

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### INTERNATIONAL PATENTS

It is announced in *Nature* that the council of the Trade Marks, Patents and Designs Federation, Ltd., recently circulated a questionnaire in relation to trade marks, patents and designs prepared by the International Chamber of Commerce to a number of societies interested in these matters. This questionnaire was drawn up with the object of ascertaining the directions in which modifications and amendments were desirable, from the British point of view, in the International Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, signed at Washington on June 2, 1911. A meeting of the representatives of some twenty of the societies consulted was held at Lever House, Blackfriars, on November 23.

The questionnaire was discussed, and it was recommended, *inter alia*, that (1) a clause should be inserted in the convention abolishing revocation of patent rights either for non-working or for abuse of monopoly, but permitting each country at its discretion to grant compulsory licenses in such cases; (2) provision should be made for establishing in all convention countries a uniform period of duration for patents, and renewal fees should be paid at agreed intervals of time and be based on a sliding scale system of progressively increasing payments; (3) there should be uniform provisions governing the use of an invention on vessels sailing under the flag of one of the states which has adhered to the convention; (4) there should be provision for registration in a public register kept by the competent administration of each country of all assignments and licenses affecting the legal proprietorship of patent rights; (5) steps should be taken to secure a greater degree of uniformity in the regulations at present in force in the various convention countries with respect to the procedure to be followed on applications for the grant of letters patent. It was further agreed that it was neither desirable nor practicable to insist upon the institution in all convention countries of a system of preliminary search of patent applications, but it was desirable that any party interested should have the right, prior to the grant of any patent, to institute opposition proceedings based on all prior publications or public users of the invention.

### THE MORTALITY FROM TUBERCULOSIS AND CANCER

THE Department of Commerce announces that compilations made by the Bureau of the Census show that 90,452 deaths were due to tuberculosis in the registra-

tion area of the United States in 1922, with a death rate of 97 per 100,000 population. This is a drop of 2.4 since 1921, in which year the rate was 99.4. Though 12 states show increases in rates for 1922, in 22 states there are decreases, indicating that the general trend is still downward.

To permit better interstate comparisons for the year 1922, adjusted rates based on the standard million population have been calculated. The highest adjusted rate from tuberculosis for 1922 is 172.6 per 100,000 population for Colorado and the lowest is 36.1 for the adjoining state of Nebraska. The high rate for Colorado should not be ascribed to unhealthfulness of climate, but rather to the fact that the climate attracts those afflicted with tuberculosis.

For certain states adjusted rates have been calculated separately for the white and colored populations. In this group of states Tennessee has the highest adjusted rates for both white and colored (respectively, 121.8 and 299.8 per 100,000 population). The lowest adjusted rate from tuberculosis for white population is 54.5 for Mississippi and this State and Florida each shows the lowest rate for colored population (171.5 per 100,000 population).

Cancer caused 80,938 deaths in the death registration area in 1922, which comprised about 85.3 per cent. of the total population of the United States, and if 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 was 95,000 for 1922, against a corresponding estimate of 93,000 for 1921.

The death rate from cancer in the registration area in 1922 was 86.8 per 100,000 population as against 86 in 1921. Only five states show lower rates for 1922 than for 1921. 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 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 1922 is 106.9 per 100,000 population for the state of Rhode Island and the lowest is 53.1 for Tennessee. For a few states adjusted rates have been calculated separately for the white and colored populations. In this group of states the highest adjusted rate for the white population is 92.5 per 100,000 for Maryland and the highest for the colored population is 81.7 also for Maryland. The lowest adjusted rate for white population is 52.8 for Tennessee and the lowest rate for the colored population is 40.8 for Florida.