

Introduction and Welcome

by Harmer E. Davis*

This is an anniversary of an event which focused not only general attention but scientific attention on the problems that are created by the subject that brings us here. It is fortunate in the race of men that there are always those sincere and interested few who rally round to give serious and scientific attention to the problems that plague the life of men on this planet. These things do not come all at once, but they evolve. Following the earthquake of 1906 there was a group of men in California who, first by informal interest and finally by formalizing their interest, established the Seismological Society of America. That was in 1907.

Through the interest of such men with driving curiosity to find out why these things are and how they can take steps to prevent difficulties that come about from them, there has been effort over the years to make more scientific measurements in many ways.

Coming to more recent years, through the interest of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey there were programs of measurement around the country and especially in those areas in which earthquakes were likely to occur. Some years ago there was formed an Advisory Committee to the Director of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, so that suggestions concerning improvement of the measurement program could be funneled into the Seismological branch of the Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Out of that group of men, since time had marched on to the point where some measurements and some facility in analysis had accumulated, there were those who felt that attention now should be brought to the problems of what to do about a more scientific approach to the structures that man might build in earthquake areas. And so, in 1950, there was formed the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute.

So these things evolve, and as time goes by we find that the occasion arises where groups can sit down with those who have similar interests all over the nation and all over the world. We are most fortunate and privileged here at the University of California to be able to welcome you to the World Conference on Earthquake Engineering. On behalf of the University I extend our heartiest welcome and hope that you have a most productive conference.

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