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### INTRODUCTION

It is both an honour and a great pleasure to me to call this conference to order. I appreciate this opportunity and am very grateful to you who have responded so well to our challenge to come here to the verge of the inhabitable world, to participate actively in this symposium. I express this appreciation to each and every one of you but name here only Gunnar M. Idorn and Bryant Mather, who through years have exercised the motive force behind our little endeavour in this research, as they have done for so many others. We are also grateful to have Hoyt Lemons present; his institute the ERO has been so kind as to support and cosponsor our symposium.

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If one has high-alkali cement, and reactive aggregates in ones concretes, one should expect a reactivity that could be detrimental to structures. We in Iceland produce a cement with an alkali equivalent of around 1,5% and much of our aggregates are rich in reactive volcanic glasses. We should therefore and indeed have been concerned. However, we have been fortunate with minimal damage to our structures that we can attribute directly to alkali-aggregate reactions. The reasons for this are as yet undefined, but some of the possibilities are:

- a) Our general use of high-air entrainment as well as the ordinary high porosity of our aggregates.
- b) Our cool and wet climate.
- c) Our diagnostic inability to differentiate between frost damage and damages due to other causes.

Even though our conditions as regards alkali extremes in cement will hardly be matched, increased fuel prices in effect increase cement alkalies in many places of the world. Hence arises our continued interest to search for preventive measures, to counteract the malicious effect of these reactions.

We in Iceland certainly await with enthusiasm your learned submissions, in order that we may refer to these in our future work and decision making endeavours.

