

PREFACE

Few among the makers of Canada have played so varied a part in her upbuilding as Alexander Tilloch Galt. There have been statesmen who impressed themselves more spectacularly upon popular memory. There have been business men who have since carried through greater projects of industrial development. There have, however, been few men in our annals who combined in such a degree eminence both in political and in commercial life.

No man did more, if any did as much, to achieve Confederation. While he declined the highest office in his country's gift, Galt was for many years foremost in party council and in parliamentary struggle. Few finance ministers have combined his large grasp of public affairs, his power of bringing order out of chaos, and his lucidity of expression. He was our first and is still our foremost diplomatist. In the shaping of opinion upon the future political relations of his country he took a changing but always reasoned and always influential part. Yet he never could bring himself to make politics his sole or dominant interest. In the opening of the Eastern Townships to settlement, in the early railroad development of Canada, and in the first great projects of joint stock company enterprise, he displayed unusual financial capacity and power of handling men, while in his latest years his energy and optimism found an outlet in enterprises for developing the land and mining resources of the far west.

Throughout the formative period of our national history, Galt played a part of lasting significance to the Canada and the Canadians of after days. The forces