

consulting engineer, and in 1903 he was offered and accepted the post of electrical engineer-in-chief to the Admiralty. Here he was responsible for the electrical equipment of all his Majesty's ships and for the electrical lighting and power used in the dockyards, including Rosyth and all the naval air stations. In 1918 he left the Navy and resumed his consulting practice. He was consulted by many local authorities on traction and lighting projects. He also gave expert evidence and supervised the erection of several power stations.

Wordingham served for many years on the council of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and no one took a greater interest in practically all the committees. He was president of the Institution in 1917 and 1918, and laid down a standard of work which subsequent presidents have found it difficult to equal. He was very enthusiastic that the Institution should found a Proving House for all electrical apparatus and material, but many difficulties stood in the way. During his presidentship he helped to found the Society of Radiographers, which is doing useful work. He made many contributions to the technical journals and wrote a useful book on "Central Electrical Stations."

He was president of the Junior Institution of Engineers and always took the greatest interest in young engineers, doing his utmost to encourage them.

A vast amount of work was also done by Wordingham in connexion with the Engineering Standards Association, being chairman of the Electrical Sectional Committees. He also took endless pains in getting the Wiring Rules of the Institution of Electrical Engineers accepted by the authorities. He has died at a comparatively early age, leaving many of the projects in which he was enthusiastically interested half finished. He was very popular with his colleagues, and he will be grievously missed by every electrical engineer.

A. R.

#### MR. GEORGE ABBOTT.

GEOLOGY perhaps more than any other science needs all the assistance which careful amateurs can bring to the total sum of knowledge. Men living on the spot are of the greatest service to the official geologists when a re-survey takes place. George Abbott was one of the most painstaking of local geologists, whose help was always at the service of those who needed it. Born on March 25, 1844, he was in his eighty-first year when he died on January 12 at Tunbridge Wells, where he had lived since 1878.

Scattered in various publications are many of his contributions to geology, but he was particularly interested in the various rock-forms which so often resemble organised life. From the magnesian limestone of Fulwell he obtained most of his specimens, and these he classified in so clear a manner that one was able to realise from his tables the series of stages by which such forms gradually grew to their familiar pseudo-organic shapes.

In 1896, in conjunction with the Rev. T. R. R. Stebbing, Abbott conceived the happy thought of creating a union of scientific and similar societies in the south-east of England for mutual help, and the first two of the South-Eastern Union's Annual Congresses were held at Tunbridge Wells. The Union grew into a vigorous organisation and has held its annual congresses regularly ever since, whilst its annual proceedings, *The South-Eastern Naturalist*, is now accepted as a responsible scientific publication. Some years later he founded a Geological Physics Society, but here apparently was a society which was not needed, for after a few years of vicissitude it ceased to exist. Its work is being done by other organisations, but as a protest against the overpowering study of palaeontology it performed some useful work.

Abbott had suffered a good deal during the last few years, and his favourite study, apart from his medical duties, was a great comfort in the time that he was laid by. He founded the local natural history society, and supplied many specimens to the elementary schools of the borough, on the Town Council of which he served for some years. He also established the Eye and Ear Hospital at Tunbridge Wells, and was Hon. Surgeon from 1878 to 1886.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. W. A. Haswell, F.R.S., emeritus professor of biology in the University of Sydney, and author, with the late Prof. T. Jeffrey Parker, of "A Text Book of Zoology," aged seventy.

Dr. N. Kulchitsky, lecturer in histology at University College, London, and formerly professor of anatomy in the University of Kharkov, on January 29.

Dr. D. B. Spooner, deputy director of archaeology in India since 1919, on January 30.

Prof. Hermann Schunck, a former director of the Badische Anilin- und Soda-Fabrik at Ludwigshafen, who retired in 1923, on January 8, at Solln near Munich.

### Current Topics and Events.

ELSEWHERE in this issue appears an account of a remarkable discovery which appears to afford *prima facie* evidence of the occurrence at a remote period in South Africa of a pre-human stock, neither chimpanzee nor gorilla, and possessing a series of characters differentiating it from any anthropoid hitherto known. Fossilised fragments from a limestone cliff formation at Taungs, 80 miles north of Kimberley, in Bechuanaland, when fitted together, have revealed a natural endocranial cast with almost the entire face of what at first sight appeared to be an anthropoid, but on closer examination is found by Prof. Dart to exhibit humanoid rather than anthropoid characters.

The occurrence of a fossil anthropoid so far south would in itself be sufficiently remarkable, but the interest and importance of this discovery is enhanced by its remarkable divergence from the anthropoid and its approximation to the human stock. Not only is this exhibited in the character of the cranium as a whole, but it is also apparent in the formation of the brain, so far as this is indicated by the endocranial cast. The position of the foramen magnum, if correctly estimated, in itself would indicate that this sub-human type was well on the way towards acquiring the upright posture, and the inference of an increase in intelligence which would follow upon a