

London Journal of Canadian Studies

Modern Québec

Christos Sirros¹ *

How to cite: Sirros, C. 'Modern Québec.' *London Journal of Canadian Studies*, 2017, 32(1), pp. 3–4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ljcs.2017v32.002>.

Published: 15 December 2017

Copyright:

© 2017, The Author(s). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY) 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ljcs.2017v32.002>.

Open Access:

London Journal of Canadian Studies is a peer-reviewed open access journal.

*Correspondence: qc.londres@mri.gouv.qc.ca

¹ Québec Government House, UK

Modern Québec

Christos Sirros

It is my pleasure to write a few opening remarks for this issue of the *London Journal of Canadian Studies* (LJCS), which is devoted to Modern Québec. I am particularly glad that, thanks to its online publication, this issue will be widely available to academics – and indeed, members of the general public – who, in Britain and throughout the world, are interested in Québec and Québec Studies.

Over the past three years, I have had the honour of representing Québec as Agent-General in London. I became quickly aware of the close links that unite Québec and the United Kingdom, and of the interest that Québec generates in British cultural and academic fields in particular. Through the sterling work of institutions such as the British Association of Canadian Studies (BACS), the Institute of the Americas at University College London (UCL) and the Centre for Quebec and French Canadian Studies at the School of Advanced Studies, University of London, the reality of Québec is becoming better known.

By reality I mean that Québec is not only ‘the place in Canada where French is spoken’, but that it is also a modern, pluralist, inclusive nation with a strong sense of self. It boasts a prosperous economy (think of Bombardier and Hydro Québec), a rich culture (think of Cirque du Soleil and Robert Lepage) and an array of world-class universities with outstanding talent. Indeed, Montréal is home to several of Canada’s highest-ranking academic institutions, and Université Laval in Québec City is the oldest francophone Higher Education establishment in America.

2017 is a year of celebrations. Montréal’s 375th anniversary first, but also the 50th anniversary of Québec’s Ministère des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie, which played a large part in

giving Modern Québec its rightful place on the international scene, in its fields of jurisdiction, and which has recently published a new international policy (http://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/content/documents/en/PIQ-2017-Sommaire_ANG_BR.pdf).

This is also the year of the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Federation, in which Québec holds a unique place: we are Quebecers, and this is our way of being Canadian, as the recent policy on Québec Affirmation and Canadian Relations explains (<https://www.saic.gouv.qc.ca/secretariat/publications-en.asp>).

As I prepare to leave London to start a new life as a retiree, I would like to thank Dr Tony McCulloch, Senior Fellow in North American Studies at UCL and former president of BACS, for his continuous interest in Québec and Québec Studies. The initiator of the UCL Annual Québec Lecture, which the Québec Government Office in London has supported over the years, Tony has invited prominent academics to take part in this yearly event, several of whom have contributed to this issue of the *LJCS*. I am glad to add that Tony was also twice the recipient of *Les Prix du Québec* – this is no small feat – a distinction awarded every year at the annual BACS Conference.

I would also like to thank UCL Press for giving the *LJCS* its online platform and wish the contributors to this special issue all the best.

Note on contributor

Christos Sirros served as the Agent-General for Quebec in London from December 2014 to October 2017. Prior to that he was the Agent-General for Quebec in Brussels. A graduate of McGill University, Mr Sirros had a long and distinguished service as a Liberal Member of the National Assembly of Quebec from 1981 to 2004, before embarking on a diplomatic career. During his time as an MNA he held posts as Minister of Indian Affairs, Minister of Natural Resources and First Vice-President of the Assembly. He retired in October 2017 at the same time as the *LJCS* issue on Modern Quebec was due to be published.