THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MATHEMATICIANS

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

From August 30th to September 6, nineteen hundred and fifty, an International Congress of Mathematicians was held at Harvard University under the auspices of the American Mathematical Society. In addition to the principal host, Harvard University, the following acted as co-hosts: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston College, Boston University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Tufts College.

This was the first International Congress of Mathematicians held in the United States since that assembled in connection with the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. At that time an international gathering of mathematicians met at Northwestern University under the presidency of Professor William E. Story of Clark University. Professor Felix Klein of the University of Göttingen attended this Congress as the official representative of the German government and brought with him a number of papers by prominent foreign mathematicians. These papers formed an important part of the program of the meetings which were attended by twenty-five mathematicians. The 1950 Congress was the first International Congress of Mathematicians held on the North American Continent since that in Toronto in 1924.

At the International Congress in Oslo in 1936, the American delegation invited the mathematicians of the world to hold their next general gathering in the United States in 1940. Plans had been practically completed for such a gathering at Harvard University when the outbreak of World War II necessitated the cancellation of the Congress. At the close of the War in 1945, the Council of the Society at once began discussion concerning the possibility of a gathering of the mathematicians of the world. Those guiding the policies of the American Mathematical Society were insistent that there should be no international congress until such a time that the gathering could be truly international in the sense that mathematicians could be invited irrespective of national or geographic origins. On December 10, 1947, the Council of the Society voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Emergency Committee for the International Congress of Mathematicians that steps be taken at once to elect officers and committees for the next congress.

Early in 1948, the following officers of the Congress were elected: President Designate: Oswald Veblen, Institute for Advanced Study;