

eight Metropolitan Boroughs comprising the Administrative County of London on the night of April 26/27, 1931, numbered 4,397,003 persons. The males and females were respectively 2,044,108 and 2,352,895, a ratio of 1151 females per 1000 males. For the third decennium in succession, the County population shows a decline, the loss during the past intercensal period being 87,520, a number comparable with the population of a good-sized town like Ipswich or Wigan. The number of private families has increased by 6.17 per cent, and the average size of the family has been reduced by 8.7 per cent, to 3.46 persons. With the reduction in the average size of the family, the average number of persons for each occupied room has declined from 1.05 in 1921 to 0.98 in 1931; that is to say, on an average there is less overcrowding. In Greater London, which occupies roughly a circle of 15 miles radius with Charing Cross as a centre, 8,203,942 persons were enumerated, or more than one-fifth of the total population of England and Wales.

Forecasting Mortality

IN a lecture to the Norwegian Actuarial Society printed in the *Skandinavisk Aktuarietidskrift*, Mr. Palin Elderton takes up the fascinating subject of forecasting mortality. Most medical statisticians and actuaries, if only for their private amusement, have tried their hands at prophecy. The most obvious line of approach, when rates of mortality in age groups are available over a long series of calendar years, is to take each group separately and to study the form of secular change, then, having more or less successfully represented the trend by some mathematical function, to extrapolate horizontally. As Mr. Elderton points out, this method would be inappropriate if changes in mortality at a later age are really determined by the experience through which the generation of which those at the later age are survivors have passed. In that case, one should consider not the horizontal but the diagonal progression of the table.

Prehistoric Chronology

AT the request of the editor of *Antiquity*, Mr. Miles C. Burkitt and Prof. V. Gordon Childe have prepared a chronological table of prehistory, which is published in the June number of that periodical. The progress of recent research in prehistory will secure a welcome for the chart among students, not least perhaps because of the decisive manner necessitated by its form in dealing with controversial points, which should at least be provocative of fruitful discussion. The compilers have found that a task which they anticipated would give rise to no great difficulty has proved of no little complexity. Failing the ideal method of distribution maps, it was found most practical to divide the map into several geographical areas, each of which heads a column in the list. Even so, the area of extent of specific cultures has sometimes been difficult to determine and represent. It has been found impracticable to give an absolute chronology much before 2000 B.C. In glacial chronology most of the Mousterian is taken as contemporary with Würm ii, Acheulean with Riss-Würm, and Chellean with Mindel-Riss, while pre-Chellean is

definitely pre-Mindel. Even when allowance is made for local specialisation and retardation, and when a solar chronology becomes possible with the dated monuments of Egypt and Mesopotamia, difficulties have still to be overcome, as witness the correlations here put forward between Egypt and Mesopotamia, which, it is admitted, are not universally accepted. The chronological chart, with explanatory notes on each section and index, has been reprinted and is obtainable separately, price 2s. 6d., from the assistant editor of *Antiquity*, 24 Parkend Road, Gloucester.

Re-opening of the South African Museum

ON June 1 the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa, the Earl of Clarendon, opened the reconstructed South African Museum in Cape Town, and so marked the accomplishment of an instalment of the development scheme of the trustees. The Museum, founded as a Cape Government institution in 1885, was housed in a new building in 1897, but had seriously outgrown the accommodation there. The present additions permit of a running sequence in the exhibits of different sections, and have given new opportunities for the proper display of some of the treasures the Museum possesses. The additions, on two stories, consist of the old Art Gallery and an entirely new block on the opposite or Avenue side, forming two large halls, 90 feet long by about 35 feet wide. The lower of these is devoted to ethnology, and here the famous life-casts of native races have found a fitting place; the upper contains the big-game collection, and the opening is marked by the addition of a new group of springbok. The trustees and Dr. Leonard Gill have made a notable contribution to museum progress in the Union.

Albinism in Wild Animals

A VERY interesting specimen recently received at the London Zoological Gardens is a young albino reticulated python. Its eyes are pink, but the usual markings are present in orange-colour on the white skin. Albinism seems to be very rare in cold-blooded animals, but a few years ago the Gardens exhibited an albino cobra, and many years before that an albino common frog. The albino form of the axolotl, of which specimens can be seen in the aquarium, is bred in domestication like the ordinary black form, but all such specimens appear to have descended from one albino which came in the first consignment of live axolotls received in Europe during the last century. Albino or 'silver' goldfish are well known, and in the Zoological Society's aquarium can be seen white as well as golden specimens of common carp; but these, again, are domesticated. Neither white axolotls, white goldfish, nor white carp have pink eyes, and so fall short of complete albinism. It has been noticed in birds that an albino or lutino specimen, if pink-eyed, retains its abnormal hue, but if normal-eyed, is liable to revert to type on moulting.

Modifying Broadcasting Voices

IN a broadcast talk given in America by O. H. Caldwell, the editor of *Electronics*, a method of improving the voices of some of the political speakers was described. By using a suitable combination of