

CHAPTER I

CANADA BEFORE FRONTENAC

1608 to 1632

WHEN Count Frontenac landed at Quebec, in the month of September 1672, to administer the government of Canada or, as it was then more generally called, New France, the country had been for a period of a little over sixty years under continuous French rule. The period may, indeed, be limited to exactly sixty years if we take as the starting-point the commission issued to Samuel de Champlain on the 15th of October 1612 as "Commander in New France," under the authority of the Count de Soissons, who had been appointed by the queen regent, Marie de Medicis, as lieutenant-general of that territory. What had been accomplished during those sixty odd years? How had the country developed, and what were the elements of the situation which confronted Frontenac on his arrival? Answers to these questions may be gathered, it is hoped, from the following brief introductory narrative.

The territorial claims of France in the gulf and valley of the St. Lawrence were founded on the discoveries made in the name of the French king, Francis I, by that brave Breton mariner, Jacques Cartier, in the celebrated voyages undertaken by