

## MR. W. McWHIRTER

MR. W. McWHIRTER, who died at Glasgow on March 6, at the age of eighty-two years, was one of the pioneers of the electrical industry. In 1882 he invented the first instruments for indicating volts and amperes and these he continually developed, introducing magnetic shielding and other devices into his ammeters and voltmeters. His electrical water-level indicators and recorders fulfilled a most useful function.

Apprenticed to his uncle in the bakery and confectionery business, McWhirter spent nearly all his leisure experimenting on magnetism and electricity. He joined the Glasgow and South Western Railway, where he attained the position of divisional inspector. He then joined the Barrow and Furness Railway and was partly responsible for one of the earliest installations of dock lighting by means of arc lamps at Barrow. He was also responsible for the first electric lighting installation at the Glasgow Central Station. In those days the arcs were not well shaded, so that the light was dazzling and cast such dark shadows that one had to walk warily. After lighting the Central Station, McWhirter started business in Glasgow and, later on, opened the Faraday Electrical Engineering Works in Govan, where important improvements

were made in the efficiency and commutation of the dynamo.

Mr. McWhirter was well known to all the older generation of electrical engineers and had many friends. He was one of the founders of the Electrical Contractors' Association in Scotland and was chairman of the Scottish centre of the Institution of Electrical Engineers in 1912. In the course of his electrical researches he co-operated with Silvanus Thompson, Ayrton and Perry. One of his pupils was Dr. A. Hay, who was a professor at Coopers Hill and afterwards at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

WE regret to announce the following deaths :

The Duke of the Abruzzi, Founder's medallist of the Royal Geographical Society in 1901, who was known for his explorations in the Far North, in Africa and in India, on March 18, aged sixty years.

Prof. W. C. Unwin, F.R.S., emeritus professor of engineering in the Central Technical College, City and Guilds of London Institute, president of Section G (Engineering) of the British Association in 1892, of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1911, and of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, on March 17, aged ninety-four years.

## News and Views

## Early Man in East Africa

ON March 18-19 a conference summoned by the Royal Anthropological Institute met at St. John's College, Cambridge, under the presidency of Sir Arthur Smith Woodward, to receive reports on the human skeletal remains discovered by Dr. Leakey's archaeological expedition to East Africa in the autumn of last year. On the geological, palaeontological, archaeological and anatomical evidence, the findings of the respective committees are:—(1) That it is clear that the two fragments said to have been found *in situ* at Kanjera belong to the original deposit and that the fragments cannot have been introduced into the calcareous deposits at a later date; (2) that the fragment of human lower jaw-bone from Kanam is derived from a deposit of lower Pleistocene age, while the fauna from the Kanjera deposits, in which the cranial fragments were found, cannot be later than the middle Pleistocene; (3) that the cranial remains from Kanjera show no character inconsistent with reference to the type of *Homo sapiens*, special points noted being the absence of any frontal torus and a thickness of bone not present in any non-pathological modern skull and comparable with that of the Piltdown and Boskop skulls: while the Kanam jaw shows no appearance incompatible with its inclusion in the type of *Homo sapiens* or with the high antiquity assigned to it; and (4) that the Kanam jaw is associated with a pebble industry, comparable to Oldoway Bed I, which has no precise counterpart in western Europe; and the Kanjera skull with a Chellean industry

corresponding with that of the upper part of Oldoway Bed II, the pebble industry of Bed I being older than the Chellean industry from Bed II, while the latter corresponds typologically to industries from deposits of early Pleistocene age in Europe.

## Indian Federation

WITH the publication of the White Paper, discussion of the future government of India enters on its final phase. At this stage it would be vain to expect that any fundamental change will be made in the basic principles upon which the proposed constitution has been framed. For good or for ill, a matter on which time alone will give a ruling, the principles of Western democracy, which themselves in the West are now being strained to breaking point, will be applied to an Eastern community, or rather communities, in which the elements, especially that of Hinduism, as past experience has shown, are further removed in temperament from the spirit of compromise, which is of the essence of democracy, than almost any other community in the world. Hinduism as a social and religious system has shown in the past an almost unlimited power of assimilating elements from outside, but it is itself incapable of adaptation. Even the influence of Mr. Gandhi has not availed to modify the position of the Untouchables, notwithstanding the political gain that thereby would have accrued to Hinduism. However flattering the abortive results of Mr. Gandhi's efforts to the opinion of the scientific observer, he regretfully accepts this as further confirmation of his view that