

others who are not scientists. Many an agricultural bulletin is not read or is thrown away by farmers because it is too technical or because what they wish to know is buried in hundreds of pages of detail too technical for their understanding. Possibly an expert advertising writer could condense the labels written by experts down to essentials and re-write them in language understood by the average farmer. Such labels consequently could not give the name and address of the owner, price, or other local details, but each label should be an adequate article on the subject, including references to both the best literature and to that which is most available, such as experiment station reports. It should contain nothing that could be replaced by a more important statement. Possibly the labels would cover an 8×12 inch card. They would tell, for instance, which breed of cow was good for milk, which for beef, what to feed, when to water, the general values and all such useful information. They would help the city dweller to cooperate with the farmer, and also in connection with buying, storing, drying, or otherwise preserving food. They might assist mechanics to know better how to invent and to make farm machinery.

These labels could be printed by national or provincial governments and distributed to each fair management so that each exhibit might teach to the farmers and other citizens who need the knowledge the essentials of increasing and improving the country's food supply.

The labels may be bound into a book, or rather the same type may be used to print off a guide-book or elementary agricultural encyclopedia, thus killing two birds with one stone, as has been done in the case of the imperfect and incomplete preliminary edition of the Handbook of the Rocky Mountains Park Museum, where one type setting supplied a handbook and labels for 18 museums, a zoo, a paddock and other uses. The same labels may also be illustrated with lantern slides or moving pictures and thus serve as lecture notes which may be arranged in any desired order. If a local fair wishes to add advertise-

ments or labels of unusual local products not common to all fairs, such as peanuts or sweet potatoes, these labels may be prepared and printed locally for binding in at the back. In case the local authorities wish such advertisements or labels to local products added in the body of the book, then the originating or central office may supply electrotype or matrix of the standard label matter.

This plan would give far more accurate labels and handbooks than if each fair had its relatively unexpert men compose the matter. It would also save the useless expense of each fair composing its own labels and setting its own type.

HARLAN I. SMITH

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY,
OTTAWA, CANADA

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE COORDINATION OF SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION¹

THE coordination of scientific publication formed the subject of a recent conference arranged by the Faraday Society under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Hadfield, when a number of interesting problems bearing on the desirability of a fuller cooperation amongst our scientific and technical societies were discussed. Both in the reading and publication of papers there is, at present, a considerable amount of overlapping and lack of coordination, with the result that much valuable work is either lost or overlooked owing to communications being made to societies which are not especially associated with the subject-matter of the investigations concerned, and much benefit would undoubtedly result from a federation of interests in this respect. Whilst there is a general consensus of opinion that it is essential to maintain the individuality of each society in regard to the reading and publication of papers, and that any attempt to pool communications for later distribution by a central organization is undesirable, much effective cooperation could be secured between kindred societies by the arrangement of joint meetings and conferences with the object of

¹ From *Nature*.

promoting united work on problems of common interest. Borderland subjects merit special consideration from this point of view.

The publication of the proceedings of such meetings in the transactions of the several societies concerned would be much facilitated by the adoption of a uniform size and type for the publications of societies dealing with allied subjects, so that each could include such papers in its journal or distribute them as self-contained reprints of a standard size. Similar uniformity is perhaps not practicable for all scientific and technical publications, but in so far as it can be adopted it would add much to the accessibility and the utility of the recorded work.

Organized collaboration is also desirable by means of which the members of scientific and technical societies should have opportunity of knowing what papers are being contributed to societies other than their own, apart from their later publication either in the journal of the society concerned or in the form of abstracts. The proposal, which, it is understood, is being considered by the Board of Scientific Societies, to publish a weekly journal of announcements would meet this want, and it is to be hoped that the board will decide to issue such a publication as soon as possible. Meanwhile, individual societies could aid in this direction by publishing in their journals both the announcements of cognate societies and short summaries of papers read previous to publication, so that the subject-matter is brought to the notice of those interested at as early a date as possible. A method of mutual exchange to facilitate such cooperation could be easily arranged, and would in no way detract from, but rather add to, the interest in the later full publication of papers.

Apart from original contributions, the publications of most societies include abstracts of scientific and technical literature published both in our own and in foreign journals. In so far as such abstracts include subjects of common interest to members of kindred societies, there is at present a great deal of overlapping which could be advantageously eliminated by organized collaboration. We have, in the past, been far too reliant in many sub-

jects on the foreign, and especially on the German, journals for our supply of the world's scientific and technical literature, and it is high time that we became independent and self-supporting in this respect. Effective cooperation should achieve this desirable end for each group of cognate subjects; and whilst the method of collaboration would depend to a considerable extent on the character of the subject, a common journal of abstracts for each group of societies would, in the majority of cases, prove the most advantageous plan. Although a scheme of this character would necessarily decrease the bulk of the publications of each society, the original contributions which mark their individuality would be given greater prominence, time wasted by the re-reading of the same abstract in several journals would be saved, and considerable economies in publication would be effected.

Much attention is being directed at present towards the unification and coordination of scientific effort. The coordination of scientific publication, which has made some progress in the directions indicated during recent years, should certainly continue to occupy a prominent place amongst these problems of reconstruction.

VITAL STATISTICS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

THE Registrar-General has made public the following statement showing the birth-rates and death-rates and the rate of infantile mortality in England and Wales and in certain parts of the country during 1917.

ENGLAND AND WALES

Birth-rate, Death-rate and Infant Mortality during the Year 1917 (Provisional Figures)

	Birth-rate per 1,000 Population	Civilian Death-rate per 1,000 Civilian Population	Deaths Under One Year per 1,000 Births
England and Wales:.....	17.7	14.4	97
96 great towns, including London (population exceeding 50,000 at the census of 1911).....	18.0	14.6	104
148 smaller towns (populations from 20,000 to 50,000 at the census of 1911).....	17.9	13.1	93
London.....	17.4	15.0	103