

he may be said to have founded the Schafer school of physiologists.

Sometimes when the Physiological Society met in Edinburgh, Sharpey-Schafer would complete the scientific business in the morning and then invite all the members to spend the afternoon with his family at 'Marly Knowe', North Berwick. During his later years he resided at 'Park End', North Berwick—a house on the foreshore of the Firth of Forth near the golf course. In 1933 he underwent an internal operation and withstood it exceedingly bravely but later developed pneumonia. He apparently recovered somewhat from these trials, and was able to go about again slowly and to entertain his friends with his usual mental acuteness. He resigned his chair in Edinburgh in 1933 and remained at 'Park End' but had intended, sooner or later, to move to the south of England to be nearer other members of his family. However, he never left North Berwick and died near the golf course and the Firth of Forth which he loved so much.

With such large numbers of students in his classes, few of them were able to know the man apart from official duty, and to some Sharpey-Schafer appeared rather distant; but all his assistants and research workers were able to appreciate the kindly heart and goodwill which characterised their chief and benefactor. In 1922 his past and present assistants, co-workers and research pupils presented him with

a portrait plaque and medal; the plaque we understand is now at University College, London. Most of his older students did not know him as Sharpey-Schafer but as Schäfer. He adopted the former name in 1918 to emphasise his indebtedness to Sharpey, who inspired his early work. It is impossible for an old assistant to express his feelings adequately for this great scientist and staunch friend.

J. A. C.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Mr. C. F. Cross, F.R.S., who was associated with the late Mr. E. J. Bevan in the viscose process for the production of artificial silk, on April 15, aged seventy-nine years.

Prof. W. R. Hodgkinson, formerly professor of chemistry and metallurgy at the Ordnance College, Woolwich, an authority on the chemistry of explosives, on April 8, aged eighty-three years.

Mr. H. R. Kempe, formerly principal technical officer and electrician to the Post Office, and author of the "Engineer's Year Book", on April 10, aged eighty-three years.

Dr. Albert Mann, of the U.S. National Museum, Washington, formerly professor of botany in the Ohio Wesleyan University (1895–1900) and in the George Washington University (1907–9), an authority on diatoms, on February 1, aged eighty-one years.

## News and Views

### The Sugar Beet Industry in Great Britain

THE United Kingdom Sugar Industry Inquiry Committee, the report of which (H.M.S.O. Cmd. 4871) was issued last week, failed to come to a unanimous conclusion on the fundamental issue of whether the beet sugar industry should be carried on with State assistance. The subsidy policy which was initiated in 1924 essentially as an experiment has already cost the Exchequer more than forty million pounds, and its extension for the present season will cost more than seven million pounds. Mr. Wilfred Greene, the chairman, and Sir Kenneth Lee, in their majority report, conclude that there is no reasonable prospect of the industry being permanently self-supporting. The principal value of the industry is as a relief measure to arable farming, but they consider the method extravagant and inequitable. Over the whole period of the subsidy, the cash payments to farmers have only just equalled the cost of assistance. The same acreage of beet could, in fact, have been, and still could be secured as cheaply by paying farmers to grow sugar beet and keep them on the farm for use as they thought fit. The majority is unable to recommend the continuance of State support beyond the maximum rate of duty preference grant to Colonial sugar, and it recognises that this would substantially mean the discontinuance of the beet sugar industry in Great Britain. Compensation to farmers is proposed for three years on an acreage basis.

In the minority report, Mr. Cyril Lloyd emphasises the difficulties of forecasting the trend of future prices, and of giving precise values to the indirect benefits from the industry. National considerations of the difference between free trade and protectionist policies are, for him, of much greater importance than the contention that, biologically, sugar cane is more efficient than sugar beet for the production of sugar. He recommends continuing the assistance for a long-term period by a levy on all imported sugar. The reports agree on the broad principles of a reorganisation scheme, should it be decided to continue the industry. It is proposed to amalgamate the beet sugar interests, and to control the whole industry by a Permanent Sugar Commission. It is also agreed that any such scheme should provide for a programme of research and education on a scale very much larger than that which has existed up to the present. Valuable educational work has been done locally by the factories' agricultural staffs, county organisers and other educational and research institutes, and, since 1927, about £4,000 a year has been spent by the factories on a national programme of technical experiments and education, including a prize scheme for beet growers. In spite of the very large sums involved in assistance to the industry, no funds whatever have been made available by the State itself for research, and no fundamental research of any kind in sugar beet problems has been initiated.