

La construcción del ferrocarril mexicano (1837-1880). By JOHN GRESHAM CHAPMAN. Translated by ROBERTO GÓMEZ CIRIZA. México, 1975. SepSetentas. Maps. Tables. Pp. 197. Paper. \$10.00 M.N.

Chapman's study of the Mexican Railway Company, Ltd., Mexico's first major railroad construction project, describes the history of that enterprise from the first concession in 1837 to the completion of the line from Veracruz to Mexico City in 1873. A brief chapter covers the initial period of operation from 1873 to 1880. The book is a translation into Spanish of a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Texas in 1972. It is one of the best studies available of Mexican business enterprise in the nineteenth century and compares very well with Randall's valuable account of the *Real del Monte* mine or Pletcher's accounts of foreign mining and railroad entrepreneurs in the period of the restored republic.

The book is organized chronologically to follow the history of the Veracruz-Mexico City enterprise. Only a few miles of track were actually laid, despite various federal and state government efforts at promotion, until the French invasion and the arrival of Maximilian. The chief promoters of the project in Mexico were members of the Escandón family who acquired the concession in 1856. Little progress occurred, however, until after Antonio Escandón traveled to London in 1864 to form an English company to carry out the project. Although construction proceeded rapidly for the first time during the next two years, Chapman shows that most of the funds came from the Escandóns and the Mexican government. Work was suspended with the fall of Maximilian, but renewed when the Juárez government, despite vociferous opposition, granted a new concession and new construction subsidies in 1867.

Much of Chapman's work deals with the complex relations between changing Mexican governments and the railroad's promoters. Historians of Mexico will find this a useful case study of the traumas faced by entrepreneurs under conditions of extreme political, social and international conflict.

Chapman does not pretend to discuss the economic, social or political impact of his railroad, although he does essay some judicious comments. His only significant error lies in the assertion (pp. 190-191) that this "was the only railroad in the nineteenth century to have mainly Mexican employees." All the railroads employed more Mexicans than foreigners (and a few employed no foreigners at all), mainly in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Aside from this error (and

the omission of Chapman's 15 page bibliography) one can complain only of the narrowness of the book's focus. Readers will want to know more about the Escandón family, their other activities, and the place of railroad enterprise in their collective portfolio. Or about entrepreneurs, the impact of the railroad on the region it transversed, or its effects on social and economic life more generally. There is little in Chapman's work of analytical (as opposed to descriptive) interest. It is nonetheless a welcome addition to the still very sparse literature on business conditions in Mexico before the Porfiriato.

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La inmigración en México (1821-1857). By DIETER GEORGE BERNINGER. Translated by ROBERTO GÓMEZ CIRIZA. México, 1974. Setentasetas. Bibliography. Pp. 198. Paper. \$10.00 M.N.

This is a Wisconsin dissertation, unrevised for publication. Its purpose is to explore "criollo opinion" concerning the desirability of attracting immigrants to Mexico and the characteristics all such immigrants should possess. The author disavows any intent of studying immigration itself; existing data is too limited for that. He is certain, however, that immigration to Mexico was inconsequential prior to 1860. His sources are ministerial *memorias*, periodical accounts of congressional debates, editorials, U.S. and British diplomatic correspondence, foreign travel accounts and correspondence of the Mexican Foreign Ministry.

Berninger searches for the origins of the idea of the desirability of immigrants, stressing the first decade as formative. Here he pays too little attention to the Spanish question and fails to note that Spaniards were prevented by Mexican law from entering Mexico (1823-1835). Early colonization projects are described, especially that of Stephen Austin, and the failure of these schemes to promote rural development or contribute to the defense of the frontiers is analyzed. The author also discusses the problem of the treatment received by immigrants and "criollo" distress concerning the prevailing xenophobia. Berninger focuses particularly on the question of religious tolerance which, he demonstrates, inhibited migration and even aborted several colonization schemes negotiated in Europe. He then follows the course of the debate from the war with the U.S. to the