

had covered the distance between Chuguchaq and Urumchi quicker than the telegram. He spoke very freely about the new order that had been introduced since the death of the old, experienced Governor-General.

We had a long period of waiting. Not until September 10th were there any signs of its coming to an end. On this date, however, the Governor's interpreter and a customs official put in an appearance and required us to open our forty-three packing-cases.

»Why didn't you ask this a week ago, when you came and had a look at them? It takes several days to unpack and then re-pack our baggage.»

»It's not our fault,» they replied; »we have been instructed to examine your effects.»

And so began the inspection. AMBOLT, CARLSON and LAGERBÄCK were kept hard at it for nearly two days. It was evident that the authorities wished to find out whether we had weapons and ammunition in our boxes.

No doubt a telegram had arrived with instructions to the effect that a thorough examination be carried out. But why had LI not received any reply to his question as to whether we might continue? Obviously because the Urumchi people did not wish to give us our travelling permit until they were convinced that we were not taking weapons to Urumchi. Nor did we hear anything from LI until he had received the report of his subordinates concerning the results of their examination. But *then* he came, on the evening of the 11th. He was not in the best of tempers. Probably he felt ashamed at having been obliged to carry out an order that was offensive to us.

»Now you may start,» he said. »I have just received the telegram.»

»Then we shall set out to-morrow.»

»Oh no; to-morrow you are coming to dine with me.»

At first I declined this invitation, as we had already lost so many days for nothing in Chuguchaq; but as he continued to press us, AMBOLT, who is politer than I, begged me not to hurt his feelings by refusing, especially as it had not been through any fault of LI's that we had had all this annoyance. I therefore promised that we should come, and we wrote our names on the big red paper where all those who had been invited were listed.

For the petrol for our cars LI referred us to a Sart named HASAN ABDULLAH BIRISHEV, the manager of the garage. This man was a small, strongly built fellow with a chalk-white beard. Besides his own language, he spoke Russian and Chinese, and he was arrogant and cock-sure in his manner. To my request for petrol he replied curtly: »I cannot let you have any petrol without special orders from Urumchi.» Finally, he stated his intention of telegraphing for permission the following day.

The next morning the old man turned up, more soft-spoken than he had been the previous day, and announced that the Governor had given orders that we