

THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF NOVA SCOTIA.

By

JOSEPH PLIMSOLL EDWARDS, F. R. H. S.,

President Nova Scotia Historical Society.

Read before the Nova Scotia Historical Society, 5th December, 1919.

In bringing before you the subject of our Provincial Archives, I have but one object in view, namely, to give publicity to the fact that we have here in the City of Halifax a splendid collection of the manuscript records and documents which to a large extent governed the establishment and the carrying on of British Government in this Province. I am of the opinion that the existence of these papers,—the original sources of the history of Nova Scotia—is practically unknown to the general public. To awaken interest in this priceless collection of documentary material is the purpose of this paper; and I trust that it will lead to ample discussion and unfettered suggestion as to the betterment of the conditions under which these documents are held, and towards making their contents better known and more available to students of our history.

It has been truly said that a country without archives is a country without history or with one of which it is ashamed. Per contra that country which possesses a store of historical documents and shows that degree of proper pride in their holding which leads to care and reverence, has no cause for shame, and has a proper incentive to impress on the succeeding generations the existence of its storied past. Such are, in part, the conditions in Nova Scotia. The development of interest in that past—which by lack of care or thought has become somewhat deficient—can readily be increased.

In this brief sketch a large portion of attention will be given to the laborious and faithful work carried on by those gentlemen who have had charge of our archives, and to show from their reports and from other information how this splendid collection has been built up during the past sixty-two years.

The 30th day of April 1857 was the birthday of organized effort in connection with our Public Records, inasmuch as it