

GEOGRAPHY.

THE WORLD'S RAILWAYS.—The report of the Interstate Commerce Commission says that there are 18 countries which partly own and operate their railroads, viz: Argentina, Australia, Austria Hungary, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cape of Good Hope, Chili, Denmark, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Russia and Sweden. Ten neither own or operate them, viz: Columbia, Great Britain, and Ireland, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United States and Uruguay. Greece, Holland, and Italy own their roads, but do not operate them, leasing them out to private companies. In the former list the percentage of roads owned and conducted by the various governments is not given in full, though in Russia it is said to be nearly one-half of the entire system, and a like condition prevails in Austria and Germany. In the latter country the government is required to manage the roads in the interest of general traffic on a single system. In Austria, on the expiration of charters not exceeding ninety years, the lines and lands of the company revert to the government but the equipment remains the property of the private owners. The government fixes the tariff on all traffic, has power to revise it at will, and must by law reduce the rates when the earnings exceed 15 per cent. The cost of freight carriage in a number of countries is given, being in Great Britain 2.80 cents per ton per mile; in France, 2.20; in Germany, 1.64, and in the United States, 1 cent. In the matter of interest on capital invested, England pays 4.1 per cent; France, 3.8; Germany, 5.1; Russia, 5.3; Austria, 1; Belgium, 4.6; United States, 3.1; the aggregate system of the world paying 3.2 per cent.

The management of roads by the government is not always, nor in a majority of cases, found to be advantageous economically, though in some it is important for various public reasons, among them that of defense standing foremost. In this country several of the States have tried ownership in a limited way and not found it satisfactory. Illinois built a road costing a million, but was glad to sell it for 10 per cent of the cost; and Indiana had a similar experience. Georgia now owns a road, but it is leased to a private company. Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan and several other States have tried like experiments, but all found them failures. In the above recitment it is notable that the United States has reduced the carriage of freight to the lowest point enumerated, but seems not to have made a like score in the matter of passengers, ranking in that particular about equal with Great Britain, France and Germany, when their various classes into which our traveling multitudes are not divided, are averaged. In the matter of interest we are below all the principal countries except Austria; and in extent of mileage and capitalization greatly exceed any of them.—*New York Tribune*.

THE MACKENZIE RIVER MISSIONS.—The Mackenzie basin is an unknown land to many Canadians. Its resources have, however, been made known to us by a parliamentary committee, guided chiefly by Dr. Schultz. The scope of the committee's enquiry covered an area of 1,260,000 square miles, a tract greater than the continent of Australia, or two-thirds of Europe. Its coast line measures 5,000 miles; it has a river and lake navigation of 6,500 miles a distance