

political safari, reporter Hoy noticed that Mr. Mulroney paid scant attention to the majesty of Victoria Falls. He approached no closer than 300 yards, apparently anxious to "rush off to catch his charter airplane back to Harare for yet another hotel meeting." Yet, as Gratton explains, the Prime Minister was, at the time, "sick as a dog, running a temperature and barely able to stay on his feet." The former Press Secretary commented "none of the media were to find out, otherwise it would become the day's story."

*Friends in High Places* is a fast-moving record of events and political developments seasoned, if not soured, by the acerbic views of a practiced observer. The general reader may find it easy to put down but not so the political student.

★★★★★

The Sawatsky book is the weightiest of the three reviewed here but not heavy. Tightly written, relying on facts

to speak for themselves and salted with surprising insights into the motives and methods of people with power, it deserves to do well.

Sawatsky fashions painstaking research, some of it, I suspect, provided by university students, into a compelling story of two skilled ex-ministerial aides who made themselves and their advice indispensable to corporate leaders seeking the ear of government. Bill Lee and Bill Neville, their wits and persuasive powers honed in the high-pressure atmosphere of ministers' offices, established Executive Consultants Ltd. Dispensing advice on how to deal with government, who to see and how to approach them, it became a lucrative enterprise with a clutch of business clients paying monthly retainers. ECL did not open doors; it steered business executives towards the right ones and primed them with facts.

Neville later became the moving spirit of Public Affairs International which grew and prospered along with small firms set up by others trained in the hard school of politics. Some, notably Government Consultants International founded by former Newfoundland premier Frank Moores, are unblushing lobbyists. They not only open doors but unabashedly plead the client's cause. And why not?

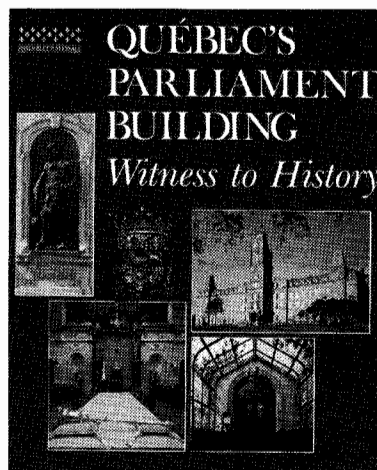
Sawatsky's is far more than a dry account of the rise of government consultants on the Ottawa power scene. He follows them into the backrooms of leadership conventions and the campaign cockpits of prime ministers. Messrs Trudeau, Turner and Mulroney may not relish his evidence of fumbles, flip-flops and pettiness. The book fairly reflects the warps of the political game and the warts of the players.

★★★★★

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**QUEBEC'S PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS: WITNESS TO HISTORY, Luc Noppen and Gaston Deschênes, Les Publications du Québec, Montreal, 1986, 204 pp.**

Who can visit parliament buildings and not be impressed by the solemnity of the place, as though the rooms, the walls, the corridors, even the chairs, breathed history? Some famous political figure comes into your mind — you imagine him strolling through the very halls where you yourself are walking; in the chamber the guide points out his seat and you hear his voice raised in debate. And the irreverence with which we sometimes regard politicians is, for the moment, forgotten. The physical space where the political history of a nation has been made has a definite symbolic dimension; this makes such sites, both for their own citizens and for tourists, centres of pilgrimage, political



Pantheons. The architecture and ornamentation of parliament buildings illustrate the spirit of their people. This reviewer has had the privilege of visiting a good many legislatures, in Canada (the federal Parliament and the legislative assemblies in Quebec City, Toronto, Fredericton and Winnipeg), in Europe (the French National Assembly and Senate, the headquarters of the Belgian Conseil de la Communauté française) and in Africa (Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Cameroon); and more than any other national monument, parliament buildings are the concrete and visible symbol of a community.

Because of this they are designed, built, decorated, adapted, and preserved from the ravages of time by the best architects, artists and master craftsmen their society has to offer. They are part of the national heritage, perhaps even its crowning glory.



Among those present to launch the book on the National Assembly were (L-R) Gaston Deschênes, co-author; Lieutenant Governor, Gilles Lamontagne; Luc Noppen, co-author; Speaker of the National Assembly, Pierre Lorrain; Richard French, Minister of Communications and Louise Pagé, Director General of Quebec Publications.

We are, however, not always so familiar with the histories of the buildings. As far as Quebec's National Assembly is concerned, this gap in our knowledge has now been filled by *Quebec's Parliament Buildings: Witness to History*, a new book by architectural historian Luc Noppen and historian Gaston Deschênes. Published to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Eugène-Étienne Taché, the architect who designed the National Assembly, the book succeeds admirably in weaving together the strands of the construction and evolution of the buildings, and the development of parliamentary government in Quebec. From it we learn that the construction one hundred years ago coincided with the consolidation of parliamentary government in Quebec: the overlapping of the executive and legislative functions that characterized parliamentary life after Confederation was reflected in the fact that one building housed both government and parliament. We also learn, coming

closer to our own time, that the extensive parliamentary reform sparked by the Quiet Revolution coincided with a major rethinking and modernisation of the National Assembly buildings (which are obviously Quebec's most important historical site). The chapters devoted to architecture and ornamentation are especially interesting. An architectural whole unique in North America, Quebec's parliament buildings adopt with sobriety, practicality and economy of means a variety of trends in French architecture, mainly the Second Empire style of the last half of the XIXth century. The only discordant note is the central tower, which, the authors suggest, may have been inspired by the Middle Ages, but which may also simply have been influenced by the architects. Statues, emblems, coats of arms, frescoes, all suggest Quebec's motto, "Je me souviens" [I remember], although there are some extraordinary lapses in that memory: a statue of Jacques Cartier was never part of the statuary planned for the façade because

the discoverer of Canada had fallen into political disgrace.

Ten years of university research covering two centuries of Quebec's political history are synthesized into an essay on parliamentary life that discusses the evolution of parliamentary structures, elections, parliamentarians, the rules of parliamentary procedure, and the working conditions of an MNA. This alone would make the book a unique and indispensable reference tool.

It is also a feast for the eye, amply and strikingly illustrated, as fascinating to skim as to study — an invaluable complement to a visit to the National Assembly. It will appeal to the lover of history and anecdote, the art enthusiast and the collector of beautiful books. We must hope it is the first of many more in other legislatures.

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