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senting the wishes of the various sections of the people interested in the Constitution of Canada; (c) Those despatches and letters passing between Canada and Britain which originated ideas and policies afterwards followed up, or which most fully discussed the issues then before the country, and which were most frequently referred to afterwards as expressing the views of the persons or groups vitally interested in the measures proposed or adopted; (d) Such minor documents as were intimately connected with or obviously throw light upon the more important ones, and contribute to a better understanding of them.

By following these principles of selection it was found that the documents arranged themselves in a natural and connected order of development, and furnished in great measure their own standards for selection. As a consequence of this arrangement, we have been able to include the great majority of the papers referred to in the primary and secondary documents, including the petitions, memorials and official correspondence. Hence, with the assistance of the notes and supplementary references, if the documents are read consecutively, they will be found to gradually unfold a closely connected and intelligible story of the leading constitutional issues and of the factors, personal and corporate, determining the constitutional development of Canada during a very critical and highly controversial period in our national history.

It has been regarded as beyond the scope of a volume of this description to take notice of the voluminous discussion in periodicals, pamphlets, and historical treatises dealing with the issues here presented whether from a partisan or impartial point of view. However valuable much of this material may be, it is plainly to be treated as supplementary reading. The object of this volume is simply to furnish the more central and essential documentary bases, alike for original and independent judgment and for an intelligent estimate of all other judgments, whether contemporary or subsequent.

The most essential portion of the supplementary reading consists of the Debates in the British Parliament connected with the passing of the Quebec Act and the Constitutional Act. These are naturally too voluminous to be included in their entirety. To make selections from them, and especially from the Debates on the Quebec Act, which would be satisfactory to all parties would prove a very difficult if not impossible undertaking. References to the Debates are given in the notes, and as they are available in every fairly equipped library, they may be consulted in their complete form by practically all who care to make a serious study of these matters.

The notes throughout the volume are entirely devoted to furnishing necessary concrete information as to the documents themselves, the connecting links between them, or the supplementary documents which throw additional light on the questions in hand. No attempt however has been made to pass judgment upon the issues involved, or to give an interpretation of the documents themselves. The functions of the notes may thus