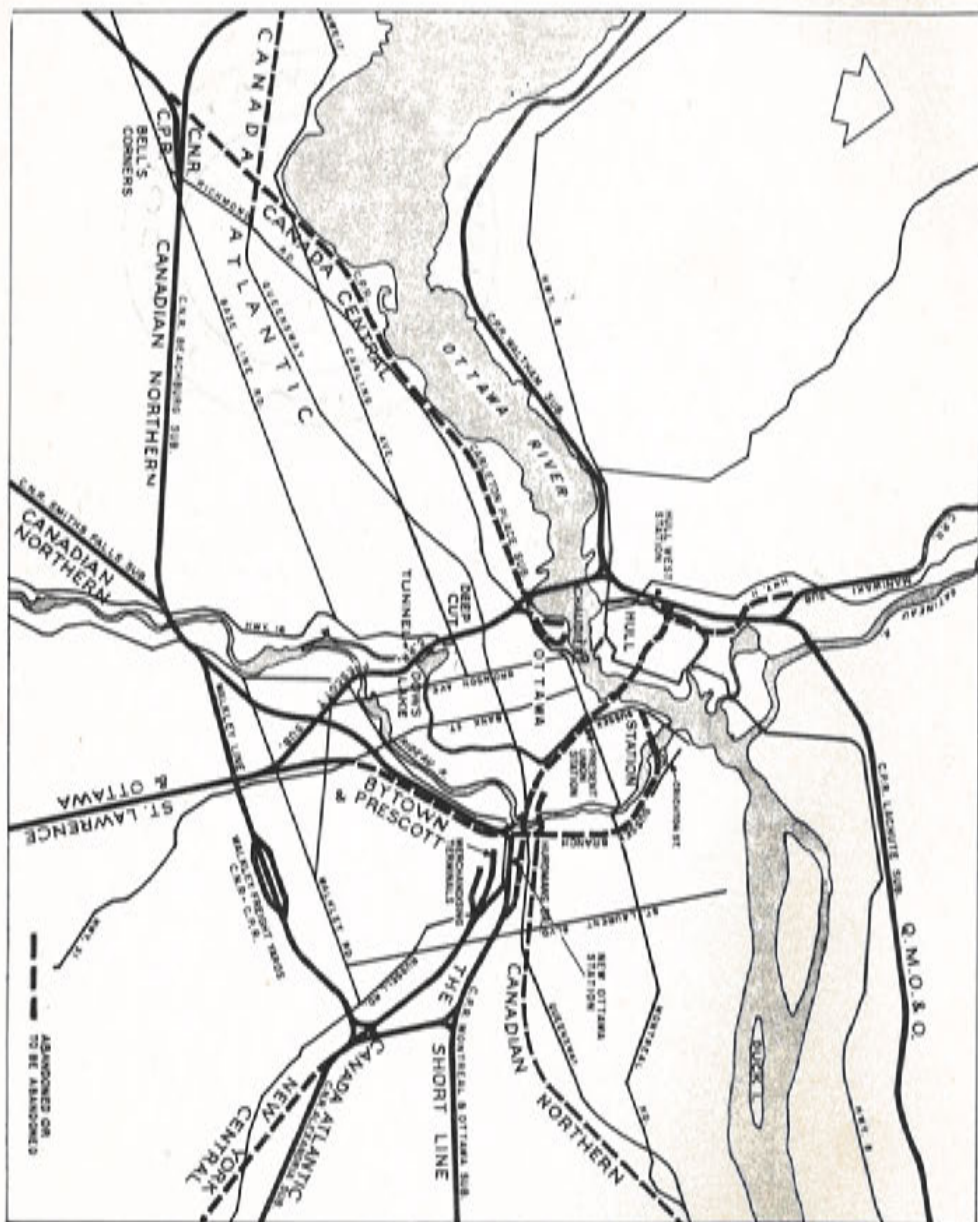




Tracks into Ottawa: The Construction
of Railways into Canada's Capital.

- C.C. J. Bond.

- 1965 -



TRACKS INTO OTTAWA: THE CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAYS INTO CANADA'S CAPITAL*

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Bytown in 1851 numbered 7,760 souls. The days of squared timber were going and the Bytown mills were already sending a few million board feet of sawn lumber each year to the United States via water along the Ottawa-Richelieu route and the Rideau Canal. American and Canadian entrepreneurs were investigating new mill sites and the government of the Province of Canada would shortly build works that would make the hydraulic power of the Chaudière Falls available to them.¹ A few years earlier, in 1848, there had been a meeting in Bytown to discuss the building of a railroad southward to Prescott, that would join with the Ogdensburg Boston line and serve to carry sawn lumber to the U.S.A.² A charter was granted to the "Bytown and Prescott Railway" on May 10, 1850.³

The famous Canadian railway engineer Walter Shanly was employed to survey the line. His report to the president and directors was published in the *Citizens* on April 7, 1851. Shanly set forth four possible routes — he had walked over each of them, a total of over two hundred miles — and recommended, because some of these crossed the Rideau River a number of times, that the one east of the Rideau via Kemptville was the best. There was some difficulty in determining where the station should be located in Bytown. Because of the river cliffs and the great fluctuation of the water level, it was impossible to get the line low enough down by the river to discharge cargo. The canal basin in the centre of the town was a good location, but the elevation left from the Ottawa River was over 80 feet. Shanly proposed a station on the north-easterly outskirts of Bytown just west of the Rideau near the bank of the Ottawa.⁴ His printed report, issued a few months later, pointed out other reasons for the location of the station near the Rideau Falls. By now the 52-mile route east of the Rideau had been decided upon. To reach the canal-basin would have required a long and costly embankment from the bridge across the Rideau to the canal near the present-day University of Ottawa. In addition, he considered that appearance was another factor against such a railway, which would pass east of the canal along what is known as the Deep Cut. Shanly reasoned:

Through this cut trains would skulk into the Town, to reach a Terminus which would, inevitably, be soon built around on all sides, giving it a confined and hampered appearance and limiting the prospect to an occasional view of the Basin, when it did not happen to be obscured from sight by the presence of a number of diminutive craft.

On the other hand, he recommended the approach

through fine open country, where trains would show to advantage — reaching their

* This paper was read before the Annual Conference of the Ontario Historical Society at Picton, Ontario, June 17th, 1965.

1. H. W. Hughson & C. C. J. Bond, *Hurling Down the Pine*. Old Chelsea Que.; Historical Society of Gatineau, 1964.
2. *Historical Atlas of Carleton County*, H. A. Beldon and Co., 1879.
3. *Citizen*, Ottawa: Sept. 28, 1851.
4. *Citizen*, Ottawa: April 26, 1851.

destination on a fair and level plane, fronting on and in full view of the noble Ottawa — a view which can never be obstructed, and the effect of which upon the stranger visiting Bytown would be to create a lively and enduring impression of the beauty of its situation.⁵

However, the fact that John McKinnon, the railway president, was the son-in-law of Thomas MacKay, the great entrepreneur of New Edinburgh, near Rideau Falls, and builder of Rideau Hall, (his mills at the falls were making cloth, flour and lumber,) may well have had some bearing in the location of the station. Shanly designed bridges for the crossing of the Nation and Rideau River; the former was a fine-looking wooden truss,⁶ but plans of the latter have not been found.

A meeting was held at the Bytown Market Hall on September 28, 1851, with McKinnon in the chair and Robert Bell as secretary. It was decided that a committee headed by McKinnon would petition the municipality of Bytown for £15,000.⁷

Work on the railway seems to have languished during 1852; little was done. There was a meeting in Kemptville on May 17 at which McKinnon was re-elected as President.⁸ The Grand Trunk offered to aid the Bytown and Prescott if the latter would adopt the Grand Trunk's gauge. But McKinnon preferred to keep his proposed standard gauge, 4' 8½", and to connect with Boston; in March, 1853, a meeting was held in the Revere Hotel in that city, at which \$100,000 was sought.⁹ In early July McKinnon arrived home from England, where it was reported that he had disposed of £55,000 worth of stock in exchange for the steel needed. Mr. Bell, said the newspaper story, arranged for the purchase of 8 locomotives and 131 cars in Boston.

But more money was needed. In Bytown on August 31 the municipal electors met at the Market Hall to vote on the question as to whether or not the Town would lend the railway £50,000, the money to be borrowed upon the credit of the Consolidated Municipal Loan Fund of Upper Canada. The opponents of the loan demanded a poll. At sunset, after 443 votes, the ayes were far ahead. The polls opened at 10 a.m. the next day and closed at 1:45 p.m. for lack of voters. The result was 460 in favor, 147 against. Bell, McKinnon, Mayor J. B. Turgeon and others made speeches and there was a grand procession from one end of the town to the other.¹¹

In mid-September some of the steel had arrived. It was not until June 21, 1854 that a passenger train ran over any part of the railway. The inaugural journey must have been a dry one. The Prescott Division of the Sons of Temperance "engaged passages by the Cars to attend the Temperance Celebration at Spencer-

5. Shanly Walter, *Report on the Location Surveys and Estimates of the Bytown and Prescott Railroad*. 26 July 1851.

6. *Francis Shanly Papers*, Ontario Archives.

7. *Packet and Weekly Commercial Gazette*, Ottawa: July 8, 1848, Oct. 19th, 1851.

8. *Citizen*, Ottawa: May 22, 1852.

9. *Citizen*, Ottawa: March 19, 1853.

10. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: July 2, 1853.

11. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Sept. 3, 1853.

ville." The "Cars" left the station below the fort at 9:30 a.m.¹² This train was probably pulled by a work locomotive. The Ottawa papers reported in mid-July that "two splendid locomotives," the "St. Lawrence" and the "Ottawa" had been brought across the river, with some gravel cars. Ogdensburg, opposite Prescott, was northern terminus of railways in New York State. The locomotives were probably brought over the river in barges. A few days later the Citizen carried a story that a large iron steamboat was being built in Philadelphia to travel between Ogdensburg and Prescott. This rail ferry was to carry five cars on each track.¹³

Until this time the traveller had to traverse the 120 miles between the growing lumber city and Montreal by boat when the waterways were open or by stage when the road-bumps had been somewhat smoothed by snow. Kirby, Pattee, Beauchamp and Hillman ran a line of covered stages every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in winter. The night staging point was Hawkesbury; between this town and Montreal a four-horse team pulled the vehicle.¹⁴

The Transportation Revolution was now about to occur in Bytown; the stage-coach was going to be put out of business. On the morning of August 9 the steamship *Beaver* puffed out of the canal basin en route for Kemptville, weighted down with Bytownian men eager for a new experience. All enjoyed a splendid spread in Kemptville and were sighing with repletion when suddenly the ding dong of an engine bell was heard. Chairs scraped back and all rushed to the train. After examining the hissing monster, the crowd, for most of whom this was a brand new experience, got aboard and soon:

Pish, Pish, and in a few seconds the unmusical gallop of the Iron Horse convinced us . . . that we could not make up a small sum of twenty in simple addition by counting the cedar posts which flanked the road on either side . . . the occasional scream of the steam whistle showed, as some errant cow or horse obtruded on the track, that Railroad Cars were likewise new to quadruped as well as biped, [the former] with heads down and tails erect scampered *in terrorem* out of harms way and looked to all the world as if they meant to ask, "where the devil do you come from?" . . . At Prescott many of us for the first time slackened our thirsty souls with the water of the St. Lawrence, improved mightily as some declared with Gillman's Brandy.

This appears to have been far from the drab affair that the Prescott Sons of Temperance had conducted earlier in Spencerville. The *Beaver* reached the Bytown turning-basin only at 3 a.m. the next day.¹⁵

This burst of enthusiasm was dampened as the snows of winter began to fall. The management ran out of money and steel three or four miles short of Bytown. The energetic Robert Bell had hardwood rails capped with hoop-iron laid and the first train finally skulked into New Edinburgh just across the Rideau from the site of the Bytown station on December 25, 1854. Next spring the bridge over the Rideau was completed and the trains could enter Bytown.¹⁶

12. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Sept. 17, 1854.

13. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: July 15, Aug. 6, 1854.

14. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Jan. 21, 1854 (advertisement).

15. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Aug. 12, 1854.

16. Myles Pennington, *Railways and Other Ways*, Toronto: Williamson & Co. 1894, pp. 146-7.

L. Brault, *Ottawa Old & New*, Ottawa, 1946, p. 191.

Note: Ottawa newspaper for this period (December 1854) are not available.

On January 1, 1855, Bytown signalized the completion of this important transportation link by becoming a city and changing its name. Other railways in the area were abuilding. The Grand Trunk Montreal-Toronto line was completed on October 27, 1856. Another ambitious project, the Montreal and Bytown Railway had been started; only the middle portion was built, a portage railway between Grenville and Carillon, bypassing the rapids on the Ottawa at that point. This little line was completed in October 1854.¹⁷

Immediately after the arrival of the first train, the Bytown and Prescott (which was not renamed the Ottawa and Prescott until some time after April 1855) advertised regular service to Prescott, with connections via Ogdensburg to Montreal. (It was a three-hour journey, from 6 a.m., to Prescott; passengers arrived in Montreal the same evening).¹⁸ McKinnon must have felt earlier that he had a certain winner in his railway, for he had bought from Thomas MacKay early in 1854 land on the cliffs above the Ottawa just north of his station, and here he erected shortly afterward the magnificent stone residence that Sir John A. Macdonald, when he lived there, named Earncliffe. It is now the residence of the British High Commissioner.¹⁹

McKinnon and Bell must have had a difficult time financially. There were no funds; the traffic was poor. Bell gave "promissory notes in great numbers for sums of five dollars and upwards, which became a sort of paper currency in the district, and were bought and sold at various shades of discount. . . . In time the traffic on the P. & B. [D. & P.] line improved and all the notes were redeemed at par."²⁰ However, the general financial picture remained poor. The Welsh Ebbw Vale Iron Co. had a first mortgage against the rails and there was another to the City of Ottawa for the 1853 loan. A receiver was named about 1861. Finally in 1865 the railway was put up for sale and bought by Thomas Reynolds, the agent of the Ebbw Vale Company. The Ottawa & Prescott became the St. Lawrence & Ottawa Railway Company, organized on December 21, 1867.²¹

Meanwhile Ottawa had become the capital of the Province of Canada; the civil service and government officials moved up from Quebec in October and November, 1865, many coming by the Ottawa and Prescott.²² Railway travel was full of hazard and adventure in those days. Edmond Allen Meredith, at that time Assistant Provincial Secretary for Upper Canada, en route to Ottawa from Toronto by the Grand Trunk in June, after the move, tells in his diary how just west of Kingston station his car went astray. The rotten ties had broken, the rails had

17. G. R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways* Vol. 1, Toronto: 1960. *Citizen*, Ottawa: Oct. 25, 1854.

18. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Jan. 13, 1855.

19. Norman Reddaway, *Earncliffe* London: Commonwealth Relations Office, 1955. Note: MacKinnon does not seem to have moved into the house until 1857.

20. Pennington, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

21. Norman Reddaway, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

22. C. C. J. Bond, "Canadian Government Comes to Ottawa 1865-1866" *Ontario History*, LV. (1963) No. 1.

spread and his car went off the track, bumping over the roadbed. The coupling chains broke, but fortunately the car came to a stop without overturning.²³

On July 1 Confederation of the four provinces was celebrated on Parliament Hill in the capital. It was now more important than ever that good railway communications be established linking Ottawa to the main centres of the new Dominion. The mills about the Chaudière in 1868 cut a hundred million feet of lumber for the American market, much of which went out on barges. However, winter shipments had to go by rail. The St. Lawrence & Ottawa depot at the Rideau Falls was badly situated to haul lumber from the Chaudière. Thomas Reynolds, who bought Earncliffe in 1868, acquired a controlling interest in the newly organized Ottawa Horse-car Company, with the idea of using its rail at night to haul cars of lumber from the Chaudière to his depot. Construction of this line had started in 1867, but the first cars did not run until 1870, and by then the impractical idea had been given up, possibly because of the appearance of a competitor in a much stronger position. Reynolds sold the street railway to Thomas Keefer in 1871.²⁴

In 1853 a charter had been granted to the Brockville and Ottawa Railway Company, to build a railway from Brockville to the Ottawa River; this line had been constructed as far as Carleton Place in 1859. In 1864 the Brockville and Ottawa, which did not reach either the Ottawa River or Ottawa, was bankrupt. The Canada Central Railway which had received a charter in 1861 replacing an earlier ambitious Lake Huron, Ottawa and Quebec Junction Railway Co., acquired entire control of the Brockville and Ottawa. By 1866 Mr. Richardson, the Canadian agent of the English interests that controlled the Canada Central, had extended the B. & O. to Sand Point, a few miles north-west of Arnprior on the Ottawa.²⁵

On February 16, 1870, there was held a great Railway Convention in Ottawa to discuss the extension of direct railway communication from Montreal westward via the Ottawa valley. Mayors Rochester of Ottawa and Workman of Montreal, Members of Parliament, of the Legislative Assemblies, as well as lumbermen and the railwaymen were present. The old military argument that lay behind the construction of the Rideau Canal was once more set forth: there were no communications between Montreal, chief city of the Dominion, and Ottawa its capital "which could not be interrupted by batteries planted on foreign soil." Then there was the need to stimulate settlement in the valley, and haul away lumber. The Canada Central Railway had commenced building a line from Carleton Place to Ottawa in 1868. Now it was proposed to join forces with the Northern Colonization Railway that owned the old Montreal and Bytown's fifteen miles between Grenville and Carillon, to link Ottawa with Montreal. "We would form the best route for a Canadian

23. E. A. Meredith, *Diary*, in possession of Lt. Col. C. P. Meredith, Ottawa: June 5, 1866.

24. Hughson & Bond, *Hurling Down the Pine*, p. 37. Reddaway, Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

25. Robert Dorman, *Statutory History of Canadian Railways 1836, 1837*. Belden's *Historical Atlas of Carleton County*. *Times*, Ottawa: Feb. 17, 1870.

The largest shareholder was said to be H. W. F. Bolckow (*Times*, Sept. 16, 1870).

Pacific Railway" exclaimed the enthusiastic Richardson. But meantime, there was the Canada Central to construct first.²⁶

The *Times* headed a story on September 16, 1870:

THE INTEROCEANIC CHAIN: FORGING THE FIRST LINK

A large crowd gathered at 9 a.m. on the 15th at the terminus of the C.C.R. on LeBreton Flats near the Chaudière. Here waited a train of eight cars behind a powerful locomotive named after the contractor, H. A. Abbott. It was decorated with coniferous boughs, union jacks and red, white and blue flags. The train proceeded through green woods for awhile, then passed the blackened forest and fields of the "burnt district," ruined in the great fire of August 17. At Carleton Place all disembarked and got aboard the Brockville train for Sand Point. Here beside the Ottawa there was little but a wharf and a large freight shed. But for today there were a triumphal arch, flags, and banners reading "Welcome" and "Success to English Capitalists."

The lunch menu was so complete that it must be cited in detail.

For Relèves there were:

Boned turkeys with apple jelly, game paté, ornamented hams, rounds of beef, smoked beef tongue.

The Entrees:

Chicken salad, partridges with jelly, oyster patés.

Roasted meats:

Roast beef, turkey, mutton, chicken, goose, veal.

Game:

Partridge, wild duck, prairie chickens, plover.

Relishes:

Olives, pickled oysters, pickled cucumbers.

Pastry:

Jelly tarts, fancy cakes, wine jelly, blanc mange, charlotte russe, charlotte of apples.

Fruit:

Isabella grapes, oranges, fameuse apples, almonds, raisin, figs, etc., crackers, mixed nuts, celery.

The band of the Brockville Garrison Artillery played during lunch, then the speeches started. Sir Francis Hincks, Minister of Finance, apologized for the absence of Sir John A. Macdonald, who was on his way back from convalescence in P.E.I. The Hon. J. J. C. Abbot answered the toast of D. Bearup, the president

26. *Times*, Ottawa: Feb. 17, 1870.

of the railway. He saw this Ottawa-Sand Point line as a first leg of a trans-continental railroad. The party broke up at 3:40 p.m. and all arrived in Ottawa at 6 p.m.²⁷

This year the St. Lawrence and Ottawa was offering two trains a day to Prescott. Business was picking up. In May, 1871 the largest train of cars ever to run on the line was pulled by the locomotive "Lady Lisgar." Three passenger cars carried 68 people, besides the usual baggage and post office cars and 30 grain cars, each with 350 bushels of wheat. The next day 17 cars of lumber left for Boston. They were to be ferried over the St. Lawrence; there was to be no trans-shipment.²⁸

Thomas Reynolds was not going to let the C.C.R. get away with its privileged position at the Chaudière. He started a line from five miles south of Ottawa, over the Rideau River and Canal, west of Dow's Lake to the Chaudière, where a depot was built. On December 10 the first locomotive ran over this line, its whistle screaming at the crossings, making "an unearthly row," according to the inhabitants of Rochesterville.²⁹ In mid-1875 the St. Lawrence and Ottawa took a big step when decision was taken to burn coal henceforth in some of the locomotives. Pullman cars were operated while Parliament was sitting.³⁰

From 1874 to 1877 construction of a rail line in the province of Quebec between Montreal and Hull was under way. First called the Northern Colonization Railway, it soon became the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occident. Its first train steamed into Hull on December 3, 1877. Soon the tracks were being extended to Aylmer.³¹ In the summer of 1879 luxurious palace cars were placed in service on the Q.M.O. & O. Railway for the convenience of Members of Parliament, Senators and others.³² In 1880 a railway bridge was constructed across the Ottawa — the first upstream from the Grand Trunk bridge near Montreal — a long truss structure built in a shallow area of the river above the Chaudière. The locomotive "St.-Jean Baptiste," followed by the "Champlain" and the "Joliette," crossed the bridge to test it on December 3.³³ Now three railways entered the capital.

John Rudolphus Booth, a Canadian from Waterloo, Que. who got his start in Bytown in the early 1850's, was one of the most important sawmill owners in the capital twenty-five years later.³⁴ In 1879, with the American William G. Perley, (another Ottawa lumberman) and a businessman from St. Albans, Vt., he formed the Canada Atlantic Railway. The C.A.R. was incorporated in mid-1879, making use of a charter granted in 1871 that permitted the construction of a railway from

27. *Times*, Ottawa: Sept. 18, 1870.

28. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Jan. 24, 1870.

Ibid., Ottawa: May 17 and 18, 1871.

29. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Aug. 3, Nov. 14, Dec. 7, Dec. 11, 1870.

30. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: June 23, 1875 and Jan. 25, 1876.

31. *Ibid.*, Ottawa: April 20, 1875, Aug. 27, 1874.

Free Press, Ottawa: Nov. 6, 1877, Nov. 27, 1877.

Ibid., Ottawa: April 20, 1875, Dec. 3, 1877, Oct. 14, 1878.

32. *Canada Illustrated News*, July 19, 1879, p. 35.

33. *Free Press*, Ottawa: Feb. 12, Dec. 14, Nov. 15, 1880.

34. Hughson & Bond, *op. cit.*, p. 35, 37.

Ottawa to Coteau, Quebec, near the St. Lawrence. The City of Ottawa promised \$100,000 toward the construction. The next year another charter was secured for the extension of this line from Coteau to the head of Lake Champlain, where a connection with American railways was possible.³⁵ Construction was started north-westward in 1880 from the Coteau end. The work neared Ottawa in 1882; south of the city limits the line approached the Rideau Canal through Wildwood, the country estate of the barrister Robert Lees. A swing bridge over the canal was tested by the pragmatic Booth with a number of railway cars loaded with stone. The depot was built just west of Elgin Street and a roundhouse was constructed north of the track and just west of the canal. The area to the north became a large piling ground for lumber that was brought up from the Chaudière mills by barge and unloaded at a great dock a thousand feet long on the west side of the Rideau Canal. The first train on the new line steamed into Ottawa on September 13 and regular service was soon started to connect with the Grand Trunk at Coteau. Soon a spur carried the line to the St. Lawrence at Coteau Landing and a car ferry ran to Clark Island on the other side. In 1884 the southerly extension from Clark Island to Lacolle, Quebec, was opened.³⁶

While Booth was thus getting access by rail to the capital and a means to ship his own lumber, a giant corporation appeared on the railway scene in the capital. On February 15, 1881, an Act approving the contract for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was passed. The Canada Central Railway, which had been extended as far as Mattawa, became part of the new transcontinental railway.³⁷ The Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occident Railway was acquired by the C.P.R. on May 17, 1882. The St. Lawrence and Ottawa became part of the C.P.R. on September 26, 1884.³⁸ Booth's timely action just managed to prevent the Canadian Pacific Railway from having a stranglehold on rail transportation into Ottawa.

The two companies settled down to orderly competition. The Canada Atlantic was successful from the start. Booth, although aging, was still dynamic and continued to make money. In 1888 the southerly end of the Canada Atlantic line was extended south from Lacolle to the international boundary east of Rouse's Point, seeking a link on the other side. (It was not until 1895 that it became possible to connect with the Central Vermont.) In 1888 he obtained two railway charters, one for the Ottawa, Arnprior and Renfrew, to extend west from the capital up the Ottawa, and one for the Ottawa and Parry Sound, which was to run from Renfrew to Scotia on the Grand Trunk line running north from Toronto to Callander. In 1890 the car ferry over the St. Lawrence was replaced by a bridge.³⁹

35. Dorman, *op. cit.*: *Minutes City of Ottawa*, 1879, Sept. 18, 1882, Oct. 2, 1882, Nov. 6, 1887, Dec. 4, 1882.

36. Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 365, *Ottawa Citizen* Aug. 25, Sept. 15, *Insurance Plan of the City of Ottawa*, 1888, revised, *Ibid.*, Ottawa: Oct. 31, 1882.

37. J. M. Gibbon, *Steel of Empire*, New York: 1935, pp. 206, 210.

38. *Statutes of Canada*, 1882. Dorman, *op. cit.*

39. Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-6.

John Booth put a magnificent train on the road in 1891. The first class coaches, 63 feet long overall, were framed of B.C. fir and southern pine. The interiors were finished in Canadian cherry. "Every inch of woodwork is polished and varnished to show the natural beauty of the material," said the advertisement. There was an entirely new feature, separate smoking rooms, secluded from the passenger section by means of a corridor which allowed free movement from one end of the car to the other without disturbing the smoking room. There were wash-rooms at each end of the car. The wheels were by Krupp and the brakes by Westinghouse. The second-class car was the same on the exterior; the interior was fitted in Canadian birch.⁴⁰

While the Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway was being built across the southern edge of the city, much of it on an embankment, Booth negotiated with the city of Ottawa for lands and a grant that would permit him to construct a new depot at the very centre of Ottawa, near the point where Rideau and Wellington Streets each crossed the canal on its own bridge. In 1892 the city agreed to give \$150,000. to be paid in instalments as work was completed. Booth was to erect his Central Union Depot within three years, and to construct a railway to Parry Sound in six years. His railway was to be independent, especially of the C.P.R., for 40 years. It was not to amalgamate with the C.P.R. or any company controlled by the C.P.R.; all monies paid would be forfeited if it did.⁴¹

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Canals authorized the opening of traffic on the Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound on September 13, 1893.⁴² The tracks were extended another 93 miles by September, 1894. On December 3, 1895 the city congratulated John Booth on the completion of the Central Station. This structure was little more than a series of covered platforms terminating at an old stone building, once Dufresne & McGarity's wholesale grocery warehouse, which had been acquired by Booth. The Government of Canada had bought the building and changed it into quarters for Militia Stores; the upper floor remained the military storehouse when the railroad took the building over.⁴³

Booth's railway toward Lake Huron was completed to Scotia Junction on December 1, 1896. He had acquired another short railway that carried his line on to Depot Harbour. Now the Canada Atlantic extended from the American border at Lake Champlain to Georgian Bay. Within three years the line was handling a million tons of freight a year.⁴⁴

Another line, the Montreal and Atlantic Railway Co., was completed between Ottawa and Montreal on July 17, 1898, on the south shore. It was immediately acquired by the C.P.R. and became known as the "short line." On the 29th the Ottawa and New York Railway Company completed another line that extended to

40. *Ottawa Free Press*, June 20, 1891.

41. *Minutes, City of Ottawa*, Oct. 31, 1892.

42. *Minutes, City of Ottawa*, 1893, Appx., copy of letter. A. W. Fleck to City Clerk.

43. *Insurance Map of Ottawa*.

44. Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-7.

Cornwall, Ontario, and Tupper Lake, New York. The station for the latter was built about a mile south-east of the Central Depot, as Booth would not permit the use of his station.⁴⁵

On the Quebec side, the Pontiac and Pacific Junction Railway had bought the tracks running from Hull to Aylmer and extended them to Portage du Fort in 1892. Another line, the Ottawa & Gatineau Railway, begun in 1883, was extended up the Gatineau River. It reached Kazabazua in 1893 and was built to Maniwaki in 1903. These two joined to form a company which, with the aid of municipal and other grants, built the Royal Alexandra Bridge between Ottawa and Hull in a deep section of the Ottawa. It was opened on February 22, 1901. Trains from Hull could now run to Booth's Central Depot.⁴⁶

Booth would not build a proper depot at the Chaudière on Broad Street, but the C.N.R. did. This was quite a pretentious structure in the Château style made popular in 1893 in the great C.P.R. hotel in Quebec.⁴⁷ In the 1920's it was abandoned, and finally demolished.

Booth's obstreperousness about the use of his depot by other railways, and the state of the central depot for which he had been paid a large bonus, nettled City Council. The city solicitor was asked in 1902 to apply to the Privy Council for an order to compel the C.A.R. to build a central station. The matter was taken to the Minister of Justice the next year.⁴⁸

Booth sidestepped the issue. In 1903, soon after it was announced that the National Transcontinental Railway would be built, the Canada Atlantic was offered for sale. The Canadian Pacific Railway did not try to buy Booth's railway; it will be remembered that the City of Ottawa had a sharply anti-C.P.R. clause in its agreement to pay Booth a grant in 1892. There ensued a struggle, in which the rising Canadian Northern and the New York Central (whose subsidiary the Ottawa & New York Railway Company had a line to the capital) appeared as contenders. On September 29, 1904, it was announced that the Grand Trunk had bought the Canada Atlantic. The City of Ottawa kept on pressing in the matter of the central depot, writing the new owner to enquire when it would be built.⁴⁹

At last, in 1907, the Grand Trunk gave notice to the city that it was applying for incorporation of the "Ottawa Terminal Railway Company." The railway's General Manager, Charles Melville Hays, asked for a fixed assessment for twenty years on the station and a hotel that were to be built, costing in the order of

45. L. Brault, *Ottawa Old & New*, Ottawa: 1946, pp. 193, 194.
Insurance Atlas City of Ottawa.

46. L. Brault, *Hull 1800-1950* Ottawa: 1950, p. 1181.

47. *Free Press*, Ottawa: Nov. 20, 1889, Apr. 8, 1893.

Anastase, Roy, *Maniwaki et La Vallée de la Gatineau*, Ottawa: 1933.

48. *Station at Ottawa For Canadian Pacific Railway*, Edward Maxwell
Architect (plan).

Courtney C. J. Bond, *City on the Ottawa*, Ottawa: 1965.

Minutes, City of Ottawa; 1902, p. 491.

Minutes, City of Ottawa; 1903, p. 260

49. Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp. 370, 371.

Minutes, City of Ottawa; 1905, p. 308.

\$2,500,000. The great American architect Bradford Lee Gilbert was retained. Sir Wilfrid Laurier approved the plans, which called for the erection of Gothic structures, the station by the canal, and a hotel in Major's Hill Park, Ordnance lands belonging to the Crown. The Grand Trunk was deeply involved and railway construction in Canada's west and the financial panic of 1907 struck in a sore blow. Hays, who was virtually the dictator of Grand Trunk policy, instructed his architect to cut down the plans so as to save a million dollars, omitting entire storeys. When the plans were submitted to City Council on February 14, 1908, the changes were noted. The Chief Engineer of the Railway explained that the architect had "exceeded his instructions." Gilbert, who was present, leaped to his feet to protest. His services were immediately dispensed with and a Montreal firm was retained. In a very short time they produced a new set of plans, which bore a very suspicious resemblance to those of Gilbert. However, the exterior designs of the buildings were altered, the hotel to a French chateau and the station to a neo-classical structure. They were duly opened in the early summer of 1912, but Hays was not present. He had died a short while earlier in the sinking of the *Titanic*.⁵⁰ The Grand Trunk service to Ottawa was merely a branch line from its main Montreal-Toronto line. The railway's transcontinental line passed far to the north of the capital.

In 1917 the recently built transcontinental lines were in difficulty. That year Parliament authorized the taking over of the Canadian Northern by the Government of Canada, and in late 1918 the Canadian Government Railways was set up to manage this and other railways. The name was shortly afterward changed to the Canadian National Railways. The Government of Canada acquired ownership of the Grand Trunk Railway in May 1920, and a few years later it too became part of the Canadian National Railways.⁵¹

Now a process of *subtraction* of railways from the Ottawa scene began. The first to go was the Canadian Northern's Ottawa-Hawkesbury line. (Some of its right of way east of the capital has become the Trans-Canada Highway). The depot on Hurdman Road became a coal-yard. The New York Central, which in 1915 had acquired the Ottawa and New York Railway, abandoned its line to Cornwall and tore up the tracks in 1957.

Under the administration of Sir Robert Borden a Federal Plan Commission was established to prepare a plan for the development of Ottawa and Hull. One of the aspects to be considered was "convenient arrangements for traffic and transportation. . . ." In November 1913, the Commission set up an office in Ottawa; a Report was issued in 1915. The Report recognized the interference caused to the Ottawa street system by the multitudinous railways of Ottawa and Hull and recommended a rationalization involving the abandonment of many lines, the building of

50. *Minutes, City of Ottawa*; 18 Feb. 1907. [C. P. Meredith?] "Architectural Ethics" *Architectural Record*, July, Dec., 1908.

51. *Ottawa Journal*, Sept. 13, 1909; *Ottawa Free Press*, Oct. 24, 1911; Stevens, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 72-3, 76-7.

52. Glazebrook, G. P. de T. *A History of Transportation in Canada*, II, Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1964, pp. 160-176.

a tunnel, etc.⁵³ The war and the advent of the automobile vehicle, which revolutionized traffic patterns, caused the Report of the Federal Plan Commission to be shelved forever.

In 1922 a Canadian city planner, Noulan Cauchon, prepared an unofficial plan for the capital. In it he proposed several revolutionary steps:

- (a) The creation of a rail belt-line bypassing Ottawa.
- (b) Marshalling yards to be concentrated along this line south of the Walkley Road.
- (c) Lifting of the tracks and creation of a rapid transit highway across the city on their alignments.⁵⁴

In 1950, a National Capital Planning Committee, in a report made after a long period of study under the direction of the French town-planner Jacques Gréber, once more recommended changes to the railway system, changes that embodied much that Noulan Cauchon had proposed.⁵⁵

Work began in 1950 on the carrying out of some of the Gréber proposals. Five and a half miles of main line tracks were laid, bypassing the city on the south. In November 1953 through freight trains began to bypass the city by this route. By August 1955 the CNR transferred its freight marshalling and car repair to the Walkley Road area. In 1960 the cross-town tracks, the former C.A.R., were abandoned, and work began on the building of a four and six lane rapid transit road, the Queensway, broken at present at the Rideau Canal and east, in the area of the main line tracks.⁵⁶ This was another Cauchon proposal.

The Gréber proposal that all rail crossings of the Ottawa River be transferred to a new bridge that would be built six miles east of the capital, crossing Duck Island, was found to be not economically feasible. The old St. Lawrence & Ottawa line to the Chaudière and the 1880 rail bridge to Hull were retained.⁵⁷ Work began in 1964 in putting this line in a tunnel under the canal at Dow's Lake and into a cutting from there northwards toward the Ottawa, so that the line could be easily bridged for street crossings. New dynamiting techniques were used in blasting the excavation through the limestone, resulting in a very neat cutting, almost as though chiselled.

The final step in the rationalization of Ottawa's railways under the Gréber proposals will occur when the 1912 G.T.R. Union Depot in the city's heart is demolished, the tracks along the canal lifted, and a new station by Hurdman Bridge, designed by John B. Parkin Associates of Toronto, take over its function.

The C.N.R. trains will no longer have to back into the station, the C.P.R. trains no longer approach or leave via Hull. Some Ottawans are sorry to see the 1912 Union Depot go. It was really just one aspect of an almost anarchic free enterprise development. The planners have at last taken over and a new era is dawning.

53. P.C. 2304, 125 Sept. 1913.

54. *Report of Federal Planning Com.*, R.P.C. Ottawa: 1915.

55. *Journal of the Town Planning Inst. of Canada*, April, 1922.

56. *General Report, Plan for the National Capital*, Ottawa: 1950. *Atlas Annexed to the General Report*, Ottawa: 1950.

57. W. Eggleston, *The Queen's Choice*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961, p. 257.

OVER THE EDITORS' DESKS

Correction of text: "Tracks into Ottawa: The construction of railways into Canada's capital," *Ontario History*, Vol. LVII, No. 3, September 1965. On page 132 line 13, for "C.N.R." read "C.P.R." On page 133, after line 18 add paragraph:

These were the mad days of new transcontinental railways. Sir Donald Mann and Sir William Mackenzie brought the main line of their Canadian Northern Railway right through Ottawa. On November 30, 1909, the Ottawa-Hawkesbury line connecting with a line that ran to Montreal was completed. A new bridge north of Hurdman's Bridge brought the tracks over the Rideau to yet another terminus in the south-east part of the city. In 1911 The Canadian Northern's line west from the capital was started. Mackenzie and Mann announced plans to build a town, Rideau Junction, near their southerly crossing of the Rideau, that would be the main car shops of their railways. But somehow this project was deferred, and eventually discarded. Shortage of material for bridging the Ottawa upstream delayed the opening of the C.N.'s transcontinental line west of the capital until 1916. Meanwhile, another line was built, from Toronto to Ottawa via Napanee. The last section of this was completed on December 30, 1913.¹⁴

The Editors regret that these revisions of the text, that were supplied in good time by the author, were not made in the final printing.