

## The International Scene

# Eleventh Congress of the International Council on Archives: An American Perspective

compiled by NANCY BARTLETT

**Introduction:** On the eve of its 1989 bicentennial, France played host to over 2,000 archivists from more than one hundred countries. The occasion was the eleventh quadrennial congress of the International Council on Archives (ICA), held on 22-26 August 1988 in Paris. The theme of the congress was "new archives." The French hosts were surprised with the challenge of accommodating hundreds more ICA participants than anticipated. Yet the charge was accepted and met with panache, with results matching the high expectations of the foreign visitors.

Among the vast throngs of archivists carrying plastic conference briefcases, with colors signifying the bearers' language ability, were forty-five U.S. archivists equipped with the yellow cases for English speakers. Though the number of Americans was outnumbered by the West Germans (113), Spaniards (144), and even Canadians (58), this relatively small U.S. ensemble still played a significant role in the congress.

What follows is a *rapportage* that combines the reports of American archivists who participated in the ICA Congress in an official capacity and the personal observations of other individuals who attended as well.

*About the compiler and contributors:* "International Scene" co-editor Nancy Bartlett invited a number of the American archivists who participated in or attended the ICA Congress to contribute brief reports of their activities and observations. She compiled the submissions from nearly half of the American archivists who gathered in Paris. Bartlett thanks the authors for their reports and for the wonderful memories they have provided of experiences shared in the City of Light. Names of individual contributors are indicated by boldface type throughout the report.

## Plenary Session

*The American archivist with the most visibility at the conference was **Trudy Huskamp Peterson**. She presented one of the major papers at the plenary session entitled "New Archival Materials, Principles: Creation and Acquisition." Through headphones attached to each seat in the vast assembly hall, Peterson's remarks were simultaneously interpreted from English into French, German, Spanish, and Russian. Peterson's contribution to this report describes both the elaborate preparation for such an event and distinguishes the characteristics of an international forum.*

Planning for an ICA session begins years before the session is to take place. In October 1986 Robert Warner, then the U.S. member of the ICA executive committee, informed the ICA that I was the nominee to present the U.S. paper. I was officially notified of participation in March 1987. By that time Mme. René-Bazin had sent out an international survey questionnaire on the creation and acquisition of new archival materials, and she graciously shared the returns with me. My paper had to be in Paris by the end of December 1987 so that it could be translated into French, Spanish, German, Russian, and Chinese. By June 1988, I had English language copies of all the papers for the session and in July I received the keynote papers for the other two plenary sessions. On Sunday before the congress began all participants in the plenary sessions met with ICA officials to review the ground rules. Each session had a chair and a secretary (in my session, from Botswana and Sri Lanka, respectively). The plenary sessions are three hours long, with no break, and it is the duty of the chair to see that the keynote speaker takes no longer than twenty minutes and the subsidiary speakers take no longer than ten. The alert reader will notice that with six subsidiary speakers, this adds up to an hour and twenty

minutes of the three hours. What happens during the rest of the session? Interventions.

Persons in the audience who wish to speak must register in advance of the discussion period. The names and nationalities of the intervenors are given to the chair, who is responsible for limiting the interventions to five minutes. Each intervenor is also required to provide a written summary of the intervention to the *Archivum* desk so the interventions may be included in the proceedings of the congress. Meanwhile the secretary of the session is to be taking notes all during the interventions, and in the last fifteen minutes of the plenary the secretary is asked to summarize all the papers and the interventions.

The plenary sessions in Paris were held in a large auditorium. Speakers sat behind a table on the stage, to the right of which was a mammoth television screen. The entire proceeding was televised, much like a U.S. professional basketball game, with the picture of the speaker (and sometimes the whole stage) appearing simultaneously on the big screen. On the stage there was a monitor so you could see where the camera was at any given moment, but the brightness of the lights meant that the audience was largely invisible.

When one speaks for about eight minutes out of three hours but is potentially on camera at any time therein, it is important to find a way to concentrate. I solved that by taking notes of all the interventions. My notes show twenty-four interventions, from persons representing France, Canada, China, Italy, Rwanda, Brazil, the U.S.S.R., Tunisia, the G.D.R., the U.K., Spain, Zaire, India, Zimbabwe, Mexico, and Switzerland. In no case did the panel of speakers reply to the interventions. Often the intervenor's statement appeared to be carefully prepared in advance, making the entire session very unlike the free-flowing commentary that enlivens the latter part of a session in the U.S.

The intervenors talked about a wide variety of issues. One very interesting group of comments focused on the place of oral history in an archives. Perhaps the most arresting comment in my notes is one by an archivist from Senegal, who said that oral history is extremely important to "the forgotten peoples of the world—those who invented neither gunpowder nor colonies."

All the participants in the plenary session were of uniformly high caliber. The chair was extremely forceful and kept the intervenors and speakers on time, and the secretary produced an amazingly cogent summary of the remarks. It was a true professional pleasure to have participated in the session and I am sure that whoever presents the U.S. paper in 1992 will find the same sense of international comity.

### Committees, Sections, and Working Groups

*In contrast to the plenary session, the activities of other official U.S. participants were not elaborately broadcast. Several standing working groups, sections, and committees took the opportunity of the congress to meet for the purpose of reporting and deciding upon ongoing projects. Eleven Americans partook officially in the proceedings of ICA committees. For **James Fogerty** of the Minnesota Historical Society, the 1988 ICA meeting was his first as an official participant.*

I went as a member of the official U.S. delegation because of my membership on the ICA Committee on Audiovisual Archives (CAV). I was appointed to ICA/CAV in 1986 when it became a committee after several years of working group status. Since that time it has met in Madrid (1987) and The Hague (1988), and so I came to Paris with a small network of colleagues already established through committee work. The meeting was especially useful since it offered an opportunity for several of the com-

mittee's corresponding members, who do not usually attend its yearly meetings, to join the discussions. As I prepare for next March's ICA/CAV meeting in Brussels, it is good to reflect that the work goes on independently of the quadrennial conferences. Our committee has a platter full of projects and concerns, from the appraisal of television news film and the preservation of photographs in the tropics, to the rationalization of differences between oral history and oral tradition—a difference of major interest in the Third World.

***Larry Hackman**, of the New York State Archives, was involved in more than one official meeting.*

My particular interests during the congress, beyond meeting international colleagues individually, included attending the two meetings of the ICA section on Municipal Records. This has been the fastest growing membership group within the ICA and was accorded official section status during the Paris General Assembly meeting. I presented to the section a brief overview of local government records activities in the United States, stressing the diversity of approaches from state to state and the generally underdeveloped nature of municipal government archives compared to some other sectors in the U.S. A revised version will be published in an upcoming number of *Janus*, the journal that the section cosponsors with several other ICA bodies, including the section of professional associations. The most important activity for me in Paris was attending the meetings of the ICA's Committee on Current Records to which I have recently been appointed. This committee has ten official members and is the newest ICA committee.

***Francis Blouin**, director of the Michigan Historical Collections, experienced the less predictable side of committee work.*

During the congress, the Committee on Education met three times. The first was to

consider its status within ICA. There was some sentiment that the committee should become a section with broader participation. Michael Cook, chair of the committee, ably led the discussion. The second meeting was primarily a social gathering of committee members. The third session was somewhat of a surprise. Eckhart Franz of ICA met with the committee to announce that it has been disbanded and would be newly reconstituted for four more years at which time the decision would be made about its becoming a section.

*Megan Sniffin-Marinoff, Simmons College, attended the pre-conference International Colloquium on Archival Education.*

The program outline called for lectures and discussions on topics such as the possibility of a universal structure of archival training and the organization of archival education. But what proved most interesting was the manner in which the topics were presented and discussed. After receiving a copy of a paper either in the original language or translation, the group of approximately forty participants divided into anglophone and francophone working groups to discuss the papers. Whether it was group dynamics, a real difference in the anglo and franco approaches to archival practice and education, or a combination of both, the two groups consistently came to different conclusions about the topics and how to proceed with further discussion. The atmosphere was collegial and in a strange way productive. What lingered throughout was the question of whether or not there were truly universal conclusions to the issues at hand. Even though much was left unresolved, I left this colloquium with a greater appreciation of the difficulties of setting any kind of universal standards. Aside from the anglo and franco divisions, time was spent both formally and informally trying to break down stereotypes and to make clear exactly what is going on,

beyond the pages of catalogs and other official claims, in universities and other archival training settings around the world.

*Anne Van Camp, who recently moved from the Chase Manhattan Archives to the Hoover Institution, served as the U.S. representative to the ICA Business Archives Committee.*

The Business Archives Committee met each day and our open sessions were heavily attended by nearly 100 other business and economic archivists. During these sessions, papers on "New Record Forms and Uses of Archival Materials in Business Archives" were presented by committee members and other professional business archivists from the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, France, New Zealand, China, Japan, Sweden, and the U.S. The majority of new corresponding members and those attending our sessions were archivists from financial institutions, large multinational corporations, or major research centers focusing on economic studies. The committee's ongoing projects include the production of a multi-lingual brochure on the value of business archives, the compilation of a worldwide directory of business archives, and the production of a manual, in English, for archivists dealing with business records.

*Maygene Daniels, from the National Gallery of Art, participated in the ICA's Working Group on Architectural Records as the U.S. official representative.*

Over the past four years; members of the group slowly have been working to gather information concerning the location of architectural records of international expositions. Such records can be found in the government or private archives of the city and nation in which it was held, in files of architects who designed the various pavilions, in archives of other nations participating in the exposition, and elsewhere. A search for such records therefore must be truly international in scope. In many ways

the working group's efforts to bring together information on these architectural records can be seen as a pilot project in international cooperation in gathering data concerning specialized archival materials.

In keeping with the theme of the international congress, the working group also examined technological developments in architects' drawing methods and in the manufacture of architectural records and in gathering, storage, and presentation of cartographic data. Particular emphasis was placed on North American developments in these fields, and members of the group requested more information on this subject at their next meeting.

Sara Stone of the Foundation for Documents of Architecture, based at the National Gallery of Art, presented a report concerning the international database of information on architectural drawings that the foundation is developing. Members of the group also formulated plans for increased communication and interchange internationally, by encouraging appointment of corresponding members to the group, and by holding roundtables with representatives of various organizations, annually if possible. In keeping with this concept, the next meeting of the group is scheduled to coincide with the bi-annual meeting of the International Council of Architectural Museums (ICAM) in Montreal in September 1989.

*Mike McReynolds, of the National Archives, participated in the meeting of Archivum editorial board members and national correspondents. He observed a continuity in procedures for the journal's board, and sympathized with the efforts of the editor to maintain a timely publication schedule.*

*The establishment of a new working group brought special responsibilities to conference participant **Helen Samuels**, director of the Institute Archives and Special Collections at Massachusetts In-*

*stitute of Technology. She describes her role in a report of the first meeting of the Working Group on the Archives of Science and Technology.*

In 1987 the Executive Committee of the International Council on Archives agreed to establish a working group on the archives of science and technology and asked that the group meet for the first time in Paris at the ICA meeting. In preparation, the convenor, Helen W. Samuels, mailed a brief questionnaire to over one hundred national and state archives to encourage attendance and solicit information about science and technology archives. In general the information gathered from the fifty-five respondents demonstrates that although the national archives have authority for these records, to the greatest extent the documentation of modern science and technology is not in archival custody. The two prime reasons for this fact are that records laws require that material be transferred only after a period ranging from twenty to sixty years, and scientific and technological institutions maintain their own archives either by tradition based on research needs or by legal mandate. Archivists expressed particular concerns about the problems posed by the volume, technical nature, and computerization of these records. The purpose of the Paris meeting was to discuss the role of the working group, identify those willing to participate in these activities, and make recommendations to ICA. Participants in the two sessions included representatives of several national archives, public and private scientific research institutions, private companies, and universities. Both the questionnaire and the discussion at ICA attest to the interest in the topic and the need to provide information to the membership about scientific and technological documentation. Information about current projects and guidance on technical issues such as appraisal and automation were deemed highly valuable. The group agreed to explore ways in which they could gather



and transmit information to educate ICA about the need to attend to scientific and technological documentation.

The magnitude and complexity of many problems associated with scientific and technological records, however, suggest that ICA must work in collaboration with other organizations to find solutions. The International Council of Scientific Unions is the most logical body, as the national academies of science and the international disciplinary organizations, as well as information groups such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and CODATA, the Committee on Data for Science and Technology of the International Council on Scientific Unions (ICSU), are among its members. Results of joint efforts will be reported to the ICA membership, and we hope they will suggest future joint projects.

### Related Activities

*Among the tours offered to the congress participants was a three-hour visit to the Etablissement de Conception et de Production Audiovisuelle at Fort-d'Ivry-sur-Seine. This military archive of visual images was visited by Cornell University's archivist, **Kathleen Jacklin**. Particularly interesting was the automated retrieval system of photographs, whereby selected images may be viewed on the computer screen.*

The cinematic collection of film is stored in vaults in stone buildings, once used as stables; they are in part underground and suitably cool. In addition to seeing blowups of photographs of particular interest displayed on the walls of the reception area, we were shown two short indoctrination films, one from each world war.

*Along with official excursions, there were also meetings elsewhere in Paris of archival interest groups outside of the formal agenda of ICA. **Beth Yakel**, project archivist for the Religious Archives*

*Technical Assistance Project, attended a meeting of Catholic archivists representing European dioceses, Catholic organizations, and the Vatican.*

A Catholic priest addressed the audience about the importance of religious archives and their research value. Access did not seem to be an issue. Actually, the question period was more interesting. There was a great debate concerning the Mormons' microfilming sacramental records.

### Executive Committee

*In addition to the American involvement in subsidiary groups within ICA, there was also an official representative of the United States on the Executive Committee of the ICA, which is its main policy group. **Robert Warner**, from the University of Michigan's School of Information and Library Studies, submitted the following summary of his official duties.*

Quite frankly I never thought that I would finish my term. My plan was that I would resign from the committee when a new Archivist of the United States was appointed; however, we all know the story and know that the appointment was a long time in coming. Thus, I was able to serve out my full term and to see Don Wilson elected to the executive committee as my successor. This was also the last meeting for Hans Booms, Archivist of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the outgoing President of the ICA. He presided through all the meetings and throughout the congress, and as usual did an admirable job. There were no major issues brought before the group, as is not unexpected with outgoing councils. There was discussion of the next congress to be held in Montreal.

Perhaps the most interesting item on the agenda was the invitation from the People's Republic of China to host the 1996 meeting in Beijing. This is a historic invitation in that it will be the first time the congress

will have met in Asia and in a Third World nation. Incidentally, the Chinese had done their political homework very well. I had received a letter before the Paris meeting urging me to support the nomination. That was very easy for me to do since I have only the greatest respect and the warmest affection for the Chinese archival officials I have become acquainted with through the years. I know that Beijing will be a fascinating city in which to meet and that the Chinese will do a fine job.

My most important role at the meeting was to give a report, both written and oral, on the progress of the Second European Conference [held in Ann Arbor in May 1989]. This was well received and the whole meeting was carried out in an amicable and politics-free environment. There were no tedious interventions that went beyond the subject of the conference. In fact the only real division arose over giving an honorary membership to an Asian political leader for having promoted archives legislation. Some of us were not too happy with that idea. I noted, for example, that if we used that as a precedent there are two or three American political leaders who should have honorary memberships too for their role in the independence movement of the National Archives. However, despite grumbling from myself and others, the matter passed, largely I think because it was too far along and not worth causing some potential negative international repercussions. Over the years the meetings have often been tedious, and the issues not of the greatest import, but on the whole, I have enjoyed my experience with ICA and hope to elaborate these observations in a more lengthy article.

### General Observations

*Another true veteran of international archival affairs, Frank Evans of the National Archives, offered a few expert observations relating Paris to previous congresses.*

Washington ('76), London ('80), and Bonn ('84) represent a new phase in the history of ICA congresses, both in terms of topics (current problems and impact of technology) and formats (few readings and set pieces irrelevant to the subject of the session). Montreal ('92), with its "advanced" archival programs, should complete this cycle that began in North America. Paris provided a convention center with truly adequate meeting facilities; a banquet at Versailles without speeches, the playing of the fountain and the music of the Court of Louis XIV, and fireworks; a President of the Republic who departed from his prepared text to discourse eloquently on the cultural value of archives; a transoceanic transmission by satellite of an invitation to meet in Montreal in 1992; reunions with old friends and opportunities to make new ones—all in the City of Light where I had the great pleasure of living and working for eight years.

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Evans' compliments about the Parisian ambiance were echoed by many of the Americans, recalling "nightly receptions staged in glamorous settings in the Hôtel de Ville, Hôtel de Rohan, Canada House, and Versailles." Jim Fogerty took the opportunity of these less formal but no less impressive gatherings to converse with archivists from Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Iran, and the Soviet Union. Recalling the exclusive invitation for the congress participants to visit Versailles in the evening, Robert Warner marvelled that "to be able to tour the Palace of Versailles after hours with no one else there was a rare privilege indeed." The many positive experiences for Donald W. Jackanicz, of the National Archives, motivated him to put the 1992 ICA quadrennial meeting in Canada on his advanced planning calendar.

The Paris congress was not without disappointment for a few of the American contingency. For instance, Jean Preston, of

Princeton University, was displeased with the uncertainty of the registration procedure, the comparatively few opportunities for on-site visits to archives in Paris, and her modest housing accommodations. John Knowlton, despite his otherwise positive impression, found the plenary sessions "bland." Yet even Larry Hackman, who experienced the most serious inconvenience of the American visitors, recovered from his hospital stay with only praise for his French hosts' concern.

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The ultimate display of gracious hospitality was offered by the President of France, François Mitterand. With an official entourage, the President honored the congress by addressing in person its assembled participants. Robert Warner recalls that "though occasionally the heads of nations have had roles in executive committee conferences or round tables, this was the first time the head of a major nation addressed the con-

gress. Not only was the fact of his presence extraordinary, but he spoke in such a knowledgeable and substantive fashion about archives. It was not a political speech. Later I heard from French sources that Mitterand does much of his speech writing himself, so it may actually have been mostly his own work. In any case, it was exciting, and certainly a great compliment to the organizers of the congress and to all of us attending."

Through the generosity of Charles Keskemeti, executive secretary of ICA, the text of President Mitterand's address has been made available to the *American Archivist*. The President's eloquent speech was praised by the American participants as a treasured highlight of their visit to Paris. The address was translated by Amanda Arrowsmith of the United Kingdom, and was approved by the Elysée. It was first printed in both English and French in *ICA Bulletin* #31.

## Address Given by Monsieur François Mitterand President of the French Republic to the XIth International Congress on Archives

Paris, France, 24 August 1988

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

I need scarcely repeat how happy France is to welcome this XIth International Congress on Archives. Your arrival was expected, but now that the appointment has been kept, I want to tell you how delighted I am about this. Thirty-eight years ago, your first international meeting was held in Paris. More than 2,000 people are here today, delegates from over one hundred countries—we do not yet know exactly how many, but clearly every continent is represented—and this indicates the road you have travelled and the links you have forged since your first meeting. You preserve and promote the memory of the world. The archives of every country, in bearing witness to yesterday's actions and what led up to them, cast light on the present day as well as informing future plans. Those who exercise responsibility know very well that future directions are never determined without reference to the past.

Archives, too, are available to all; every one of us may make use of them, in our professional or personal lives. This memory which we have at our disposal offers people all over the world the opportunity to define, even to rediscover, their identity, to undertake



projects and to defend their rights, secure in the knowledge of their cause: it gives them, quite simply, knowledge of their history. For thousands of years, men have striven to use this tool, as individuals and as members of a community. The success of this venture depends on archives. Indeed, since we are in France, on the eve of the bicentenary of our great Revolution, how can we forget that the creation of our own national and departmental archives dates from that moment? As we celebrate this event, the documents gathered in them will allow us—are already allowing the French—to understand more fully the life, aspirations, and actions of those to whom we are heirs.

I should like at this point to say something to you about new technology. Periods of great change—political, social, or technological—perhaps sharpen our concern not to lose the thread of ever-accelerating history. Our modern age, which has seen a tenfold increase in the means of communication between people, presents archivists with many new challenges. Today, as your congress theme witnesses, the remarkable development of new technologies requires a rethinking of policies for the collection, conservation, and exploitation of what will become the inheritance of future generations.

The rising tide of written records, and the abundance, too, of oral archives, together with the revolution in techniques of communication and information, all of which are interdependent, as well as the increase in sources termed ephemeral because they do not have the permanence of paper: all these require a redefinition of perspective and method in organising memory for posterity. In my view, it is splendid that you have decided to dedicate your congress sessions to studying those techniques.

Allow me a digression on what my country, France, has undertaken. I am not citing it as a model, but you ought to know about our particular contribution—I am sure there are similar projects elsewhere. As I have just said, archives—tomorrow's archives—will no longer consist simply of what remains after the passage of time, but will comprise what people have chosen to place at the disposal of those who come after them, from generation to generation. So our responsibility for them has grown. When we take action—at that very moment—we have to consider that action's place in posterity's memory. For this reason, a head of state, a government, a business, or any group of people acting within society have to include within their priorities the provision of an effective archives service.

I wanted to establish a pattern for this. The archives service of the President of the Republic, which selects items to be added to the National Archives, is now, I think I may say, in the forefront of progress in information technology as well as in collecting methods and in the conservation of documents. The evidence shows that we are not stopping there. In deciding from 1981 onwards to increase significantly the resources available to archive services, and in using new technologies to develop scientific and cultural policy, I wanted archives to be treated as an essential dimension of national life, and I wished France to use these new methods to cherish its collective memory.

The first problem was to preserve the archives which are being created daily, even as we speak. In 1984, the capacity of the Centre of Contemporary Archives at Fontainebleau, not far from Paris, was doubled, and we have built laboratories for the conservation of the new format archives to which your congress is dedicated. At the same time, I wanted to provide overseas archives with a centre where documentary resources relating to the numerous countries who have shared in our history could be reassembled. The Aix en Provence Centre, endowed with an impressive library containing archive collections from central and local administrations, is becoming a focal point for research into developing countries.

But other archives are in danger—those of businesses, affected by the upheavals of

industrial society. We nevertheless need their historical perspective if we are to understand the past two centuries we have lived through. We must, in consequence, work to preserve archives generated by economic and social organizations, which define and shape human relationships within the world of work. There are thousands of archive collections which are indispensable to an understanding of our world: those of chambers of commerce and of trade, of professional organizations of employers and workers, of all associations that express the aspirations of the world of work.

That is why, four years ago, we decided to create a Centre for Archives of the World of Work in Roubaix, a town in northern France; work on this is now in progress. I believe we shall be giving the twentieth century the right to its own memory, which is not simply that of state administrations, territorial groupings, or particular collections. Clearly, the memory of administrations and territorial groupings has not been forgotten. We have doubled available resources, and the State will support capital projects. We want to encourage local efforts to develop initiatives such as new buildings for the preservation and exploitation of archives. I imagine that in many other countries of the world a similar effort is being currently supported.

I know very well, too, that even here we need to find models and seek inspiration from those achievements which are most highly regarded in your particular countries. But in the final analysis we ourselves, in a country with a long history, with buildings accessible to the whole world, with exhibition areas, with places adapted for educational use, must still do our utmost to secure the necessary infrastructure. After all, our real task—yours and mine—is to guide the younger generation towards the proper exercise of their critical faculties, and the development of a sense of civic responsibility informed by knowledge of their past.

It is also essential that users of archives find the equipment necessary for their work in the face of increasingly complex scientific developments. That is why, in the heart of Paris, we have now provided a Reception and Research Centre for the National Archives, in a prestigious location known to historians the world over, where they have at their disposal the practical resources to match their intellectual aspirations. This modern building, where new technology is at the service of the public, is open to scholars from many countries. People come in their thousands every year—from more than eighty nations so far—to consult the archives which reflect our past, and perhaps some part of theirs.

Civilization depends on the material in which you deal. Modern methods ease access by researchers and members of the community to their heritage. With this in mind, I have recently promoted a project for the construction of a massive library in France. This huge library, new in concept yet geared to the current state of knowledge, is not unique worldwide. I have noted with pleasure that a number of countries have already taken a lead here. It is essential, though, that France have this library, covering all fields of knowledge, at everyone's disposal, making use of all means of data transmission, of preservation, of communication of knowledge, and of remote access. This new endeavor is prolonging the action that has been carried out in recent years for modernizing and equipping the archives of France.

We have to discover, for the benefit of the public at large, new links between traditional written sources and the developing techniques which you are currently discussing. The realization of this great project of which I have been speaking carries with it an ambition for the future which is not mine only, and one far from alien to your work: to do our utmost now in terms of planning and equipping for the future to ensure the life and growth of the heritage in our keeping—to seize the tools of technology and turn them into instru-

ments for preserving and understanding the past; we are, after all, creating the past every day.

I do not think it possible to direct a state, to take on the leadership of a nation, to secure the destiny of a people, without the belief that through libraries, through archives of every kind, through the link they form between all periods of history we can, I hope, become worthy to undertake responsibility for public affairs. I believe that culture is a response, perhaps the main one, to the questions men ask of themselves in recurring moments of despair, and that you, ladies and gentlemen, you play a major part in this through your work, often humble work which requires enormous patience, great attention, minute concentration, and a sharpened sense of duty. Your contribution to the development of this culture is greater than we can know.

Four years ago, you recall, I invited your congress to meet in France, and I am delighted that you have assembled here, in a country proud of its civilization and, as I have told you, ready to use all the new means that intelligence and human technologies suggest to us. In this area, specialists like you know the value of shared consideration, of the meeting of experience, of exchanges between countries. In this area, none of us can work alone. Our national archives are indispensable elements in international cooperation, the extent of which I can appreciate when I see such diversity before me in this room.

Yes, I repeat, in a world of accelerating change, you are the guardians of a kind of permanence, the permanence of memory. Therefore, I promise you that this Paris Congress will live up to all your expectations, that it will formulate resolutions to enlighten those of us who are responsible for our countries, and I ask you to believe that France will pay particular attention to the conclusions which are passed to me at the end of your deliberations. We welcome you, ladies and gentlemen, to our capital; we welcome you to our country. We are confident enough to believe that we can help you, can offer you something extra, and we are also modest and humble enough to appreciate what you are bringing to us. Therefore let us combine our many and varied contributions, drawing the best from them to ensure the progress of humanity.

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*The twelfth International Congress on Archives will be held 7-11 September 1992 in Montreal, Canada. For further information, contact Claude Minotto, executive director, 1945 Mullins Road, Montreal, Quebec, H3K 1N9, telephone (514-873-3067).*