

As dusk fell we passed the little two-headed mountain Mokanchinskaya-gora, where a perpetual wind is said to blow. In the village Mokancha we were accommodated for the night in a simple Russian peasant's cottage.

On the morning of September 3rd we had a two and a half hours' drive to Bakhty, the frontier village to Sinkiang, where we made a stop at the customs for examination. Nothing was opened; only our boxes and crates were counted and our passports stamped. In the little bank I changed 300 American dollars for 1603 Sinkiang-liang. We had much to do in this little frontier-village, not the least important part of our business comprising the writing and sending off of letters and telegrams. It was the last time we had a proper and well-run telegraph-station at our disposal. I had had sad experience of how such matters were managed on the other side of the frontier.

THE RUSSO-CHINESE FRONTIER

The Russian toll-bar is quite near Bakhty; but it took us a good hour and a half, as the last Russian bridge broke down under one of the cars.

The Chinese have no barrier. Instead, the road runs between two mud houses where one draws up while the customs officials come forward and require to see one's passport. The baggage was not to be examined before we reached Chuguchaq.

At the edge of the Chuguchaq oasis CARLSON smashed the first Chinese bridge with his heavily loaded lorry, but managed to get across without further mishap. In this delightfully rural town we were met by Mr BOROVoi, the acting Russian consul. Also on this occasion we stayed at the HOKHRIEKOV's. Late that evening the Governor's interpreter and a customs official came to the house to fetch our passports and to make some notes.