

## RAILROADS IN THE CONGO FREE STATE.

An article in *Le Mouvement Géographique* (No. 5, 1907) describes the railroad that is being built between the Portuguese port of Lobito Bay and the great copper and gold mining region in Katanga, the southeastern province of the Congo Free State. The map here reproduced is from one published in that article to show the development of railroads now in progress in the Congo State.

The copper-mining region of Katanga is believed to be one of the richest in the world. Development there has scarcely begun, because the region, as yet, has no means of comparatively cheap communication with the coasts. Two railroad enterprises are now pushing forward as rapidly as possible to connect the Katanga copper fields with the Atlantic.

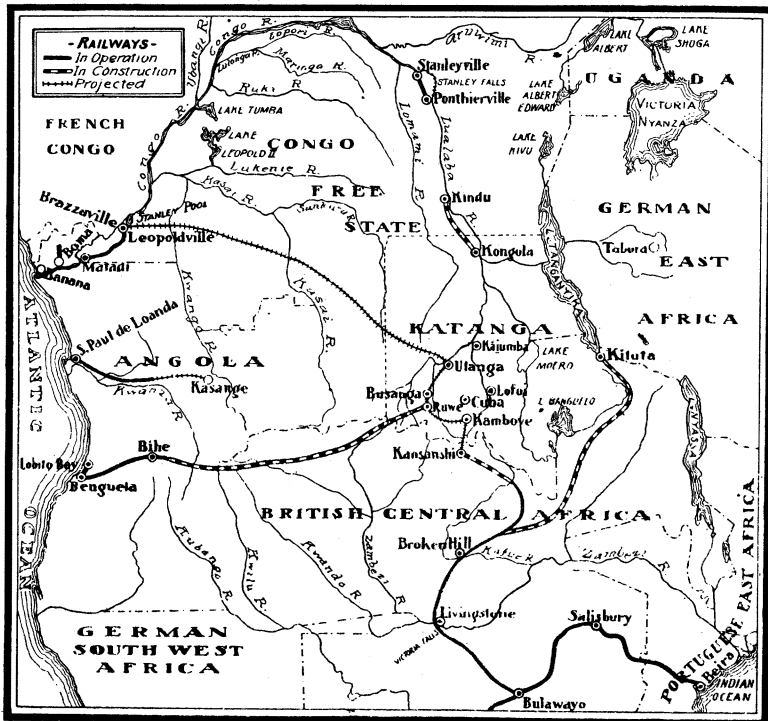
One of these roads is to connect the bay of Lobito, north of the large town of Benguela on the Atlantic, with Katanga. The Katanga Company, a Belgian-British concern of which Mr. Robert Williams is the director, is building the road. It was at first intended to make Benguela the Atlantic terminal, but it was found that Lobito Bay offered much finer harbour facilities, being naturally protected from the sea, while at Benguela the erection of costly breakwaters would be necessary. The largest vessels, even at low tide, will be able to load and unload at the docks to be built in Lobito Bay.

The entire route, which is over 900 miles long, has been surveyed. The most difficult part of the railroad, from the coastal plain up through the mountains to the inner plateau, has been completed, and trains are in operation to a point some distance beyond Bihe. Across the plateau to Katanga the line will follow, in the main, the water-parting between the Congo and the Zambezi systems. The work, which is in the hands of Messrs. Griffiths & Company of London, has been in progress about two years. In crossing the coast ranges, the track was carried to a height of nearly 5,000 feet above the sea.

Meanwhile, the Congo Free State is carrying on the large enterprise of joining Katanga with the Atlantic by a series of connecting steam land and water routes. The map shows the lower Congo navigable by large ocean steamers to Matadi; the railroad connecting Matadi with Leopoldville about 335 miles long; the Congo navigable for steamers between Leopoldville and Stanleyville, about 900 miles; the railroad now in operation from Stanleyville to Ponthier-

ville, 75 miles; the navigable stretch of the Lualaba from Ponthierville to Kindu, 195 miles, on which steamers are now plying; the railroad now building from Kindu to Kongola, 276 miles; and the river from Kongola to the head of navigation on the Lualaba, in southern Katanga, about 300 miles. The total length of continuous steam communication along the Congo, when this enterprise is completed, will be 2,471 miles, of which 1,485 miles will be by water and 986 miles by railroad.

Another railroad project for which a concession has been granted is the extension of a road from Leopoldville across the Kasai River to the mining regions in southern Katanga. This enterprise is not



yet under way. The length of the proposed line is about 1,250 miles, and the route passes through some of the richest rubber and agricultural regions of the State.

The map also shows the extension of the Cape to Cairo railroad that is now being built to Kansanshi, on the southern edge of the Katanga mining fields. When this road is extended to Ruwe, as is proposed, Africa will have a trans-continental rail route between Lobito Bay on the Atlantic and Beira on the Indian Ocean.