

CLOSING SPEECH by THE PRESIDENT of ICOMOS

This brings us to the end of our first symposium on the problems raised by the conservation and revitalization of gardens of historical interest. We can indeed agree that we have achieved the aims we set ourselves, which were primarily to examine the present state of the whole question and determine the directions our future work should take. One proof of the interest attaching to our meeting has been the enthusiasm with which our invitation was accepted by all concerned, which fully came up to our expectations. We succeeded in bringing together 34 experts representing 14 different countries, and we have heard a total of 14 papers.

It was no easy matter to broach so very vast a subject for the first time without tending to confine ourselves to the realm of vague generalisations. Yet all our successive speakers from the platform were visibly anxious to pursue research of a systematic nature and to probe really deeply into their allotted subject. It will not, I feel, be a waste of time to attempt here to give a short but comprehensive picture of the work you have accomplished during these last few days, which it has been my privilege to witness.

In his remarkable introductory report, Mr. René Pechère recalled the past struggles of landscape architects to promote knowledge of their art and announced that one of the main purposes of this initial symposium would be the compilation of a "grammar-book" of historic gardens and the formulation of a list of the dangers by which such gardens are threatened. The dangers themselves were then examined in greater detail by Mr. Bagatti Valsecchi ; in his opinion they are mainly the result of the rapid and haphazard development of urban and industrial civilisation, which has the effect of sullyng gardens and stifling them out of existence, of modern alterations in ways of living, involving the abandonment of the big estates and their conversion into building sites, and of a failure to

understand the problems confronting the private landlord and the heaviness of his burden. Another speaker, Mrs. Micoulina, very rightly stressed the disastrous effects for ancient gardens of the presence of millions of visitors, yet one more instance of the way man may endanger his own environment. Mrs. Micoulina's suggested remedy - with which I think we are all in agreement - would consist in laying out a public recreation ground in the vicinity of any garden of historical interest.

One of the initial tasks on our programme was to compile provisional lists of ancient gardens on the basis of data supplied by IFLA and checked by the National Committees of ICOMOS. These lists in their present state were submitted to us by Miss Gollwitzer; once they have been further revised and completed we are hoping to publish them as an inventory which will be of vital importance as a reference document.

The legal aspect of the protection of gardens in France was dealt with by Mr. Preschez, who succeeded in deriving some valuable information from rather uninviting material and drew attention to the need to assist owners of historic gardens by amendments to income-tax legislation. The Prince de Ligne, who spoke on behalf of the landlords, recalled the enormous expense involved in the regular upkeep of a historic garden, now that the big country estates were so much less profitable to run and the income derived from them no longer covered the care of their gardens. Another vital problem he raised was that of bequests to heirs, which very often led to the dividing-up of estates in a manner detrimental to them.

In a paper at once extremely brilliant and eminently thorough, Mr. Jean Feray gave us a complete general picture of the problems connected with the upkeep and proper conservation of all those elements which together serve to enhance a garden and give it life - its statues, and fountains, pleasure pavilions, lighting and so on.

Successive speakers from different parts of the world described to us the appearance of gardens in their respective countries and dealt with their special problems. Mr. Yokoyama told us about the very varied types of garden to be found in Japan, ranging from big landscape gardens linked

directly to the countryside round them to the tiny sand and stone gardens in which temples stand. He reminded us that each element of these had a symbolic meaning, which gave added beauty to the whole. Mrs. Baseova described the development of gardens in Czechoslovakia, from the Middle Ages down to the eclecticism of the 19th Century, when nearly all ancient gardens were remodelled as grounds of the informal landscape variety. All were now owned by the State, and she explained that the problem of their upkeep and of the uses to be assigned to them was nevertheless a difficult one. Mr. Fricker brought his gift for brilliant paradox to bear on the gardens of England, more particularly the big grounds designed to resemble natural landscape, which were in reality extremely delicate creations necessitating a great deal of work which had to be carefully concealed. He raised the question of how far it was actually possible to restore the original form of a garden, and emphasized the difference between such work and the restoration of a painting. Mr. Strandberg gave us the history of Swedish gardens in the 17th and 18th Centuries, with their numerous visible traces of influence from France and Italy; he dealt at some length with one characteristic feature of Swedish palace and chateau gardens, the "waterside courtyard", which was the entrance reserved for distinguished people. These courtyards had all unfortunately disappeared with the passing of time, and the problem of restoring them must now be examined. Mr. Orsi put forward a series of views on gardens in Hungary; the country, he explained, had retained some large gardens dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries, many of them complete with their buildings and statues. All of these were State property and were protected by special legislation, but it was still difficult to provide for their upkeep, through shortage of labour and funds. Mr. Prieto Moreno next described the specific problems relating to the magnificent Moorish gardens of Andalusia and gave a number of concrete examples to illustrate the courage required by anyone in charge of an ancient garden if he is to restore it to its original condition in the teeth of the reactions of an ill-informed public opinion.

The paper read by Mr. Alfred Marie was designed to give added value to the tour of Versailles he had himself conducted in so masterly

a manner and was of the greatest interest to all hearers. He told us in more particular of the lengthy research he had needed to carry through to a successful conclusion in the archives and libraries of both France and Sweden in order to build up the all-embracing collection of material which has gone into his big history of the palace and its grounds.

After this brief summary of our work here, it is now a pleasure for me to thank most specially all those who, on either the practical or the theoretical level, contributed to the arrangements for this meeting : the French authorities who so generously granted us the necessary funds ; the Ministry of Cultural Affairs - and here let me thank Mr. Souchal for so kindly coming here to represent the Minister, Mr. Duhamel ; the Directorate of Architecture, and in particular Mr. Michel Denieul, who takes such interest in all our ventures, and the Caisse des Monuments Historiques, whose Director, Mr. Salusse, and whose Vice-president, Mr. Fallier - the latter representing Mr. Malécot - have given us the pleasure of their company.

I would also like once again to express our gratitude to Mr. Emile Bollaert, President of the Ligue Urbaine et Rurale, who was kind enough to agree to preside, and who has been chairing our discussions with such admirable efficiency.

The city of Fontainebleau has given us a most hospitable welcome, and our every gratitude is due to the Mayor, Mr. Séramy, who came specially to join us and received us at the Town Hall, and to the Deputy-Mayor, Dr. Beuzard. With the very kind permission of their owners or curators we have been privileged to visit some magnificent gardens, some public and others private, and we wish to express our most sincere thanks to :

the Viscount de Noailles, our Honorary Chairman, who received us at the Hôtel Pompadour ;

the Count and Countess de Vogüe, who arranged so wonderful a lunch for us in their château at Vaux-le-Vicomte ;

the Duke de Gramont, who admitted us to the Parc de Vallière ;

Baron Guy de Rothschild, who allowed us to visit the Parc de Ferrières ;
Mr. Cazelles, curator of the château and grounds at Chantilly
Mr. Samoyaud, to whom we are most particularly grateful for the welcome
we received at the Palace of Fontainebleau, whose Salle des Colonnes
had provided so magnificent a setting for our meetings ;
Mr. de Cidrac, Chief Architect of Civilian Buildings, who is officially
in charge of the Palace, and so kindly arranged for us to use the
Salle du Jeu de Paume.

I wish to thank especially Mr. Hardouin, who attended our
proceedings as UNESCO representative.

I must now remind you of the vital part played by Mr. Pechère,
Chairmann of the Historical Section of IFLA, who kindly agreed to act
as our chief rapporteur, in the preparations for the symposium and in
its day-to-day organization. We have indeed all of us admired the
capable and authoritative way in which he has been directing our proceed-
ings. I should add that Mr. Pechère is the official representative here
of Mr. Aspesaeter, President of the International Federation of Landscape
Architects, while the Marquis de Amodio represents Europa Nostra and
Mr. Maurice Berry the International Union of Architects.

I would like, on behalf of you all, to express our heartiest thanks
to the French National Committee of ICOMOS, which has been in charge of
practical arrangements for this meeting, and particularly its Chairman,
Mr. Trouvelot, Mr. Berry, its Secretary-General, and Mr. Feray, who kindly
made himself responsible for preparing so exceptional a programme of
visits.

Our thanks are also due to the drafting committee which, with the
help of Mrs. Grémont and Mrs. Geerts, worded the recommendations, and
whose members were Miss Collwitzer, Mrs. Baseova, and Messrs. Dupont,
Feray, Marie, Pechère, Procinaï and Trouvelot.

During the symposium you will have had reason to appreciate the
excellence of the interpreting, which made it possible for everyone to

take a genuine and full part in the discussions, and I would like on your behalf to congratulate Messrs. Bancaud, Carasso and Jagers most sincerely

Let me not, last of all, forget our faithful secretaries, Mrs. Geerts who came specially all the way from Louvain, and Mrs. Grémont and Miss Flichy, who put in several months' hard work in Paris to organize the meeting, and I wish to express our gratitude to all three.

Piero GAZZOLA