



ICOMOS CANADA

ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMITTEE

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Newsletter

The ICOMOS 3rd National Congress



.....is being held in Ottawa Nov. 26, 27, 28, 1987. The conference's theme - New Design in Old Design - reflects a key issue in conservation today.

The many workshops which represent the range of disciplines involved in conservation will allow participants to express their views and opinions on the subject of new design in old design. The ideas and resolutions of each workshop will be communicated to all participants in the form of a panel discussion. The conference will terminate with a keynote address from our guest speaker - the distinguished scholar and preservationist of international renown, Professor James Marston Fitch.



James Marston Fitch is Professor of Architecture Emeritus and Director Emeritus of the Historic Preservation Program of the Graduate School of Architecture and Planning at Columbia University. A well-known authority in architecture for more than 40 years, and an international leader in the preservation movement, he has published well over 200 books, articles, reports, reviews and other communications both here and abroad. He has taught and lectured widely, has studied preservation and restoration all over the world, including Africa, the Middle East, and the USSR, and has served as a consultant on a great many historic preservation projects in the United States, the Caribbean, and South America.

A post-conference tour of the new Museum of Civilization to be held Saturday November 28, 1987 at 2 pm will prove to be a highlight in itself. Your active participation in ICOMOS Canada's Annual Congress is vital to the growth and development of conservation in Canada.

A VOTE AGAINST CHANGE?

The Canadian delegation to the ICOMOS 8th General Assembly in Washington D.C. was both large and made up of young professionals compared to most of the other delegations. It was supporting Jacques Dalibard's candidature to the Presidency of ICOMOS. Jacques Dalibard was not elected; he lost to the Italian candidate 240 to 300, a difference of 9%. What does this vote mean?

Many of us present believed that it is the fear of change that mobilized the "old ICOMOS guard" to react this way. Jacques Dalibard spoke openly of change.

Firstly a change from doctrine to process. Doctrine is a set of principles and guidelines or dogmas. It is generally imposed by the elite; it is a top-down approach. A perfect example of this is the new Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas adopted in Washington. Essentially developed by Europeans, it was challenged in the first hours of the scientific sessions that followed its adoption by several lecturers. It is almost useless in the North American context. Very little input, if any, came from parts of the world outside of Europe. The process of participation and consultation was cut short. It should have continued until that input was secured. We believe that the consultation process, the dialogue, was more important than the final document itself. It is in the exchange process that understanding, tolerance, education and discovery of cultural differences occurs. The process should have been strengthened; the document could have waited for a while more.

Secondly, a change from a centralized elitist organization to a decentralized participatory organization. An article published by the other candidate to the presidency in the ICOMOS magazine, just two weeks prior to the elections, states that ICOMOS should be an organization of "the most qualified representatives of the various cultures and civilizations". We believe, as stated in the ICOMOS statutes that "Individual Membership shall be open to any individual engaged in the conservation of monuments, groups of buildings and sites". We believe that ICOMOS should be "our" organization, not the one of our elite's.

Thirdly, a change from the control of change to the management of change. For the last twenty years, we have been told about the necessity of planning, guidelines, integrated conservation, legislation, subsidies; in short, tools for controlling change. Our experience of the last decade in North America and in other parts of the world has taught us that public participation, organization, marketing of heritage, and the integration of economic and tourism factors in conservation practice brings about a much more permanent and significant effect on the conservation of our heritage than control.

The first President of ICOMOS was Italian, the second Belgian, the third French, and now we are back with the Italians again. The philosophy proclaimed by the new President is that ICOMOS should be a centralized, elitist and strong doctrine-oriented organization.

Our delegation definitely had an opposing view on how ICOMOS should be allowed to develop.

Francois Leblanc

