

PREFACE

In this volume an attempt has been made to bring together for the first time and to render accessible in English form the chief manuscript sources of the earliest history of Canada. The majority of these documents have appeared in print already, but the texts here given have, wherever possible, been either copied from or collated with the original manuscripts. In some few cases facsimiles have been used.

The translations are in every case new, and in view of the publication of the original Latin, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, a somewhat free rendering has been adopted. It has not been considered necessary to translate the French documents.

From these sources and from the printed volumes and atlases listed in the appendix has been compiled the introduction. Owing to the fragmentary nature of the material available this is necessarily an incomplete story. Many of the statements in the same are purely conjectural and must be considered as nothing more than working hypotheses. As such it is hoped that they may stimulate the interests or arouse the curiosity of fresh investigators. Should such a result follow, and the narrow bounds of our knowledge of early Canadian history be in consequence extended, one of the main objects of this volume will have been achieved.

It is with gratitude and with pleasure that the editor acknowledges the valuable assistance of many friends and scholars. To Mr. Hubert Hall, F.S.A., author of the standard work on the English archives, and to Dr. S. E. Dawson, C.M.G., whose labours have contributed so materially to the elucidation