

PREFACE TO THE RE-ISSUE [1956]

THIS book was published originally in 1937 as *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence, 1760-1850*. It appeared as a volume in a series called *The Relations of Canada and the United States*, which was sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and directed by Dr. James T. Shotwell. The late Professor Harold A. Innis, Head of the Department of Political Economy and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies in the University of Toronto, was asked by Dr. Shotwell to act as editor for the volumes contributed by Canadians on the economic aspects of Canadian-American relations; and it was he who proposed that my book should be published in the series. I was, of course, only too glad to accept this invitation, since *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* was my first book and since, in those days, a work on Canadian history, by a Canadian, was published only with difficulty, and often, in part, at the author's expense. In the preface to the original edition I acknowledged my debt to Professor Innis and Dr. Shotwell; and I should like to repeat here my thanks for the encouragement and support which they gave me on that occasion.

In this new edition, called *The Empire of the St. Lawrence*, the original text has been reprinted without change. The book expounds and illustrates, through a narrative account, a certain thesis respecting Canada's historical development during a given period; and, in my opinion, such interpretative essays are injured, rather than benefited, by the revisions and additions which are sometimes made in more general histories, particularly text-books. I should perhaps be inclined to modify slightly, here and there, some of the views expressed in this book; but the idea of the St. Lawrence as the inspiration and basis of a transcontinental, east-west system, both commercial and political in character, is still central in my interpretation of Canadian history. Much of my later work has been based upon the idea; and I prefer, therefore, to leave this first, enthusiastic expression of it in its original form.

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