

death rates at the earlier ages. Again it would be interesting to know whether and to what extent the indicated superiority of the southern females at the advanced ages is due to overstatement of advanced ages.

It should be stated that no scheme of smoothing of data was employed in computing the death rates given in the tables above and that the computation of each death rate was essentially independent of that of any other. In the light of this fact the absence of significant incongruities and the general agreement of the various numerical results at the different ages of all twenty mortality tables is rather remarkable. It is only hoped that the evidences of overstatement of advanced ages—and the northern states are not wholly beyond criticism in this respect—will gradually disappear. It should also be added that since all of these mortality tables were constructed from the statistics of a single year (1920) the results given above are offered merely for purposes of comparison and *general* conclusions.

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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

SAFETY CODE FOR AUTOMOBILE BRAKES

A NATIONAL safety code for automobile brakes and brake testing will be developed under the auspices of the American Engineering Standards Committee as the result of the decision of a special committee consisting of representatives of the American Automobile Association, the Motor Vehicle Conference Committee, the Conference of Motor Vehicle Administrators, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the United States Bureau of Standards, the United States War Department, the Society of Automotive Engineers, the Underwriters Laboratories, the Safety Group of the American Engineering Standards Committee and David Beecroft of the Class Journal Company. David Van Schaack, vice-president of the National Safety Council, was chairman of the committee.

The American Engineering Standards Committee has asked the Society of Automotive Engineers, the Bureau of Standards and the American Automobile Association to act as

joint sponsors for the development of this code. The actual work of formulating the code will be carried on by a sectional committee representative of all the interests concerned with the problems of automobile brakes either as administrative officers, users, producers or general public.

The need for a national safety code covering methods of testing brakes and also those elements of brake or brake lining construction which are accident factors is emphasized by the increasing tendency toward state and municipal legislation on this subject. Several states already have brake testing laws and in a number of other states such laws are being drafted. There is, however, no agreement at present as to what is a safe braking distance or what constitutes a satisfactory braking test. Until a national safety code has been developed and generally accepted the motorist driving from one city to another or from state to state will have no assurance that brakes approved in one city will not bring a fine in the next town or state.

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

THE Australian National Research Council has issued a report of its annual meeting held in Sydney in August last which is summarized in *Nature*. The council was formed for national and international purposes in January 1921 by the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, to which body it has to submit a full report of its work and proceedings on the occasion of each meeting of the Association. At the meeting Sir David Orme Masson was elected president of the council in succession to Sir Edgeworth David. Resolutions were passed urging the need for the State endowment of systematic research in the Pacific islands under Australian control, for research work in Australia in respect of refrigeration, and for laboratories to carry out industrial investigation and research. Offers of co-operation with the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry in measures for furthering these objects were made, and preliminary steps taken for the inauguration of a publicity campaign for the purpose of securing that the functions, operations and financial needs of the