



RIDEAU FALLS IN 1854

OTTAWA: PAST and PRESENT

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BYTOWN AND OTTAWA.

By A. H. O'BRIEN.

Early Explorers.

Is there another city in the world of which it can be told that, at a time when not as yet was "the axe laid to the root of the trees," a prophecy was made that on the then virgin soil would arise the capital of a great country? The country is the northern half of the North American Continent, and the prophet was the Earl of Dalhousie, then Governor of Canada. The prophecy was made when in the company of the English Engineer officer who was sent to construct a waterway from the Ottawa river to the Great Lakes, and whose name is inseparably connected with the birth of the city. A still earlier epoch calls our attention. In 1613 Samuel de Champlain, the founder of Quebec, whose tercentenary was celebrated but recently, ascended the Ottawa river on his way to Lake Huron, and was unquestionably the first white man to stand on this site. As he ascended the river, the Rideau Falls, then in their pristine beauty, appeared to him immediately after he had turned from noting