

slots, so avoiding the expense of heavy smoothing choke coils in main feeders and individual arc lamp circuits. The studio switchboards (four 3,000 amp. and three 5,000-amp. panels) and distribution features include bare aluminium ring mains (19,500 ft., weighing nearly 34 tons) supported by 'Sindanyo' racks attached to the roof steelwork, descending in sheet steel conduit to distribution boards at floor level, which are equipped with audible and visible signals for the overhead distribution 'grid' attendants. The object is to keep the floor free from trailing cables and feeding points, lighting equipment being stored overhead in the grid for quick lowering. Master control is exercised within the studio from a mobile desk on castors, plug-connected by a fifty-line multiple cable.

### Recent Earthquakes

THE Jesuit Seismological Association at Saint Louis, U.S.A., has determined tentatively the epicentres of three recent earthquakes. From the readings of seismograms from eight stations the earthquake of June 27 at 17h. 11m. 30s. G.M.T. was found to have an epicentre near  $16^{\circ}$  N.,  $93^{\circ}$  W., which is south-west of La Concordia in southern Mexico. By the Brunner chart the depth of focus was estimated to be 200 km., which is somewhat unusually deep for the fairly frequent normal and intermediate earthquakes in this area. From the readings of seismograms from sixteen stations the earthquake of July 1, at 7h. 50m. 57s. G.M.T., was found to have an epicentre near  $34.4^{\circ}$  N.,  $119.5^{\circ}$  W. Damage by this earthquake was done in and about Santa Barbara, California, and the agreement is good. From the interpretations of records from ten seismographic stations the epicentre of the earthquake of July 3, at 7h. 11m. 51s. G.M.T., was found to be near  $31^{\circ}$  S.,  $68.7^{\circ}$  W. This earthquake was felt at Mendoza in the Argentine Republic.

On August 15, a strong earthquake giving a full suite of pulses was recorded at Kew Observatory. The preliminary pulses registered at 6h. 16m. 45s. G.M.T., *S* at 6h. 22m. 42s., *M* at 6h. 29m. 34s. and the earthquake finished recording at 10h. 10m. having lasted nearly four hours. The maximum ground amplitude at Kew was  $82\mu$  and from the above tentative interpretation of the record the epicentre has been estimated to have been 4,330 km. distant from Kew.

### Disease in New South Wales

ACCORDING to Dr. E. Sydney Morris, director-general of public health of the State of New South Wales, the chief event in the State since 1875 has been the rapid growth of Sydney, so that though the State is about 95 per cent rural the population has become increasingly urban. In 1939 the population was 2,749,134, of whom 1,380,940 lived in the metropolitan area of Sydney. Since 1875 the mortality from tuberculosis in New South Wales has dropped steadily, whereas the cancer mortality has increased at nearly the same rate. In 1875 the tuberculosis mortality was 154 and the cancer mor-

tality 31 per 100,000 population. In 1895 the rates were respectively 109 and 44, in 1935 they were 105 and 39, and in 1939 tuberculosis fell to 37 and cancer rose to 113. The mortality from heart disease has shown an enormous rise in recent years. In 1875 it was 79; it fell to 57 in 1893, and has since risen, at first slowly and then rapidly, to 259 in 1939. As regards infectious diseases, influenza showed a mortality of about 5 until the great epidemic of 1891, when it rose to 87; it dropped to 8 in 1893 and 5 in 1917. In 1919, it rose to 319.3, and in 1920 it fell again to 18. Since then it has shown abrupt rises and falls. In 1899, when the incidence of scarlet fever was the highest on record (48.5 per 10,000 population), the mortality from this disease (2 per 100,000) was the lowest recorded until then. The mortality from measles has shown a great reduction in the height of the peaks since 1915 and a smaller incidence in the intervening troughs.

### Population of Sweden

ACCORDING to preliminary estimates of the Central Office of Statistics, the population of Sweden in 1940 was 6,370,964. Comparison with the figure at the end of 1939 shows that the population has increased by about 30,000, corresponding to 4.68 per thousand. The growth of the population was split up as follows: 1,648 in the country, where there are at present 3,990,114 inhabitants, and 27,977 in the towns, where the population is now 2,380,850. Preliminary statistics for births and deaths during the past year show the following figures: 95,457 births and 72,584 deaths, that is, a surplus of births of 22,873, of which 12,927 were in the country. Lastly, there were 6,870 immigrants and 3,186 emigrants, giving a net surplus of 3,684.

### Announcements

IT has now been announced that Prof. L. G. M. Baas-Becking, who was placed in custody in a prison in Scheveningen, Holland (NATURE, May 17, p. 606), has now been released by the German authorities and has assumed again the directorship of the Botanical Institute of the University of Leyden.

THE Joint Committee for Scientific, Technical and Engineering Supervisory Staffs, of 30 Bedford Row, London, W.C.1, has arranged a meeting and exhibition of technical films chosen to show the applications of scientific and technical advances in industrial processes, to be held at the Portland Hall, Little Tichfield Street, London, on October 11 at 3 p.m.

THE library of the University of Louvain, which was damaged in the War of 1914-18 and rebuilt largely through American generosity, was again destroyed in May 1940. Of the 900,000 books only 15,000 survive, of 800 manuscripts only 15; 3,000 collections of periodicals were completely destroyed by fire, likewise 811 incunabula and 200 valuable engravings, including some by Dürer and Holbein and 22,606 photographs of all known Coptic manuscripts.