



PREFACE.

MUCH of a country's history is born within its legislative halls. Anglo-Saxon freedom was largely developed in the ancient moot and the modern Parliament, and the foundations of British self-government were laid in the open air Parliament on the plain of Runnymede and within the historic walls of Westminster. The American Republic is built upon a constitutional foundation erected by its representatives in the Congresses of the eighteenth century; the connecting links between the France of Louis XIV. and the France of President Carnot are traceable in the records of the Chambre des Deputies on the banks of the Seine. From the world's Parliaments have emanated the world's best laws, and the voice of the people in the control of national affairs the remedying of national ills and the institution of national reforms has ever been more effective, more ennobling, and more pregnant with good results than the exercised power of a tyrant king or an autocratic ruler.

Equally true is it that much of Ontario's history had its inception in her Parliaments; equally true that the legislative record of the past century represents the best in that history. It is not the author's intention, however, to attempt to deal fully with the latter in these pages, but the more modest task of outlining the historical importance of the four Parliament Buildings that