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To satisfy the numerous inquiries for authentic information as to the condition and resources of Canada, the following State Papers have been selected from the Archives of that Country by the Commissioners appointed to superintend the Canadian Contributions to the great Exposition of 1855, at Paris.

The papers now published consist of selections from the Despatches addressed by the Earl of Elgin to Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies during the years 1852, 1853 and 1854. Those years formed a portion of the period for which the Earl of Elgin filled the exalted office of Governor General of Canada and the other British American Provinces—a fact that gives to all the statements put forth in the following pages the highest official authority. In these pages, then, will be found amply detailed the statistics of the progress of Canada: 1. in population, whether native, springing from the soil, or arriving through the channel of emigration from foreign lands; 2. in all the branches of productive industry, shewing the marvellously rapid process at which has gone on the extensive redemption of the wilderness to human wants and the purposes of husbandry, the advancement of manufactures, the augmentation of commerce, foreign and intercolonial, the amounts of exports and imports, the Railroads and other public works, the steady increase of shipping visiting the Ports of Canada; and 3. Finally, the amount of customs and other duties and payments forming the revenue of the country, and the items of its public expenditure.

There will also be found in the following pages much deeply interesting matter and necessary instruction under the heads of Educational Institutions, and the principles, cost and incidents of the Common School system in Canada, and upon the general politics, external and internal, of the country.

In this publication, therefore, which is offered as a handbook or companion to the Canadian section of the Great Parisian Exhibition of 1855, will be found portrayed in colours truthful and authentic, by a mind eminently gifted with powers of discrimination and philosophy and a perfect mastery of language both written and spoken, the resources of Canada under all its several heads of prosperity, its peculiar institutions, political and social, its past history, present actual condition, and future prospects.