

Rather than being organized thematically, the documents are printed in chronological order and separated into six parts. This arrangement has been chosen because it highlights the interplay that often existed between various northern sovereignty issues. Readers searching for documents on a particular topic should easily be able to identify relevant material through the subject, author, and recipient indexes.

The maps have been placed together near the beginning of the volume for quick reference. For background information on aspects of government organization and procedure, on some civil service positions, and on Canada's diplomatic relations with other countries, see pp. xxxviii-xl; for an explanation of the editorial principles used in transcribing and annotating the documents, see pp. xxxvi-xxxviii.

Part One, 1874-1897

The question of Canada's northern boundary was first raised in 1874, four years after the transfer of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory from the United Kingdom.³ The boundaries of Rupert's Land, about which the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) had made various far from consistent claims over the years, had often been the subject of dispute since the company's founding in 1670. By 1870, it was generally accepted that the HBC could claim only the Hudson Bay watershed, which included part of southwestern Baffin Island. The North-Western Territory, also called the Indian Territory, had been defined through legislation in 1821 and 1859 simply as everything that was not part of the United States, Russian America, Rupert's Land, or the British colonies. This definition could well have been understood at the time of Confederation to include all the northern islands discovered by British explorers (see map 1); however, it was not so understood in Ottawa. Canadian politicians, interested almost exclusively in potential agricultural lands, simply do not seem to have considered the northern archipelago at all.⁴ Evidently, the name North-Western Territory did not suggest to them that the Arctic islands would be included in the transfer, while the name

³ The 1874-1880 correspondence between the CO and Ottawa has been examined by several historians, but most have used the copies made for Canadian officials in 1921 (see doc. 265). These copies do not include the minutes written by CO officials on incoming letters and despatches, which are essential for understanding the intentions behind the transfer of Arctic territories to Canada. Historian Gordon W. Smith used the microfilmed copies of the CO documents, with minutes, held at Library and Archives Canada (LAC), but even he appears to have missed a few crucial minutes, as well as some Canadian documents. See Smith, "The Transfer of Arctic Territories from Great Britain to Canada in 1880, and Some Related Matters, as Seen in Official Correspondence," *Arctic*, vol. 14, no. 1 (March 1961), pp. 53-73. This article has long been the standard scholarly source on the 1880 transfer, but the interpretation offered here differs in some respects.

⁴ In 1869 the Canadian commissioners, Sir George-Étienne Cartier and William McDougall, described the North-Western Territory as "all that part of British North America, from Canada on the East, to British Columbia, Alaska, and the Arctic Ocean, on the West and North, not heretofore validly granted to, and now held by" the HBC. Cartier and McDougall to Sir Frederic Rogers, 8 February 1869, in *Report of the Delegates appointed to Negotiate for the Acquisition of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1869), p. 27.