

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

My primary object in publishing this collection of documents has been to provide students of Canadian constitutional development in the University of Toronto with a handy and convenient volume. I have not therefore thought it necessary to edit the documents in close detail. The notes which I have provided are meant to encourage work rather than to give full information. Nor have I written a long historical introduction. The history of the Canadian constitution can be divided into well-defined periods. I have arranged the documents selected for each of these periods in chronological order so that the student can easily follow the development which they suggest, and I have linked each section with introductory notes in which I attempt to sum up, briefly and in broad generalization, the history to which the documents afford illustrations. With the growing interest, however, in constitutional history, especially within the British empire, I venture to hope that the volume may prove useful to a wider circle of readers than those for whom it has primarily been compiled.

If such a volume as this needs a defence, necessity and experience must bear the burden of it. Many of the well-known volumes of documents—e.g. by Messrs. Shortt and Doughty, Professors Egerton and Grant, and Mr. W. Houston—are out of print, and even had they been accessible, none of them fulfilled exactly what experience had taught me was necessary—a single volume in which acts of parliament, ordinances, proclamations and such dry-as-dust material would be vitalized by being brought into touch with letters, speeches and contemporary illustrations. These are of the greatest help in making dull documents live, and in giving that contemporary outlook which is the hardest thing to acquire. Experience has guided me, too, not only in compiling the book, but in selecting the documents. To the skilled student of the subject my selections may appear arbitrary; but I have tried to include no document which has not proved its value in actual teaching, and I have excluded many which, whatever their intrinsic importance, have not satisfied that test. The actual test itself is, I feel, arbitrary; but when a selection had to be made, it served a practical and useful purpose. I have omitted any selections from Lord Durham's *Report*, which must be read as a whole by all students of the Canadian constitution, and selections from it would be superfluous. I have also excluded any select cases illustrating the workings of the British North America Act of 1867. The cases are too numerous and too confusing for selections in a volume such as this.

With regard to the text, I have as a general rule strictly adhered