felt very quickly. There were not enough measuring instruments. Working tools were both few in number and worthless in quality. The only exception was an explosive called "ammonal" for rock excavation. Holes for this explosive were bored by hand.

Technical Personnel and Hired Laborers

17. As far as the technical personnel was concerned, the situation at the construction project was very bad. There was either none at all or it was very poor in quality. Engineers appointed to the construction project were young and had no practical experience. With higher wages and monthly travelling expenses the services of more experienced technicians and foremen from the Ukraine were obtained. 50X1

18. , The construction work, which had begun in 1932, was in a most unsatisfactory condition. The Main Administration of Highways resolved to reorganize the whole construction set up under a different leadership with a new technical staff. When the local population refused to work on the construction of the highway, it became necessary to bring labor in from the outside. The local population preferred to do their habitual work of hunting and carting which

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provided them with a much better income than working on the construction project. The low wages, high production quotas, and poor food further distracted them.

- 50X1 19. [redacted] two Soviet battalions of rear units of specialized military personnel. The battalions had been working on road construction in Belorussia and the Ukraine for about two years and consisted of young men of draft age who had been deprived of their political rights. They were the sons of former army officers and government officials, rich peasants or merchants, victims of persecution, and, in general, all the disenfranchised. They were formed into battalions and sent to construct roads where it was said, "they were forged anew". They were given food which was bad. As for clothing, they wore whatever they brought from home. They were sheltered in crowded barracks, in dugouts, or in old, torn, army tents. They received no pay. Each of the two battalions consisted of less than 300 men. Later the battalions were merged into one unit. This was all the labor force we had.
20. The 1933 construction plan was only 40% complete when certain sections of the highway were put into use. These were the Kyren, Zangisan, and Kharadaban sections. The traffic along the highway greatly facilitated further construction.
21. In the spring of 1934 a road machinery crew arrived. This crew brought the following equipment: 3 heavy 12-foot American type graders; 3 light 9-foot American type graders; 20 power shovels (Baker) with a capacity of 0.75 cubic meter; several plow-type trench diggers; several road plows and steam rollers. All of the machines were equipped with tractor power.
22. The road machinery crew undertook to complete the dirt bed road over the remaining length of the highway with the exception of the stretches where the ground was rocky. The presence of this crew and an improvement in food supply for the convicts and construction battalions, made it possible to complete the highway in 1934.
23. The administration of the portion of the highway carrying through traffic from Kultuk to Turta was then transferred to the Operational and Routing Administration under the Irkutsk Highway Department of the Eastern Siberia Kray. The section in Mongolia also came under this direction.
24. Because the highway stretch located in Mongolian territory was so short and was constructed with great speed, it is quite impossible to form any opinion on the attitude of the Mongolian population to the construction project and the people engaged in it.

Additional Labor Forces

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- 50X1 25. In 1933, in order to increase our labor force, a battalion of homeless children, collected in Moscow, arrived at our construction project. The waifs refused to do any work. They became a heavy burden on the organization. [redacted] it had become necessary to remove them from Moscow. The group was made up of children of dispossessed rich peasants, children of broken families, children of victims of persecution, and children of parents who had been shot or sent to penal institutions by the NKVD. They were also children of the street, simply delinquent children, etc. In the summer the children disappeared into the big cities, lived in sewers and drain pipes, and in basements of wrecked buildings. They stole and robbed in the city markets for their food. When the winter came they migrated southward. Most of them were between 10 and 15 years of age. 50X1
- 50X1 26. [redacted] they had been deceived because they were promised that they would be taken south to a rich estate where they were to get good lodgings and excellent food, and where there was a lake, a beach, and boats. They revolted when they realized that they were taken eastward. The NKVD guards subdued them by dogs. Each railroad car had three dogs, one at each end and one in the middle. When any child stirred, a dog would jump at him. This created a panic. The children calmed down and surrendered finally on the condition that the dogs would be removed.
27. Naturally the homeless children did no work. Wherever they were lodged, stealing began. They stole everything they saw, whether they needed it or not. They stole from habit and for recreation. They stole cattle from the local people, slaughtered it in the woods ate to satiety, and when there was no cattle, they went hungry. Unable to stand the extreme harshness of the living conditions, some of them died. Some ran away but were

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caught at previously setup road blocks. The more clever ones who knew how to get around these danger points disappeared, or perhaps became the prey of wild beasts. At the insistence of the construction management and the local administration, the children had to be removed from the construction area.

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28. The Main Administration of Highways finally realized [redacted] shortage and soon after the departure of the homeless children in the [redacted] were notified that a normal labor force was being sent [redacted]. This force was designated by the initials SShD3 (Highway Construction #3). It turned out that the labor force was nothing but a party of "Bytoviki" (petty offenders). No country in the world except the USSR and its satellites has the kind of criminals known as "bytoviki". A man may pick up a few ears of grain, or even a few grains from the fields after harvest for his hungry family, and he is called a criminal and sentenced to 3 or 5 years, or even longer, to a concentration camp. [redacted] these "bytoviki" upon their arrival [redacted] reasons for their punishments. They all said the same "The children collected grain in the fields after the crops had been gathered, so I became a criminal".

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29. The laborers arrived badly weakened by their stay in confinement and their travel. Since no living quarters were provided for them, part of the force was settled in half ruined houses and the remainder in homes from which the NKVD had removed the tenants. After making repairs to the half ruined houses, the laborers were found so weak that they could hardly drag themselves around the construction project.

30. The famine of 1933 also affected the construction project. The supply organizations could not satisfy our needs. Everyone went hungry including the engineers and technical staff. Party representatives were the only exceptions. They received their supplies from special distribution agents. The convicts /Bytoviki/ were the chief sufferers. Starvation led to scurvy and many died. The whole construction project became a sort of infirmary but without doctors or medicine. A local plant called "Ramson", eaten by the local population as a cure for scurvy, did not help. The engineering and technical staff had strict orders to state that there was no famine, no sickness, no deaths, and that everything was fine. However, the situation obviously became known to Moscow and in the fall of 1933, a commission of NKVD representatives descended upon us. It consisted of eight overt members and several covert members. It is interesting to note that among the members of the commission there was a former engineer of the Main Administration of Highways who was convicted of sabotage. He was under constant surveillance of one of the covert agents and was continuously followed. The commission investigated the construction for three weeks and then departed. Other than the arrests of the chief of the finance section and the chief of the supply section, no changes were made and the famine continued until late in the fall when the supply situation improved somewhat.

The Tunkin Valley

31. The Tunkin valley is a narrow strip of land lying between two spurs of the Sayan Range. It lies between the villages of Bystraya and Kharadaban. Through this valley flowed the rapid and very winding Irkut river. The soil was stony and without vegetation near the villages of Kharadaban and Mondy. Near Zangisan it became marshy changing to forests. The entire valley was interspersed with light soils and mud deposits and was subject to erosion.

32. At the 50th kilometer mark on the highway, in the Tunkin Mountains, was the Arshany health resort. This resort was widely known throughout Siberia for producing amazing results in the curing of kidney diseases. About 15 kilometers from Obrub was another health resort called Nilova Pustyn' (Nil's Hermitage). It was supposedly discovered by an ailing monk named Nil. The resort was very primitive. The main building was a crudely constructed wood frame house with a leaking roof. The inside partitions were of rough boards with wide cracks in between. There were three rooms, each having a bath, which were merely wooden boxes looking like coffins with rags stuffed in the cracks. Wood pipes with wood shutoff plugs fed strong sulphurous water from nearby springs. The sulphurous water had temperatures of 35, 45, and 55 degrees centigrade. Near the main house there were four small frame residences. This was the entire resort. The medicinal baths were used only by the local inhabitants. Despite the amazingly salubrious properties of the water, the resort was closed to the general public because of its location in a frontier area. Admission to the resort was authorized only by

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special passes issued by the NKVD. Approximately 30 additional mineral springs were located in the vicinity but for the same reason they were not opened to the general public. The Party officials on the construction project used this health resort constantly and devoted much time to it, the other employees were too busy with their work.

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33. The population consisted of Buryats and Russian Irkutsk Cossacks. The Cossacks had settled along the Mongolian frontier and had been charged with guarding the border. After the Revolution they were released from this duty and replaced by the border units of NKVD. The Cossacks were deprived of all their privileges. They were taxed beyond their ability to pay. Constantly watched, they were extremely careful in their work and conversation. [redacted] the Cossacks received permission, from the regime, to wear yellow stripes on their trousers and caps with a yellow band.
34. The Buryats were rather secretive and in general were disinclined to speak out. However having lost their peaceful way of life, and being forced to flee to Mongolia and China, they sometimes spoke frankly. The Buryats have spiritual bonds to the Lamas. They resented the closing of their monasteries and the persecutions of Lamaism. The Lamas always had a great influence on the Buryats and they themselves were subject to the authority of the Dalai Lama in Tibet.
35. At the foot of the Tunkin range, between Kyren and Kharadaban, lies a sanctuary for "andatra" rats (muskrats), 17 of which were brought from the United States.
36. The people of the Tunkin Valley were carters and hunters. They were very willing to cart goods into Mongolia because they were permitted to bring back to the USSR certain foodstuffs, such as white flour, sugar, tea, vegetable oil, etc. which were unobtainable in the local stores.
37. The hunting season was in the late fall, the winter, and a short period during the spring. During the spring they shot wapiti, a form of spotted elk. Early in May there was always excitement in the hunting villages. It was at this time that the wapiti shed their horns. The new horns, before they harden, were of great value (they are called "panty"). The hunter prepared a spot frequented by the wapiti by spreading salt. Just before night the hunter would go to his shack, which was near his chosen spot, and await the wapiti. This was repeated every night. Despite the darkness of the night the hunters were extremely skilled and shot the animal seeing only its shadow. The hunting lasted about 10 days before the antlers hardened and lost their value. The "panty" obtained was taken to purchasing centers and exchanged for drafts which enabled the hunter to receive hunting equipment and other necessary supplies. A good panty weighed about 7 or 8 kilograms, thus providing a hunter and his family with a modest, but better than average, living for a six-month period.
38. It was not unusual for the hunters to go to the taiga for two or three months to hunt squirrels, chipmunks, wild cats, lynx, an occasional sable, wolves, wild boars, bears, and wild goats. The hunters would exchange the pelts obtained for drafts on special stores where unobtainable household necessities and hunting equipment could be purchased.

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