

**PREFATORY NOTE TO AN INVENTORY OF THE MILITARY AND
ALLIED DOCUMENTS IN THE CANADIAN ARCHIVES,
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This collection of manuscript records now consists of 1,847 volumes besides 149 portfolios of loose papers which have not yet been arranged in a permanent form and 201 similar portfolios of militia papers.

With a very few exceptions the contents of the bound volumes relate to the period extending from the arrival of Lord Dorchester as Governor General and Commander of the Forces in 1786 to the date of the transfer of the fortress of Halifax to the military authorities of the Dominion. The documents obtained from Halifax in 1873 by the consent of the War Office formed the nucleus of this series. These mainly consist of the letters and despatches with their various enclosures which accumulated in the office of the Military Secretary to the Commander of the Forces in Canada in the course of eighty-five years. There are among them a few copies or rough drafts of letters written in the office. Naturally they vary greatly in character as well as in relative value. There are papers of every conceivable description. Many relate to trivial matters and the petty details of military administration or the interior economy of a corps or military post, but a great number are of permanent historical value. Some contain only words hastily scrawled on a mere slip of paper possibly bearing a certain light of a camp fire in the heart of the woods. A large proportion are lengthy and momentous despatches from the Admiralty, the Treasury Board, or the War Office, bearing the signature of a Secretary of State, or from officers of rank, detailing their operations in the field while events were still fresh in their minds. In some the writing has almost faded from view while in others of practically the same date it seems as bright and distinct as when it left the pen. Some are so badly written as to be scarcely legible while others are models of calligraphy. Most interesting are the numerous