nomena has thus far depended, first, upon adequate state or municipal legislation, and, second, upon the adequate enforcement of that legislation. As a result, some states and municipalities maintain efficient registration systems while others do not. Until the matter is placed under federal control or supervision it is not likely that reliable birth and death records, approximating completeness, will come into existence throughout the entire United States. Since the military registration of June 5, 1917, the desirability of maintaining such records has become apparent to all.

THE INTERNATIONAL CATALOGUE OF SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

Sir Henry E. Armstrong, chairman of the executive committee of the International Council of the Central Bureau of the International Catalogue, writes in *Nature:*

The Conjoint Board of Scientific Societies, some time last year, appointed—by what mandate is not clear—an International Catalogue Subcommittee "to obtain information regarding the extent of the use made by scientific men of the present International Catalogue of Scientific Literature, and to obtain recommendations for possible improvement." The subcommittee consisted of Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, Mr. C. V. Boys and Mr. E. B. Knobel, in addition to the official members. The subcommittee appears to have gone outside the terms of reference and to have reported "that it was advisable to consider suggestions for an alternative scheme." . . .

The history of the International Catalogue is briefly as follows. In 1893 the Royal Society was memorialized to take into consideration the preparation of complete author and subject catalogues, by international cooperation, in continuation of the society's Catalogue of Scientific Papers, which the society did not propose to continue beyond the century. The proposal being viewed with favor, the Royal Society solicited the opinion of scientific workers all over the world. There was practically but one reply—that such catalogues were essential, and almost universal agreement that the only way of carrying the work into execution was by international cooperation. Representative committees were appointed, and after two years of very hard work a scheme was prepared which was forwarded abroad, together with the invitation to attend the first international conference on the subject. This was held in July, 1896. Two subsequent international conferences were held in London in October, 1898, and June, 1900. All three were highly representative. Ultimately it was decided, at the third conference, to establish the catalogue as an international enterprise. Work was begun in 1901, and has been continued up to the present time. The organization has grown steadily in weight and efficiency, and at the beginning of the war there were thirty-four regional bureaus in operation. The harmony which has prevailed throughout among the nations is one of the most remarkable features of the enterprise; notwithstanding the complexity of the work, there has not been the slightest friction. I believe no other international enterprise of like magnitude has been called into existence or worked more smoothly. . . .

As war went on, it became necessary for the society to evaluate its responsibilities towards the catalogue. It was decided that the society could not guarantee the publication of the catalogue beyond the fourteenth issue. An issue consists of seventeen volumes, each dealing with a separate science. The fourteenth issue is now being published, and it is noteworthy that special contributions in aid of publication have been made by the Carnegie Foundation of New York, by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and by certain private donors.

The Royal Society has also undertaken the direct control of the enterprise during the period of the war. Early last year it was intimated to workers abroad that the future of the catalogue must be left for the decision of an international council to be called as soon as possible after the conclusion of peace.

Why the Conjoint Board has intervened is not clear. It certainly has no right to give the catalogue its quietus. That it should have taken the action it has *without ever consulting the international organization* passes belief.

I attended the meeting of the board on Wednesday last, and protested most strongly against the discourtesy the subcommittee has displayed towards our Allies and the neutral countries concerned in the enterprise.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the special need at the present time of maintaining and cementing relationships that have been so happily established, and to comment further on the unhappy policy adumbrated by the subcommittee.

PRIZES OFFERED BY THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

IT is announced in the *Fisheries Service Bulletin* that in order to develop interest in fish culture and related subjects, and to stimulate expression regarding them, the American Fisheries Society has, through its president and executive committee, decided to offer three prizes of $100 each to be awarded at its meeting in New York state in September, 1918, as follows:

1. For the best contribution on fish culture; either new or improved practical fish-cultural appliances, or a description of methods employed in the advancement of fish-cultural work.

2. For the best contribution on biological investigations applied to fish-cultural problems.

3. For the best contribution dealing with the problems of the commercial fisheries.

A committee of three members of the society, one a practical fish-culturist, one a scientist, and one a practical commercial fisherman, to be appointed by the president, will pass upon the material submitted. The conditions governing the competition are as follows:

1. Any person who is a member of the society, or who duly qualifies as a member prior to September 1, 1918, may compete for the awards.

2. Each competitor is to notify the secretary of the society, John T. Titcomb, state fish-culturist, Albany, N. Y., before September 1 of the particular prize for which he intends to compete.

3. Each paper or exhibit offered in competition is to be in the custody of the secretary of the society on or before September 3, 1918.

4. Each device, apparatus, process, or method offered for an award is to be presented by a sample, model, or illustrated description, each to be accompanied by a complete statement of the points for which an award is asked.

The society is to reserve the right to publish any papers or photographs submitted in competition prior to their publication elsewhere; provided, however, that in the event of failure to publish within nine months after the meeting the author will be at liberty to publish when and where he may elect.

5. The committee appointed by the president is to determine the competitors who are entitled to awards, and the decision of the committee is to be final.

6. In order to obtain additional information if desired the committee may call before it persons who may have entered the competition, and also other persons.

7. The committee is to make its final report to the society not later than the morning session of the third day of the meeting.

THE MEDALS OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

AT the anual meeting of the society on February 15, the president, Dr. Alfred Harker, handed the Wollaston Medal, awarded to Dr. Charles Doolittle Walcott, to Mr. William H. Buckler, attaché to the Embassy of the United States of America in London for transmission to the recipient, addressing him as follows:

The Wollaston Medal, the highest honor at the disposal of this society, is conferred upon Dr. Charles Doolittle Walcott in recognition of his eminent services to geology and paleontology, more particularly among the older fossiliferous rocks of North America. While his administrative work, both on the United States Geological Survey and at the Smithsonian Institution, has done much for science in his own country, his personal researches have excited interest and admiration wherever geology is cultivated.

He has made important contributions to the history of the Algonkian formations, and his discoveries lead us to hope that the less altered of those ancient sediments may ultimately yield more abundant and definite relics of pre-Cambrian life.