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WORK ON CHINA-BURMA HIGHWAYS

The economic development of Yunnan Province depends on the opening of the K'un-ming to Lo-ta highway, which is to extend a distance of more than 900 kilometers. Through aid given by the Central Government and investments made by private firms, construction on the first section between K'un-ming and O-shan was recently started. District No 4 Highway Bureau recently reported, however, that the present unsettled conditions around O-shan, which require the workers to arm themselves for protection while working, are greatly retarding construction work.

The construction of the road between Pao-shan and T'eng-ch'ung on the Pao-shan to Myitkya section of the China-India highway [Ledo Road] was temporarily suspended for lack of funds from the Ministry of Communications. The work was recently resumed through private investments made by local business interests. It is expected that this section of the highway will be opened for traffic by this spring. The steel Hui-jen Bridge, 170 meters long, located on the upper reaches of the Mekong River, was completed in May 1948, and it is now being guarded by the local inhabitants. This bridge was recently renamed the Chi-ch'eng Bridge in honor of the former bureau chief, Lung Chi-ch'eng.

As a result of the increasing bandit activities along the Yunnan-Burma highway there has been little traffic over this highway lately. At present, there are more than 100 cargo vehicles stalled at Lashio, Burma, awaiting settlement of bandit problems so that they may safely proceed. Negotiations are now in progress between the governments of Burma and Yunnan Province to arrange for the establishment of garrisons on the Yunnan-Burma border, as well as for the despatch of guard units with each convoy.

Since the institution of the armored-car escort system, travel over the two highways, Yunnan to Szechwan, and Yunnan to Indochina, has been made safe. Repair work on the Ko-pi-shih (branch) Railroad [connecting the tin-producing center of Ko-chiu. (103 05, 23 22) with the Yunnan (K'un-ming to Haiphong) Railroad at Pi-shih-chai], destroyed more than a month ago, was recently undertaken under armed protection.

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