

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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ALTHOUGH it is only since the customary decennial revision of the Bank Act in 1890 that the Canadian system of banking can be said to have been a subject of interest to any but the citizens of that country, the history of currency and banking in Canada is of considerable antiquity, dating as it does from the early part of the seventeenth century. And from the point of view of development, it has the advantage of beginning with the simplest conditions of barter, followed by a currency limited to moose and beaver skins, and passing by intelligible stages to a condition of sufficient perfection to be worthy of consideration as one of the half-dozen best systems in the world.

But the total wealth involved in Canadian banking is only about \$320,000,000, a sum very small when compared with the great trading nations, such as Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. In its early stages, indeed, the actual money involved was so trifling that it seems scarcely worth while to record such facts in history. Principles, however, are more important than the range of their application, and in the history of the development of Canada, whether we consider banking, or representative government, or any other important branch of society, its people have always shown a strong disposition to discuss the reasons of things, whether the application at the moment was important or not. If there are any general principles lying at the foundation of banking they will assert themselves as well in a small volume of business as in the transactions of a great nation.

In attempting to set forth the history of the currency and banking of Canada, up to the last revision of the Bank Act, the facts fall naturally into the following groups:

1608-1760, New France. Card money and other paper issues -- 1685-1719 1729-1749, and 1750-1760.