

## O T T A W A

OTTAWA, the seat of the federal government of Canada, while by no means the largest city in the Dominion, nevertheless possesses the advantages of location and physical appearance necessary to meet the requirements and uphold the dignity of the Canadian capital.

As the chief interest in Ottawa hinges upon the fact that it is the seat of the central government of Canada, so does the city itself, in general appearance, group itself around the stately legislative and administrative buildings which constitute authority's visible image, and within whose walls there are laws enacted and orders given for the guidance and control of eight millions of people and half a continent.

The Parliament Buildings occupy a distinctly beautiful site. They stand upon the summit of a steep, lofty, tree-clad bluff rising to a considerable height from the shores of the Ottawa River, and viewed from this angle their appearance is picturesque in the extreme. The buildings, however, face in the other direction. They form a handsome quadrangle, enclosing beautifully kept lawns and facing out over the city, which slopes away in all directions at a gradual and decreasing gradient. Thus, looking from any direction, one sees the city rising to the central culminating feature—the splendid pile in which is housed the highest representative authority of the Dominion.

But while Ottawa has reached its present importance chiefly by reason of its being the Capital, still there was a city there before such a dignity was thrust upon it. The original *raison d'être* of the settlement lies in the decision of the War Department of Great Britain that a line of communication between Lower Canada and Upper Canada should be provided, which would not lie too dangerously near to the United States frontier. It was following the war of 1812, when the disadvantages of the St. Lawrence route in this regard were demonstrated, that the British authorities first suggested to the Canadas, and then undertook themselves, in 1826, the construction of such a line of communication. The result was the Rideau Canal, leading from Grenville, on the St. Lawrence, through Ottawa to Kingston, on Lake Ontario, thus avoiding the frontier route via Cornwall and Brockville. In connection with the work, which was undertaken for military purposes, Colonel By, who was in charge, formed a settlement at the junction of the rivers Ottawa

and Rideau, which became known as Bytown. It is worthy of note that the foundation stone of the locks at Bytown was laid by Sir John Franklin, in 1826, on his return from one of his trips to the far north. The canal was finished in 1832, and following its completion there seems to have been little in the way of expansion of the town for some years, a large number of the population going into the surrounding country and settling down as farmers. Ultimately, however, the town began to grow, and by 1854 the population had reached the ten thousand mark. The town was then incorporated into a city and took the name of Ottawa.

Following the burning of the Parliament House in Montreal by a riotous mob, in 1849, the capital of united Canada, formed by the union of Upper and Lower Canada, which took the names of Ontario and Quebec respectively, alternated between Toronto and Quebec city. This, of course, was a highly unsatisfactory system, and considerable jealousy existed as to which city should be the permanent capital. In 1857 Queen Victoria was asked to designate the city which should receive the honour. Her choice fell on Ottawa. Considerable resistance was at first evidenced to this choice, but in the end the Queen's ruling was accepted and preparations made for constructing suitable buildings. These were commenced in 1860, when the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) laid the foundation stone; and in 1865 the buildings were completed and the first session of the Canadian Government held in Ottawa.

Ottawa thus became the capital of Canada as a sort of "compromise candidate", but on the whole the choice seems to have been an excellent one. Ottawa is situated on the boundary line of Ontario and Quebec, and was thus very centrally located as regarded the Canada of that day. Although the city at the time of its selection was in a somewhat isolated position, the building of several railway lines subsequently resulted in bringing it into closer touch with the outside world, and to-day, standing as it does on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental line, and with excellent connections with the Grand Trunk, Canadian Northern and other systems, it is really excellently situated with regard to communication with other points in Canada.

The year after the opening of the Parliament Buildings, the Confederation of Ontario, Quebec,