

Leading article

AN INTERESTING YEAR

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The retiring President of the American Concrete Institute entitled his final report to his members "An Interesting Year". With apologies to Mr. Burnett, I borrow his title; for it is a most appropriate one for an account of the Society's first year.

The inaugural meeting was barely over when the Inangahua Earthquake, Richter Magnitude 7, of May 24, 1968 devastated a wide area. The Society prepared and published a special bulletin devoted entirely to this earthquake, recording the results of surveys by engineers, seismologists, assessors and builders; along with human interest features of a non-technical nature. At the 1969 Annual Conference of the New Zealand Institution of Engineers a further bulletin published by the Society formed the basis of a symposium on the Inangahua Earthquake.

Dissemination of earthquake engineering knowledge was the committee's prime task for the year. The first Bulletin appeared in June. It was the aim to present information from both overseas and local sources. The first journal got away to a good start with a Welcome to the Society from John Rinne who was the current President of the International Association for Earthquake Engineering and with an article by Dr. Hisada, Chairman of the Japan National Committee for Earthquake Engineering. This issue, also, contains a paper of practical interest from overseas. It is apparent that the Bulletin has the support of local writers of technical material on earthquake engineering. Tributes to the value of these articles have been paid by several well known overseas scientists and engineers.

A copy of each Bulletin is sent to the National Delegate of each National Committee of Earthquake Engineering (and there are some thirty of them throughout the world). The special Inangahua Bulletin was forwarded to all public libraries and local bodies in New Zealand. It was also distributed overseas to the libraries of the many universities carrying out research work in the subject and to many engineers and scientists who have done their share in furthering the objects of earthquake engineering. This wide distribution of the Inangahua Bulletin was made possible due to the ready agreement of the Earthquake & War Damage Commission.

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Forty members attended the inaugural meeting of the Society. It is pleasing to record that during the Society's first year the membership has grown to a total just over two hundred. This included overseas members in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and Japan. Amongst our eminent overseas members we are especially proud to mention Professor George W. Housner, the recently elected President of the International Association for Earthquake Engineering.

Initially, concern was expressed by some members that the Society and the N.Z. National Committee on Earthquake Engineering were on a collision course, that the Society was usurping the functions of the National Committee or that the National Committee itself should have undertaken the duties assumed by the Society. In fact, there has been close co-operation between these two bodies. The Society was set up with the blessing and active assistance of the Chairman of the National Committee and the Society incorporated into its Rules the following clause:

"The Society shall be independent of, but work in close collaboration with the N.Z. National Committee on Earthquake Engineering. The Society may take over from the National Committee such responsibilities, functions and tasks as may be delegated by the National Committee. On all matters relating to policy and/or law the National Committee and the Society shall confer prior to any action being taken."

It has been agreed between the two bodies that the relationship with international associations such as U.N.E.S.C.O. and the I.A.E.E. and also matters of national policy of broad application would be the concern of the National Committee and that specific technical matters, on the other hand, would be the concern of the Society. To implement the policy, the Committee, although interested in the wider area of earthquake engineering research, has passed over to the Society the responsibility for actual administration of a research group. Similarly, although the Committee is involved in recommendations for the inclusion of New Zealand experts in the U.N.E.S.C.O. study missions, it has left the organization of a local earthquake reconnaissance group to the Society. It will be the continuing policy of both bodies to keep the other fully informed on matters of mutual interest. It is pertinent to mention that Mr A. G. Stirrat, Chairman of the National Committee and Dr. R.D. Adams, Deputy Chairman and Mr O. A. Glogau National Delegate to the I.A.E.E. for the National Committee are also currently members of the Management Committee of the Society.

The Society offers a technical service to its members, to Government, local authorities and to other associations. During the past year technical advice has been given to engineers and engineering bodies in India, Australia and the British Solomon Islands. Locally, assistance has been given to kindred associations. Furthermore, it is the hope of the Editor of the Bulletin that the recently introduced Code Feature Section will help members in finding solutions to practical problems on earthquake engineering.

The establishment and progress of the Society has been made possible by the financial assistance of the N.Z. Earthquake & War Damage Commission, together with the administrative services and advice of the N.Z. Institution of Engineers and the support of engineers, architects, scientists and insurance officers. From the new Chairman, Mr R. Shepherd of Canterbury University, the new bulletin editor, Dr. B.H. Falconer of Auckland University and a strong Management Committee elected at the recent Annual Meeting, the Society can expect a vigorous and imaginative extension of the activities of its first year.