undertaken and the monthly *Journal of the American Ceramic Society* is the logical result.

The first number is a very attractively prepared journal of seventy-two pages. It is well edited and well printed on good paper. The contents of the first number are as follows:

Editorials:
- To the Public
- The Fuel Curtailment Orders
- The National Research Council
- Edward Orton, Jr.

Original Papers and Discussions:
- Kaolin in Quebec—Keele
- Special Pots for the Melting of Optical Glass—Bleininger.
- The Effect of Gravitation upon the Drying of Ceramic Ware—Washburn
- Test of a Producer Gas-Fired Periodic Kiln—Harrop
- Notes on the Hydration of Anhydrite and Dead-Burned Gypsum—Gill

Meetings of the Local Sections, American Ceramic Society

The present officers of the society are:
*President*—Homer F. Staley,
*Vice-president*—A. F. Greaves-Walker,
*Treasurer*—R. K. Hursh,
*Secretary*—Charles F. Binns,
*Trustees*—
- A. F. Hottinger,
- E. T. Montgomery,
- R. D. Landrum.

Membership in the society is open to any one interested in any branch of the ceramic industries and application should be made to the society. All members receive the *Journal* gratis.

C. F. B.

## ENGLISH VITAL STATISTICS

THE *Journal* of the American Medical Association reports that the English registrar-general's seventy-ninth annual report on vital statistics for the year 1916, which has just been published, is of unusual interest, because in that year the war existed long enough to affect the figures considerably. The birth rate was 20.9 per thousand living, and was the lowest on record. It was 4.6 below the average for the ten years 1905–1914 (which were practically unaffected by the war). On the whole, the reduction of natality, which amounted to about 12 per cent. on the figures for 1914, is less than might have been expected, and compares favorably with the experience of other belligerent countries. The civilian death rate was 14.1 per thousand living, and was slightly below the average of the decennium before the war. The rate of 1916 is considered to be the lowest recorded, provided allowance is made for the effect of enlistment on the population. The standardized mortality of males ordinarily exceeds that of females. Up to 1860 the excess was not more than 9 per cent.; but in 1916, in consequence of the war, the excess amounted to 32 per cent. The most remarkable feature is the low death rate in the first quinquennium of life. It was much lower than any previously recorded, and was less than half the rate prevailing in the concluding years of the last century. The all-age mortality from typhoid and from scarlet fever was the lowest on record, while diphtheria and influenza were more fatal than the average. But the death rate from tuberculosis showed a further advance on the high rate of 1915, although the increase did not extend to young children, the mortality under 5 years being the lowest hitherto recorded. Cancer was more fatal in 1916 than in any other year, and cerebrospinal fever continued to be abnormally destructive. In view of the loss of life in the war statistics of childhood are of unusual importance. The births in England and Wales in 1916 were in the proportion of 1,049 males to 1,000 females, against 1,033 to 1,000 in the preceding five years. This proportion is by far the highest recorded during the last half century. It certainly bears out the old view, regarded by some as a superstition, that war increases the proportion of male births because nature endeavors to compensate for the loss of male life in warfare. Of the deaths at all ages, 41.1 per cent. were those of infants under the age of 1 year. These deaths correspond to a mortality rate of 91 per thousand births, the lowest ever recorded. It was below the average in the preceding decennium by 20 per cent. This decline was in part due to low diarrheal fatality, but the greater part of it is accounted for under other diseases less subject to climatic

influences. The mortality in infants from tuberculosis was 2.39 per thousand births, much the lowest on record.

## WAR COMMITTEE OF TECHNICAL SOCIETIES

THERE has been organized a war committee of technical societies consisting of the following members: American Society of Civil Engineers, Nelson P. Lewis, Major James M. Boyle; American Institute of Electrical Engineers, Harold W. Buck, Dr. A. S. McAllister; American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Professor A. M. Greene, Jr., R. N. Inglis; American Institute of Mining Engineers, David W. Brunton, Edmund B. Kirby; American Gas Institute, Dana D. Barnum, E. C. Uhlig; American Electrochemical Society, Joseph Bijur, Dr. Chas. A. Doremus; Illuminating Engineering Society, Louis B. Marks, Preston S. Millar; Mining and Metallurgical Society of America, Christopher R. Corning, George C. Stone; American Society of Refrigerating Engineers, Henry Torrance, F. E. Matthews; American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Dr. Chas. F. McKenna, Frank E. Dodge.

The chairman, D. W. Brunton, has addressed the following letter:

The men who, at the call of patriotism and duty, have joined the colors, are not only risking their lives, but are cheerfully sacrificing their careers and in many instances their financial interests to protect the honor of the nation. It, therefore, becomes the duty of those of us who, for various reasons, are unable to enlist, to do something more than our share in keeping the machinery of industry moving.

Other wars have been fought only on land and sea, but in this conflict the combatant areas have been greatly extended by the advent of submarines, flying machines and even subterranean warfare. In previous wars the armies and navies of belligerents were practically the only forces engaged; in this war the full economic strength of nations is drawn into the contest and every branch of scientific and industrial effort is taxed to the utmost.

Intensifying production and conserving the supply of food and clothing constitute service within the reach of all, but the engineers, electricians and chemists of this country can go a step further and utilize their technical training to develop such new devices and improvements, equipment and methods as will give our Army and Navy that superiority which will assure victory.

Inventive talent in this country is by no means confined to the membership of our societies; members who have employees or acquaintances of an originative turn of mind should make an effort to stimulate that most useful talent by passing on to such persons the bulletins as they are received, and also by calling attention to the numerous ably written articles on the mechanical phases of the war, published in technical and popular magazines.

In the world-conflict which is going on to-day the three dominating factors, the submarine, the automatic machine gun and the flying machine, are all American inventions. This nation is still in its youth and can therefore be expected to do in future still greater things than it has done in the past. War is a new occupation to us, but under the stimulus and pressure of its necessity, we should advance as far in the arts of war during the next two years as we normally would in twenty.

Some of the civilian engineers of this country are now rendering great service to the government through the agencies of the Council of National Defense, the Naval Consulting Board, the National Research Council and their numerous auxiliary committees, but unfortunately only a small proportion of the technical men of this country are so situated that they can go to Washington and engage in this service; therefore, some means of utilizing the patriotism and originative thought of our members had to be devised.

For this purpose the War Committee of Technical Societies has been organized, and it hopes to give the members of the technical societies who are obliged to stay at home, an opportunity to use their inventive talent and technical training in the study of the varied problems which arise in the preparation for and prosecution of the war—thus making valuable contributions to the national cause.

The greatest care will be taken to discover and utilize everything of value that may inhere in suggestions and inventions submitted. Not only will they receive studious examination, but when necessary, trials and experiments will be conducted. All inventions which have successfully passed the necessary examinations and tests are turned over to the particular department of the Army and Navy Service where they may be most profitably utilized.

D. W. BRUNTON,
*Chairman*