

will commemorate in April next the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Petrus Camper, physician, anatomist, obstetrician and artist. The name of Camper is perhaps now most frequently recalled in connexion with his contributions to the foundation of craniology as a scientific study. He was the first to make use of the facial angle—an invention apparently of the artist Dürer—as a factor in racial discrimination. The occasion is not without special interest to science in Great Britain, as it was during Camper's visit to London in 1748, through his association with Pringle, Mead and Pitcairn, and his familiarity with the collections of Sir Hans Sloane, Collinson and others that his interest in natural history was stimulated, if not actually aroused. Camper was born on May 11, 1722, at Leyden, where he was educated and took his degree in philosophy and medicine in 1746. He afterwards held professorial chairs at Franeker (1750), Amsterdam (1755) and Groningen (1763), being appointed councillor of State in 1787, two years before his death in 1789. He was among the most distinguished men of science of international standing of his day. Not only was he a fellow of the Royal Society of London, but also he shared with Boerhaave the then unique honour for a foreigner of membership of the Paris Academy of Sciences. His works, of which a collected edition was published in Paris in 1803, covered a wide field, ranging from the physical education of children to detailed studies in anatomy, physiology and natural history. Among his anthropological treatises were studies of the origin and colour of negroes, and on the variation of the facial angle in different races.

#### Preservation of Wildfowl

AN amendment put forward by the promoters of the Wild Birds (Duck and Geese) Protection Bill has secured the withdrawal of the opposition, on behalf of shore-shooters, which has been holding up the Bill in the House of Commons, and it is to be hoped that it will now have a successful and rapid passage. The amendment provides separate close-times for wild duck and geese above and below high-tide mark; further, the date of the period of prohibition of import of wildfowl will commence on February 1. This last is an extremely important feature of the Bill, for it stops the demand for duck caught in decoys on the Continent during the breeding season. The Bill, which is promoted by the International Committee for Bird Preservation (British Section) and has the full support of the Government, is part of a big international scheme to preserve the stock of wildfowl in Europe. The accumulation of adverse effects of modern civilization is having a most serious effect on wild duck and geese. Cold storage, facilities of transport, draining of land, development of arctic areas and over-commercialization by means of decoys are but a few of the factors which are depriving wildfowl of their nesting and resting grounds and causing their destruction on a vast scale. The shooting season is also admittedly too long in many countries. Sweden has already taken drastic steps by prohibiting all shooting in several

of its largest provinces, Denmark and Germany have greatly restricted their shooting seasons, and other European countries are alive to the necessity of action to safeguard the general stock of wildfowl before it is too late. The state of affairs in America, where wildfowl have been reduced to a perilously low number, is only too gloomy an example.

#### Engineering and Social Science

IN a recent address to the Manchester and District Association of the Institution of Civil Engineers on the work of the civil engineer in relation to social and international problems, Mr. R. D. Brown urged that engineers are no better qualified for statesmanship or politics than the medical man, the lawyer, the psychologist, the physicist or the parson. Engineering science has nothing to do with solving the social, economic and political problems of mankind, and the scientific and the political minds and methods of working have nothing in common. While engineers should be mindful of their duties as citizens, they can only engage in politics if they are prepared to give up engineering altogether and devote their time and energy to a new way of life. Mr. Brown is sceptical of the value of the proposed Council of Engineers, and recommends rather that any man of science, whether an engineer or not, who desires to help in this matter to get into touch with the committee of the newly formed Division for the Study of the Social and International Relations of Science of the British Association. The committee will require all the help it can obtain, whether from engineers, chemists, biologists, publicity experts or others. Mr. Brown referred to the importance in thinking about such problems of divesting the mind of all prejudice, superstition and humbug, and of laying aside all preconceived political, social or racial notions. He considered the committee's work might prove to be the most important investigation ever undertaken by the British Association.

#### Steel Manufacture in South Wales

THE project of a new steel works and rolling mill at Ebbw Vale in Monmouthshire designed on the latest lines and including a hot strip rolling mill for continuous production has aroused considerable interest. The size of the undertaking may be estimated from the fact that the plant cost about ten million pounds, and is designed to give an output of 600,000 tons per annum of tin plate and sheet steel of the highest quality. The raw materials, coal and limestone, are in the immediate vicinity and transport facilities are good. The electrical part of the equipment is very complete. The works have an installed capacity of 250,000 kw. and will consume approximately 200 million units per annum. The Victoria generating station of the former Ebbw Vale Company has been largely reconstructed, but to provide the greatly increased demand of the new plant a grid supply at 132 kv. is brought from the Upper Boat power station, a distance of eighteen miles. The supply of iron ore for the works is obtained from Northamptonshire, and ample coal is obtainable