

The population of the dominion at the present date is five millions, nearly four times that of the United States at the declaration of independence in 1776. For the last half century the dominion has possessed self-government, accorded in the most liberal spirit, and we have matured within that period many of the theories affecting our political relationship, which, prior to this time, were either imperfect or unformed. We have learned to estimate better our rights and our responsibilities. Our knowledge of the practical science of government has taught us that mere acknowledgment of the existence of a wrong from which we suffer cannot be accepted as the rectification of it. Moreover, as an important element of the imperial system of Great Britain, we understand what we may with propriety ask, the form in which the request may be couched, and the persistence with which the demand may be repeated.

If we desire rightly to act upon this principle, a knowledge of our history, with all the influences having relation to it, is indispensable to the teaching both of ourselves and the imperial authorities. Such a history becomes of value in modern political relationships, not by adding wearisome and often inapposite citations concerning admitted facts, but by so presenting a fair and general view of former times that it may guide us in our future diplomacy. This is the chief point I have kept in view while engaged on these volumes. In this spirit, I have endeavoured to present a record, with its attendant circumstances, which may hereafter prove of practical utility.

In some instances remarks have been made upon the number of these volumes, as if it were a matter of wonder that Canada had any history at all. Such a criticism presupposes the idea that the received exemplar of what chronicle we possess should be contained in a small volume of a few pages, in which dates should figure as prominently as events; the latter being related almost as briefly as they would appear in the summary of an almanac. Humbly believing that a very different work is required, not only in the dominion, but by imperial statesmen, and by members of the British parliament who desire to deal fairly and justly with Canada, and generally by the British student of our