

PREFACE.

The Public Archives of Canada, though primarily intended for the preservation of official records, serves the secondary, but not unimportant purpose of furnishing materials for historical study.

History, it need hardly be said, is no longer regarded merely as a field for the exercise of literary skill; it has to a large extent lost its epic character and assumed the severe guise of science. Original documents or faithful transcripts of them must be consulted, and it is manifestly important that these should be made accessible, under as favourable conditions as possible to all serious students. There is in Canada to-day a growing historical school; and it is a satisfaction to know that much benefit has already been derived, by our younger writers particularly, from the resources which the Public Archives have placed at their disposal. The work, of which the first volume is now published, is intended to promote a wider and fuller knowledge of the range and variety of the papers which the Archives contain, and of the manner of their classification and arrangement.

The task of preparing *A Guide to the Documents in the Manuscript Room at the Public Archives of Canada* has been entrusted to Mr. David Parker, M.A., who was first brought into touch with our collections through compiling for the Carnegie Institute of Washington a volume entitled *A Guide to the Materials for United States History in Canadian Archives*. Mr. Parker has since been placed in charge of the Manuscript Division of this Department. It is hoped that his work will prove of material assistance to students in the field of Canadian and, to some extent, of general history.

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