

CAPE SIBERIA

### Former Mail Carrier in Siberian Service Believes Journey Can Be Accomplished, but Not Without Privation and a Hard Struggle.

**SCAR IDEN-ZELLER**, a native of Germany, who has lived for several years in Russia, and who is at present a resident of New York, is exceedingly interested in the proposed automobile race from New York to Paris by way of Alaska and Siberia, to be held under the auspices of Le Matin of Paris and the New York Times. Mr. Iden-Zeller has made the journey from Moscow, Russia, to Nome, Alaska, following the route along the edge of the Arctic Ocean in Siberia, while the contestants in the forthcoming race will probably follow him as for four years a mail carrier in the employ of the Russian Government, carrying the mail, with the assistance of reindeer teams, through the most inhospitable and sparsely settled part of the great frozen northland of the Russian Empire.

Mr. Iden-Zeller believes that the journey by automobile can be accomplished, but makes no attempt to belittle the difficulties, dangers, and privations which the contestants will be forced to undergo. The most trying part of the trip, he declares, will be from East Cape, the first point on Russian territory reached by travelers after leaving Cape Prince of Wales, in Alaska, at Bering Strait. He kept a daily diary while on the way from Moscow to Nome, and recorded many interesting experiences during the trip.

A distance of 18,000 miles will be traversed by the contestants between New York and Paris, he said yesterday. "Of this, 8,450 miles will be through the arctic regions on Asiatic soil, where a man's blood almost freezes and one's breath turns to icicles as soon as it leaves the body. An awful 'white death' awaits one on every hand in that desolate land, and a hundred precautions will have to be taken to avoid losing one's life. Although this race is planned on a scale never before undertaken by man, as long as relay stations now in existence are taken advantage of, or established where none now exist, and if good judgment and extreme care be taken, I believe the journey to be possible."

Compared with the distance traveled by Prince Borghese this year in the race from Peking to Paris, also conducted by Le Matin, the proposed race will be much more important, while the difficulties encountered by the Prince will be as nothing compared with what the New York to Paris travelers will have to undergo. At the same time it may be said that the distance from Irkutsk to Moscow can be negotiated with comparative ease, for the road is excellent. Through Northern Siberia there will be a different tale to tell, for while the roads, if they may be so called, are atrocious even where they exist, there is not a single settlement where Russian authority counts for aught, so remote are these places from civilization and the world as we know it. Nevertheless, a committee of influential French and Russian gentlemen can do much to aid the autolists, even in those far-away regions, if the matter is approached in the right way through Russian officials. Suggests Best Route.

As to the proper route, commencing at East Cape, on Bering Strait, I suggest that the shore of the Arctic Ocean be followed to the Bay of Koluchinsk. Then, still along the coast, to the Bay of Tschau. From there it is 1,500 miles to the mouth of the Kolyma River. Continuing, the route leads to the settlement of Nishne Kolymak and Svevne Kolymak, a distance of 324 miles. At this point provisions are obtainable. From Svevne Kolymak the road proceeds to the City of Verchokjansk, a stretch of 1,500 miles. You see, the distances between points are very great in Northern Siberia. At Verchokjansk the first telegraph station is to be found after landing on Russian territory at East Cape. From there to Yakutsk, on the Lena River, the distance is 620 miles. Following the Lena and leaving the Balkan Mountains to the west, the important city of Irkutsk, on the Siberian Railway, 2,000 miles away—a mere trifle in distance, you will note—is reached. From that point the road to Moscow is very good, and one that automobiles can travel without much difficulty. At Moscow preparations will be made for the final run to Paris, 1,800 miles distant.

Without doubt the most difficult part of the journey will be from East Cape to the mouth of the Kolyma River, 1,500 miles. For a distance of 1,000 miles along the shore of the Arctic

Ocean the autoists will be enabled to travel from settlement to settlement, such as they are, consisting only of a few tea houses of coal food is natives, whose principal food is either reindeer or seal meat or fish. The 500 miles following, from Tschau to the mouth of the Kolyma River, are uninhabited, which will make it necessary to camp on the ice in tents.

It would be advisable for those participating in the race to provide themselves with articles for exchange purposes after reaching East Cape, for in Northern Siberia the natives know nothing of money in the form which is familiar to us. One thing which is essential above all others, for the purpose of barter, is Russian tobacco, called 'tcherasky,' which comes compressed in one-pound packages. Also compressed Russian tea in bricks. Sugar and flour should also be taken, together with a few repeating rifles. These articles could be shipped to Nome from San Francisco or Seattle, thus avoiding the necessity of transporting them through Alaska, although Russian tobacco and tea can be obtained from the Northwestern Siberian Company. They will be found invaluable in traveling through Northern Siberia. In fact, impossible to do without if assistance of any kind, even to the obtaining of food or shelter from the natives, is sought. At the Tschuktsch settlement called Oulek, which will be reached soon after leaving East Cape, it would be advisable to buy fur tents, as canvas tents, owing to thinness and instability, are worse than useless.

Diplomacy Will Be Necessary. The autoists must also bear in mind that it will be not only advisable but highly necessary, if they wish to succeed in getting through the country inhabited by the Tschuktschs, to treat the natives in a kind and friendly manner, for otherwise they might get ugly. If not dangerous, in their attitude toward the contestants, for these natives are treacherous, and in fact, they probably seek to steal whatever they can lay their hands on. From Bering Strait to the mouth of the Kolyma River, 1,800 miles, Russian authority and the exercise of law is only nominal. The natives are entirely independent and recognize no authority other than their own, for Russian officials

are not to be found for hundreds of miles. Despite the miserable existence which these natives lead, they are very proud specimens of the human race. Some of them possess a very slight knowledge of English, picked up perhaps from prospectors or whalers, and a kind word or a good-natured nod of the head goes much further with them than a harsh command. They are fetish worshippers, having as gods the sun, moon, and also the reindeer, which supplies them very largely with food. They are very resentful of the least slight upon their religious belief.

Reindeer meat and flour is to be obtained in nearly all native settlements during the winter. From Kollachin Bay, a few hundred miles from East Cape, to the Kolyma River, natives must be employed as guides, and even for a distance beyond the river.

Winter Travel Alone Possible.

The contestants, of course, understand that they will be compelled to travel under climatic conditions that are unparalleled, for, as has been mentioned, it will be possible to travel in Siberia only in the winter, when the 'tundra,' as it is called, or ground, which consists of small hummocks of earth, long grass, and weeds, a few feet apart, is covered with snow. In summer time it is so wet and soggy, with water beneath each hummock, that it is absolutely impossible to travel in any direction, for the 'tundra' stretches away for hundreds of miles. In winter, with the 'tundra' covered with snow and in some cases packed hard, it is possible to travel with dog teams hauling sleighs, or with reindeer teams. Of course, if only dog and reindeer teams can travel only in winter over the snow and ice, it stands to reason that automobiles must avail themselves of the same conditions, which even then will be hard enough. The autoists will probably experience a temperature as low as 70 degrees below zero. It goes without saying that to meet such climatic conditions special provision must be made for the autoists and to overcome the freezing of lubricants, etc. Gasoline cannot be purchased in eastern or western Siberia, and provision should be made for supplies to be taken further north also.

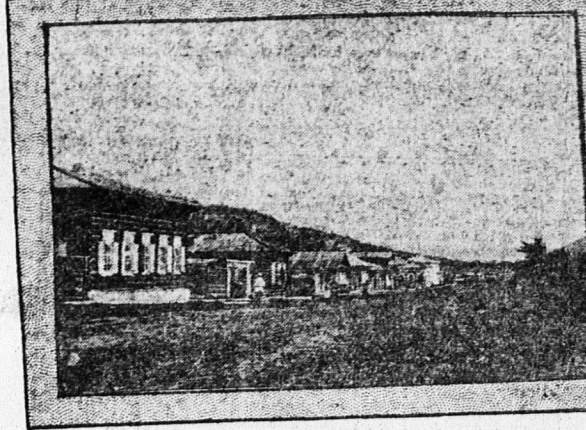
The largest water main in the city is of 90 inches diameter. This begins at the reservoir at High Bridge and goes down Amsterdam Avenue to Manhattan Street, where it bifurcates into

two 48-inch mains that carry the water to the reservoir in Central Park. It is paralleled all the way from High Bridge by one 48-inch and two 36-inch mains. Underground Convent Avenue presents a remarkable appearance in that the entire thoroughfare from curb to curb is occupied by eight 48-inch water mains, forming part of the supply system running from reservoir to reservoir. These crowd two gas mains under the sidewalks, and the sewers, under the gutters.

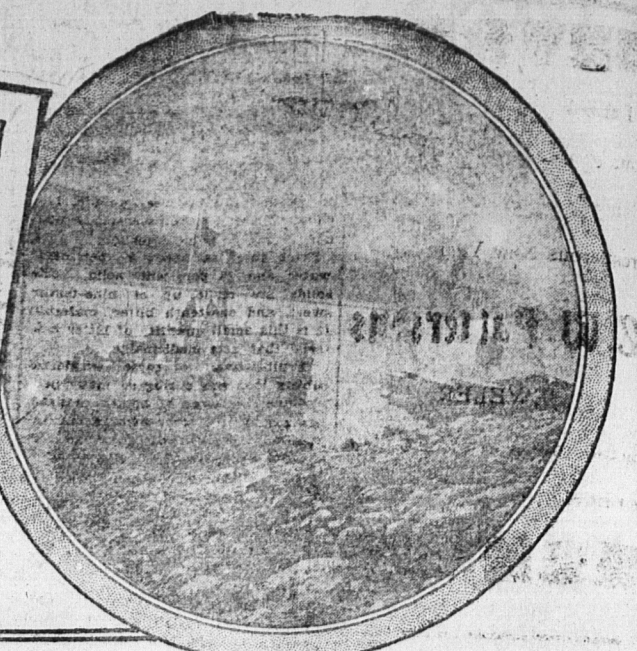
The thoroughfares in Manhattan and other parts of the city are crowded with pipes of all kinds. On account of its proximity to the city, the water supply system is a serious problem for the men who have to keep the pipes in repair. Here the work of laying them was complicated by the elevated railroad. Between the elevated structure the space is taken up by the trolley ducts and conduits. In many places between the conduits and the curbs at a depth of from 14 to 16 feet, according to the surface elevation, run two large sewers with manholes there at every fifty feet. Of water mains there are two, and in many places three, varying from six to twenty feet in diameter. There are ten gas mains, ranging from six to twelve inches in diameter, and two electric light and an equal number of telegraph and telephone conduits, all boxed in, with dimensions of two feet by three or four feet, according to the number of tubes. Added to this, at the intersection of every street are pipes that



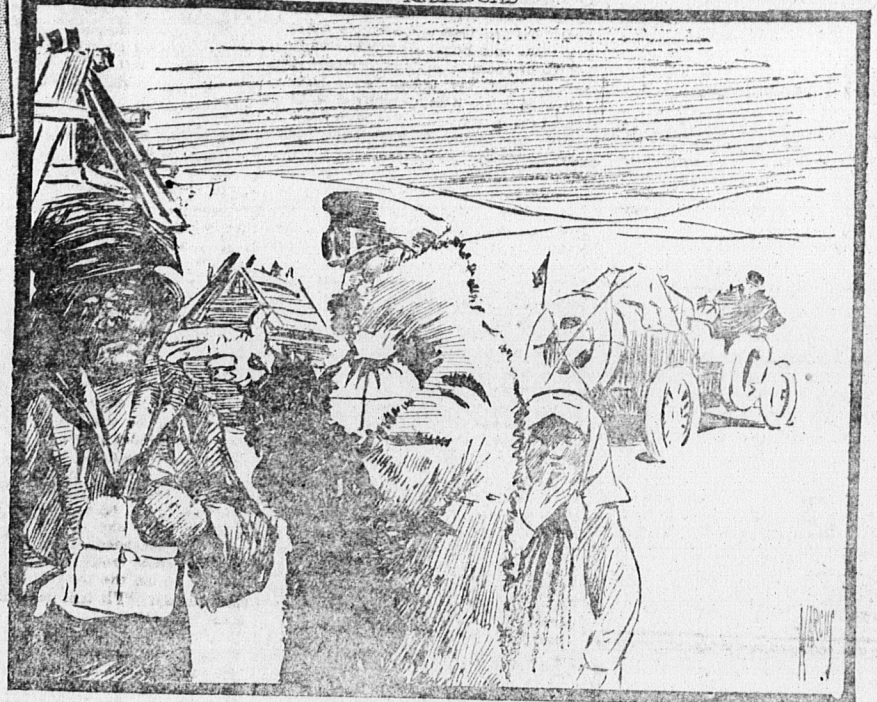
RUSSIAN CHURCH ON LINE OF SIBERIAN RAILROAD



STREET IN VERCHOKJANSK, SIBERIA



SUMMER SCENE ON LENA RIVER, SIBERIA



TRADING WITH THE NATIVES

From Nishne Kolymak to the Siberian Railway the trip will be much more agreeable, if the term can be applied to travel through such a country, than through places from East Cape. The distances and stations between Nishne Kolymak and Yakutsk are as follows: From Nishne Kolymak to Svevne Kolymak there are ten stations or settlements, which are each about thirty miles apart. From Svevne Kolymak to Verchokjansk twenty-eight stations, each about forty miles apart. From Verchokjansk to Yakutsk twenty stations, each about thirty miles apart. From Yakutsk to Irkutsk, one hundred and twenty-two stations, about sixteen miles apart. The route from Nishne Kolymak through tundra, the natives, who include Yakutsks, Lamuts, Tchungs, Tulandres, and Burjatus, are absolutely peaceful, and hospitable, but do not doubt the chiefs of police of such cities as Nishne Kolymak, Svevne Kolymak, and Verchokjansk and the Governor of Yakutsk would order Cossacks to accompany the autoists as escorts for a distance.

I have very distinct recollections of my experiences as mail carrier for

the Russian Imperial Government through Northern Siberia, carrying the mails with dog teams or reindeer. At night the sky was ablaze with the flame from the Northern Lights, glowing red, and green toward the heavens, making a sight so wonderful and awe-inspiring that nothing in the world can be compared to it. The bluish light of the stars harmonized well with the ghost-like appearance of Verchokjansk as I approached it. It is merely a village, but I regretted having to leave it when ready to start with the mail for walking slowly through the main street in any morning, the snow being very deep, there was no sound to disturb the stillness, which was that of a graveyard, except the occasional whining of a dog. Every one in the village seemed to be fast asleep except the Police Commissioner, the Postmaster, a few Cossacks, and a cook. The Postmaster soon afterward turned the mail over to me, requiring me to sign a document showing that I had 3,000 parcels in my charge, as well as one bag of letters, and 35,000 rubles in money. For these articles I was to be held responsible until I reached the Kolyma River, 1,200 miles away. Six sleighs hauled by reindeer, and attended by a driver, made up the party. As I was about to depart the Commissioner of Police handed me a manifesto signed and retained an order for the release of certain poor wretches who had been condemned to prison in northern Siberia some years before. This document I carefully fastened around my neck.

The Start for Bering Strait.

After having loaded the sleighs with food, taken a parting drink of vodka with the Commissioner of Police and some other officials, all of whom looked at me with much sadness and forebodings, I took my departure lightheartedly. How different would have been my demeanor could I have known in how many different forms death lurked in this barren, desolate tundra! All thought of danger I resolutely set aside, however, as the goal of my ambition was to reach Bering Strait. A temperature of 67 degrees was behind me, and in front the immense fields of tundra stretching off as far as the eye could see, snow covered and with a bitter, cutting wind sweeping across its face.

After we had proceeded a few miles the frightfully cold wind from the northeast made my cheeks burn and the icicles formed on my eyelashes. Any attempt to wipe them off or otherwise get rid of them caused the most intense pain. My fingers and feet gradually became numb. Innumerable knife blades seemed to be piercing my lungs. The cold, biting wind seemed to bite within my body. I felt an irresistible desire to sleep. Pictures of days gone by flitted before my eyes with startling distinctness. I seemed to stand at the side of the grave of a man buried only a short time before, a grave which took four days to dig in the battle with snow and ice. Clearly I saw myself stand, bareheaded, by the open grave, and heard choir boys singing with startling discordance. When the service was about over, blocks of ice were thrown on the coffin instead of dust.

A low, whining sound caused me to awaken with a start. Looking around, I saw a pack of wolves accompanying the sleigh, and but a short distance away. They made no attempt to attack the party, however, but the fierce glare of their eyes and the howls they gave reminded us constantly of their presence.

Followed by Wolves.

As the journey progressed we had many obstacles to overcome. Sometimes it would be a fallen tree, or a deep hole would have to be crossed, making it necessary for us to stop. Going down a steep declivity covered with dwarf trees, I was overturned out of my sleigh, which was overturned and a number of my instruments broken. Our reindeer hands refused to do the work of repairing the sleigh for some time, but finally we succeeded. After two days' traveling we reached the village of Kurelick, a settlement of the Yakutsk tribe, where there is a Post Office. Our arrival at one of the native huts was marked by every expression of pleasure on the part of the natives, occupants, who foresaw presents of tobacco and tea. We proceeded on our way the following morning. How I hated the nights, when the green eyes of those murderous wolves kept staring at us until morning, the beasts following us for miles and miles. At the village of Ebelach we changed reindeer and driver and rested for a day in a house made of ice and snow. We were given frozen fish to eat, which is considered a great delicacy and was a sure indication that we were approaching the Indigirka River. We proceeded on our way, but the air became colder and colder, and the icicles larger and larger. It was impossible for us to sit in the sleighs uninterruptedly, and so we were compelled to get out and walk very frequently. As we approached the Indigirka River, we saw immense quantities of geese, ducks, and swan on the shores, leading an apparently happy life. The driver told me that the river is 800 miles long and twenty miles wide in places.

We continued on our way to Chaty-gauk, where a most awful sight awaited us. A bear had surprised a family of Yakuts gathering wood and had killed the father and mother and had horribly torn their skin. I dressed of reindeer meat, twenty pounds of butter, and a sack of frozen milk were given me by the villagers in token of their appreciation of my aid.

"In time I reached Svevne Kolymak, seven days' travel surrounded, my position and continued on my way to East Cape along the route I have indicated, and from that point proceeded, gasoline sashoon. From Nome I went on to Seattle, arriving in New York a few months ago.

"As I have said, I believe it is possible for an automobile to make its way from New York to Paris by way of Alaska and Siberia, but it must be well understood that many difficulties and hardships will be encountered in Siberia. Those undertaking the journey must not only be exceptionally brave and full of determination, but must make up their minds to undergo serious privation. I know nothing about the conditions autoists might encounter in Alaska; never having traversed that part of the United States."

## Wonderful Network That Underlies Manhattan's Streets

### More than 1,500 Miles of Gas Mains, 550 Miles of Water Mains, and Thousands of Miles of Lesser Tubings and Conduits.

How many persons in the multitudes who on business or pleasure bent through daily the 500 miles or so of the streets of Manhattan ever pause to wonder what is beneath them, what lies hidden by the borough's more or less even and well-kept covering of asphalt, granite, cobble, wood block, and macadam? How many have any idea of what would be revealed were this covering suddenly to be ripped off by some titanic hand? Yet immediately under the feet of the hurrying crowds is a starveling system of great arteries that send pulsing above the surface, through hundreds of thousands of veins, light, heat, power, and water, and therefore life and comfort, to the smoggy and hottest corners, for the poorest and for the wealthiest.

So intricate is this system—perhaps owing to the island's formation the most intricate in the world—so crowded together are its innumerable parts, that there is no longer a single avenue where a pipe could be laid straight for more than a few feet, and were it desired to carry one of more than sixteen inches in diameter across any avenue at any given point the workmen would have to lay it under the network at a depth of not less than a score of feet. And so from the Battery to the boundary of the Bronx 1,500 miles of gas mains and 550 miles of water mains—not to speak of sewage pipes, steam pipes, pneumatic tubes, and electric light, telegraph, and telephone conduits—bend and twist their way about Manhattan's thirty-nine square miles, the gas mains of which there are three miles to every mile of street, delivering warmth and light to consumers and feeding the street lamps through something like 1,600 miles of lesser tubing represented by 170,000 miles of gas pipes.

The laying of this extraordinary network of gas veins in a territory of such limited extent, which has been one cause of the chronic upheavals that has marked the city since the present generation can remember, was due to the fact that franchises were granted to as many as eleven different companies prior to their consolidation.

Proposed to gas and gas pipes, it is not generally known that New York enjoys the distinction of possessing the largest main in the world. This is a 60-inch "transfer line" three miles in length, laid by the Astoria Light, Heat and Power Company, and has been in operation since December 3 last. Unlike the other mains, all of which are of cast iron, this one is of riveted steel, 25,000,000 cubic feet of gas per day. It conveys it from the company's new plant in Long Island City, just opposite Seventy-first Street, Manhattan. Thence in two 26-inch pipes the fluid is sent through the first tunnel ever burrowed under the East River to Seventy-first Street, where the next largest gas pipe in the United States, a 48-inch main, conveys it down Avenue A to the holders at Sixty-second Street. The tunnel was completed fourteen years ago. It was bored mainly through solid rock, but where silt was encountered casing had, of course, to be used to keep the tunnel intact.

The largest water main in the city is of 90 inches diameter. This begins at the reservoir at High Bridge and goes down Amsterdam Avenue to Manhattan Street, where it bifurcates into two 48-inch mains that carry the water to the reservoir in Central Park. It is paralleled all the way from High Bridge by one 48-inch and two 36-inch mains. Underground Convent Avenue presents a remarkable appearance in that the entire thoroughfare from curb to curb is occupied by eight 48-inch water mains, forming part of the supply system running from reservoir to reservoir. These crowd two gas mains under the sidewalks, and the sewers, under the gutters.