

Railway statistics for 1875-1876.

The number of railways in operation at that date was 37, including Government roads (the Intercolonial and the Prince Edward Island Railways) with a total length of 5,157 miles (8,299 kilometres), from which is to be deducted for mileage of the Grand Trunk Railway in the United States, 228 miles (367 kilometres), leaving 4,929 miles (7,932 kilometres) operated in Canada. With the exception of 79 miles (127.8 kilometres) of the Great Western, all were single track lines, 2,373 miles (3,819 kilometres) were laid with steel, 2,758 miles (4,438 kilometres) with iron, and, in the case of one line, 25½ miles (41 kilometres) with wooden rails. The total "paid up capital" of railways in operation and under construction amounted to \$333,886,047 (1,669,430,238 francs), of which there was expended by the Dominion Government \$60,283,026 (301,415,131 francs).

6,331,757 tons (6,433,065 tons met.) of freight and 5,544,814 passengers were carried. The earnings aggregated \$19,358,084 (96,790,420 francs) and the cost of operating \$15,802,721 (79,013,607 francs). There were 1,000 locomotives, 773 passenger cars, and 13,647 box freight and cattle cars. The above figures do not include certain short lines operated by coal companies for shipping purposes, of which there were in Nova Scotia 15, aggregating 111 miles (178.6 kilometres).

Besides the railways in operation there was much work of construction in progress, both by Government and by private companies. Published official returns for the previous year show that on the 30th of June, 1875, there were under construction, but not opened, 2,275 miles (3,661 kilometres) of road. These included work on the railway in contemplation to connect Canada west of the great lakes with the waters of the Pacific, which ultimately took completed form under the name of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

General position of railway construction in 1876.

Before considering this great work, and the new epoch which its construction inaugurated, it would be well to note to how limited an extent the interior of the country had so far been touched by railways. A map which accompanied the Departmental Report of 1876, shows, indeed, a through line connecting the principal cities of the Dominion and communicating with American lines to the south and west, but this through line bordered closely on the River Saint Lawrence, and with the exception of a line of the Grand Trunk Railway to Ottawa, about 50 miles (80 kilometres) north on the river, and another about 120 miles (193 kilometres) long, from a point on the main line to the River Ottawa at Pembroke, there was practically nothing to pierce the dense forests with which the interior of the country was covered beyond a few more or less difficult and sometimes impassable roads and paths, and these of but limited extent. Quebec had, it is true, communication by ferry, with the railway across the river, but none to the east, west or north. Montreal had no railway to the north or east, though by means of the Victoria bridge she had ample connection with the south.

This condition of things was, however, being rapidly altered. A line of railway was in course of construction on the north side of the Saint Lawrence between Quebec and Ottawa, and the building of a railway to connect the railway systems of eastern and central Canada with the Pacific (expressly stipulated for as a condition of the entry of British Columbia into confederation) was making progress. Surveys of the whole intermediate country had been simultaneously commenced at either end by parties starting in June and July, 1871.

Position of communication west of the Great Lakes prior to the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

A brief glance at the position of traffic communication between Canada East and Canada West of Lake Superior prior to the advent of the railway will be of interest.