

professional services and divisions of the Office of the Surgeon General; the air surgeon; the ground surgeon; the chairman of the Division of Medical Sciences of the National Research Council (by invitation); and the chairman of the Committee on Medical Research, Office of Scientific Research and Development (by invitation). The board has two operating divisions, the Research Division and the Development Division, to carry out its plans. It is the intent of the Surgeon General to carry on an active program of research and development during the postwar period and the new board should provide the means for maximum coordination of effort within the military service and cooperation with civilian and Federal research agencies. The immediate tasks facing the board are three in number. Essential research must be continued in the existing research and development laboratories of the Medical Department in spite of the personnel difficulties of the period of demobilization. Plans must be made and implemented for the continuation or actual expansion of research and development in the postwar period. The demobilization of the Office of Scientific Research and Development necessitated finding other sponsorship for those research contracts of the Committee on Medical Research which warrant continuation even though hostilities have terminated. A group of these contracts will be taken over by the Medical Department and administered by the board.

#### THE MOUNT PALOMAR TELESCOPE

CONSTRUCTION of the world's largest telescope—(200-inches) at the summit of Mount Palomar in California—is being resumed after a wartime interruption. Between one and two years will be required for its completion according to an announcement made by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, which cooperated with the California Institute of Technology in the design and operational plans. The uncompleted reflecting telescope is now at the observatory on Mount Palomar, sixty-six miles north of San Diego.

The 200-inch glass disc was poured on December 2, 1934, at Corning, N. Y., and was taken across the country to be placed in the observatory. With the outbreak of war both the optical and mechanical work had to be suspended.

Plans have been formulated by the Carnegie Institution, which operates Mount Wilson Observatory in California, for a cooperative research program between Mount Wilson and the Mount Palomar Observatory as soon as the equipment at the latter is completed. According to the announcement both institutions have approved a program whereby "the two observatories will be placed under a single administrative management, having a director who will

be chairman of an advisory management committee with representatives from both organizations."

#### THE ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

AN appeal for more complete consideration of the Atomic Energy Act, signed by one hundred and fifty-five scientists of the Boston area, was telegraphed to President Truman on the morning of October 23. Those signing the telegram—including Dr. Karl T. Compton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dr. Leonard Carmichael, president of Tufts College—are members of the National Society of the Sigma Xi. The need for resumption of hearings on the bill is emphasized. The telegram follows:

The undersigned scientists of the Boston area, members of The National Scientific Research Society, feel deep concern over the very brief and inadequate discussion of the Atomic Energy Act of 1945. Widespread fears have been expressed regarding the sweeping nature of the powers delegated to the Atomic Energy Commission in the proposed bill, and without attempting to take a stand on this point, we feel it is imperative to give the fullest opportunity for discussion on this and other points both in Congress and by the public at large. Whatever the urgency of such legislation, the need for full and complete understanding of the momentous issues at stake is much greater. We urge strongly that hearings on the bill be resumed and that the fullest public consideration of the question be encouraged.

Copies of the telegram have been sent to John W. Snyder, director of War Mobilization and Reconversion; Representative Andrew J. May, chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, sponsor of the bill; Representative Chet Holifield, member of the House Military Affairs Committee, and John W. McCormick, House of Representatives. Those signing the telegram from Harvard University included Professor Harlow Shapley, director of the Observatory; Dr. Lionel S. Marks, Gordon McKay professor of mechanical engineering, emeritus; Dr. Percy W. Bridgman, Hollis professor of mathematics and natural philosophy; Dr. John H. Van Vleck, professor of mathematical physics; Dr. Jabez C. Street, associate professor of physics, and Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, professor of geology.

#### NEWS FROM ABROAD

THE following is a translation of a letter from Professor J. Timmermans, president of the Bureau of Physico-chemical Standards, International Union of Chemistry; University of Brussels, Belgium, addressed to Dr. Marston T. Bogert, as president of the International Union of Chemistry:

August 29, 1945

Dear Colleague:

As Professor Dony-Henault will already have told you,