# SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

## THE ALBERT FARWELL BEMIS FOUNDATION

DR. KARL T. COMPTON, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has announced the establishment of the Albert Farwell Bemis Foundation, dedicated to the advancement of housing for the benefit of the public and of the building industry. The purpose of the foundation will be to search for and disseminate knowledge pertaining to adequate, economical and abundant housing.

The establishment of the foundation has been made possible by a grant from the Albert Farwell Bemis Charity Trust, the trustees of which are Farwell G., Alan C. and Judson Bemis, sons of the late Albert Farwell Bemis, of Boston. The new foundation is a memorial to their father, who died in 1936.

The foundation, which will be a separate division of the institute, perpetuates the life-long interest of Mr. Bemis, who believed, after many years of pioneering studies, that better and more economical housing could be achieved only through improvements in the technology of building.

The foundation will be directed by John E. Burchard, of Winchester, who for several years has been vice-president of the Bemis Industries, Inc., where he was closely associated with the late Mr. Bemis in research on housing and the utilization of housing materials. Mr. Burchard will begin his work as director of the foundation in September.

The foundation will cooperate with various departments of the institute, especially the departments of architecture and civil engineering, and the division of industrial cooperation, the three departments whose work most closely approaches that of the foundation.

The major policies of the foundation will be determined by the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with the counsel of an advisory committee, the members of which will be men prominent in the architectural and building professions.

The general program will include:

Coordination of the available knowledge on materials, construction methods and the economics of shelter.

Stimulation and planning of research in various phases of the building industry.

Dissemination of information on its various activities for the greatest benefit of the public and the building industry.

Cooperation with all departments of the institute in making available the latest material on housing for undergraduate and graduate instruction in the institute.

As a central organization for the study of housing, the foundation is expected to play an important part indicating and preparing for research fundamental problems the solution of which will contribute notably to the technological advancement of building. Other problems involving the economics of housing are the transportation and distribution of building materials, studies of the effect of mass production in those portions of the building industry where this technique has been applied, analysis of the cost of existing houses in terms from which conclusions may be drawn; land development studies; studies of building costs in terms of maintenance. The entire field of building materials may also be of interest to the foundation, particularly the behavior of building materials in combination as opposed to their behavior individually. The foundation plans to publish the results of its activities at such times and in such form as will be of the greatest assistance to the public and to industry.

## THE PROPOSED POLISH BALLOON FLIGHT INTO THE STRATOSPHERE

THE National Geographic Society, after a conference with members of the Polish Embassy staff, has announced that the next manned-balloon flight into the stratosphere will be made from Poland in September, under the auspices of the Polish army. The pilot will be Captain Zbigniew Burzynski, who has returned to Poland after a visit to the United States, during which he consulted with Major Albert W. Stevens, who commanded the stratosphere flight of the National Geographic Society and the U. S. Army Air Corps in 1935, and with specialists of the National Bureau of Standards, who designed some of the instruments used in the ascent.

The balloon, which is almost completed, will be considerably larger than the *Explorer II* of the Geographic-Army flight, and will be made of rubberized silk, which was both grown and processed in Poland. Its volume will be more than 4,800,000 cubic feet as against 3,700,000 cubic feet for *Explorer II;* the height at take-off time, 459 feet as against 315 feet, and the greatest diameter 209 feet as against 192 feet. In spite of this greater size, the bag will weigh only 3,300 pounds instead of the 6,350 pounds of *Explorer II,* owing to the lesser weight per square yard of the silk fabric. The spherical gondola to be used will be made of aluminum and steel.

Balloon and gondola together, ready for flight, will weigh less than half as much as *Explorer II,* so that it should reach a much greater height, probably 81,000 feet (15 1/3 miles) above sea level. *Explorer II* established the present world altitude record of 72,395 feet (approximately 13¾ miles), in an ascent from the Black Hills, near Rapid City, S. D., on November 11, 1935.