

REPORT ON CANADIAN ARCHIVES.

DOUGLAS BRYMNER, ARCHIVIST.

Honourable JOHN CARLING,
Minister of Agriculture,
&c., &c., &c.

SIR,—I have the honour to present the report on Archives for 1887.

The work of copying documents in London is now so systematized that few remarks are necessary on the subject. During the year the last of the volumes of the Haldimand Collection have been received, and the whole of them being now in the Archive Rooms, that collection of 232 volumes, with Bouquet's collection of 30 volumes, both covering an important period in the history of the country, are accessible. There are no other copies of these collections on this continent, and their existence here has led to a very considerable amount of correspondence. The most prompt attention has been given to every inquiry, and the letters of acknowledgment show how greatly the information sent has been valued.

In the Public Record Office in London, the work of transcription is making steady progress. As stated in the report for 1887, instructions were given to have the work so arranged that copies would be made concurrently of the papers relating to Lower and Upper Canada after the division of the old Province into two, in 1791. Those for Lower Canada received this year cover the administration of Lieutenant Governor Alured Clarke, from November, 1791, to September, 1793, and a portion of Lord Dorchester's administration as Governor General from the latter date to November, 1795. Those for Upper Canada include the rule of Lieutenant Governor Simcoe from November, 1791, to August 1796, the administration of Acting Governor Peter Russell from the latter date until November, 1799, when General Peter Hunter became Lieutenant Governor, the papers covering a part of his tenure of office to December, 1803, being received. The papers relating to Upper Canada are essential to the study of the formation of that Province, not only from a historical but from a more material point of view. It may be permitted to remark that a common error is the belief that the Archives form a collection intended to satisfy the curiosity of historical students and historians as to the events of the past. For this purpose they are undoubtedly valuable, but experience has shown, that from a mere money point of view, they have proved of essential benefit to the public service as well as to individuals.

I beg most respectfully to call attention again to the reports on the documents in Paris made by Mr. Joseph Marmette. The importance of having these copied at as early a date as possible is scarcely open to doubt, and it may be permitted to point out that there are claims pending in the courts of law here, involving large amounts, which can only be settled by a reference to documents now in Paris, of which copies should be in the possession of this Department. I would also respectfully submit for consideration the propriety of beginning at as early a date as possible the collection of the records concerning Nova Scotia, many of which are of great importance.