

did that this might be of some practical advantage to China. If there was to be a new expedition, I should perhaps have an opportunity of seeing the part of the »Silk Road» I did not yet know — a road that led from Tun-huang along the northern shore of the new Lake Lop-nor and the new course of the Tarim that had come into existence in 1921.

IN NANKING

When I left Peking on the evening of August 5th summer was at the zenith of its beauty; and the following day warm winds were blowing over the low country as the train rushed through the groves of ancient cemeteries to the capital of the republic.

In company with LIU I visited the Foreign Minister, Dr LO WEN-KAN, a man who recoiled from no difficulties, and whose attitude towards life and its problems was bright, cheerful and unprejudiced. He told me that since the failure of General HUANG MU-SUNG's mission he had decided to go to Sinkiang himself to quell the unrest in the lacerated province and to make peace between its fighting generals. Dr LO also informed me that the Government meant to invite me to conduct a motor-car expedition to Sinkiang.

So my intuitions and desires were on the way to fulfilment!

An hour later I was sitting with Prime Minister WANG, who confirmed all that I had already heard. To build railways into the interior would, he said, be too expensive; they must content themselves with motor-roads to begin with, and these were necessary. But they must be connected with the termini of the already existing railway lines in North and Central China. A northern motor-road ought to start from Kuei-hua, a southern road from Sian. The work was to begin without delay. The Government had not yet, however, made up its mind; and he himself wished to discuss the matter with experts. I should have an answer in a few days.

Several more conferences were held, and I wrote five new memoranda on various details — routes, distances and other conditions. These were to be analysed by experts and then discussed in the council of Ministers. It soon became clear that I must arm myself with patience.

Meantime, the new astronomical observatory on the summit of Purple Hill, 800 feet above the Lotus Lake, was approaching completion. A little farther down the slope PARKER C. CHEN lived in the magnetic observatory. I had put in a special request that CHEN be allowed to take part in the proposed motor journey through the regions he had got to know so thoroughly in HÖRNER's company.