

Some of this material had been prepared for publication in the form of a paper on Air Navigation and sent to press early in October, following which his attention was eagerly concentrated on further problems. So the end came like a ship holding its course accurately, and passing out of sight with all sails set.

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PITTSBURGH, PA.

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## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### MORTALITY FROM CANCER

THE Department of Commerce announces that the returns compiled by the Bureau of the Census show that over 76,000 deaths were due to cancer in the death registration area of the United States in 1921, and assuming that the rest of the United States had as many deaths from this cause in proportion to the population, the total number of deaths from cancer in the entire United States for 1921 was 93,000, while for 1920 the number is estimated as 89,000 or 4,000 less than for 1921.

The trend of the cancer death rate is upward, the rate for 1921 being higher than that for any earlier year in twenty-three of the thirty-four states. The cancer death rate in the registration area in 1921 was 86 per 100,000 population, against 83.4 for 1920. In comparing the death rate from cancer in one state with that in another, the bureau uses "adjusted" rates in order to make allowance for differences in the age and the sex distribution of the population, because, generally speaking, only persons in middle life and old age have cancer, so that a state with many old persons may be expected to have more deaths from cancer than a state with comparatively few old persons.

The highest "adjusted" cancer rate for 1921 is 99.6 per 100,000 population for the state of Massachusetts, and the lowest is 47.6 for the state of South Carolina. For a few states adjusted rates have been calculated separately for the white and colored population. In this group of states the highest adjusted cancer rate for the white population is 95.9 per

100,000 population for New York and the highest rate for the colored population is 90.6, also for New York. The lowest adjusted cancer rate for the white population is 51.5 for Tennessee and the lowest for the colored population is 36.4 for Florida.

The adjusted rates show that the northern states have comparatively high and the southern states comparatively low cancer mortality, while there is little difference between the adjusted cancer rates of the white and colored races of the same states.

### COLORS FOR TRAFFIC SIGNALS

THIRTY-NINE men, representing as many administrative bodies, trade associations, scientific or technical societies, and government departments, make up the sectional committee on colors for traffic signals which was organized at a meeting in New York City on November 9 under the auspices of the American Engineering Standards Committee. In opening the meeting, P. G. Agnew, secretary of the American Engineering Standards Committee, said that this was unquestionably the most representative group that has ever come together anywhere in the world to discuss this subject.

The committee elected as its officers the following representatives of the three sponsors for the code: *Chairman*, Charles J. Bennett, state highway commissioner of Connecticut, representing the American Association of State Highway Officials; *vice-chairman*, Dr. M. G. Lloyd, representing the United States Bureau of Standards; *secretary*, Walter S. Paine, research engineer, Aetna Insurance Company, Hartford, Conn., representing the National Safety Council.

Because of the difficulty of bringing the entire sectional committee together at frequent intervals an executive committee was appointed with instructions to collect information on the subjects coming within the scope of the code, to digest this information, to appoint subcommittees, to arrange for the necessary research work, and to draft definite recommendations for the consideration of the sectional committee. The executive committee consists of the following:

Bert Lord, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, Albany, N. Y., representing the group of administrative officials and departments;

T. D. Pratt, Motor Truck Association, New York City, representing the owners and operators of motor vehicles;

G. G. Kelcey, American Gas Accumulator Company, Newark, N. J., representing the group of automotive accessory, signs and signal manufacturers;

A. H. Rudd, Safety Section, American Railway Association, representing the railroads;

W. P. Young, general manager, National Automobile Underwriters Conference, representing the group of insurance interests on the sectional committee;

W. P. Eno, of the Eno Foundation, Washington, D. C., representing the group of scientific and technical societies;

Harry Meixell, of the Motor Vehicle Conference Committee, New York City, representing the motor vehicle manufacturers;

and the three officers of the sectional committee.

The sectional committee by resolution invited the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of the United States to participate in the work of the committee. It was also decided at the organization meeting of the sectional committee to appoint a sub-committee to investigate the efficiency of all color signals now in use as traffic signals, and where possible to ascertain the reasons for adopting certain colors for specific uses. This committee will investigate the use of various types of semaphores and silent policemen. Another committee will make an original study of specific colors for definite uses as a check upon previous researches and to establish certain colors for traffic signals. A third committee will study non-luminous signs and signals and propose, after thorough research, signs of definite colors and shapes for highways and also for railroad crossings.

#### THE CHARLES A. COFFIN FOUNDATION

ON May 16, 1922, Mr. Charles A. Coffin, in his seventy-eighth year, retired from the active leadership of the General Electric Company. Mr. Coffin has been identified with the development of the electrical industry since 1882. He was the founder and creator of the General

Electric Company, of which he has been the inspiration and leader for thirty years. As an expression of appreciation of Mr. Coffin's great work not only for the General Electric Company but also for the entire electrical industry and with the desire to make this appreciation enduring and constructive as Mr. Coffin's life and work have been, the board of directors of the General Electric Company created on his retirement and now desire to announce the "Charles A. Coffin Foundation."

A fund of \$400,000, to be known as the "Charles A. Coffin Foundation," has been set aside and the income, amounting to approximately \$20,000 per year, will be available for encouraging and rewarding service in the electrical field by giving prizes to its employees, recognition to lighting, power and railway companies for improvement in service to the public and fellowships to graduate students and funds for research work at technical schools and colleges. The foundation will be controlled and administered by a foundation committee appointed by the board. This committee, within the limits of the purposes for which the foundation is created, will have power to change the conditions applicable to the distribution of the fund and the amounts for each particular purpose.

The committee proposes to distribute the income of the foundation as follows:

*First.* Eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000) in prizes for the most signal contributions by employees of the General Electric Company toward the increase of its efficiency or progress in the electrical art. Particularly, the prizes are to further encourage suggestions from workmen. With each prize, the company will give a certificate of award.

*Second.* A gold medal, to be known as the "Charles A. Coffin Medal," will be awarded annually to the public utility operating company within the United States which, during the year, has made the greatest contribution towards increasing the advantages of the use of electric light and power for the convenience and well-being of the public and the benefit of the industry. The company receiving the medal will also receive one thousand (\$1,000) for its employees' benefit or similar fund.