

My association with Dr. Bowman led to a startling disclosure about a much publicized North Pole flight in 1926. The conversation took place at Dr. Bowman's summer home on Lake Wentworth, New Hampshire in September, 1949. I later made a memorandum of our talk and had it notarized.

"Finn, I'll tell you something I don't want repeated to anyone as long as I'm around," Dr. Bowman confided. "Will you promise me that before I go on?"

I assured him I would, and he continued approximately as follows:

"Upon Byrd's return from the Arctic in 1926, I had doubt that he ever flew over the North Pole. I asked to see his compila-

tions and what navigational aids were used to prove that he had reached 90 degrees north. Byrd always gave evasive answers and said no one should question his integrity. But he had no proof of having passed the northernmost point of Ellsworth and Amundsen the year before. I got my answer to my suspicion when Byrd returned from the Antarctic in 1930. Byrd visited the AGS and after lunch we went for a walk with one other person, whose name I will not mention, but you know him. It was raining that afternoon and with raincoats on we kept walking and talking for almost four hours around the blocks of Broadway and 156th Street. By that time I managed to break down Dicky-Byrd, and the time it took do so was worth it. Byrd confessed to the two of us then that he had not reached the North Pole, but had missed it by about 150 miles."

At that time Dr. Bowman was Director of the American Geographical Society in New York. Why, I wondered, had he not immediately let the American people know the truth about it? He replied that no one would have believed him, for Byrd was a worshipped national hero. What a dreadful thing it would be to reveal him as a liar.