local section than from the national organization.

Our parent societies have joined in forming the United Engineering Society, and the plan has proved eminently successful from every angle. May we not begin now to lay the foundation for branches of that organization in western centers? Why not the San Francisco branch of the United Engineering Society? At least we may suggest this as an ultimate possibility, another incentive among the opportunities that await our pioneer joint council.

The joint council will have regular meetings once a month, the executive committee convening at the pleasure of its members. The constitution tentatively adopted at the September 4 meeting sets forth the following as the purposes of the organization:

1. To foster closer relationship among the engineering societies of San Francisco, especially in those matters (*a*) where cooperation will make for more efficient "win the war" service, (*b*) where cooperation will make for more efficient service to the state of California, its cities and counties, and (*c*) where cooperation will expedite progress toward those ideals common to our several organizations.

2. To plan and carry out arrangements for joint meetings of the several societies whenever such meetings are deemed advisable and to endeavor to make joint meetings effective in developing closer relationships among members of the several societies.

3. To act generally as the clearing house for matters which involve the several societies, especially where the common good will be enhanced by working through an executive head representative of the several organizations.

The first act of the joint council was the decision to urge upon the governor of the state the appointment of an engineer as member of the state railroad commission. In making this recommendation it was pointed out that "the best interest of the state would be served by the appointment of engineers as members of commissions dealing with problems the solution of which requires technical training and experience" and that the appointment of an engineer to fill one of the vacancies on the state railroad commission would doubtless "be regarded by the people of the state as indicating a wish to place the public service on the highest plane of efficiency and will be creditable both to the appointing power and to the engineering profession."

CHEMISTS AND THE CHEMICAL WARFARE SERVICE

Major General William L. Sibert, director of the Chemical Warfare Service, addressed, on September 1, the following letter to the chemists of the United States:

This is a chemical war: therefore the War Department must have immediately available all possible information regarding chemical materials and chemical man power. Of these two essential elements chemical man power has so far received less attention. The census of American chemists made by the American Chemical Society in 1917 has been of great assistance to the War Department. Without it the present state of progress of the United States in chemical warfare would have been impossible of attainment.

However, during the same period conditions have undergone rapid and radical changes. The old census, excellent as it was, is no longer completely adequate. With the organization of the Chemical Warfare Service as an independent branch of the War Department, unifying all the elements of chemical warfare, it is obvious that the War Department must have its own set of records on a matter so vital to its own success. Moreover, these records must contain information which a short time ago was apparently of little importance. The new census must be made primarily from the viewpoint of the military status of chemists.

The importance of a prompt return of the census blank, properly filled out, by every chemist of the country, can not be overstated. American chemists are presented at this moment with one of the greatest opportunities to serve their country by the simple process of answering this questionnaire with all possible speed.

It is stated in the *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* that as a result of the letter from the Adjutant General of the Army, dated May 28, 1918, 1,749 chemists have been reported on. Of these the report of action to August 1, 1918, shows that 281 were ordered to remain with their military organization

because they were already performing chemical duties, 34 were requested to remain with their military organizations because they were more useful in the military work which they were doing, 12 were furloughed back to industry, 165 were not chemists in the true sense of the word and were, therefore, ordered back to the line, and 1,294 have been placed in actual chemical work. There were being held for further investigation of their qualifications on August 1, 1918, 432 men. The remaining 23 men were unavailable for transfer, because they had already received their overseas orders. Each case has been considered individually, the man's qualifications and experience have been studied with care, the needs of the government plants and bureaus have been considered with equal care, and each man has been assigned to the position for which his training and qualifications seem to fit him best.

SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS OF THE ALLIED NATIONS

AT the invitation of the Royal Society, a conference between representatives of the Allied nations will be held in London on October 9 to discuss the future conduct of scientific organizations. According to *Nature* it is expected that representatives from the academies of Paris, Rome, Tokyo and Washington, as well as nominees of the governments of Belgium, Portugal and Serbia, will attend. A memorandum proposed by a committee of the Royal Society points out that international scientific organizations and conventions may be divided into four groups, according to their objects and methods of procedure. A first group consists of those important agreements which fix the standards of measurements, and are essential not only in purely scientific investigations, but also in the development of many industries. A second group contains associations definitely formed for the investigation of scientific problems in which coordination of observation is essential. A third group, which hitherto has not been large in numbers, but presents some special features, embodies the efforts to organize undertakings that might be carried out in one locality, but is more economically dealt with by a division of work. The most prominent example of this type is the arrangement made between eighteen observatories to form a photographic chart of the heavens. The organization dealing with the "International Catalogue of Scientific Literature" may also be included in this group. In the fourth group is placed the large number of congresses called together by workers in some one department of science, and mainly intended to foster friendly personal relationships between those who pursue similar aims in different countries. There is, finally, in a group by itself, the International Association of Academies, which aims at coordinating the activities of international undertakings, and organizes work for which special permanent bodies do not exist and are not required. The council of the Royal Society will submit the following questions as subjects for discussion at the forthcoming conference: (1) Is it desirable for the Allied nations to establish organizations for scientific cooperation among themselves? (2) If this be agreed upon, what should be the particular forms of organization to be aimed at in geodesy, seismology, meteorology, etc? (3) Should particular academies be asked to submit proposals on those undertakings in which they have taken the leading part, such as: (*a*) The Académie des Sciences on the Commission Métrique and the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures; (*b*) The Royal Society on the International Catalogue of Scientific Literature? (4) What representations should be addressed to the governments with regard to those organizations which have hitherto received their support? The conference at present is intended to deal only with scientific subjects, but similar questions no doubt also arise on the literary side.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

SAMUEL WENDELL WILLISTON, professor of paleontology in the University of Chicago, has died at the age of sixty-two years.

MAXIME BÔCHER, professor of mathematics in Harvard University, has died at the age of fifty-one years.