

revolutionary atmosphere, with Shaw, Wells, William Morris and Bradlaugh as friends of his family. He was a nephew of Graham Wallas, whose influence he always gratefully acknowledged. Educated at Abbotsholme and University College Hospital, his career in public health was that of a successful and efficient sanitarian. But, as a close colleague of his has written, "he was not a man to allow the local trees to obscure his vision of the public health wood, or as he might have said, the public health jungle".

Widely and deeply read in literature, philosophy and economics, it was perhaps in health education in its widest sense that he found great satisfaction. The Central Council for Health Education, of which he was vice-chairman, owes much to him. But it was not the leaflet or the poster or the film which interested him most. It was rather the plan, the purpose of it all, the thought of the human personality rather than its physical frame.

He was a man of principles and ideas, preferring the long to the short view. Modest and urbane in manner, he was frank in the confession of his doubts, and both adamant and passionate in defence of principle. He was one of the few men of whom it can truthfully be said that nothing would induce him to say and do anything which he did not believe to be right. His defence of the secular approach to moral problems at a recent conference on venereal

disease, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury was the principal speaker, will long be remembered by those who heard it.

In conference or conversation—he preferred conversation—the ideas simply tumbled out, or to be more accurate, shot out. Some he pursued himself, others he left his colleagues to pursue. Strange though the country through which they led the pursuer, they were worth pursuing. He prodded the conventional—but oh, so gently. He flicked the obstinate with a wit as innocent as it was penetrating. He 'rollicked' the reactionary with a mirth that was infectious. He was, above all, a thinker; and with the world as it is, that marked him out and adds to our sense of loss.

C. HILL.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. Carl Bonhoeffer, successively professor of neurology at Königsberg, Breslau and Berlin and one of the editors of the *Monatschrift für Psychiatrie, Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie* and *Zentralblatt für Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, aged seventy-five.

Mr. Christopher Dalley, president of the Institute of Petroleum, an authority on petroleum engineering, on January 27, aged sixty.

Dr. A. Stansfield, emeritus professor of metallurgy, McGill University, on February 5, aged seventy-two.

NEWS and VIEWS

Scientific Terminology

THE enormous waste of human time and energy, nay also of human life, that has been caused by the use of wrong or vague words, and the misuse of good words, is well known to students of human thought through the ages. Many words have changed their meanings in the course of time, and new words have been adopted with ambiguous or multiple connotations. Though one would hesitate to suggest that the legal profession has been the chief perpetrator of such intellectual delinquencies, and of their *sequelæ*—for the theologians and philosophers must have run them very close—there is no doubt that the loose drafting of governmental Bills and Regulations, even up to the present day, has caused great confusion and, incidentally, served to redistribute wealth in a unilateral direction. As Mephistopheles remarked, "Mit Worten lässt sich trefflich streiten, Mit Worten ein System bereiten, Von einem Wort kein Iota rauben".

To-day most new words originate in the sciences or their applications, and many of them have been condemned or criticized owing to their lack of precision, their hybrid etymology, their ugliness or unwieldiness, or because they signify something different from identical or similar words used in common parlance. It has often been deplored that in Britain we have no institution or high authority to adjudicate on new words, like the French Academy does for France, albeit often with much delay; but there seems to be no reason why the scientific world should not take the bit between its teeth and appoint its own authority for rectifying bad words, including spelling, devising new words or deciding between rival suggestions. An 'omnibus' body, like the Royal Society, is clearly indicated to assume such a task. Through *ad hoc* subcommittees for groups of sciences, assisted by a few language

experts, it could provide authoritative guidance, if not compulsory ruling, for scientific research workers, who are seldom as good at word-building as they are at 'things'. The main committee might also attack the problem of an international auxiliary language for use in science and technology.

Photographic Terminology

THE above reflexions arise from a perusal of a letter addressed to the scientific Press by the editor of *Photographic Abstracts*, entitled "Microphotography and Photomicrography, and other Terminological Inexactitudes". Although these two terms, signifying the production of very small photographs and the photographic reproduction of very small objects, respectively, are clear enough to experts, they are confusing to other people, and one can support the author's plea for the standardization of these and similar terms. 'Micro-' and 'macro-', he suggests, should be used in photography with a definite quantitative meaning only, and one might go farther and suggest that when these prefixes are used for scientific words, they should bear a precise quantitative meaning, as in microgram and microhm, leaving their vaguer signification to popular words like microcosm, macrocosm and perhaps 'micro-cookery' (the cooking of war-time rations). The word 'radiogram' is one that needs immediate attention, as it has three distinct meanings: (1) a combination of radio-receiver and gramophone, (2) a telegram transmitted by radio, and (3) an X-ray photograph (also called a radiograph or a skiagraph). Probably (3) would be best for scientific use. The word 'radio' itself might be banned from scientific writing, for, at least etymologically, it might refer to any kind of radiation. But such difficulties as these are not to be solved offhand; they would best be considered by an authoritative body, as suggested above.