

would it be as regards the precious archives now in the hands of the French government. From their close connection with events in the English colonies, they possess an interest as wide as the limits of the continent of North America itself. A hundred years hence the population of North America will have reached four or five hundred millions, of whom fifty millions will belong to Canada. In place of having had to undergo the slow phases of alternate progress and retrogression of the older peoples, we shall, within that short lapse of time, have attained in peace and in the free development of our powers, the highest expression of modern civilization; and then everything connected with our early origin and our infancy as a people, that is to say, whatsoever thereof shall have been preserved, will be faithfully and reverently collected, studied, classified and brought out into the light. What regrets, nay—what reproaches, perhaps—must be uttered by future generations, if a conflagration should deprive them of that precious collection! Would they not be justified in charging us with having been too dilatory in transcribing the valuable papers it contains? In his last report Mr. Marmette expresses himself as follows:—

“More than ever convinced of the great importance of the large collection of MSS., relating to Canada preserved in that department, I beg, in conclusion, Sir, to again call your attention to the necessity of procuring copies of those papers at an early day. Only a few weeks ago a fire occurred in the buildings and threatened the destruction of the vast collection of the colonial archives of France. Are there not good grounds for anxiety in view of the possible loss, which a mere accident may at any moment cause, of the vast and invaluable collection of MSS., which is, in itself alone, the richest treasury of material for the early history of Canada?”

I take from a Paris newspaper of February 15 last, (1899), the following extracts in relation to this question: “The Louvre is in constant danger; the destructive element is lying in wait for it. The cry of alarm has just been officially given by Mr. Doumergue, reporter of the *Colonial Budget*. . . . ‘Every time the firemen pass, I fancy it must be our Louvre that is burning.’ There is no heating apparatus at the Ministère des Colonies, so that the offices are heated by chimney-stoves set up against the board partitions, with pipes passing through the partitions and the canvas ceilings. The officials are perfectly well aware of the danger they are in, and M. Doumergue, as well as M. Redon, the architect of the palace itself, both recognize it. ‘Two years ago,’ said the latter to me, ‘I visited the quarters of the Department des Colonies, and was simply horrified. I made a report, which was less a document than a cry of alarm. I simply cried out: Fire!’”

M. Marmette, in his reports of 1883-1885 and 1887, enumerates the several series of documents consulted by him. He himself pointed out to the copyists and analysed Series C II, consisting, of say, 160 volumes and some cartons. This series, intitled: *Correspondance Générale*, which contains only despatches, letters and documents emanating from the governors general and local intendants and other civil and military officers of Canada, Acadia, Ile Royale and Newfoundland, is beyond question, the most important of the several series. There are others, nevertheless, which are also of great interest, notably Series B., consisting of 212 thick volumes, whereof 119 at least relate to Canada, Louisiana and the islands of America. This series contains despatches from the King, the Secretary of State, and the President of the Conseil de Marine to the Governors and other officials of the Colonies. The collection called