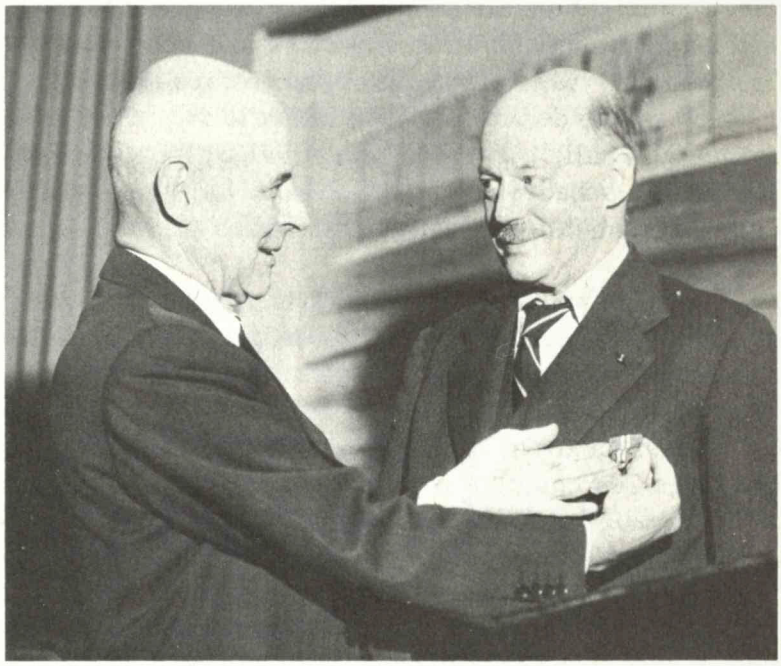
TECH TALK

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY April 9, 1957

BOUQUETS

To Dr. Jerome C. Hunsaker (Aero. Eng.): the Distinguished Service Medal, highest award of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, for "service of fundamental significance to aeronautical science, climaxed by an outstanding and unparalleled record of leadership during the past 15 years. . ." The award was made (see right) by Dr. James H. Doolittle, NACA chairman and member of the M.I.T. Corporation.



To President Killian: the Exceptional Civilian Service Award of the Department of the Army.

To Prof. T. William Lambe (Civil Eng.): the 1957 Desmond Fitzgerald Medal (for the second time) of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, for the best regional essay of the year.

To Prof. C. Gardner Swain (Chem.): a $1000 prize from the American Chemical Society, for outstanding investigations in theoretical chemistry.

BASIN BLUES

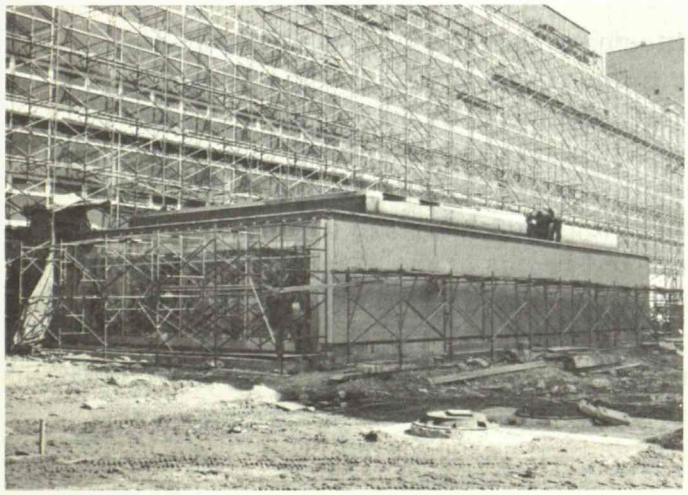
John B. Sullivan, Cambridge School Committeeman, splashed into the headlines of March 30 with a proposal that comes very close to the heart of M.I.T. Having bought, for $5000, an option on 39 privately-owned acres of aqua impura, mudflat, and "solid gravel" in the Charles River Basin, Mr. Sullivan announced his intention of a huge reclamation and building project -- second only to Prudential -- which would extend "Research Row" 1000 feet out into the river. The proposed skyscrapers would not interfere with M.I.T.'s central skyline -- too much -- since Mr. Sullivan's river bed begins at the Longfellow Bridge and ends just short of Ames Street. Noted the Boston Globe matter-of-factly: "The only obstruction between Harvard Bridge and Longfellow Bridge . . . is the M.I.T. boathouse." And uncounted city dwellers to whom that particular stretch of river bank (and river) is a special recreational and visual blessing.

TECH'S TYPHOON

With the face of the Compton Lab looking three smudges cleaner every time we look at it, and with the first contingent due in at the Computation Center sometime this month -- a progress report seems definitely in order. Actually, the scaffolding and fat canvases which still clothe the building are somewhat misleading. On the outside, the very last aluminum frames are being fixed securely in place. Then comes a grand top-to-toe polishing, in which solex glass (keeps out a lot of the sun's heat), porcelainized panels, and superstructure will all be washed down in one 300-foot, 5-story gulp. On the inside, the masonry is being "pointed up," which is the last step before painting. There are a few things still missing -- such as the deckstone floor in the lobby, the 48-foot hydraulically-operated blackboard in the lecture hall, and some acoustical ceilings, -- but these are mostly last-minute details. The Lab is scheduled for completion, landscaping and all, sometime before commencement. The next tenants, after the Computation Center, will be R.L.E., L.N.S., and the Cosmic Ray Lab.

The Computation Center, a one-story wing at the northwest end of the Lab, was added to the building after the original foundations had been laid. This created considerable pumping problems (the water level had to be held down for a much longer period than expected while new foundations were added), but the new wing has since become such an interesting architectural proposition that earlier difficulties have been forgotten. The Center will house an IBM Type 704 computer -- offspring of M.I.T.'s Whirlwind. The 704 is one of the newer models designed for solving tricky statistics in numerous fields of scientific endeavor. It will perform 40,000 additions or subtractions, 5000 multiplications or divisions of 10-digit numbers per second.

One of the biggest problems in building a room for the 704 has been the complicated system of air-conditioning and ventilation demanded by the machine. In solving the many riddles fed to it, a computer of this size generates a tremendous amount of heat. To move the giant fans, refrigeration compressors, and other machinery needed by the computer to cool its busy heels, a special transformer had to be installed in the basement of the Center. The computer room itself boasts a double floor -- the lower one, concrete, the upper one, steel plate. The 14-inch space between floors is a thicket of cables and air vents which will lead directly to the 704. The ceiling, which will eventually be covered with acoustical tile and "eggcrate," is crosshatched with more huge air vents. In case IBM decides to replace any 704 units with newer inventions, the floor plates are removable.



At present, the 704 is resting comfortably in the Lab, in a basement room sealed against humidity changes, dust, plaster, etc. It consists of about 30 units, which will take up some 50 x 70 feet of space on the first floor -- plus added space in the basement for auxiliary "electronic accounting machines." With a staff of over thirty technicians and research men from M.I.T. and neighboring colleges, the Center will be one of the largest computing establishments in existence, all of it made possible by IBM.

Captain Blanchard. . . .

. . . . turns to business

OUR MISS BLANCHARD

It all started with an ad in the Boston Transcript back in 1919. Ednah Blanchard (head secretary, Elec. Eng.) didn't like her job at the Nelson Blower and Furnace Company too well, but they liked her so much they gave her a gala dinner party and lots of flowers when she left. ("It was just in time," Miss Blanchard recalls. "The company went bankrupt two weeks later.") Miss B. turned to job hunting again, and decided to follow up an ad in the paper that "sounded kind of interesting." The ad involved some shenanigans with the Beacon Business Agency, and Miss Blanchard didn't get the job she was after -- but M.I.T. got Miss Blanchard. Two weeks later she took up new quarters in the Electrical Engineering Department.

"I've been right in the same spot ever since," Miss Blanchard says cheerfully, "and I wouldn't leave it if I could." Her international clientele (former students) grows bigger by the day, and her knowledge of the department is second only to that of Prof. Carlton Tucker, who beat her to M.I.T. by just one year (1918).

When Miss Blanchard isn't holding down the E.E. fort at M.I.T., she's as likely as not tampering with her extensive stamp and bookplate collections, or taking some of the neighborhood (Hingham) kiddies for a pony ride. But if it's summer, Miss Blanchard's number one choice is the high seas. "I don't cruise as much as I once did," she says, "but I still sail whenever I get the chance." She is also a fishing enthusiast -- "not with a rod, you understand." Her biggest triumph was a mackerel she once nabbed in Edgartown (Martha's Vineyard), and Miss Blanchard wasn't so much impressed with the fact that she caught the fish as she was with its flavor. "All the difference in the world from what you buy on the market," she says emphatically.

Land-wise, Miss Blanchard gives top priority to Cuttyhunk, an island where she makes at least one annual visit. Once, after she and some friends had moored their boat in Cuttyhunk Harbor, she saw a familiar craft motoring up the channel. "Soon as I saw the name on it, I knew it was Professor Radford," says Miss Blanchard. Dr. Radford (Assoc. Director, Lincoln Lab) dropped sail close by, and M.I.T.'s two electrical engineers had reunion refreshments aboard ship.

RECOMMENDED

The TCA Blood Drive, scheduled for a formal opening on May 7, is already under way. Bob Phinney, student chairman of the drive, encourages volunteers to sign up early (booth in Bldg. 10), offers these sidelights on the project: By special arrangement with the Red Cross -- and because M.I.T. makes substantial blood donations twice a year (7000 pints over the last six years) -- every student, faculty member, and employee is entitled, free of charge, to transfusions needed in emergencies which arise while they are at M.I.T. This arrangement holds true whether or not the person concerned has made an individual donation.

Bartok, Boston Symphony's Mazzeo, and Marchal discuss first recording

HERE AND THERE

André Marchal, the French organist who is giving a series of five recitals at M.I.T. this month and next, is also making five recordings (Unicorn) in Kresge. The engineering end of these discs is being handled by the acoustical expert, Peter Bartok, who is using the "binaural" (double microphone) system of recording. This will mark the Kresge organ's stereophonic debut in the musical world -- and the first series of Marchal recordings with an American label. Mr. Marchal, incidentally, is an old hand at these things. To date he has won France's "Grand Prix du Disque" (award for the best recording of the year) three times.

Prof. John A. Hrones, director of D.A.C.L., will take on the newly-created duties of vice president at the Case Institute of Technology (Cleveland, Ohio) beginning July 1.

Received (on schedule) in the Architecture Department: a letter from Austria addressed to the "Engineering High-School of B O S T O N."

Dr. Vannevar Bush (former M.I.T. professor, dean, vice-president, and former president of Carnegie Institution, Washington) has been elected chairman of the M.I.T. Corporation. As accepted by Dr. Bush, the chairmanship involves no administrative responsibilities. He will serve as "the Corporation's presiding officer in fulfilling the usual functions of a chairman of the board of trustees." President Killian will continue as chairman of the Corporation's Executive Committee and as M.I.T.'s chief executive officer.

Mrs. Daniel Qualter (Meteorology, formerly Barbara Keegan) set a new record at her recent wedding. She is the first bride to have ever arrived on time at the Sacred Heart Church in Roslindale. To make things more difficult for future competitors, Barbara was exactly half an hour early.

FOR SALE

'50 Crosley convertible. 25,000 miles. Excellent condition. $70. Doell, Ext. 3396.

Won't someone buy my vio - lin? Wurlitzer Cremona. Mellow tone. Used in string trio. Case & bow. $50. Smalley, Ext. 840 (Lincoln)

Winchester. 5-year old Garrison colonial. Porch & garage attached. 24-ft. living rm., dining rm., kitchen, 3 bdrms., 2 baths. Wooded lot, 2000 sq. ft. $17,500. Mrs. Slater, Ext. 401 (Lincoln).

'54 Volkswagen. 25,311 miles. H. Karasik, Ext. 2392.

Year-old Revere Tape Recorder (speed 1 3/4 only). Excellent condition. $85. N. Osborne, Ext. 2361.

'55 MG convertible. Ivory & red upholstery. Wire wheels. 20,500 miles. Best offer. Santos, Ext. 840 (Lincoln).

Orchard Acres, Marlboro. Beautiful mod. completely furnished 4-rm. house. 1/4 mi. from lake. Asking $10,900. Pat, Ext. 2538.

Mod. 4-rm. apartment within walking distanceMIT. Parking, laundry facilities. Heat & hot water. Avail. Apr. 15. Barlas, Ext. 3537.

Sears Roebuck "sump pump." Like new. $25 (originally $45). Mr. Walker, Ext. 751.

TECH TALK will be published every two weeks. Address ads to The Editor, Rm. 3-339, Ext. 2709.