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Fifty Years in Ottawa.

The Civil Service of Canada is, this month, celebrating (by practically ignoring) the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment in Ottawa.

As is well known, old Bytown was selected by Queen Victoria, in 1858, to be the federal capital of the then Province of Canada, comprising old Upper and Lower Canada, then designated Canada West and Canada East and now known as Ontario and Quebec. The selection of a site, preparation of plans for and the erection of the original three buildings on "the Hill" occupied nearly seven years and it was not until the autumn of 1865 that the new structures were in condition to afford any accommodation to the Government departments.

The great break-up at Quebec took place in October just fifty years ago. What it meant to close, dismantle, transfer and re-establish the working machinery of the Government in those days cannot be comprehended. Much of the departmental furniture, equipment and accumulation of books and documents was loaded on barges which made the slow and tiresome voyage up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, then by the Ottawa and its canals to the new Capital and finally up the Rideau canal locks and through the arch of the original Sappers' Bridge to the canal basin, where they were moored for unloading. The 26th of October witnessed the arrival of three of these barges. Much of the cargoes of some of the barges was badly loaded or protected and suffered damage in transit. Unforeseen delays added to the general disorganization and the officials in

charge were well-nigh distracted with the accumulation of troubles.

By no means least of all the woes of the exodus from Quebec was the problem of transferring the personnel of the Service. All the Government employees had to come to Ottawa along with the departmental equipment. Civil servants, their wives, their children and their household goods added to the volume of the great movement.

Little old-time "hole in the woods" Ottawa had been for seven years staring in awe at the growing stone palaces on Barracks Hill. The magnitude of the works had made a boom in the community and speculation on future growth, after the arrival of the Government, had stimulated and extended investments in lands and buildings. Ottawa had expected a big influx, but the rush that came found her in no wise prepared. The "Quebeckers," as the old-time residents called the new-comers, simply swamped the place. Every hotel overflowed, every vacant house, apartment or room was snapped up and almost every private house had a "boarder." Shops did a roaring trade and prices for every salable commodity,—food, housing, clothing, labour and fuel—soared to unprecedented levels.

There was cold, dry weather at the end of October. Considerable ice was in evidence. From dawn until dark the rutted streets were filled with carts and wagons of every description laden with Government and private goods.

Up on the Hill, all was confusion. The West Block was nearly finished,