during his career. His department has developed under his leadership and guidance from a small unit to a group of nearly 200 students and a faculty and staff of twenty-five. Many prominent mechanical engineers and engineering teachers are the product of this department.

Professor Flather has taken an active part as consulting engineer in many important engineering projects in the Northwest. Among these are municipal water works, electric light plants, factories and power plants. He designed the heating plants for the University of Minnesota on the main campus and the farm campus. He also conducted many researches and investigations, especially along lines of mechanical power development, transmission and measurement, and the design of tall chimneys.

His articles in the technical journals have been numerous and cover a broad field. He is the author of books on rope driving, dynamometers and the measurement of power, and kinematics, and joint author of books on steam boilers and engineering thermodynamics. At the time of his death he had partially completed a work on the history of engineering.

He was a member of various societies, principally scientific and technical, including the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, Society of Industrial Engineers, Minneapolis Engineers' Club, American Association for the Advancement of Science (secretary and vice-president of Section D), Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education (treasurer and later vice-president), American Association of University Professors and the honorary societies Sigma Xi, Tau Beta Pi, and Pi Tau Sigma. He was also a member of the Authors' Club and the Newcomen Society of London.

Professor Flather was a cultured gentleman of broad vision. Outside of his professional and scientific interests, his tastes ran to literature. He enjoyed a wide acquaintanceship throughout the United States and in various foreign countries. He was a delightful conversationalist, versed in many subjects.

Professor Flather is survived by his widow, a daughter, Elizabeth, who is a senior at the University of Minnesota, and a brother, Herbert Flather, of Meriden, Conn.

O. M. LELAND

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY[1]

THE scheme proposed by Sir Frank Heath for the reorganization of the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry has been tabled in the Australian House of Representatives. The outstanding aim in the scheme is to obtain the utmost cooperation of all the states with the commonwealth in the formulation of advice through carefully selected men of responsible position and wide outlook, it being recognized that the vast distances of Australia and the wide range of its climates demand a degree of decentralization much greater than is necessary or desirable in a smaller and more populous country. It is recommended that the purposes of the institute be defined under three heads: (1) To provide for the training of young men and women in scientific research and for the encouragement of research workers who have already shown capacity for original work; (2) To take responsibility for conducting scientific investigations into problems of importance either (*a*) to the whole industrial activities of the commonwealth, whether primary or secondary, or (*b*) to the interests of Australian consumers as a whole; (3) To encourage and assist under suitable conditions the solution of scientific problems of importance to particular states or groups of states, which, though urgent in themselves, do not affect the whole dominion.

Three derivative functions for the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry are added to the main purposes set out in Sir Frank Heath's scheme for reorganization: (*a*) To act as a clearing-house for information on scientific matters affecting the industries of the country; (*b*) To act as the principal and official means of *liaison* in scientific matters between the governments of the commonwealth and those of Great Britain and other parts of the British Empire; (*c*) To become, as it wins the confidence of the world of industry and science, the adviser of the government on the scientific aspects of policy. It is proposed that the institute be constituted a body corporate consisting of the prime minister for the time being and an advisory council of a chairman and eight members, under the title of the Department of Research in Science and Industry. The chairman and two members are to be appointed by the governor-general and are to form an executive committee with very extensive powers. The other six members are to be the chairmen of state advisory committees. Each of the latter is to include two members nominated by the state government from its scientific staff, two members of the state university nominated by the Australian National Research Council, and two representatives of the principal industries of the state.

[1] *Nature.*

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

UNDER a bill (S. 41) to encourage and regulate the use of aircraft in commerce, which has been reported by the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, the Secretary of Commerce would make