

the Tai-yuan — Tung Kwang line is said to have been decided on. A map of the proposed Chinese railway lines that is being distributed to officials in the empire through the post office, seems to confirm this. The latter line is marked on it, whereas there is no westward continuation of the Chen-chow — Honan-fu line. — Among some of the other surprises on this map there is a line from Lanchow to the NW, to Urumchi, without any previous connection between Lanchow and Si-an-fu or any other point on the eastern railways. Besides, this line is drawn far to the south of Lianchow, across a considerable part of the Nanshan mountains.

With regard to other means of communication nothing whatever has been done. It is reported that a road has been built by troops from Feng-siang-fu via Lintay to the Si-an-fu — Lanchow highway for transporting salt, for salt is always to go by this route, which is more level. In Feng-siang-fu, however, I heard that the rains had washed away part of this road. The people of Lungchow planned an arbah road from Feng-siang-fu to Lungchow and a rich Chinese at Lanchow even undertook to build a big bridge at his own expense, but the scheme could not be carried out because it would have reduced the importance of Feng-siang-fu, as caravan loads are transferred there to arbahs. A good example of the way in which the mandarins protect their own pockets.

Less has been done here than in Kan Su to improve the natural resources of the country. The province is supposed to possess good supplies of metals, especially in the mountains in the S, where there is said to be both iron and copper. The Chinese brag about their copper, though it does not appear to be refined anywhere. This is, no doubt, due to the risk attaching to any industrial undertaking run by a private individual. All is well so long as the business experiences trouble, but once it has been worked up and begins to yield a profit, the mandarins are soon on the scene and lay hands on it on some pretext or other. — There is said to be plenty of coal both in the S and N mountains and gold in the S. This is indicated by the fact that thousands of men make their living by washing gold in the river Han. — Oil is obtained by the authorities in the mountains near Yenchang, about 8 days' journey northward from Si-an-fu. There are 200 oil wells. Cases containing 2 tins are sold in Si-an-fu at 3 dollars and 80 cents or about the same price as the American oil, but the refining is said to be not sufficiently careful, at any rate at present. The kerosene produces a good deal of smoke. Complaints are also made that it burns faster than the American oil, which makes it dearer. The concern is managed by three Japanese and the whole installation, made a year ago, is said to have cost 500,000 dollars. — For the present this is the only place where the mineral resources of the country are being utilised. — An attempt to establish a silver mine in the neighbourhood of Yauchow is said to have proved unsatisfactory.

In regard to troops Shensi is considerably in advance of Kan Su not only in numbers, but in regard to the staff of officers and training. The main contingent, indeed, consists of the same miserable militia-like institution of «tchyping». Garrisons are numerous. If they were complete in numbers, the forces of this part of the province alone would amount to about 50,000 men. In the towns, where senior officers are resident, about 100 men can be reckoned to an in, but in other places not more than about 50 and often even