

Histoire et civilisation au Château Ramezay History and Civilisation at the Chateau de Ramezay

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HISTOIRE ET CIVILISATION AU CHÂTEAU RAMEZAY

Monique Brunet-Weinmann



1. Le Château Ramezay
aspect actuel.
(Phot. Gabor Szilasi)

L'an dernier, le Château Ramezay rouvrait ses portes, à temps pour accueillir la vague estivale des touristes qui vient battre les pavés de la Place Jacques-Cartier toute proche, attirée, au-delà du stationnement municipal anachronique dans cet ensemble, par le havre de silence et de fraîcheur qu'est, derrière ses grilles, la vieille maison de pierres. L'importante restauration intérieure était achevée, mais l'aménagement des lieux d'exposition doit se poursuivre pour améliorer la mise en place des objets et renouveler l'intérêt des visiteurs en permettant à l'une des salles de recevoir des expositions temporaires. Comme dans le cas du Château Dufresne, restauration et aménagement ont été rendus possibles grâce au mécénat de la Fondation Macdonald Stewart, dont le président est M. David M. Stewart, avec la participation du Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Québec et du Conseil des Arts de la Région Métropolitaine de Montréal.



2. La salle à manger est remarquable par l'ensemble de tapisseries qu'elle présente: la grande tapisserie des Flandres du 17^e siècle, à sujet historico-allégorique suédois; l'écran de cheminée en bois doré de la même époque et le canapé Louis XV au riche coloris. Torchère Louis XIV. On trouve les mêmes chaises Louis XIII à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec.

Une gentilhomnière du 18e siècle

Un passé ancien et tourmenté par la présence constante de l'Histoire rendait impossible la tâche de restituer à la demeure son état original. D'ailleurs, on ne peut dire avec certitude si la maison que nous visitons est celle que Claude de Ramezay érigea en 1705 dans les beaux quartiers d'alors, le Vieux Montréal d'aujourd'hui, ou celle qui aurait pu être reconstruite sur son emplacement en 1757 par la Compagnie des Indes. Les études effectuées par les Affaires Culturelles du Québec et par M. Peter J. Stokes pour Parcs Canada s'accordent pour recommander des recherches plus approfondies. Quoi qu'il en soit, les archives possèdent un contrat de construction de 1705 qui confirme que Claude de Ramezay, alors onzième gouverneur de Montréal, établit en ce lieu sa résidence officielle. Les fouilles archéologiques ont mis à jour les fondations de la demeure originelle, plus petite que celle d'aujourd'hui, de nombreuses transformations ayant été effectuées pour répondre aux besoins des occupants successifs. Au début de notre siècle encore, la maison fut agrandie par l'adjonction d'une tour et d'une aile abritant à présent la salle dite de Nantes, de par la provenance des boiseries dont elle est lambrissée.

Tout en conservant ces adjonctions, il fallait débarrasser l'intérieur des transformations accumulées par les modes et les époques. En 1972, le curetage de la structure redonnait aux pièces le style du XVIIIe siècle. Dans leur deuxième phase (1976-1977), les travaux, coordonnés par M. Robert Prud'homme, ont été dirigés par Mme Ibbie Dobell, ex-conservatrice du Musée McCord, pour la période amérindienne et le régime anglais, en collaboration avec M. Peter Winkworth, chargé des estampes, dessins et peintures à l'huile, et M. Luc Matter, designer de musée. La période française a été reconstituée par M. Jean Palardy, expert reconnu



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en mobilier ancien. On voit là de fort belles pièces, et l'ensemble révélé à l'ouverture du musée est très agréable à l'œil, bien qu'on puisse souhaiter plus d'unité dans l'ameublement et les tissus. En effet, les styles sont nombreux: Henri II, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Régence et Louis XV. Il ne pouvait être question de reconstituer fidèlement l'intérieur de l'un quelconque des occupants du Château; il s'agissait plutôt de donner un aperçu de ce que pouvait être l'habitation d'un gentilhomme du 18e siècle en Nouvelle-France.



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La Compagnie des Indes Occidentales

Plus généralement, le but était de faire du Château un musée portant sur l'histoire de Montréal depuis les découvreurs jusqu'à la Confédération et non de donner l'image ponctuelle d'un moment précis centré autour d'une figure historique. Une visite attentive à l'ensemble des salles et des objets ouvre l'imagination sur le vaste réseau d'échanges, de communications terrestres et surtout maritimes dont Montréal constituait l'une des plaques tournantes. La demeure du Gouverneur avait vue, à l'arrière, sur le fleuve sillonné par la navette des barques et son cabinet de travail était relié, par l'intermédiaire des intendants, capitaines, grands marchands, explorateurs, au Canada tout entier, à la France, aux Îles d'Amérique, à l'Afrique, c'est-à-dire surtout aux lieux de trafic de la Compagnie des Indes qui eut là, à partir de 1745, ses bureaux et ses entrepôts. Le séjour de la Compagnie des Indes dans ces murs, en cette seconde moitié du 18^e siècle, instaure une unité de signification entre les intérêts variés du musée — unité que l'étiquetage, insuffisant et imprécis à l'ouverture, ne soulignait pas assez mais que l'aménagement en cours doit mettre en valeur¹. Par lui prend tout son sens la pose, dans le grand salon du Château, de lambris d'acajou sculptés offerts en 1975 par M. Stewart, qui proviennent d'un hôtel particulier sis au 70 du quai de la Fosse à Nantes, sur le port: la Compagnie des Indes Occidentales avait son siège dans la ville bretonne.

Fondée en 1664 par Colbert, la Compagnie des Indes Occidentales reçoit le monopole du commerce du Canada, de l'Acadie, des Côtes de l'Afrique occidentale. Avec la Nouvelle-France, l'essentiel en est la traite des fourrures. Devant un succès médiocre, le roi se réserve, en 1669, d'accorder à des particuliers le droit de faire le commerce. C'est ainsi que Talon obtient la liberté de la traite avec les Indiens, ne laissant aux agents de la Compagnie des Indes que le quart du castor et le deuxième des originaux. A partir de cette même date, quand Colbert entend de reconstituer la marine de guerre pour protéger la flotte de commerce, on exporte aussi le bois de construction navale, notamment vers les chantiers de Nantes. La traite des nègres, qui est une des conséquences de la formation de la Compagnie, procure au port breton une prospérité qui



3. Dans le miroir Régence en bois doré se reflète le portrait de Jacques Testard de Montigny, copie du baron Holmfeld, accroché entre le portrait de Louis XIII et celui de Louis XV jeune homme.

4. Portrait d'Henri IV.

5. Portrait de Louis XIV, de l'atelier d'Hyacinthe Rigaud, dans son cadre d'époque doré à l'or fin, 18^e siècle.

6. La salle de Nantes, qui doit son nom au lieu d'origine des lambris d'acajou de style Régence attribués à Germain Boffrand (vers 1725), de même que la console. Les tableaux qui ornent les dessus de porte placent des personnages, imités de Watteau et de ses imitateurs, dans un port qui rappelle ceux du Lorrain. Parmi les objets Louis XV, on remarque ici une table à jouer, une commode, un cartel avec sa console. Les fauteuils et le canapé sont Régence et Louis XIV. A gauche de la porte, le portrait de M. Bossinot, qui fut commandant de la Compagnie des Indes.

7. Pendule à boîtier vert sculpté au Québec, dont le mécanisme français est signé Valin, vers 1752.

8. Commode en noyer, galbée, à cinq tiroirs, ferrures dorées, 18^e siècle.

1. C'est avec plaisir que nous constatons que nos remarques, en plein accord avec la conception de M. Stewart, auront contribué à la mise en relief de cet aspect dans l'orientation future du Musée.

2. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Le Territoire de l'historien*, Paris, Gallimard, 1973.

atteint son apogée au 18^e siècle. Les étrangers sont frappés par la richesse des demeures qui se construisent sur le quai de la Fosse. Une architecture proprement nantaise voit le jour, influencée par l'ornementation des navires, réalisée entre autres par Germain Boffrand (1667-1754) à qui l'on attribue, à tort ou à raison, la décoration des boiseries qui sont aujourd'hui visibles en partie au Château Ramezay. L'acajou était rare en France, où l'on utilisait surtout le chêne et le noyer. C'est grâce au site portuaire et au commerce colonial que les ébénistes et sculpteurs nantais disposaient de ce bois exotique.

Une petite salle du musée, où l'on est attiré par l'autoportrait coloré et vivant de Zacharie Vincent (Telariolin), chef huron et peintre, est consacrée à la traite des fourrures, enjeu d'un conflit entre la Compagnie des Indes et celle de la Baie d'Hudson, constituée en Angleterre en 1670, quand la première rejoint les rives du Nord dans la seconde moitié du 18^e siècle. La guerre, commencée en juin 1755, s'intensifie, d'abord navale, comme le rappelle dans la salle des estampes une série de gravures illustrant le heurt des deux flottes à Louisbourg, Gaspé, Carrouge, Beauport. La cession de la Nouvelle-France par le traité de Paris (1763) marque la fin des activités de la Compagnie des Indes Occidentales: sous le régime anglais, le Château redevient la demeure des gouverneurs.

Un lieu ethnographique

Par la traite des fourrures, c'est toute une civilisation qui est présentée, celle des trappeurs, des Indiens, des premiers habitants: celle des anonymes par qui l'histoire rejoint l'ethnographie. Il serait logique de commencer la visite par le sous-sol, les fondations du Château abritant une galerie et des salles qui illustrent les fondements de l'histoire qui se déroule en haut, au rez-de-chaussée, au niveau des événements. Il y règne l'harmonie du dépouillement et de la simplicité à laquelle concourent les proportions de la voûte blanche, la netteté des vitrines qui disposent avec goût les outils, objets, images de la vie quotidienne (ce design de grande qualité est le fait de M. Luc Matter), le brun des matières naturelles, bois, écorce, cuir en accord avec la moquette et les lignes noires du fer forgé. Un enclos d'herbes vivaces aménagé en collaboration avec le Jardin Botanique, ajoute une touche de verdure et de vie. Une salle d'audiovisuel accueille les écoliers avec la même beauté fonctionnelle. L'animation est confiée aux guides du Château qui, en costume folklorique, font des démonstrations d'artisanat traditionnel: filage, confection des ceintures fléchées, tissage des catalognes, parmi l'odeur du pain qui cuit dans l'épaisseur de la muraille où est creusé le four de boulanger.

Odeur de la vie éternelle, rythme recommencé des saisons, geste infini du quotidien depuis qu'au pays des Indiens fut opérée la *peuplade* de la Nouvelle-France, souvent à grands coups de filet lancés dans la misère paysanne de Bretagne, de Normandie et d'Anjou. Ainsi a commencé d'être tissée une nouvelle forme de civilisation, tissu sur quoi les noms, les dates, les faits commémorés ne sont que broderies ou accros: une récente école d'historiens dont fait partie Le Roy Landurie, tend à délaissier les grands hommes pour «l'homme moyen, c'est-à-dire en fin de compte l'homme historique»², celui qui fait l'histoire quand il ne se passe rien.



Sans la Société d'Archéologie et de Numismatique de Montréal, nous n'aurions point l'occasion de nous souvenir de tout cela: il lui aura fallu quatre ans de démarches patientes pour soustraire le Château à la destruction. Après bien des péripéties et des hésitations, la Ville de Montréal l'achète le 5 mars 1895 et y installe un musée et une bibliothèque. Le bâtiment a été classé monument historique l'année où la Société en est devenue propriétaire, en 1929. English Translation, p. 87



9. Château Ramezay, détail de la façade.
(Phot. Gabor Szilasi)

10. Vision en perspective de la galerie ethnologique du sous-sol. Au premier plan, à droite, un coin du jardin d'herbes vivaces.

(Les photos sont de Gilles Rivest, sauf mention contraire)

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TOWARD A CAPTIVATING CULTURE

By Andrée PARADIS

At a time when questioning is taking place on the means to be adopted to make cultural *productions* accessible to the greatest number of persons, there is reason for concern over the results obtained by recent experiments, where genuine attempts have been made to reconcile all the aspects of traditional culture, dynamic culture and anti-culture, and to examine the rather unexpected consequences that result.

The multiple and contradictory thoughts presently arising around Centre Beaubourg can only awaken the vigilance of all those who are giving their attention to assure, in their own milieu, conditions of life where cultural values find their place in order to give each person the opportunity of living in dignity according to his tastes and his desires, confidently and in the knowledge of his capacities. As long as culture remains "a secret place of enticement, of initiation, of a symbolic exchange limited and highly ritualized"¹, as long as living culture is other than what refuses it, denies it and tramples upon it, so long is culture a force of resistance, so long is it a perpetual conquest.

It was obvious that in the golden age of supermarkets and mass consumption we came around to applying to culture the same production techniques centred on quantity, growth and commercialization, using the curious reasoning unfortunately too well known: let us produce, multiply, exhibit massively, something will surely be left. In other terms, let us manipulate the public in the sense of quantity rather than quality, in this way creating a climate that is no longer "that of the order of representation, nor of distance, nor of reflection. Something that is akin to panic, to a panic-stricken world."

Action within a limited, restricted sphere, dense and concentrated at the same time, can allow the re-establishing of balances. Under this aspect, the 20+5 working paper, prepared by a committee of the Canada Arts Council that, after twenty years of existence, established the perspectives of development for the coming five years, takes on considerable importance. The Council, according to its president, Gertrude M. Laing, is seeking to open new paths while continuing its support to cultural institutions and existing centres of creativity. It intends also to increase aid to the marketing and distribution of artistic *products*. The size of the country demands that measures be taken to make these more accessible to the greatest number of persons and requires a greater effort in information and communication. Tours, exhibitions, information sessions and meetings can only foster cultural exchange.

We should enjoy programmes of encouragement and regional development which will be produced by means of increased assistance to small localities. This is a desirable step on condition that we make sure that the aid will chiefly profit the *creator*, since he is the one who must always be considered, finally. This leads us to continually redefine the notion of creator; it would doubtless be desirable to establish a permanent research bureau at the Council on the study of the creator's problems and the evolution of the concept of creativity, or to entrust this research program to a university. As for enlarging the place of the arts in the educational process, it goes without saying that this is primarily a provincial responsibility, but it has such scope that the support of federal and municipal organizations can only be beneficial to it. We must remember that ten years after the publication of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Instruction of the Arts (the Rioux Report), the implementing of the recommendations still leaves something to be desired. The priorities of artistic education would, nonetheless, be an excellent factor in the neutralization of the effects of superficial vicissitudes to which societies are exposed more and more. The necessity therefore remains of again seeking within ourselves the notions of culture while attempting to rediscover the virtues of initiation.

1. Jean Beaudrillard, *L'Effet Beaubourg — Implosion et dissuasion*, Paris, Éditions Gallilée, pp. 18-19.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

By Monique BRUNET-WEINMANN

Last year the Château De Ramezay reopened its doors, in time to receive the summer wave of tourists that comes to visit the streets around nearby Place Jacques-Cartier, attracted, beyond the municipal parking anachronistic in this ensemble, by the haven of silence and coolness formed behind its gates by the old stone house. The important interior restoration has been completed, but the planning of the places for exhibition must be continued in order to improve the display of objects and renew the interest of visitors by allowing one of the rooms to house temporary exhibitions. As in the case of Château Dufresne, restoration and installation have been made possible due to the patronage of the Macdonald Stewart Foundation, whose president is Mr. David M. Stewart, with the participation of the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Arts Council of the Metropolitan Region of Montreal.

A Manor House of the 18th Century

An ancient past tormented by the constant presence of History rendered impossible the task of restoring its original state to this residence. Besides, we cannot say with certainty whether the house that we visit is the one that Claude De Ramezay built in 1705 in the beautiful wards of that time, Old Montreal to-day, or the one that might have been reconstructed on its site in 1757 by the West Indies Company. The studies undertaken by Quebec Cultural Affairs and by Mr. Peter J. Stokes for Parks Canada agree in recommending more thorough research. Be that as it may, the archives show a 1705 contract for construction that confirms that Claude De Ramezay, then eleventh governor of Montreal, established his official residence on this site. Archaeological search has exposed the foundations of the original building, smaller than to-day's, many changes having been made to fulfill the needs of successive occupants. Again at the beginning of our century, the house was enlarged by the addition of a tower and a wing presently housing the room called the Nantes hall, from the origin of the woodwork with which it is panelled.

While preserving these additions, it was necessary to rid the interior of the changes accumulated through styles and periods. In 1972, the scraping of the structure restored the style of the 18th century to the rooms. In their second phase (1976-1977), the work, coordinated by Mr. Robert Prud'homme, was directed for the Amerindian period and the English rule by Mrs. Ibbie Dobell, former curator of the McCord Museum, in collaboration with Mr. Peter Winkworth in charge of prints, drawings and oil paintings, and Mr. Luc Matter, museum designer. The French period was restored by Mr. Jean Palardy, a well-known expert in antique furniture. Really beautiful pieces are found here, and the ensemble displayed at the museum's entrance is very pleasing to the eye, although one might wish more unity in the furnishing and the fabrics. Actually, there are many styles: Henri II, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Regency and Louis XV. It could not be a matter of faithfully restoring the interior of one or other of the Château's occupants; it was a question rather of giving a view of what might have been the dwelling of a gentleman of the 18th century in New France.

The West Indies Company

More generally, the purpose was to make the Château a museum on the history of Montreal from the time of its discovery until Confederation, and not to give the exact image of a precise moment centred around an historical figure. A visit concerned with the ensemble of the rooms and the objects opens the imagination on the vast network of exchanges and the land and especially maritime communications of which Montreal was one of the hubs. The Governor's dwelling had a view, at the back, of the river ploughed by the shuttling boats and his office was linked, through intendants, captains, great merchants and explorers, with all of Canada, France, the American islands and Africa; particularly to the trade areas of the Indies Company that had its offices and warehouses there from 1745. The period of the Indies Company within these walls in the second half of the 18th century establishes a meaningful unity between the varied interests of the museum — a unity that the labelling, inadequate and inaccurate at the time of the opening, did not emphasize enough but which the present planning should show to better advantage². From this occupation comes all the significance of the placing in the great hall of the Château of the sculptured mahogany panelling donated by Mr. David M. Stewart, panelling that originated in a private mansion situated at No. 70 Quai de la Fosse at Nantes,

on the harbour: the West Indies Company had its head office in that Breton city.

Founded in 1664 by Colbert, the West Indies Company was given the trade monopoly for Canada, Acadie, and the coast of West Africa. The fur trade was the most important feature of New France. When only moderate success was achieved, in 1669 the king granted to private persons the right to trade. It was in this way that Talon obtained for the habitants the freedom of trade with the Indians, leaving to the agents of the Company only a fourth of the beaver and a tenth of the moose. From this same time, when Colbert undertook to build up the war navy in order to protect the merchant fleet, they also exported wood for naval construction, particularly to the shipyards at Nantes. The negro slave trade, which was one of the results of the formation of the Company, brought to that Breton port a prosperity that reached its height in the 18th century. Foreigners are impressed by the richness of the dwellings built on the Quai de la Fosse. A truly Nantais architecture came into being, influenced by the decoration of ships and executed by Germain Boffrand (1667-1754), among others, to whom is attributed, rightly or wrongly, the decoration of the woodwork that is partly visible to-day at the Château De Ramezay. Mahogany was rare in France, where oak and walnut were mostly used. It was thanks to the harbour site and to colonial trade that Nantais cabinet-makers and sculptors had this exotic wood at their disposal.

A small room in the museum, where one is attracted by the highly-colored, lifelike self-portrait of Zacharie Vincent (Telariolin), Huron chief and painter, is devoted to the fur trade, prize of a conflict between the West Indies Company and the Hudson's Bay Company organized in England in 1670, while the former company reached the coasts of the North in the second half of the 18th century. The war begun in June 1755 intensified, at first at sea, as recalled in the hall of engravings by a series illustrating the encounter of the two fleets at Louisbourg, Gaspé, Carrouge and Beauport. The surrender of New France by the treaty of Paris (1763) marked the end of the West Indies Company's activities: under the English regime, the Château became once more the residence of the Governors.

An Ethnographical Place

By means of the fur trade, a whole civilization is revealed — that of the trappers, the Indians and the first settlers: that of those nameless ones through whom history meets ethnography. It would be logical to begin the visit with the basement, since the Château's foundations house a gallery and rooms that illustrate the bases of the history that unfolds above, on the ground floor, at the level of events. In that part reigns the harmony of the uncluttered and of the simplicity with which the proportions of the white vault coincide, as does the clearness of the show-cases that tastefully display tools and objects, images of everyday life (this fine design is the work of Mr. Luc Matter), the brown of natural materials — wood, bark and leather — in keeping with the carpeting and the black lines of wrought iron. An enclosure of hardy grass, arranged in collaboration with the Botanical Gardens, adds a touch of greenery and life. An audio-visual room welcomes students with the same functional beauty. Animation is entrusted to the Château guides who, in folkloric costume, put on demonstrations of traditional crafts: spinning, weaving of ceintures fléchées and catalogue weaving, amid the aroma of the bread baking in the thickness of the wall into which the baker's oven has been cut.

Scent of eternal life, recurring rhythm of the seasons, infinite daily gesture since, in the land of the Indians, the *peopling* of New France came into being, often as a result of great casts of the net into the peasant poverty of Brittany, Normandy and Anjou. Thus began the weaving of a new form of civilization, a fabric upon which names, dates and deeds commemorated are only embroidery or rents: a recent school of historians, among whom is Le Roy Landurie, tends to neglect great men for "the average man, that is, all things considered, historical man"², who makes history when nothing is happening.

Without the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society of Montreal, we would not have the opportunity of remembering all this: four years of patient approaches have been needed to protect the Château from destruction. After many ups and downs, the City of Montreal bought it on March 5, 1895 and the Society established a museum and a library there. The building was declared an historical monument in 1929, the year in which the Society became its owner.

1. It is with pleasure that we observe that our remarks, in full agreement with Mr. David M. Stewart's conception, have contributed to bringing out this aspect in the Museum's future orientation.

2. *Le Territoire de l'historien*, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Gallimard, 1973.

(Translation by Mildred GRAND)

CHURCH TREASURES IN THE DIOCESE OF JOLIETTE

By Serge JOYAL

Since being founded in 1967, the Joliette Art Museum has been concerned with the protection and publicizing of the regional heritage. Several initiatives have been taken since the classification of the Lacombe House in 1969 and of the church of Saint-Paul de Joliette in 1973, the unfortunately vain efforts to save the former registry office at Joliette in 1975, and the numerous interventions undertaken in the parishes which were occupied in rearranging their church according to the regulations of the new liturgy.

These visits repeated everywhere in the diocese have quickly pointed out that if buildings disappear rather easily in the movement of what is called *progress*, movable objects, little objects, are disposed of still more rapidly, on account of the ease with which they can be transported, modified, made to vanish without hardly anyone being informed or noticing. Very quickly did the urgency become obvious that a reasoned, complete inventory of all the works of art in the possession of the Joliette diocese fifty-five fabrics should be drawn up.

The idea of a systematic survey of the artistic heritage is not a new one. In fact, it dates from the French Revolution. In the 19th century, several countries began operations of this kind. Thus Germany published 500 volumes of a systematic topographical inventory.

In Quebec, very astute men understood the necessity of taking this inventory before too-serious upheaval occurred. Messrs. Jules Bazin, Gérard Morisset and Maurice Gagnon began this task and by 1938 they were at work in the diocese of Joliette. However, their efforts produced only limited results.

The inventory they had prepared was not comprehensive and did not cover all the parishes. In the absence of appropriate rules, the information it contained, lacking much application, long remained buried on some government shelf.

It is enough, for instance, to observe that Saint-Cuthbert Fabric which in 1938 owned one of the most beautiful treasures of goldsmith's craft in the province with its twelve works hall-marked Delezenne, Paradis, Arnoldi, Amiot, Morand and Huguet now retains no more than one: all the others have disappeared. One of the censers by Laurent Amiot was bought in October 1957 by a Montreal antique dealer and sold to the Detroit Museum where it is presently to be found. As for the other pieces, they were either sold or simply stolen or given away, or else exchanged for vases doubtless more brilliant but without any real artistic merit.

Therefore it was necessary to return to the parishes, old as well as new, realizing that the mobility of small objects often makes them take strange journeys: in this way at Sainte-Marcelline, a parish founded in 1927, were found two ciboria that had been acquired a hundred years earlier by the Fabric of Saint-Roch, just as it happened very often that at the founding of a new parish or *colonization mission*, an early parish made a gift of sacred vessels to an unprovided church struggling with increased construction costs and the relative poverty of its flock.

The importance of setting up a complete inventory is more obvious to-day than ever. The economic and cultural upsets of recent years have greatly changed the face of a society that was almost unalterable until lately. Important and precious evidence of that civilization will disappear in the coming years without our being able to prevent this: fire, for instance, is a constant threat in spite of all the efforts expended to prevent destruction. When we think that the three interior church décors sculpted in the diocese between 1808 and 1840 by Joseph Pépin, a sensitive scrupulous artist, and which formed the most complete and the most harmonious ensembles produced by this sculptor, have all perished in fires¹, we understand better why we must increase our efforts and initiatives in order to assure at least the conservation of what we can snatch from fate and fatality.

At the least, it is important to conserve the memory of lost works. Photographs of the period often cover a whole area of our collective memory and it is regrettable that no institution in Quebec presently has the responsibility of keeping a complete photo-library up to date. These photographs are evidence of the transitory character of man's constructions and especially of the swiftness of the change in the environment which goes on almost without his knowing it. It is, in fact, as though man was changing at the same time as the setting that serves him as reflecting mirror. The most disturbing photographs are probably those which contrast a new church with the old one