

by these favourable conditions and the newly recognized availability of hydro-electric power, a group of American and other lumbermen came to Bytown, beginning in 1853, and established sawmills by the Chaudière Falls. Soon the islands about the falls and the flats on both shores were covered with lumber piles and loaded barges were on their way to the American market. The sawmill industry began its rise to dominating importance.

At the beginning of 1855, Bytown became a city and took the name Ottawa, just in time to receive a great honour and to assume a great responsibility. The United Province of Canada, since its formation in 1841, had shuttled its capital between Kingston, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec and was now trying to agree on a permanent site. At the end of 1857 Queen Victoria settled the dispute by choosing Ottawa. Government buildings for the new capital were designed and contracts were let in 1859 for their construction. However, the task was hard and the cost much greater than expected and it was not until 1866 that the government of the Province of Canada actually moved to Ottawa. The next year the first Parliament of the new Dominion of Canada met in an incomplete Parliament Building, situated on the former Barrack Hill.

The nation enjoyed a brief prosperity during most of the next decade. Ottawa grew and the government expanded as the Dominion extended its authority over more and more of British North America. In 1871, shortly after Confederation, the city had a population of about 22,000. Many fine homes and stores in stone and brick were built. The Departmental Buildings, flanking the Parliament Building on the Hill, were enlarged. An old wooden City Hall near the Canal was replaced in 1876 by a fine stone building and a large post office was erected at the city's centre. By the end of the nineteenth century, Ottawa was a flourishing industrial centre with a population of 59,000. It remained the hub of the lumbering industry of Eastern Canada, had the largest paper mills in the country and the leading match factory in the world. However, little effort had been made to preserve or enhance its natural beauty until the Ottawa Improvement Commission was set up in 1899 and the Driveway along the Rideau Canal was begun. Even so, progress was slow in this direction but in the years up to the beginning of the First World War the city centre began to take on a new face. Many new government buildings were erected—laboratories, the Dominion Observatory and the Geodetic Building at the Experimental Farm, the Archives Building, the Victoria Memorial Museum, the Royal Canadian Mint and the Connaught Building. In 1912, the Grand Trunk Railway completed construction of the Union Station and of the French renaissance-style Chateau Laurier whose turrets continue to grace the Ottawa skyline. During this period several studies were made and plans recommended for the improvement of the National Capital but these were deferred because of the War and for other reasons. Fire destroyed the Parliament Building in 1916, leaving standing only the octagonal library now forming part of the magnificent building of modern Gothic architecture which replaced it but was ten years in the building. The city beautification program was continued by the Ottawa Improvement Commission on a slightly increased budget until 1927; in that year the Commission was reconstituted as the Federal District Commission and the program then proceeded at a more accelerated rate. The second Commission was succeeded in 1959 by the National Capital Commission.

The City of Ottawa today, with its population of close to 300,000, is well on the way to becoming a national capital of enduring beauty and grace. It is a self-governing municipality, administered by an elected City Council, but there are underlying differences which set it apart from all other major Canadian centres. Historically, it has always been the meeting place for the two founding peoples. It is the national Seat of Government and throughout the years the federal authorities have recognized the need of creating in and around the National Capital an area of pride, not only for the residents of the city and its environs but for all Canadians.

Much of the work of the National Capital Commission hinges on the implementation of a long-range Master Plan, developed by the late Jacques Gréber, a famed French town-planner. The Gréber Plan tabled in the House of Commons in 1951, although not