



## *Parliamentary Book Shelf*

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**The Québec Parliament Building: A Monument to History.** Text by Gaston Déschênes, Photographes by Francesco Bellomo, Les Éditions Stromboli, Assemblée nationale du Québec, 2007.

The City of Québec marks its 400th anniversary in 2008 with millions of tourists expected to attend numerous special events. There will be no shortage of souvenirs but for anyone interested in Parliament it will be hard to find a more beautiful memento than this lavishly illustrated, intelligently written book. The author is an historian who was a long time researcher for the National Assembly. The photographer is head of a publishing house that specializes in prestige editions.

The book actually spans more than 400 years going back to the discover of New France by Jacques

Cartier in 1534. Subsequent chapters are dedicated to the various stages in Québec's development including the founding of New France, the traumatic transfer in 1763 from one colonial power to another, the establishment of parliamentary institutions less than thirty years later, the rebellion of 1837, the organisation of a provincial government that emerged after confederation, the construction of the present day legislative building in 1887, the evolution of parliamentary institutions during the 20th century and the political changes wrought by the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s.

Each chapter is illustrated with some of the most famous paintings, photographs, maps, archival documents and artifacts in Québec history. Of course, it is hardly possible in a coffee table book to deal with all

the intellectual and political debates that make Québec history so interesting. But the authors do a remarkable job of at least touching upon almost all the main characters and events from the time of Champlain to the days of Robert Bourassa. Notable by its absence, however, is any mention of the patriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982.

Four hundred years is a short time when measured against ancient civilizations and cultures. But there is much to remember and the book is a fitting tribute to the province's motto which is also inscribed above the main entrance of the Québec Parliament Building – Je me souviens.

**Gary Levy**  
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