

DR. JOHN EDGAR TEEPLE, consulting chemist, known for his work in the development of the potash industry in the United States, died on March 23, at the age of fifty-seven years.

EDWARD DWIGHT PRIEST, designing engineer in the railway department of the General Electric Company, with which he was connected for thirty-four years before his retirement in 1926, died on March 26.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

AUSTRALIAN VITAL STATISTICS

THE Sydney correspondent of the *Journal* of the American Medical Association reports that at the end of 1929 the population of Australia reached the total of 6,414,372. The rate of growth during 1929 was 1.22 per cent. and for the ten years 1.92 per cent., which is probably the highest rate of increase in the world. Excess of births over deaths contributed 70.5 per cent. of the total increase, and net immigration 29.5 per cent. The density of population of Australia is only 2.16 persons per square mile, and varies from one person per hundred square miles in the Northern Territory to 20.22 persons per square mile in Victoria.

The birth rate for 1929, 20.31 per thousand of population, was the lowest ever recorded. Compared with many other countries the Australian rate is low, but it is fortunately accompanied by a low death rate, giving a rate of natural increase that is equaled in few countries. Extranuptial births numbered 4.70 per cent. of all births registered. The proportion of multiple births is one case of twins in every 98 confinements and one of triplets in 14,242 confinements. The average number of children per mother was 2.96, against 2.99 in 1928.

During the year, 60,857 deaths were registered, corresponding to a rate of 9.55 per thousand of the population. This rate was slightly above the average of the previous five years, but nevertheless compares most favorably with other countries. The principal causes of death were: heart diseases, 15.3 per cent.; cancer, 10.3 per cent.; violence, 6.0 per cent.; cerebral hemorrhage, 5.8 per cent.; tuberculosis, 5.7 per cent.; nephritis, 5.6 per cent.; pneumonia, 4.9 per cent. The number of deaths in childbirth was 5.1 per thousand children born. The infant mortality rate for Australia (deaths of children under the age of 12 months) per thousand children born was 51. This rate is the lowest ever recorded in Australia and is, with the exception of New Zealand, the lowest in the world. The rate for New Zealand is 34.

THE PACARAIMA-VENEZUELA EXPEDITION

MEMBERS of the American Museum of Natural History, the American Geographical Society and the New York Botanical Garden are organizing an expedition to the unexplored uplands of southern Venezuela. The plans for this undertaking, which is scheduled to begin the middle of August, provide for

a comprehensive scientific survey of the region. In order to facilitate the administrative and executive details of organization a membership corporation has been formed under the title "The Pacaraima-Venezuela Expedition Inc." At the first meeting of the board of directors Mr. H. E. Anthony, curator of the department of mammalogy of the American Museum of Natural History, was elected president of the corporation; Dr. H. A. Gleason, curator of the New York Botanical Garden, vice-president; R. R. Platt, head of the department of Hispanic-American research of the American Geographical Society, secretary, and Fred H. Smith, bursar of the museum, treasurer. The expedition will be led by staff members from the three institutions above mentioned. Those taking part are: Leader, Mr. H. E. Anthony; assistant leader, Mr. G. H. H. Tate, geologist, who has been on seven expeditions to South America for the American Museum; C. C. Graves, formerly of the Field Museum of Natural History expedition to Alaska and the Arctic, geologist; W. B. Miller, Jr., who has traveled in southwest United States, west and southwest Venezuela and northern Rhodesia, topographer and geologist; C. B. Hitchcock, who has already been to Venezuela, botanist; A. C. Smith, acquainted with Peru and Brazil, chief pilot and topographer; G. A. Thorn, aerial photographer and pilot; A. C. McKinley, an assistant aeroplane mechanic, and C. Broten, the three last mentioned having been members of the Byrd Expedition.

The region of exploration consists of about 40,000 square miles at the headwaters of the Orinoco River between Mt. Roraima, a sandstone table-mountain at the junction of Venezuela, British Guiana and Brazil, and Cerro Diuda, a mountain similar to Mt. Roraima, about 400 miles south, on the upper Orinoco. The expedition plans to map this region by means of aerial photography; to outline its physiography and geology; to make collections of its animal and plant life and to study the Indian tribes.

The plan of the expedition has been presented to General Gomez, President of Venezuela, who is in complete sympathy and has assured the leaders of his full cooperation.

SHENANDOAH PARK HIGHWAY

ONE of the most scenic highways of the country, that may ultimately extend for 150 miles, is to be built