

The International Institute of Bibliography.

ANNUAL MEETING AT COLOGNE.

THE annual meeting of the Brussels Institut International de Bibliographie was held at Cologne on Sept. 18 and 19, and by invitation of the Oberbürgermeister, Dr. Adenauer, the proceedings took place in the Petite Salle des Congrès of the 'Pressa' Exhibition. Delegates of a number of institutions in different parts of the world, interested in bibliography and bibliographical methods, were present. The Science Library, South Kensington, was represented by Dr. S. C. Bradford.

The proceedings were presided over by Prof. A. F. C. Pollard, of the Imperial College of Science, South Kensington. In his introductory address, Prof. Pollard, reviewing the organisation of the International Institute, suggested that a central daughter bibliographical society should be formed in each country in order that individuals and institutions interested in bibliography and bibliographical methods might become members of their national society, and instanced the recent formation in London of the British Society of International Bibliography (British Section of the Institut International de Bibliographie).

Prof. Pollard then proceeded to indicate the possible relation of these societies to the Institut International de Bibliographie for the purpose of securing international uniformity of bibliographical method and the application of the universal decimal classification which had been so highly developed by the Institut. He hoped that by such means the extensive but wasteful energy expended upon the innumerable bibliographies at present published upon almost every branch of learning, and in many instances utilising extraordinary and useless methods of subject matter reference, might be directed into the production of bibliographies usefully indexed upon the simple and universal system advocated by the Institut. In the field of science some of these bibliographies might replace the International Catalogue of Scientific Literature, the cessation of which was a great loss to science.

Prof. Pollard pointed out that the Optical Society of London was the first scientific society in England to adopt these methods for indexing its *Transactions*. If all scientific societies agreed to act in the same uniform manner, and these several indexes were collected and published as specific bibliographies by the central body or Institut International de Bibliographie, accurate and detailed references to scientific literature would be produced with maximum economy and minimum effort. Such an international organisation for scientific literature, if it ever came about, might be extended to all fields of intellectual activity, and a gigantic machine could be established to index the world's rapidly increasing mass of literature. This was not an impossibility, for it only required concerted action, financial support, and the use of the powerful bibliographical tools which had been offered to the

world by the Institut for the last twenty-three years.

The morning of the first day was occupied by the business of the Council, and in the afternoon the meeting of the Commission de la Classification Decimale was held. The function of this important commission or committee of the Institut is principally concerned with the periodical revision of the decimal classification, which by the aid of many collaborators in different parts of the world is ably conducted by M. Donker Duyvis, of Deventer. During the discussion upon the new edition of the Classification Decimale Universelle, now in course of preparation, it was stated that the Science Library was preparing an English index, the German Committee had decided upon a German translation of the work, and that in Czechoslovakia a translation had already been started.

On the following day the assembly, consisting of all members of the Institut and numerous delegates, convened to receive reports and hold discussions during which many interesting activities were brought to light. In particular, Dr. Huet, of Brussels, is producing by the help of collaborators an extensive bibliography of dentistry. Czechoslovakia gave evidence of the application of the international decimal classification in many directions. A remarkable feature of these deliberations was the unanimous tribute paid by a number of representatives of various municipal bodies to the great utility of the international classification for the efficient and rapid selection of any required detail from municipal archives, a very severe test of practical utility.

MM. Paul Otlet and H. La Fontaine, the original founders of the Institut International de Bibliographie in 1895, directed attention to the necessity of finding a suitable home for the Universal Bibliographical Repertory, consisting of 13,667,816 moveable index cards at present housed at the Palais Mondial at Brussels, which may shortly have to be removed. They hoped that it might be possible to find a suitable place for this enormous index in Geneva.

Dr. Uhlendahl, director of the German library at Leipzig, who also represented the Association of German Booksellers and the International Union of Librarians, pointed out, in his vote of thanks to the president, that the number of German librarians present was an indication of the interest taken in the methods of the Institut in Germany, and referred to the satisfactory progress made in various directions as shown by the reports received at the conference.

The Oberbürgermeister of Cologne invited the members of the conference to luncheon in the Rathaus, and those who were present will not readily forget his liberal hospitality or the comfortable accommodation he afforded the members of the conference in the 'Pressa' Exhibition.

S. C. BRADFORD.

Economics of Production.

DISCUSSING "Medieval Economic Theory in Modern Industrial Life," Prof. Mauritz Bonn, of Berlin, before Section F (Economic Science and Statistics) at the recent Glasgow meeting of the British Association, stated that the chief feature of medieval economic theory was probably the conception of production as a mere physical act of turning out goods. The money value side of it was of no importance. In strict accordance with this conception, distribution proper, outside physical transportation, was rather despised. Price was a kind of simple computation of different costs; costs being equivalent to

actual outlay and the necessary expenses of maintaining a status of living. The price was 'just' when the return to the producer covered these elements.

The scarcity of goods caused by the War in many countries brought the conception of physical production again to the forefront. Inflation enormously strengthened this conception. The less trustworthy the purchasing power of money, the more important was the possession of actual goods. The scramble for goods led to the theory that prices ought to pay, not for the actual cost of production of the goods sold, but for their cost of reproduction.

War and inflation had had a great influence on the fate of the purely commercial classes. Distribution was considered a mere parasitical undertaking. This reduced position of commerce enabled the manufacturing element to push forward with a policy they had embarked upon before the War—the ousting of the trader. The tendency which was visible in Germany before the War of industrial concerns trying to eliminate the trader by erecting their own distributing agencies greatly increased as the result of voluntary or compulsory cartellisation. The purely physical conception of production was most clearly visible in the attitude taken by business people in their relation of creditor and debtor. The debtor in their minds was a producer who carried out technical and economically important functions. The creditor, if not an industrial producer himself, was a kind of leech sucking the life-blood of the industry. These views, influenced no doubt by a very short-sighted self-interest, were clearly akin to the medieval attitude to usury. Even since stabilisation has been accomplished, these views have not changed very much. The theory of prices underlying development in what might be called the era of competition, had been due to the conviction that low prices were a boon to society and that economic progress was identical with slowly falling prices. The medieval theory was the same in so far as consumers' interests came first. It believed, however, in stability, as without some stability the functional income of the producer could not be maintained.

The theory that falling prices conferred a benefit on mankind is now being deserted. Instead of it, a theory is growing up that rising prices, by giving a stimulus to production, are the real solution of social problems. First came Protection, which tried to raise prices for certain selected privileged goods, its advocates maintaining all the time that the general level of prices would not be affected. Then came inflation, with its spurious boom, which owing to rising prices was supposed to expand production. When carried out to its bitter end, as it was in Germany, it certainly had not produced the much-advertised benefits. After these not over-favourable experiences with wholesale inflation came the theory of homeopathic inflation, its advocates maintaining that by proper dosing of credit, stabilisation of sorts could be secured. Prices must not be allowed to fall under any con-

ditions; wherever there was a tendency to fall, the issue of credit or the floating of loans abroad must prevent them sagging.

The theory of stabilised prices, which in its practical bearing was eagerly absorbed by business men, who cared nothing for its theoretical meaning, was closely affiliated to the medieval conception of maintaining a certain social order and a certain individual income. This is clearly demonstrated by the practice of many cartels. The question to be discussed is not free competition or monopoly; it is the peculiar form of monopoly aimed at or achieved by some influential cartels. The type of cartel in question is an agreement by which the individual works bound themselves to trade their produce by some sort of joint selling agency and to restrict their output if necessary. Now this sort of cartel is not based on any modern conception of efficiency. It standardises inefficiency at the cost of the consumer.

When comparisons have been made between trusts and cartels, cartels have always been praised for the maintenance of a number of separate enterprises. Where in a trust the initiative of leadership is reduced to a single head or to a small group of persons, the parties of a cartel continue as individual 'Captains of Industry.' As a matter of fact, they remain technical managers of their individual concerns, freed from the necessity and possibility of selling the produce they turn out. They are utterly divorced from the mere business side of their job, the marketing of their goods. The price fixed by the syndicate must be high enough to yield an income, though these works are run at half capacity and ought not to be run at all. It had often been said that the price must be high enough to keep the worst concern going. The trust need not be badly financed, but it is almost a law of Nature that the firms forming a cartel must. A trust may have many of the advantages claimed by the cartel, though some form of control was required. Real progress in a capitalistic world is, however, impossible without writing off, whereas cartels are essentially a well thought-out system of maintaining inflated capital values. The right to profit, to rents, and even to unearned increment, which the capitalistic system has conceded to private enterprise, must be counterbalanced under the system by a corresponding obligation to loss.

Examinations—The New Compromise.

THE Departmental Committee on Examinations for Part-time Students was appointed in 1927 "to inquire and report as to the arrangements for the examination of students attending part-time schools under the regulations for further education, with particular reference to the place and value of examinations as an element in training for industrial, commercial, and professional activity." Its report has just been published (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1s. net), and contains chapters—notably those on the purpose of examinations and the planning and conduct of examinations—which should be read by all teachers. It will be of special interest to teachers in technical institutions, since they particularly will be affected by its recommendations.

Briefly, the report recommends a compromise. For some years now there has been a sharp division between supporters of the purely external and of the purely internal systems of examination. Indeed, the controversy which the report is expected to settle may be traced back to 1911, when the Board of Education's Circular 776 withdrew the old Science and Art Examinations and gave freedom to institutions to organise internal examinations, the final

certificate of which would be endorsed by the Board. But it appears that the scheme has not been widely used, and the weakness would appear to have lain in the fact that many part-time classes are taught by part-time teachers who are sometimes not expert in setting and marking papers. But this was not the only cause of the failure of purely internal examinations. Most part-time students take courses in order to benefit vocationally. They therefore need a certificate of which employers all over Great Britain will recognise the value. The certificate granted by a school as a result of an internal examination does not yet fulfil that condition.

Many teachers have naturally desired to retain the principles of Circular 776, which they regarded as a charter of freedom, and the time will doubtless come when those sound principles will be found generally practicable. In the meantime, the present report sees the value, particularly in their possibilities of counting such important things as laboratory and home work, of internal examinations. But it also sees their present defects, and has decided upon a compromise in the form of modified external examinations. It envisages a system in which they are