

TRACING THE LINES



Eastern Ontario Railway History in Maps
by
Brian Gilhuly

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Introduction

Created to mark 150 years of railways in Arnprior, this brief history gives that town pride of place. The maps show settlements from 1807, as well as the location and ownership of public railways from 1854 to 2015, in present-day eastern Ontario and western Québec. The area covered is roughly centred on Carp, extending from Rigaud west as far as Rivière-des-Joachins and from Belleville north to Maniwaki. Commercial navigation on rivers and canals is shown. Industrial, logging and light railways are not included, apart from the Arnprior-Nepean Railway, nor are sidings and yards. US territory is not mapped.

Maps show the state of the rail network at year end. The choice of years to depict was based on the timing of events relevant to Arnprior and McNab/Braeside. Nearby settlements appear on the map from the generally-accepted date of their founding, which usually is when a mill or store was erected. Names of political entities are correct for the date of the map.

Setting the Stage (Maps 1 – 3)



MAP 1: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

Development of the Ottawa valley was kick-started by the British Parliament in 1807, when it imposed a 275% duty on timber imports from traditional Baltic suppliers and created the square timber trade from the Ottawa. As Map 1 shows, the European presence on the Ottawa was then limited to a few fur trade posts, Philemon Wright's settlement at the mouth of the Gatineau River and another settlement of American migrants at Lachute.



MAP 2: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

Settlements soon developed along the Ottawa, as well as at Perth, Richmond and several other inland locations. When the McNab settlers began to arrive in at the mouth of the Madawaska 1825, the date of Map 2, there was no village in their township. The first steamboat on the Ottawa had begun operating that year between Wright's Town and Grenville, joining those already operating on the Saint Lawrence River and the Lake of Two Mountains.

With the opening of the Rideau Canal in 1830, the standard steamboat shipping route from the

Atlantic ports and Montréal to Toronto became *Montréal – Bytown – Kingston – Toronto – Montréal*. The rapids on the St. Lawrence between Prescott and Cornwall were impassible in the upstream direction, though it was no problem to make the passage downriver.

Tracing the Lines



MAP 3: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE](#). [CLICK AGAIN TO](#)

[RETURN](#). Introduced steamboat service on Lac des Chats, where it operated for many years.

By the time of Map 3 in 1836 Arnprior was on the map.

In fact, Arnprior was about to become a ghost village. Founded in 1831 by the Buchanan brothers, it had a dam on the Madawaska powering both saw and grist mills by the time they sold it in 1836 after a dispute with Archibald McNab. The new owners shut both mills within two years.

Steamboats had appeared on Lac Deschênes in 1832 and in 1836 the *George Buchanan*

Rails Enter the Frame (Maps 4 – 5)

Even though a first railway had opened in Lower Canada in 1836, it was more than a decade before railway construction took off in British North America. The first major line was international, connecting Longueuil, opposite Montréal on the south shore, with Portland Maine, providing Canada with year-round access to an Atlantic port. While most railways adopted the ‘Stephenson gauge’ (4’ 8½” between rails), it had been built to a wider gauge (5’ 6”), chosen by its promoters to prevent cars being ‘diverted’ to other railways. The promoters’ close ties to the Government of (the Province of) Canada led the latter in 1849 to offer loan guarantees to railways 75 miles or longer, provided they were built to the 5’ 6” ‘broad’ gauge.



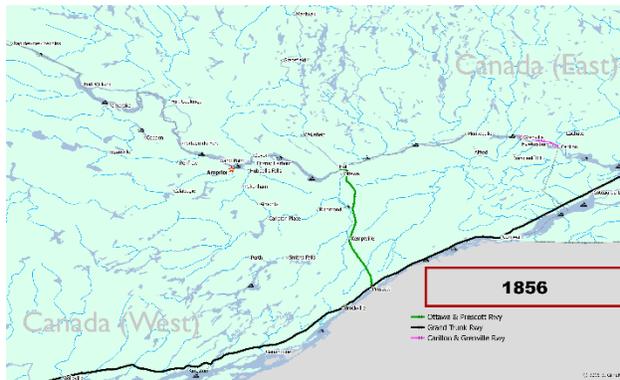
MAP 4: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE](#). [CLICK AGAIN TO](#)

[RETURN](#). Construction as a means of transporting sawn lumber to American markets. The Bytown station was on Sussex Drive, near McKay’s mill at the Rideau falls. The B&P was built to the 4’ 8½” gauge. Thus, a car hauled to Prescott by the B&P could continue on US rails after its brief ferry ride to Ogdensburg. Map 4 shows the completion of the Bytown and Prescott at the end of December, 1854. Days later, Bytown was renamed Ottawa and the railway duly became the **Ottawa and Prescott Railway (O&P)**.

In 1851 new locks on the St. Lawrence opened navigation all the way from Montréal to Kingston, effectively ending the commercial importance of the Rideau Canal. The same year, a charter was granted for the **Bytown and Prescott Railway (B&P)** to connect those towns. In fact, the real southern terminus was Ogdensburg NY, a short ferry trip from Prescott, where US railroads already provided connections to Boston and New York. American investors provided most of the capital for the B&P while timber merchants like John Egan, Daniel McLachlin (then MLA for Bytown) and Thomas McKay promoted its

Meanwhile, Daniel McLachlin had bought the derelict 400-acre Arnprior townsite in 1851 and moved his operations there in 1853. That year, a group of investors led by Brockville’s MLA, George Crawford, had obtained a charter for a broad gauge line from Brockville to Pembroke via Smiths Falls and Arnprior, with a branch to Perth, to be known as the **Brockville and Ottawa Railway (B&O)**. Such a line would

make Brockville the commercial gateway to the upper Ottawa as well as to the inland settlements. The municipalities along the planned route provided grants and loans, but for years the project was stalled by the company's inability to raise capital in the UK. Oddly, given the success of the B&P, no attempt ever seems to have been made to attract American investors



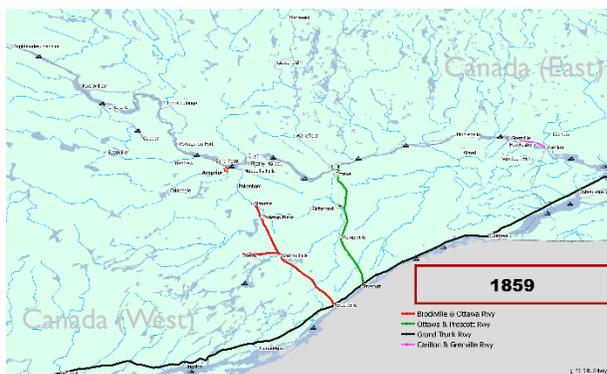
MAP 5: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE](#). [CLICK AGAIN TO](#)

fits and starts, as funds were available. A major complication was the railway's plan to tunnel under downtown Brockville to reach a waterfront terminus. Brockville Town council wanted a cheaper surface route but the tunnel – which would be Canada's first – had captured the public imagination. In a referendum the citizens of Brockville voted to support the tunnel. The B&O company was reorganized in 1856 with the municipalities taking half the seats on the board and yet another fund-raising mission to London was launched.

The broad gauge **Grand Trunk Railway (GTR)** was built westward along the Saint Lawrence from Montréal, reaching Brockville in 1855 and Toronto in 1856, as reflected by Map 5. At Montréal, the GTR had a ferry connection to the Portland line, which it bought. On the right of Map 5 is the **Grenville and Carillon Railway (G&C)**, opened in 1855 to link steamboat routes separated by the rapids between those towns. Also broad gauge, it operated seasonally.

Work on the B&O meanwhile had proceeded by

Arnprior's First Railway (Maps 6 – 8)



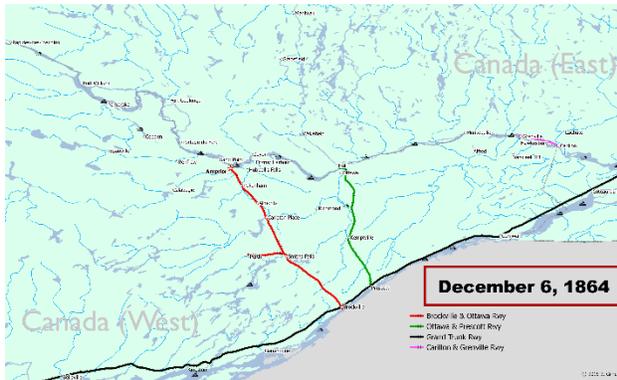
MAP 6: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE](#). [CLICK AGAIN TO](#)

Money had run out again and Almonte would remain the end of the line for over five years.

The breakthrough that would permit renewed construction was finding a British iron and steel company, Bolckow & Vaughan, that was willing to supply the needed rails on secured credit. In fact, it was willing to finance the construction as well, provided that it were given full management control. After much debate, the County Councils agreed and the company was reorganized once again in 1862. Late in 1863, things got under way again.

Rail laying on the Brockville & Ottawa finally began in 1858, and regular service between the GTR station at Brockville and Perth via Smiths Falls began in February 1859. In August of that year the line from Smiths Falls to Almonte was opened, shown on Map 6. Mail for Arnprior now travelled by train to Almonte and onward by stage coach. Passengers from Arnprior could take a 1:25 AM stage to catch the 7:45 train from Almonte. The Brockville tunnel opened in 1860, providing access to the waterfront and short ferry connections to Morristown and Ogdensburg, NY.

Tracing the Lines



MAP 7: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.](#)



MAP 8: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.](#)

Constructed during 1864, the Brockville and Ottawa line from Almonte through Pakenham to Arnprior was opened on December 6, 1864, as seen in Map 7. The bridge over the Madawaska was not yet completed, so operations began from a temporary station on the east bank of the river.

The following September, with the Madawaska bridge in place, the line was opened as far as Sand Point. That was as far as the Brockville and Ottawa would ever go, 74.5 miles (120 km) from the Saint Lawrence waterfront, depicted in Map 8. The 12-mile Perth branch brought the railway well above the mileage required to claim a subsidy.

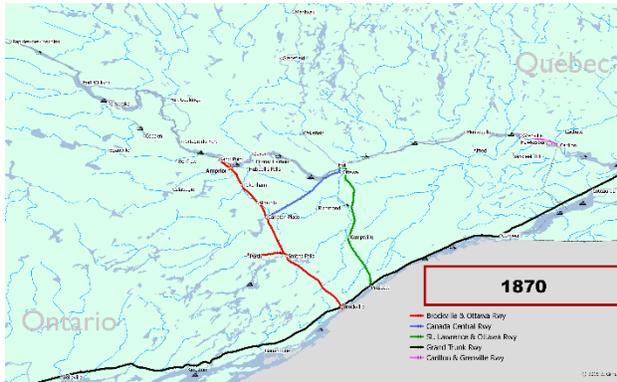
While the coming of the railway brought almost immediate prosperity to Arnprior, the added traffic did not generate enough revenue to cover the B&O's debts. In 1866 it defaulted and Bolckow & Vaughan took control of the railway. The steel company did not want to be in the railway business but it wanted to recover its investment. If making the property saleable would require still more up-front capital, it was prepared to spend.

Pacific Connection (Maps 9 – 14)

The opportunity was not long in coming. By 1870 the new Dominion of Canada was deep in negotiations to entice British Columbia into the confederation. Its price would be a railway, to match the one being built to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia under the 1867 deal. It had long been assumed that the Pacific railway would start from Montréal and run west along the Ottawa and Mattawa rivers; the old water route. Since only the final six miles of the B&O was along the Ottawa, Bolckow & Vaughan realised that a small kink in the Pacific route could be very helpful. They would connect Ottawa to Arnprior, indirectly.

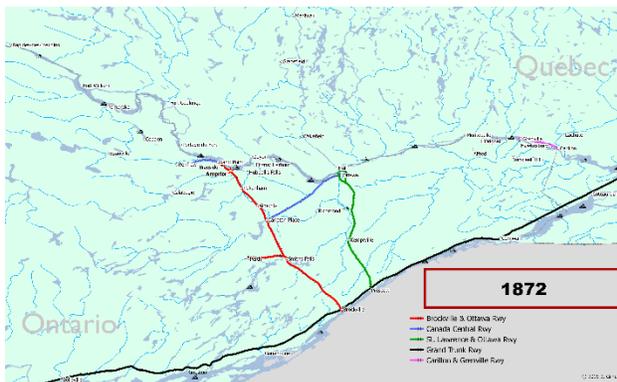
A decade earlier, an Ottawa group had applied for a charter to build a railway from Ottawa to Arnprior and, eventually, to Sault Sainte Marie. Such a line would have killed any extension of the B&O past Almonte. The municipalities that then owned the B&O mobilized support in the Legislature, and the charter that emerged in 1861 would limit the **Canada Central Railway (CCR)** to building extensions to the B&O. That was of no interest to the Ottawans, so the charter lay dormant for years.

Tracing the Lines



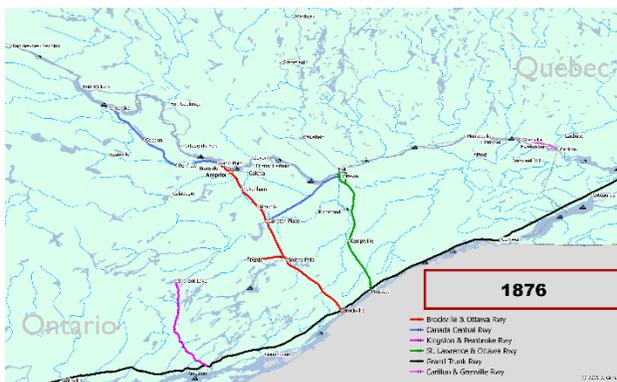
MAP 9: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

connection to the Grand Trunk at Brockville gave it a competitive advantage over the former B&P, now named the **St. Lawrence and Ottawa Railway (SLO)**, by eliminating the cost and delay of trans-loading Ottawa freight at Prescott.



MAP 10: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

scandal, the Canadian Pacific contract was cancelled and the syndicate dissolved. The Grand Trunk changed to the 4' 8½" gauge, by then called 'standard', ending the CCR's ability to interchange freight cars. A series of bank failures in the US plunged that country and Canada into a depression that would last to the end of the decade. The lumber business soon collapsed and with it the fortunes of the B&O and CCR. Westward construction did not stop on the CCR, thanks to limited government assistance.



MAP 11: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

Bolckow and Vaughan acquired the charter and built the CCR – to the broad gauge -- from the Chaudière Falls in Ottawa to a junction with the B&O at Carleton Place, illustrated by Map 9. They financed the construction themselves, since no private Ottawa investors came forward and the City refused a subsidy. It had wanted a direct line. Once the triangular CCR-B&O route was built, it would be only a matter of time before it was incorporated into the Pacific railway.

The southern section of the B&O also gained from the CCR's construction. Its same-gauge

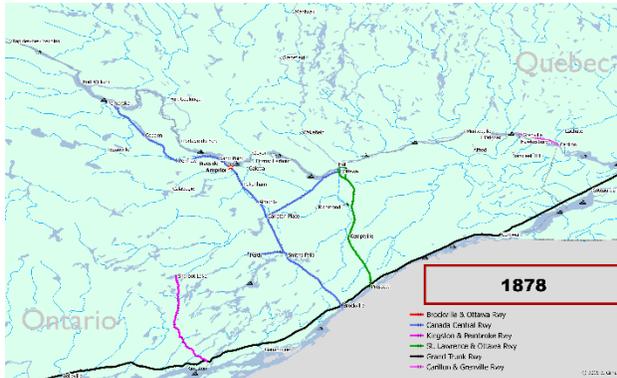
As hoped, the improved prospects made both railways more attractive to investors and by the time the CCR was extended from Sand Point to Renfrew in 1872 (Map 10), Bolckow and Vaughan had sold both to Hon. Asa Foster, a promoter known by the press as "Canada's Railway King". He had good reason to expect they soon would be resold to Hugh Allan's Canadian Pacific syndicate, which had just gotten the Pacific Railway contract from the Government.

Events in 1873 put an end to that expectation.

The Macdonald government fell in a corruption scandal, the Canadian Pacific contract was cancelled and the syndicate dissolved. The Grand Trunk changed to the 4' 8½" gauge, by then called 'standard', ending the CCR's ability to interchange freight cars. A series of bank failures in the US plunged that country and Canada into a depression that would last to the end of the decade. The lumber business soon collapsed and with it the fortunes of the B&O and CCR. Westward construction did not stop on the CCR, thanks to limited government assistance.

By the time the CCR reached Pembroke late in 1876 (Map 11), Foster's railway kingdom was collapsing. In the summer Bolckow and Vaughan had re-possessed the B&O for non-payment. Foster held on to the CCR but cooperation between the two roads was minimal. That situation continued until Foster's sudden death in late 1877. Map 11 also shows a new line, the **Kingston and Pembroke Railway (K&P)** winding its way north to Sharbot Lake.

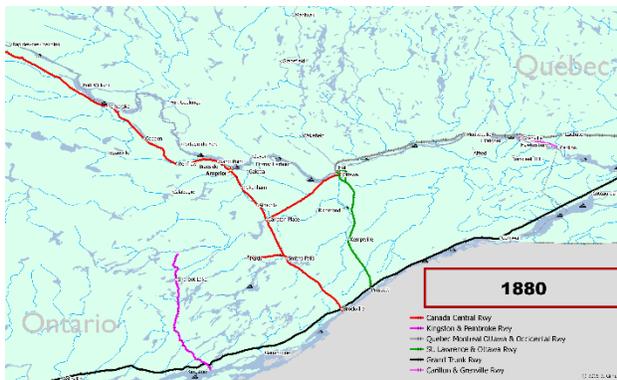
Tracing the Lines



MAP 12: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE.](#) [CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.](#)

the south bank. By the date of Map 12, work was beginning to extend the CCR beyond Pembroke. The extension would be built to the standard gauge.

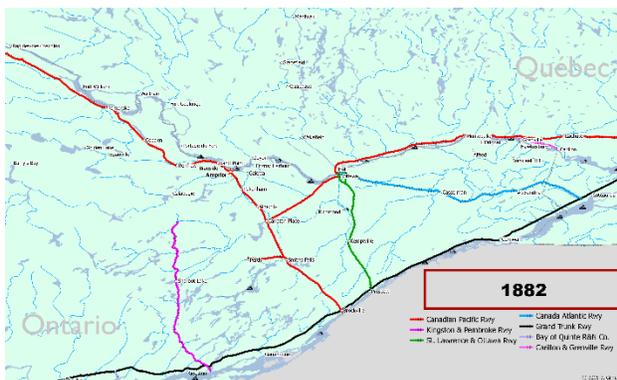
Early in 1878, the Foster estate sold the CCR to the B&O, still controlled by Bolckow and Vaughan. The latter decided to use the Canada Central name for the merged enterprise as they once again prepared for its sale. The depression was easing and the re-elected Macdonald government was looking for Pacific railway partners. The CCR's claim to be included had been greatly strengthened by the Québec government's completion of the **Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway (QMOO)** all the way to the north side of the Chaudière falls, where there was a road bridge leading to the CCR station on



MAP 13: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE.](#) [CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.](#)

wood to coal fuel. Eliminating 'wooding up' stops every 20 miles or so speeded up the schedule. As Map 13 also shows, the K&P had resumed construction northward.

Bolckow and Vaughan sold the CCR for the final time in 1880, to a group headed by Montreal businessman Duncan McIntyre. The McIntyre group made major changes. Over the Easter weekend the entire line was converted to the standard gauge, restoring interchange with other railways. An overnight sleeping car service between Ottawa and Toronto was introduced. For its part, the QMOO built the Prince of Wales Bridge just above the Chaudière so that trains from Montréal could reach the CCR station, which became Ottawa's first union station. At the end of 1880, CCR locomotives were converted from



MAP 14: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE.](#) [CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.](#)

Early in 1881 a syndicate including McIntyre and his partners won the contract for the transcontinental line and formed the **Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)**. The first meeting of the CPR Board on June 9, 1881 agreed to the purchase of the Canada Central. Within a year the CPR had also acquired the Ottawa-Montréal line of the QMOO and was in control of the SLO to Prescott.

As Map 14 shows, the CPR would thus have controlled access to the capital had not the **Canada Atlantic Railway (CAR)** been opened

Tracing the Lines

from Ottawa to a connection with the GTR at Coteau in 1882. The CAR was owned by Ottawa lumber Baron J. R. Booth and two partners. Its passenger service to Montréal, in association with the Grand Trunk, was immediately successful because it was faster than the CPR route.

At the bottom left of Map 14 appears the **Bay of Quinte Railway and Navigation Company (BQ)**, a short connection from the Grand Trunk to Deseronto to serve the Rathbun family enterprises there.

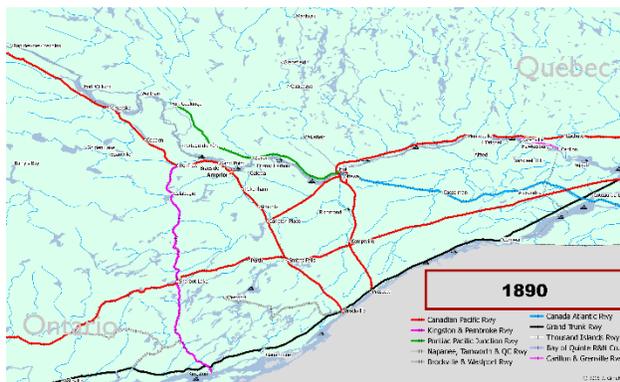
Extending the Network (Maps 15 – 16)

Railway construction in the region increased through the 1880s. Most of the new mileage was constructed by, or for, the CPR. (Many CPR lines in the East were actually owned by separate CPR-controlled companies, which leased to them to the CPR, usually for 999 years, for operation. The maps in this set show all such lines simply as CPR.) Local railways were developed to connect communities to the CPR and GTR. None of these developments touched Arnprior directly but they all increased its connectedness within the region and beyond.



MAP 15: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE.](#) [CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.](#)

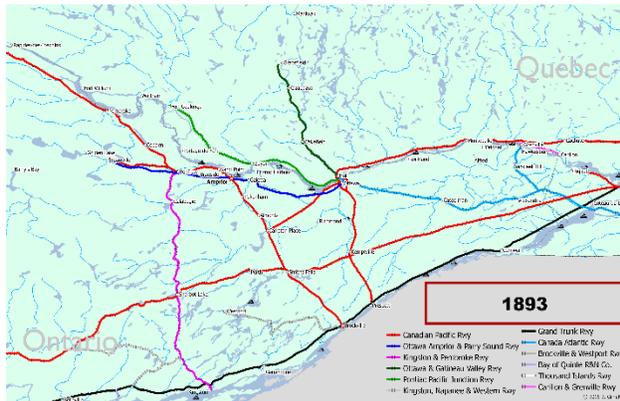
In 1883 the K&P got to Barryvale and Renfrew was reached the next year (Map 15); it never went any farther. On the north shore of the Ottawa, the **Pontiac and Pacific Junction Railway (PPJ)** was built west from Aylmer to Quyon in 1884. Gananoque on the St. Lawrence had just been connected to the Grand Trunk by the 5 mile long **Thousand Islands Railway (TIR)**. Another Rathbun line, the **Napanee, Tamworth and Quebec Railway (NTQ)** opened. Also in 1884, the CPR leased the SLO and gave itself a route to Toronto by extending the Perth branch of the former B&O through Sharbot Lake, Peterborough and Havelock to the provincial capital. When transcontinental service began in 1886, passengers from Toronto to Vancouver changed trains at Carleton Place.



MAP 16: [CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE.](#) [CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.](#)

Brockville got its third railway that year, when the **Brockville and Westport Railway (B&W)** opened. The CPR completed its Montréal – Toronto main line in 1887 by again extending the old B&O Perth branch, this time eastward from Smiths Falls to Vaudreuil. The NTQ was extended in 1889. And the PPJ was open to Fort-Coulonge in time to make Map 16. Once its bridge across the St. Lawrence opened in 1890, the Canada Atlantic linked Ottawa to northern Vermont, on the doorstep of US markets for J. R. Booth's lumber. It had long been planned that the next step would be a western extension but both his partners died within a few months. Booth bought their shares from their estates and resolved to go it alone.

Arnprior's Second Railway (Map 17)



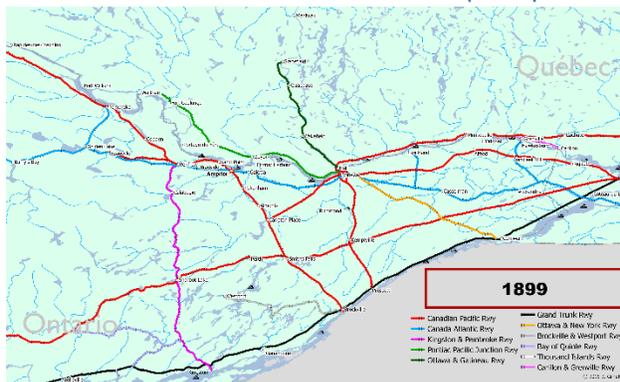
MAP 17: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

J. R. Booth undertook, on his own, to build a railway from Ottawa to Georgian Bay, via Arnprior. It could capture some of the western grain traffic and it would provide year-round access to Booth's timber limits in the Algonquin highlands. The first stage of the **Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway (OAPS)**, shown on Map 17, opened in September 1893 from the CAR's Elgin Street station as far as Arnprior.

The CPR tried to prevent the OAPS from crossing its tracks in Arnprior, but the Railway Commissioners found for Booth. Then, the CPR built a 'Georgian Bay line' from just west of

Renfrew as far as Eganville, and went to court claiming there was no room for two lines on the route both it and Booth proposed to use through Hagerty township. Booth won again. By year end, the OAPS had also reached Eganville. Meanwhile, the CAR had leased a line to Hawkesbury that opened in 1882 and the **Ottawa and Gatineau Valley Railway (OGV)** was open from Hull to the Pickanock River, just south of Gracefield, by the close of 1893. The NTQ was extended again.

Growth and Consolidation (Maps 18 – 19)

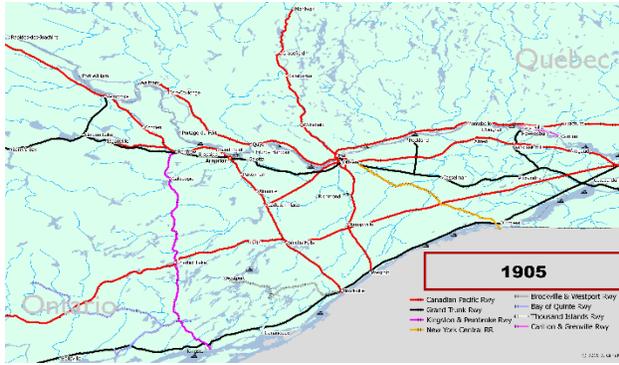


MAP 18: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

1894 saw the OAPS reach Barry's Bay and the PPJ open to Waltham, its final terminus. The OGV changed its name to **Ottawa Gatineau Railway (OGR)**. The next year, the OGR was completed to Gracefield and the CAR opened a new, leased branch to Rockland.

Service began from Georgian Bay over the OAPS to Ottawa in December 1896, a few months after the OAPS and CAR opened their new Central Depot in Ottawa, on the east bank of the canal near the last set of locks. The next year the Rathbun lines were consolidated as the **Bay of**

Quinte Railway (BQ). In 1898 the CPR responded to the CAR's competition for Ottawa – Montréal passenger traffic with a new, shorter main line via Alfred and Vankleek Hill. Ottawa gained a new connection when the **Ottawa and New York Railway (ONY)** began operation from Cornwall. The OAPS was absorbed by the CAR in 1899 (Map 18).



MAP 19: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

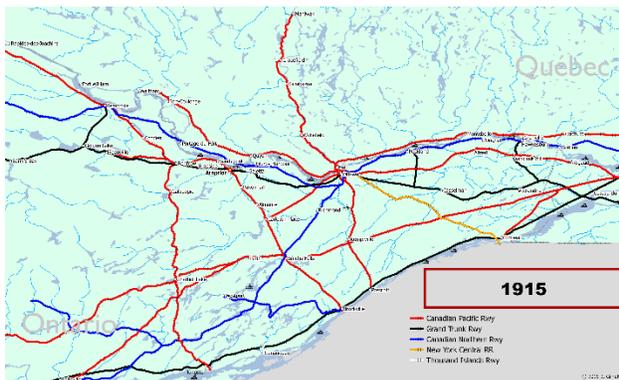
with the Grand Trunk on a very different route. To prevent the line falling into ‘enemy’ hands, the GTR was encouraged by Laurier to bid high. A sale to the Grand Trunk was agreed in 1904 and took effect the next year, as shown on Map 19.

The CPR was also an active buyer in this period, picking up the ONW in 1903 and extending it to Maniwaki in 1904. The CPR bought control of the K&P in 1903, but maintained its separate identity. The **New York Central Railroad (NYC)** bought the ONY in 1905.

The ONY completed its St. Lawrence bridge in 1900 and trains ran through to Tupper Lake. In 1901, the OGR again changed its name, to the **Ottawa, Northern and Western Railway (ONW)**. A year later it absorbed the PPJ. The BQ reached its greatest extent in 1903.

Competition to build a second transcontinental railway was heating up and Booth saw an opportunity to sell the CAR as a link in the route. As it happened, only one of the competitors, the western-based **Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR)** could use the CAR, while the Laurier government had its own idea for a joint venture

Final Growth Spurt (Map 20)



MAP 20: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

Montréal section in 1914 caused the removal of the Grenville & Carillon’s tracks, which had been silent since 1910. In its final years the G&C had become a tourist attraction in its own right; the last broad gauge railway in North America. For its Ottawa – Toronto line, the CNoR built from Ottawa as far as the east end of the BQ, bought the latter and resumed building from Deseronto west. As Map 20 shows, it also bought the Brockville & Westport, for no obvious reason. The Grand Trunk bought the TIR, but kept it a separate company because it had a municipal tax exemption. The CPR leased the K&P in 1913, ending its separate identity, and opened a leased branch to Cornwall. Most importantly, it opened a second route, also leased, from Glen Tay, just west of Perth, to Belleville and on to Toronto. The CNoR

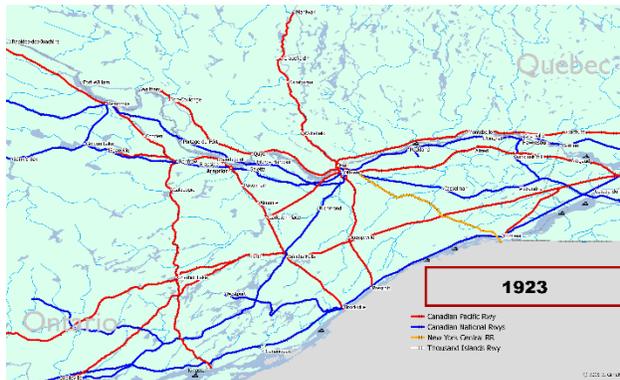
The next decade saw two new transcontinental railways opened. The Government – GTR route came nowhere near our region. But, despite its failure to acquire the CAR, the Canadian Northern did. Buying where it could, building where it must, the CNoR created a network in Ontario and Québec that included both an Ottawa Valley and an Ottawa – Toronto line.

The CNoR valley line from North Bay was all newly built. It bypassed Arnprior, crossing into Québec at Portage-du-Fort and back into Ontario at the Chats Falls. The construction of the Ottawa –

and CPR shared tracks and station at Belleville. By the end of 1915, Canada had three transcontinental railway systems, all present in our region.

End of an Era (Map 21)

Unfortunately, Canada's traffic barely justified a second cross-country line, let alone a third. Neither the Grand Trunk nor the Canadian Northern could earn enough to repay its loans and the outbreak of World War I made those loans impossible to re-finance. The final blow came in 1917, with a US Government decision to double railway wages, when it nationalized American railroads for the duration of the war. Given the integrated continental rail system, Canadian carriers were forced to follow suit. The railways, Canada's largest employers by far, were, apart from the CPR, on the brink of collapse.



MAP 21: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

The Borden Government was forced to act. The federal government had been in the railway business since 1867; building and operating the Intercolonial Railway from Québec to Nova Scotia had been part of the Confederation deal. When PEI joined in 1873, a federal takeover of its railway was negotiated. At first an informal term, by 1912 Canadian Government Railways (CGR) was the official name for the whole group, which operated as a government department under direct ministerial control.

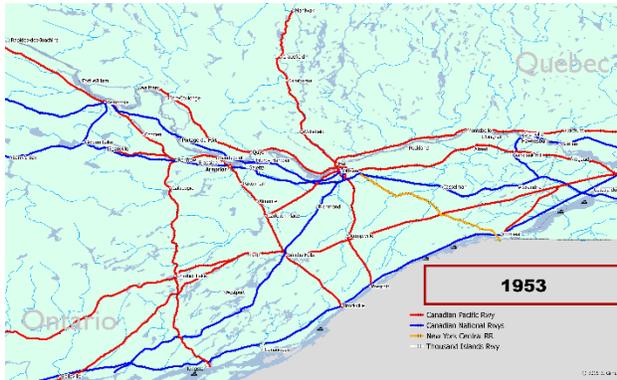
In 1918 the Government bought the Canadian Northern as a going concern. Rather than add it to the CGR group, Borden created a semi-independent Crown corporation to take over all CGR and CNoR lines. It would be called **Canadian National Railways (CNR)**. The GTR's Grand Trunk Pacific subsidiary was bankrupt by 1919 and duly became part of the CNR. The Grand Trunk itself held out a little longer but finally failed in 1922 and became part of the CNR early in 1923.

Map 21 illustrates the new reality. Apart from the NYC Ottawa line, every inch of track belongs to either the CNR or the CPR. Note the 'the'; the railways were popularly known by their initials as "the CPR" and "the CNR", always including the definite article.

Gentle Decline (Maps 22 – 25)

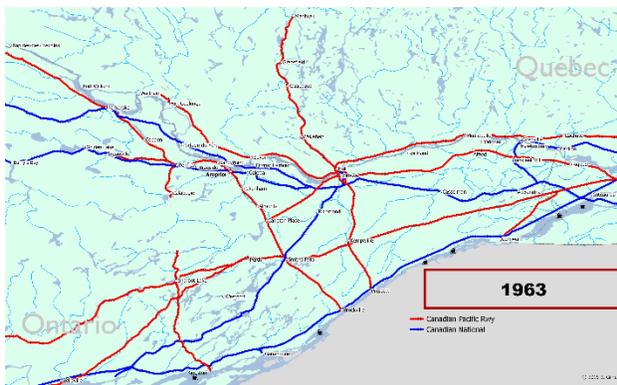
Future growth would belong to the emerging technologies: automobiles, trucks, buses and aeroplanes. But existing industries had been designed and built around the railway infrastructure; as long as they flourished the freight business would have a stable base. Post Office contracts for carriage of mail on passenger trains offset declining passenger numbers. The rise of Toronto as Canada's commercial and industrial centre, displacing Montréal, reduced through traffic on the transcontinental main lines along the Ottawa Valley. The decline of the lumber industry, of which the 1928 closure of McLachlin Bros. was an early example, reduced the volume of freight generated by the valley lines.

Tracing the Lines



MAP 22: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

Nevertheless, over the next three decades the CPR retained all its lines in this region. The former OAPS line was severed at Cache Lake in 1933 when the CNR concluded that a trestle repair would be uneconomic, but service continued both east and west of the gap. In 1936, the CNR abandoned the ex-CAR Rockland branch and the former CNoR line west of Deseronto. The Ottawa-Hawkesbury line closed in 1939. Then in 1953 the CNR closed the onetime Brockville and Westport. Even with that pruning, only the lower left of Map 22 shows much change thirty years after the calamitous birth of Canadian National Railways.

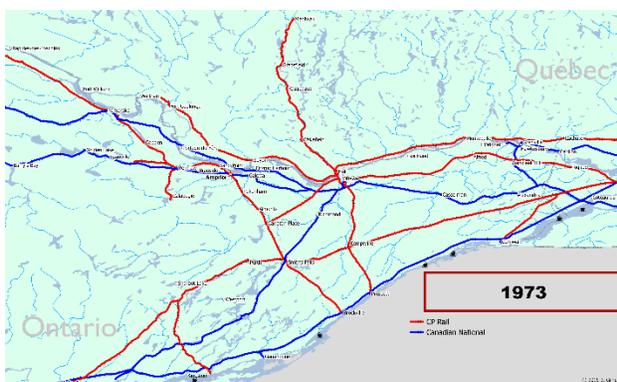


MAP 23: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

In the following decade, the biggest change in regional railways was caused by the building of the Saint Lawrence Seaway to give ocean-going vessels access to the Great Lakes. The CNR's former Grand Trunk trackage between Cornwall and Cardinal had to be moved inland and the NYC bridge removed. Replacing the bridge made no commercial sense, so the New York Central abandoned its Ottawa line in 1957. The Thousand Islands Railway was absorbed by the CNR in 1958. In 1961 the CNR 're-branded' itself as **Canadian National | Canadien national (CN)**. It also abandoned the branch from Golden Lake

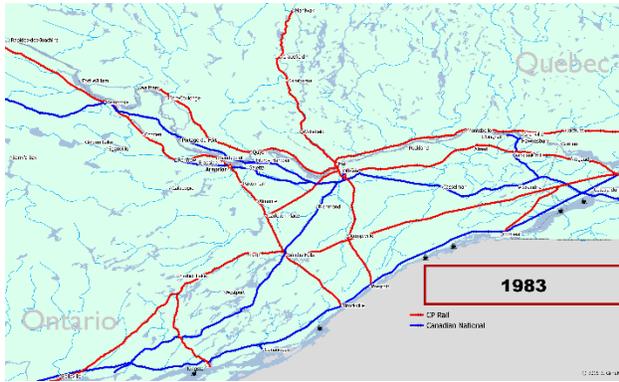
to Pembroke. The only CPR cutback shown on Map 23 is the abandonment of former K&P track between Snow Road and Calabogie at the end of 1961. The last steam locomotives had been removed from service by early 1960. Passenger service from Arnprior on CN's (ex-OAPS) line to Barry's Bay and Ottawa ended on June 30, 1961.

In the mid-sixties, railways within the City of Ottawa were radically reduced and rearranged, culminating



MAP 24: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

in the opening in 1966 of the new Union Station on Tremblay road. The CPR closed additional sections of its ex-K&P route in 1964 and in 1966, the year it quit the passenger business in the Québec – Windsor corridor. Passenger service on the transcontinental route via Arnprior continued. In 1968 the CPR re-branded its railway as **CP Rail (CP)**. The Eganville branch was cut back to Douglas in 1970, then in 1971 CP abandoned the line from Glen Tay to Tweed, on its original main line to Toronto. CN made no changes until, in 1973, it added a short spur to an industry in L'Orignal, shown on Map 24.



MAP 25: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

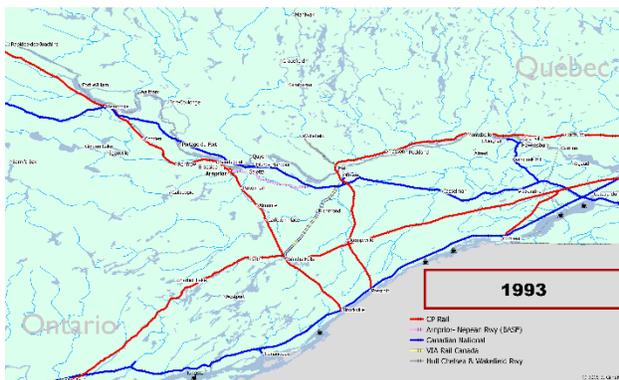
VIA Rail Canada (VIA) took over most passenger service in Canada in 1978, with no immediate local impact. Then in 1981 VIA shifted its transcontinental trains away from the Ottawa Valley route. To meet regional demand an Ottawa – Sudbury passenger service on CP tracks was introduced, so Arnprior continued to be served. CP made no changes to its network other than removing the remainder of the Eganville branch and the Calabogie – Renfrew stub of the former K&P. CN abandoned the former OAPS line from Renfrew to Whitney in 1983 (Map 25).

A Difficult Decade (Map 26)

Over the next ten years, closures accelerated and this time Arnprior would be directly affected. Map 26 shows what happened. CP drastically cut back its routes in the region. The Waltham (ex-PPJ) line was abandoned in stages between 1984 and 1993. CP's 'short line' from Ottawa to Montréal via Alfred and the southern stub of the former K&P were closed in 1986. The Maniwaki line was also abandoned that year but a tourist line, the **Hull, Chelsea and Wakefield Railway (HCW)**, began operating seasonally between those communities in 1992.

VIA returned the Montreal section of its transcontinental train to the CP route in 1985, replacing the Ottawa – Sudbury train. The return was brief. With the departure of VIA's westbound *Canadian* on Jan. 14, 1990, Arnprior had seen its last passenger train. Passenger service on the former B&O route had lasted one hundred and twenty-five years, one month and eight days. The next day, the 1870 CCR line from Ottawa to Carleton Place was abandoned. The original transcontinental link was broken.

Changes to the CN network in Map 26 were less sweeping but they touched Arnprior even more deeply. First, CN got rid of its former CNoR line from Ottawa to Napanee. The western portion was abandoned in 1985 and the stretch from Richmond to Smiths Falls was purchased by VIA in 1991, becoming the first route owned by the passenger carrier.



MAP 26: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

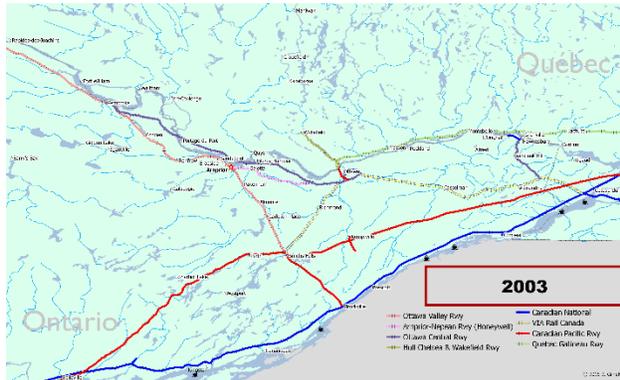
By the eighties, Arnprior's BASF plant was the only customer left on the former OAPS and BASF only took two cars per week. CN abandoned the tracks from Arnprior to Renfrew in 1989 and sought approval to abandon the rest, which could have forced the BASF facility to close. In the end, a public-private solution was developed. BASF obtained a provincial charter in 1992 to operate a private industrial railway. The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton bought the right-of-way to preserve it as a long-term transport corridor and leased it to BASF's **Arnprior-Nepean Railway (ANR)**. The ANR bought the rails and

infrastructure and contracted with CN for their operation from August 1, 1993. The Madawaska bridge and tracks west were abandoned; the right-of-way in Arnprior became a pedestrian path, now closed.

Forest industries had virtually disappeared from the Valley by the nineties, taking freight traffic with them. Both national railways had lines from Montréal to the Sudbury area that were uneconomic to maintain for their modest volume of run-through freight trains. Facing a common problem, CN and CP in 1992 announced an agreement in principle to share the existing CN route, with the CP line to be abandoned. A follow-up announcement in June 1993 launched the *CNCP Ottawa Valley Partnership*.

Short Line Experiments (Map 27)

The Partnership seems to have sunk almost immediately, but its end was officially announced by the parties in 1995, just as CN was being sold to private investors after 77 years as a public entity. There would be no collaboration. Both CN and CP, in addition to closures, began selling or leasing routes to companies that specialized in operating so-called ‘short line’ railways at lower cost, primarily through lower wages and benefits to employees. As a result, new companies abound on Map 27.



MAP 27: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

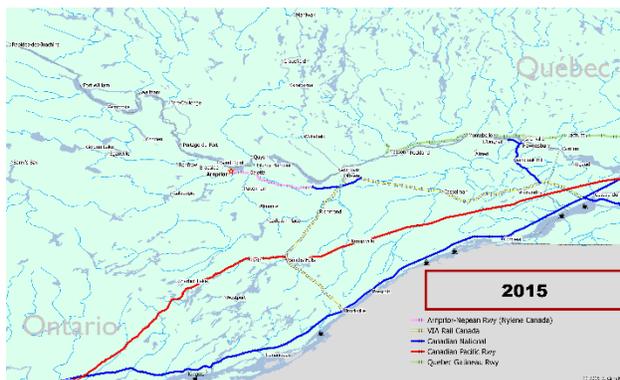
CP in 1995 closed the Prescott end of the ex-B&P line, the Cornwall branch and a section of the former QMOO route east of Thurso. The last was reopened in 1997 when the **Québec Gatineau Railway (QGR)** acquired the entire line. In 1996, CP Rail became Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) again and the Valley line from Smiths Falls to Coniston, just east of Sudbury, was leased to RaiLink Ottawa Valley, which in turn became the **Ottawa Valley Railway (OVR)** in 1999. In 1998, the northern part of the former B&P was closed.

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CN abandoned its line from Pembroke west to Capreol in 1996. The same year, the Hawkesbury branch was leased to the Ontario L’Original Railway. Then in 1998 CN sold to VIA the former CAR route between Ottawa and Coteau, retaining the right to use the line for freight, for a fee. It then leased the one-time CNoR line from Ottawa to Pembroke, plus its access to the VIA track, to the **Ottawa Central Railway (OCR)**. In 2000 the OCR bought the Ontario L’Original Railway.

A Further Sorting Out (Map 28)

Of the new short line operators, only the Québec Gatineau Railway managed to find a viable long-term business model. As a result, it is still in operation in 2015 and appears on Map 28. Likewise, the ANR, now the property of Nylene Canada Inc., continues to be operated on contract by CN.



MAP 28: CLICK MAP TO VIEW FULL-SIZE. CLICK AGAIN TO RETURN.

The ending of the short line leases came swiftly with the onset of the 2008 economic downturn and abandonments were not far behind. The closure of the Smurfit-Stone plant in Portage-du-Fort in 2008 was quickly followed by the end of the Ottawa Central. CN took back the branch to L’Original at the end of 2008. The Pembroke line

was closed. In 2013, rails were removed from Pembroke to Portage and in 2014, after a brief court battle, the remainder were lifted.

Traffic ceased on the OVR line through Arnprior in the spring of 2009 and the lease was terminated by the end of the year. CP's removal of the track east of Meath hill began in 2011, reaching Arnprior in May 2012 and Smiths Falls by mid-summer. The track from Meath hill to Mattawa was lifted from mid-2012 to late 2013.

The HCW tourist train has been out of action since landslides damaged the track in 2011 and is unlikely to return. Discussions about another home for the equipment continued through 2015.

VIA acquired the rest of the CN line north from Richmond to Ottawa Station in 2010 but, as Map 28 shows, CN retains some tracks within Ottawa. On Nov. 23, 2015 VIA announced that it had acquired the original B&O line between Brockville and Smiths Falls from CP. VIA's Montréal -Ottawa-Toronto trains now run on its own tracks from Coteau to Brockville, apart from a short stretch on CP in Smiths Falls.

Canadian Pacific retains just 12 miles of its very first acquisition in 1881; the B&O line from Smiths Falls to Perth. That route with its extensions has been the core of the CP main line from Montréal to Toronto since 1884.

Farther north, trains are mostly a memory. Like the lumber industry they created, railways are gone from the central Ottawa Valley.



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Brockville and Westport Railway (B&W)	7
Bytown and Prescott Railway (B&P)	2
Canada Atlantic Railway (CAR)	6
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Canadian National Canadien national (CN)	11
Canadian National Railways (CNR)	10
Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR)	9
Canadian Pacific Railway (CP)	13
Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)	6
CP Rail (CP)	11
Grand Trunk Railway (GTR)	3
Grenville and Carillon Railway (G&C)	3
Hull, Chelsea and Wakefield Railway (HCW)	12
Kingston and Pembroke Railway (K&P)	5
Napanee, Tamworth and Quebec Railway (NTQ)	7
New York Central Railroad (NYC)	9
Ottawa and Gatineau Valley Railway (OGV)	8
Ottawa and New York Railway (ONY)	8
Ottawa and Prescott Railway (O&P)	2
Ottawa Central Railway (OCR)	13
Ottawa Gatineau Railway (OGR)	8
Ottawa Valley Railway (OVR)	13
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Acknowledgement

The Arnprior & McNab/Braeside Archives is grateful to Mr. Wayne Tasse for his generous donation of original photographs of local railway facilities as well as copies of his books on the Brockville & Ottawa and Canada Central railways.

If you want to learn more...

Colin Churcher's Railway Pages is by far the best source for Ottawa area rail history. It is online at <http://www.railways.incanada.net/>. The Bytown Railway Society publishes a great monthly magazine, *Branchline*. You can subscribe and/or read back issues online at <http://www.bytownrailwaysociety.ca/>. The Canadian Railway Historical Association publishes *Canadian Rail* bi-monthly and back issues are readable online at www.exporail.org/en. All of these sites have many links of interest.

There is no other single book on our regional railway history, though there are a number about specific local railways included in the bibliography below. Many of the books listed are out of print but can be obtained at your local library via inter-library loan.

The Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario, based in the former CNoR station in Smiths Falls, is well worth a visit. For more information, see <http://rmeo.org/wp/>. The extent of future public access to the railway collection of Ottawa's Canada Science and Technology Museum, currently closed, will only be known when the museum re-opens.

Revision History

This document was originally published in May 2015 under the title *Arnprior Area Railway History in Maps*. That title was republished with revisions in June 2015. *Tracing the Lines* was released in October and this version includes corrections, revisions and updates to late November 2015.

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MAPS

[Click any map to jump to the related text.](#)

All maps were created using QGIS, an open-source software package available from <http://qgis.org/en/site/>. The underlying cartographic data are from NRCan's Atlas of Canada 1:1,000,000 digital maps. Location of recently-active railways is from the same source while the locations of former lines are based on multiple sources cited above.

○ Rapides-des-Joachins

○ Fort-Coulonge

○ Wright's Town

○ Lachute

○ Carillon

○ Coteau-du-Lac

○ Cornwall

○ Prescott

○ Brockville

○ Gananoque

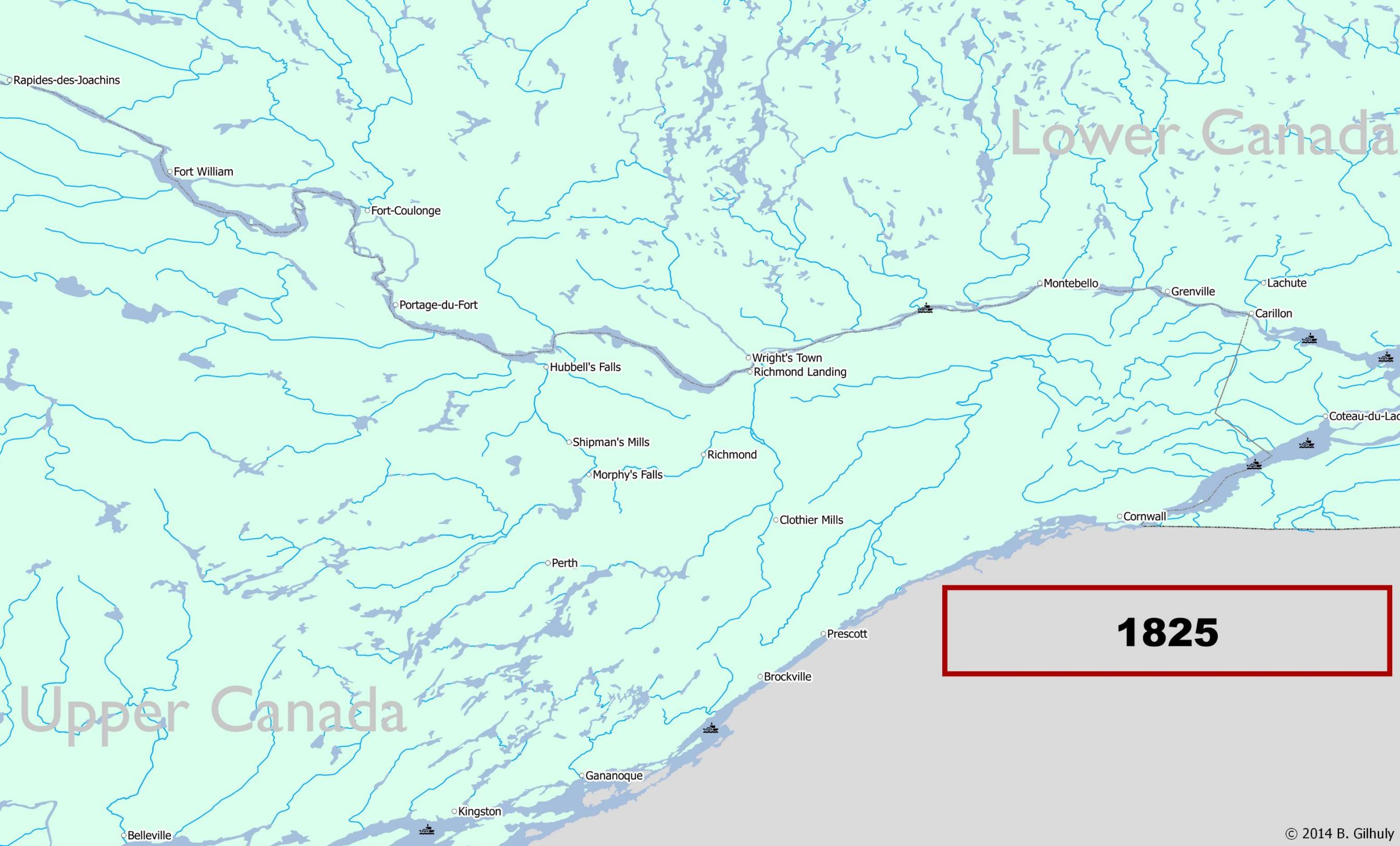
○ Kingston

○ Belleville

Lower Canada

Upper Canada

1807



Lower Canada

Upper Canada

1825

○ Rapides-des-Joachins

○ Fort William

○ Fort-Coulonge

○ Portage-du-Fort

○ Hubbell's Falls

○ Wright's Town

○ Richmond Landing

○ Shipman's Mills

○ Morphy's Falls

○ Richmond

○ Clothier Mills

○ Perth

○ Prescott

○ Brockville

○ Gananoque

○ Kingston

○ Belleville

○ Montebello

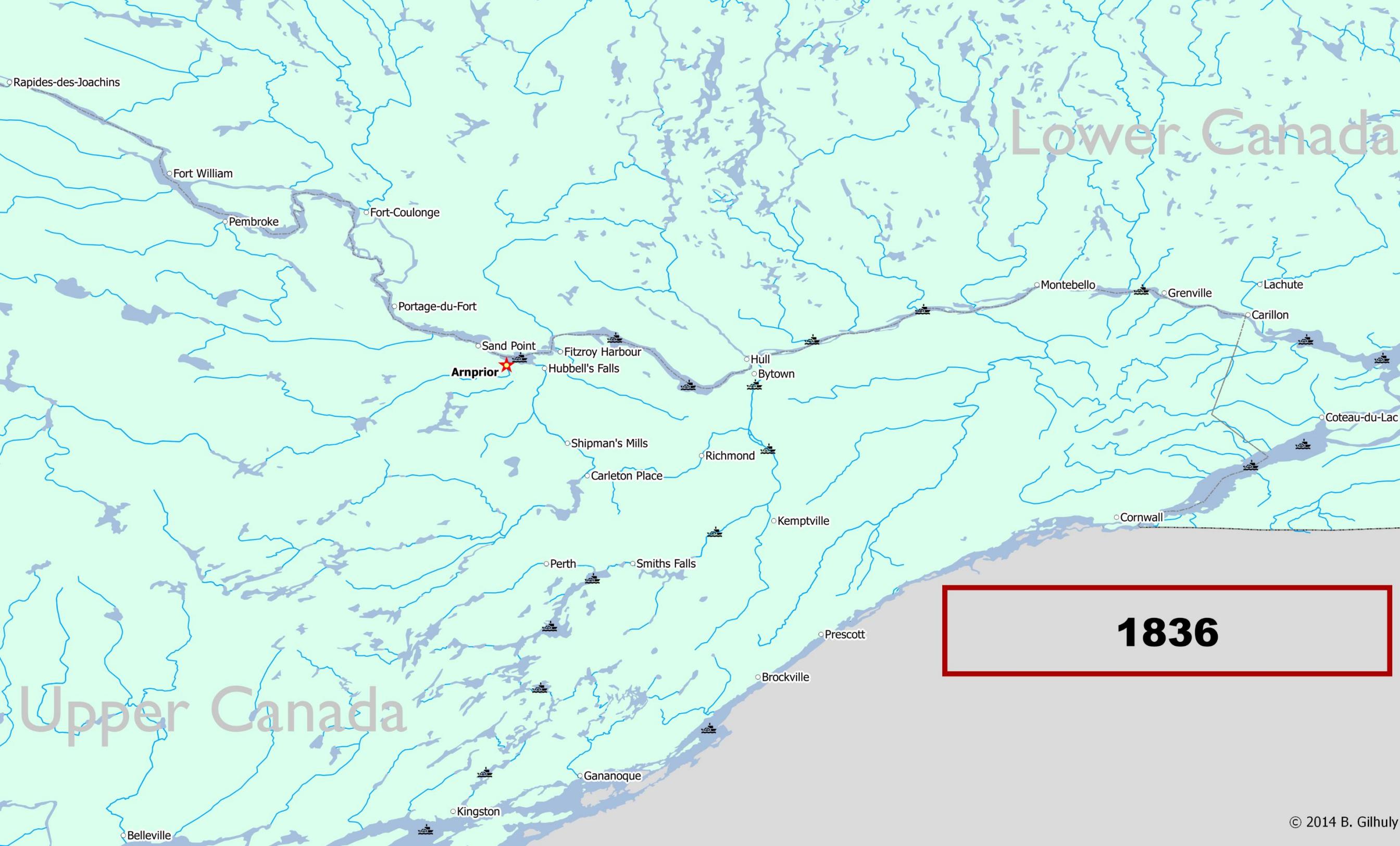
○ Grenville

○ Lachute

○ Carillon

○ Coteau-du-Lac

○ Cornwall



Lower Canada

Upper Canada

1836

○ Rapides-des-Joachins

○ Fort William

○ Pembroke

○ Fort-Coulonge

○ Portage-du-Fort

○ Sand Point

Arnprior ★

○ Fitzroy Harbour

○ Hubbell's Falls

○ Hull

○ Bytown

○ Shipman's Mills

○ Richmond

○ Carleton Place

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○ Montebello

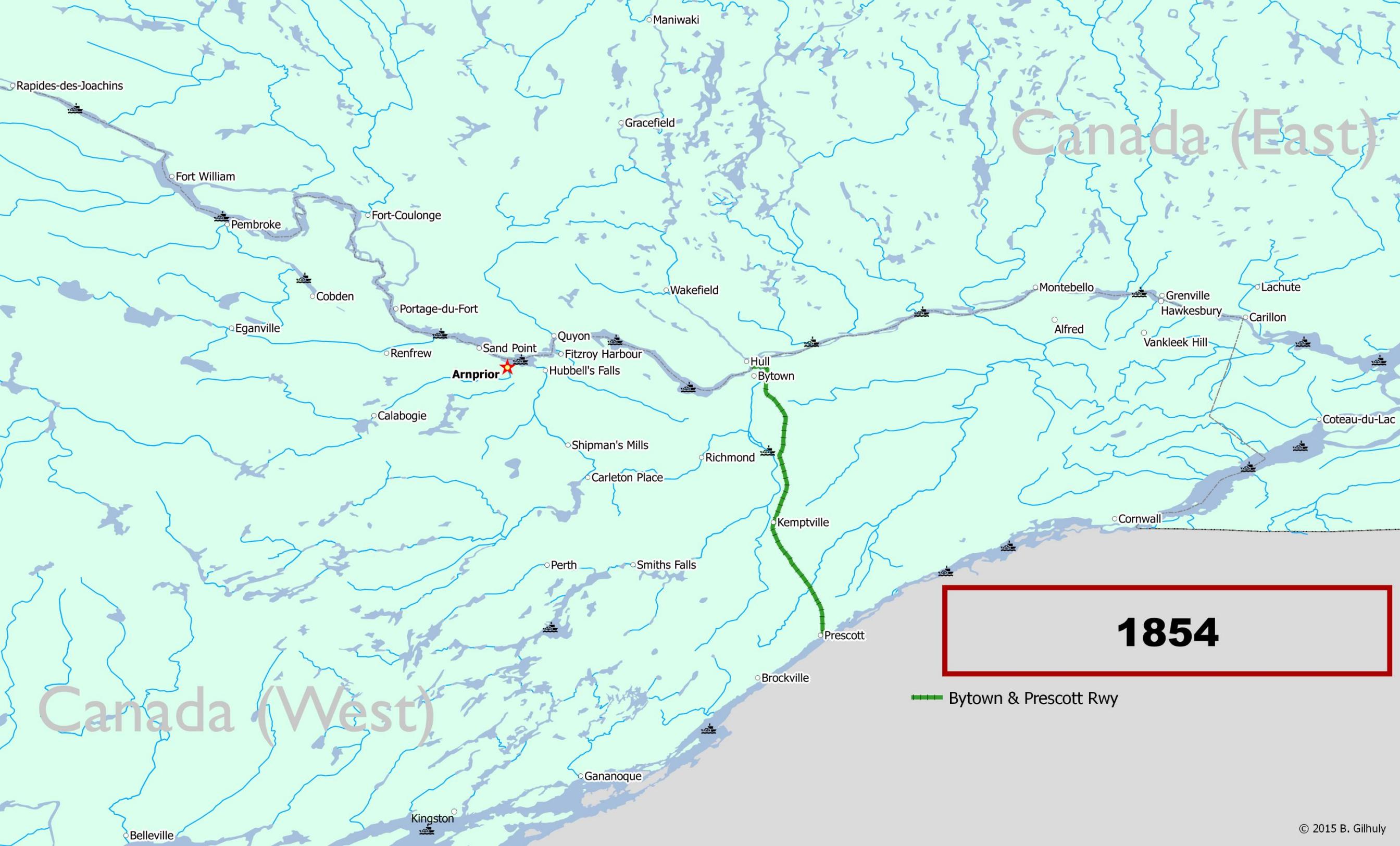
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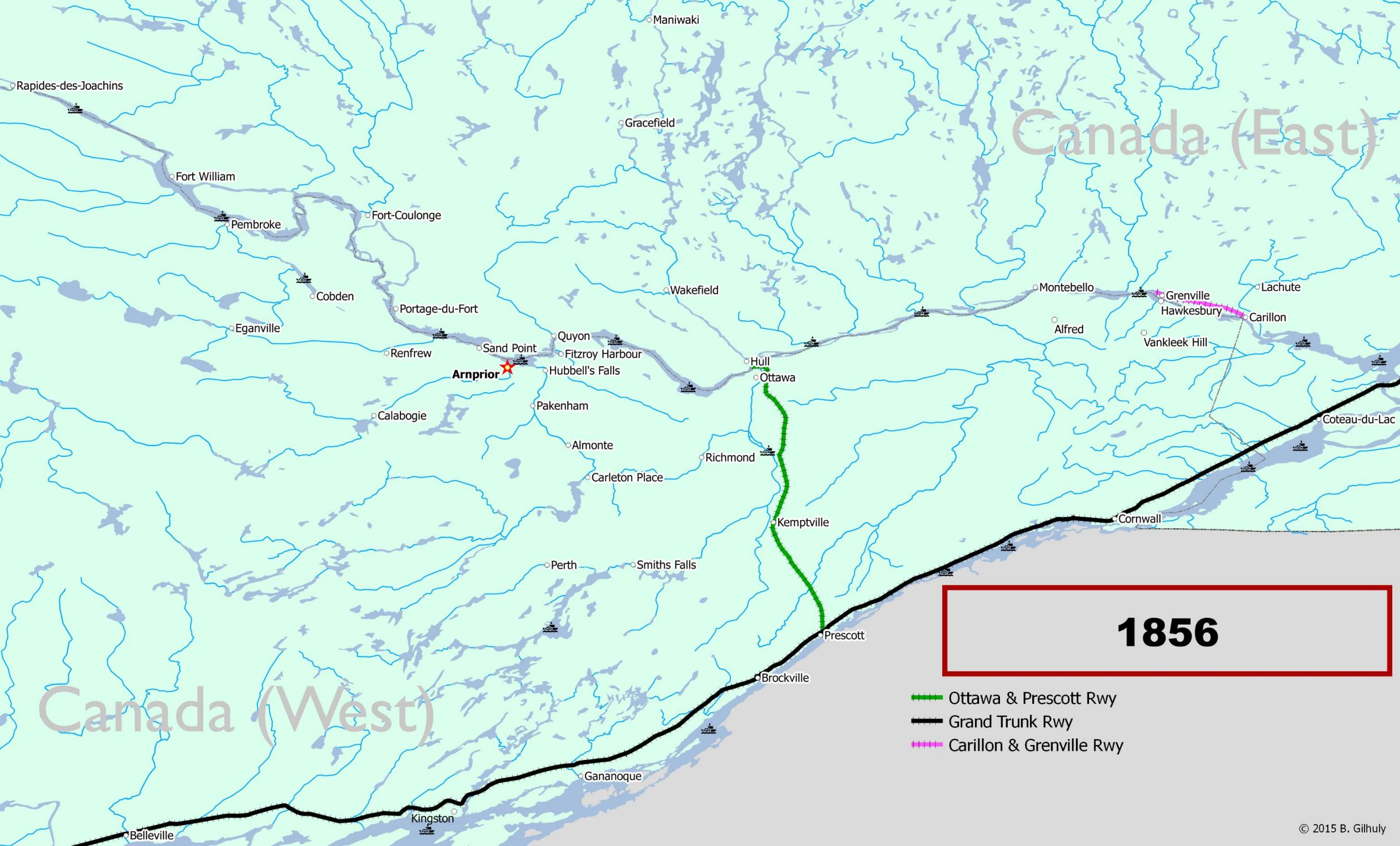


Canada (East)

Canada (West)

1854

Bytown & Prescott Rwy

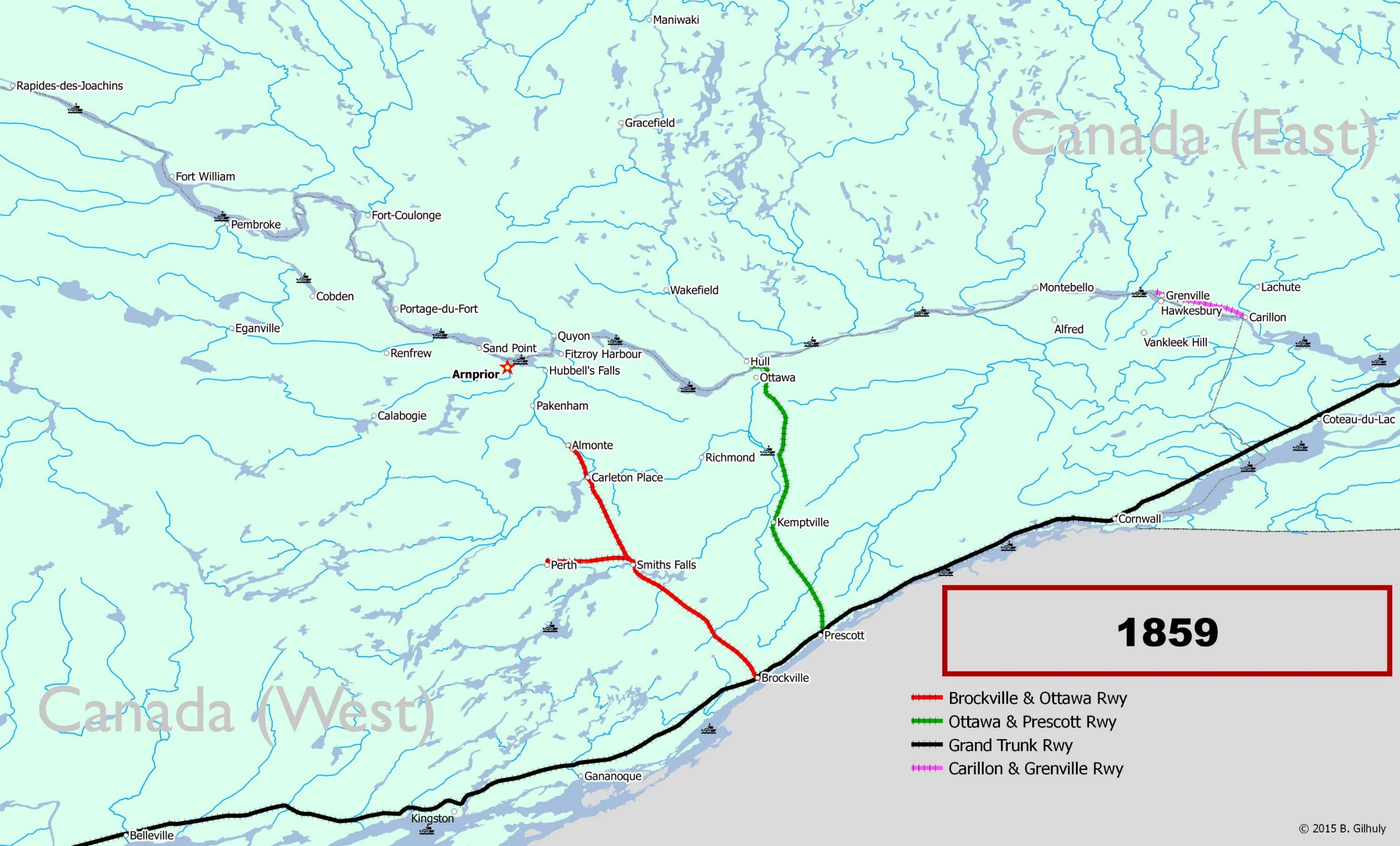


Canada (East)

Canada (West)

1856

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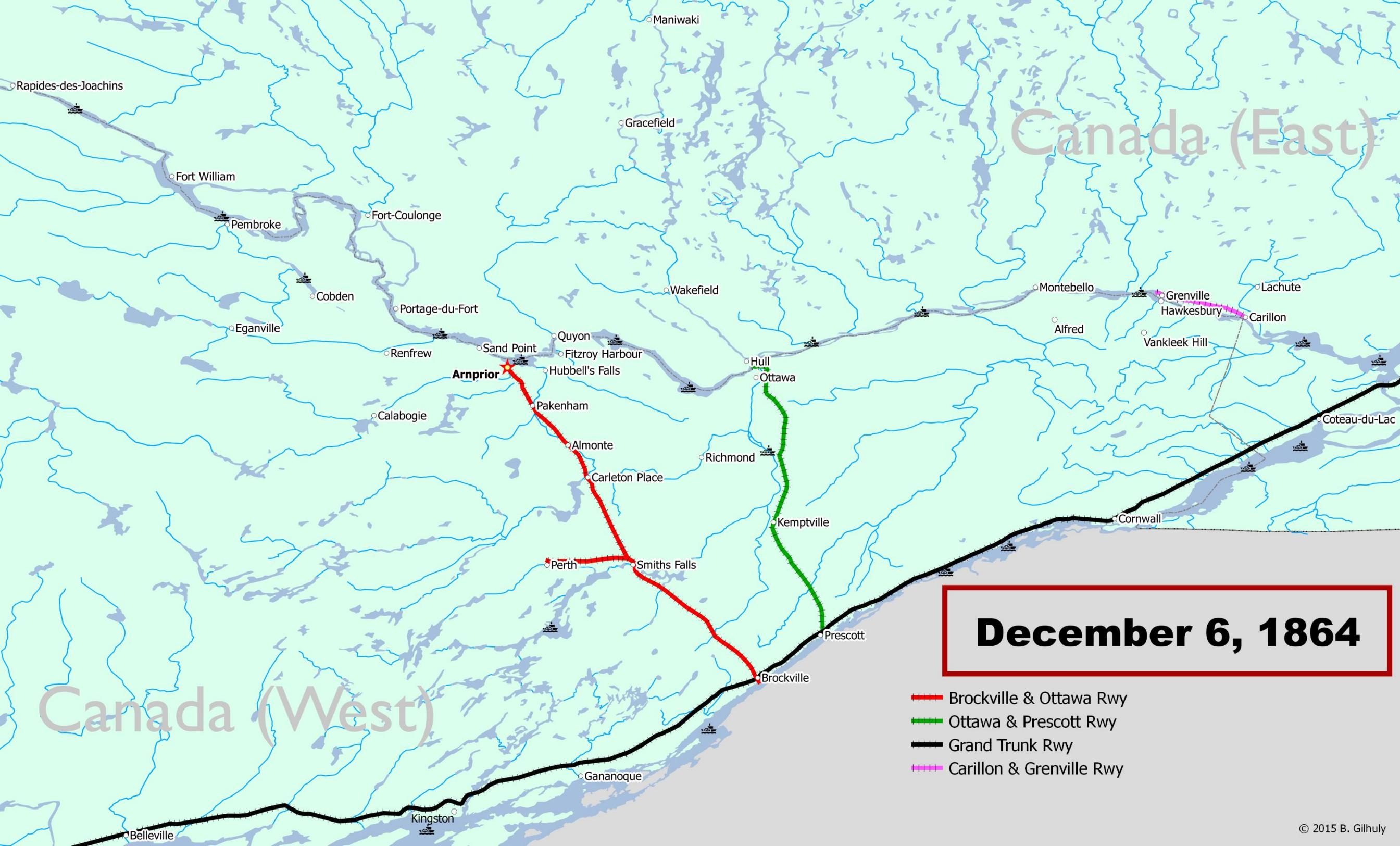
Canada (East)

Canada (West)

Arnprior

1859

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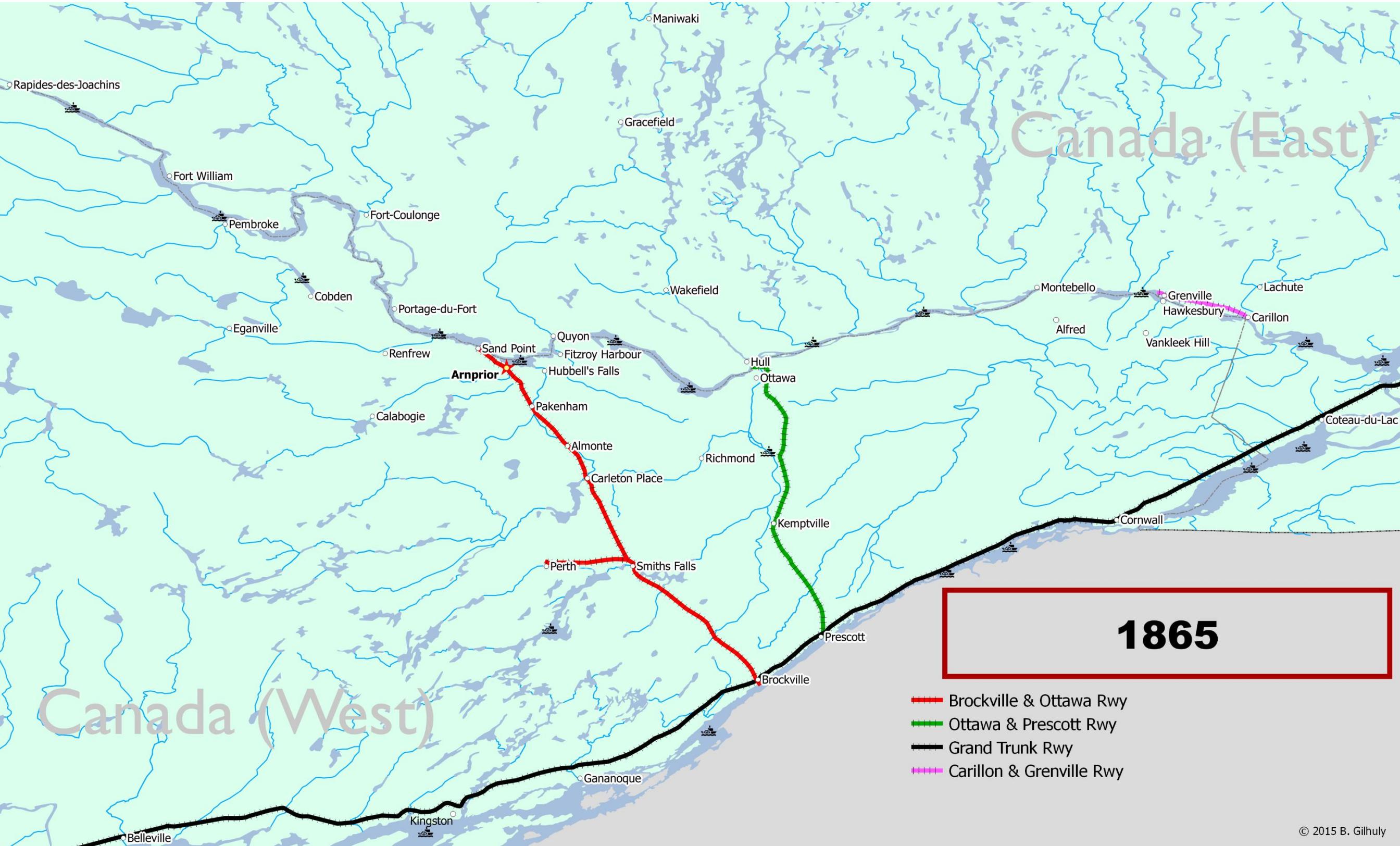


Canada (East)

Canada (West)

December 6, 1864

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- +— Grand Trunk Rwy
- +— Carillon & Grenville Rwy

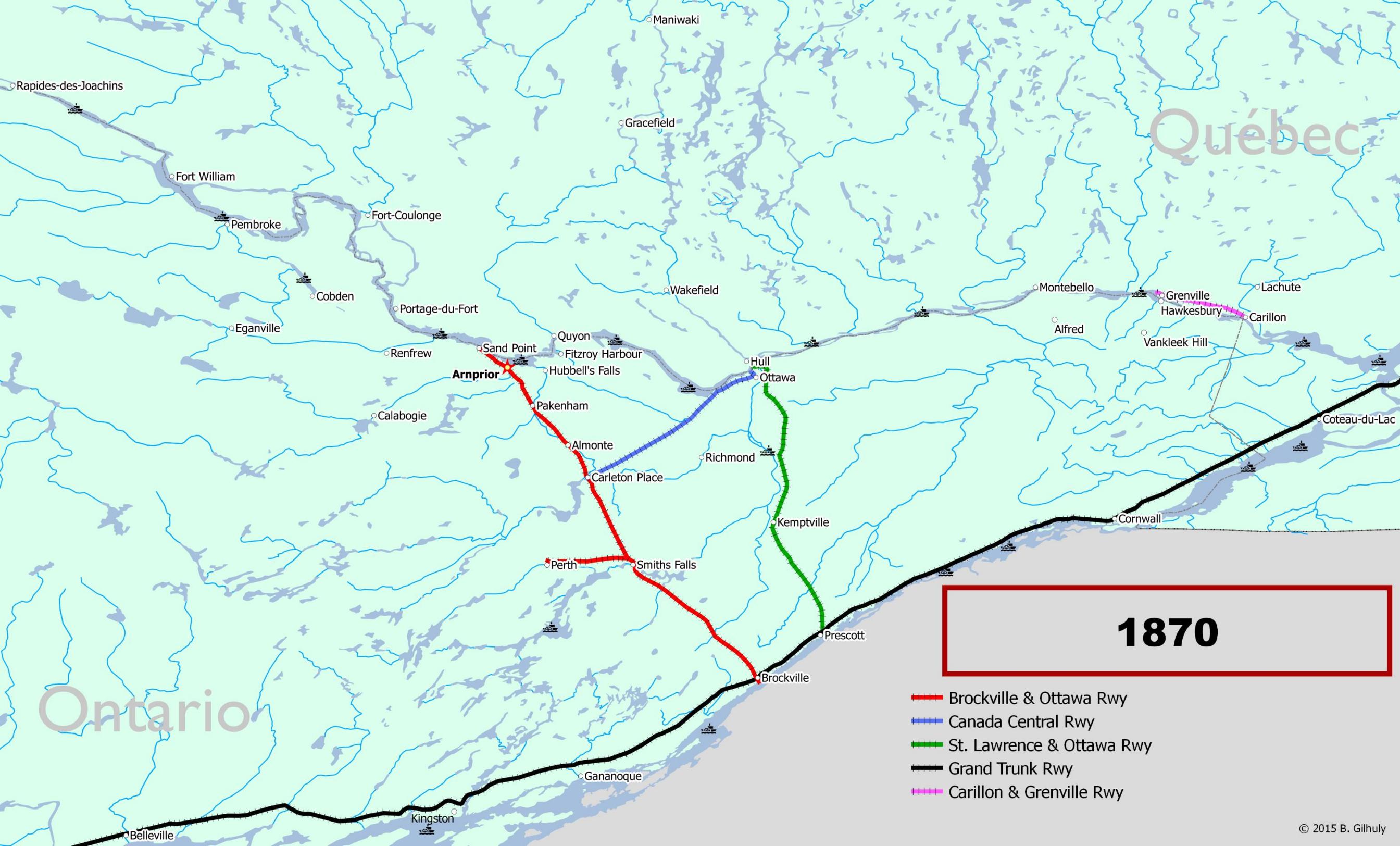


Canada (East)

Canada (West)

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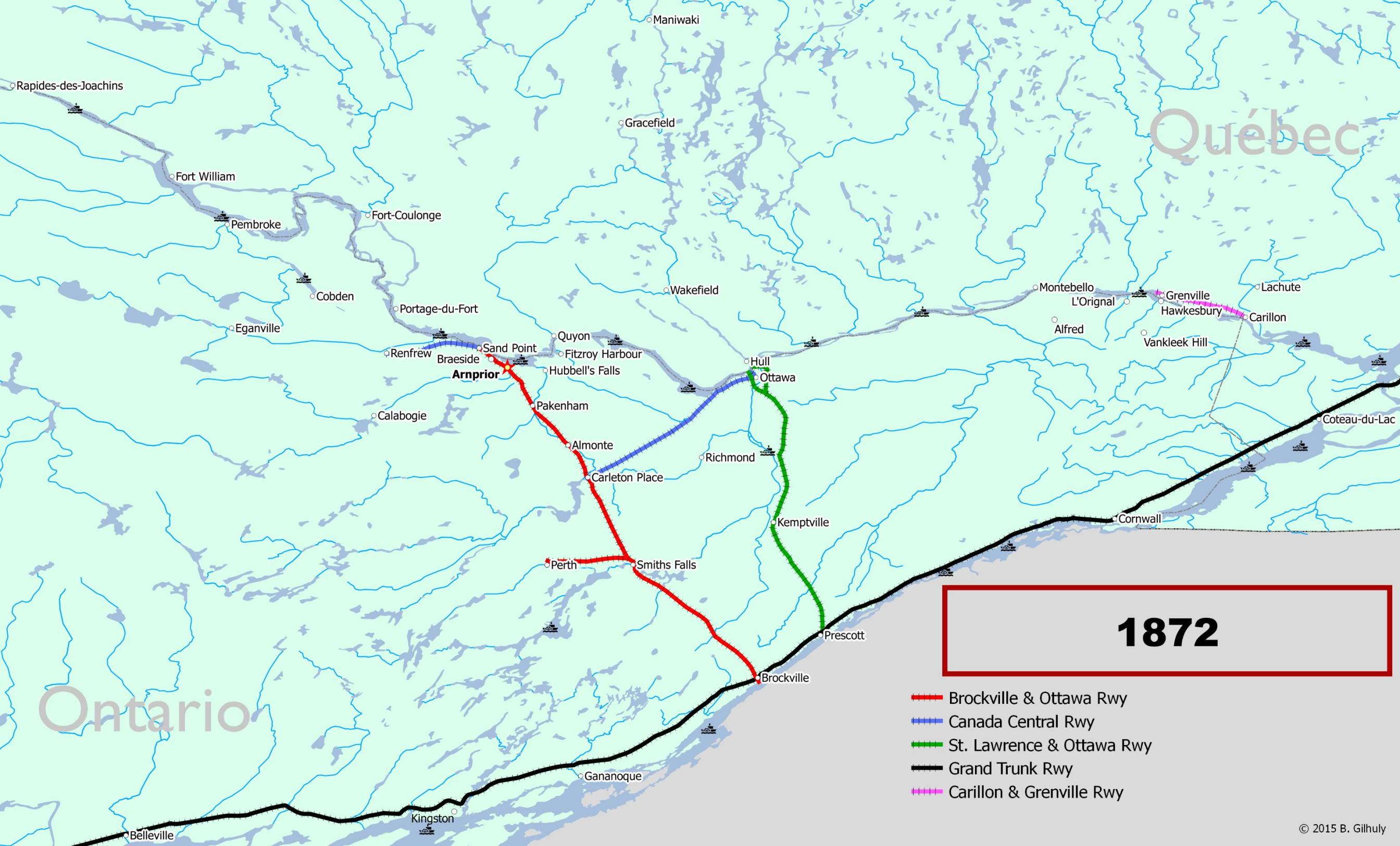


Québec

Ontario

1870

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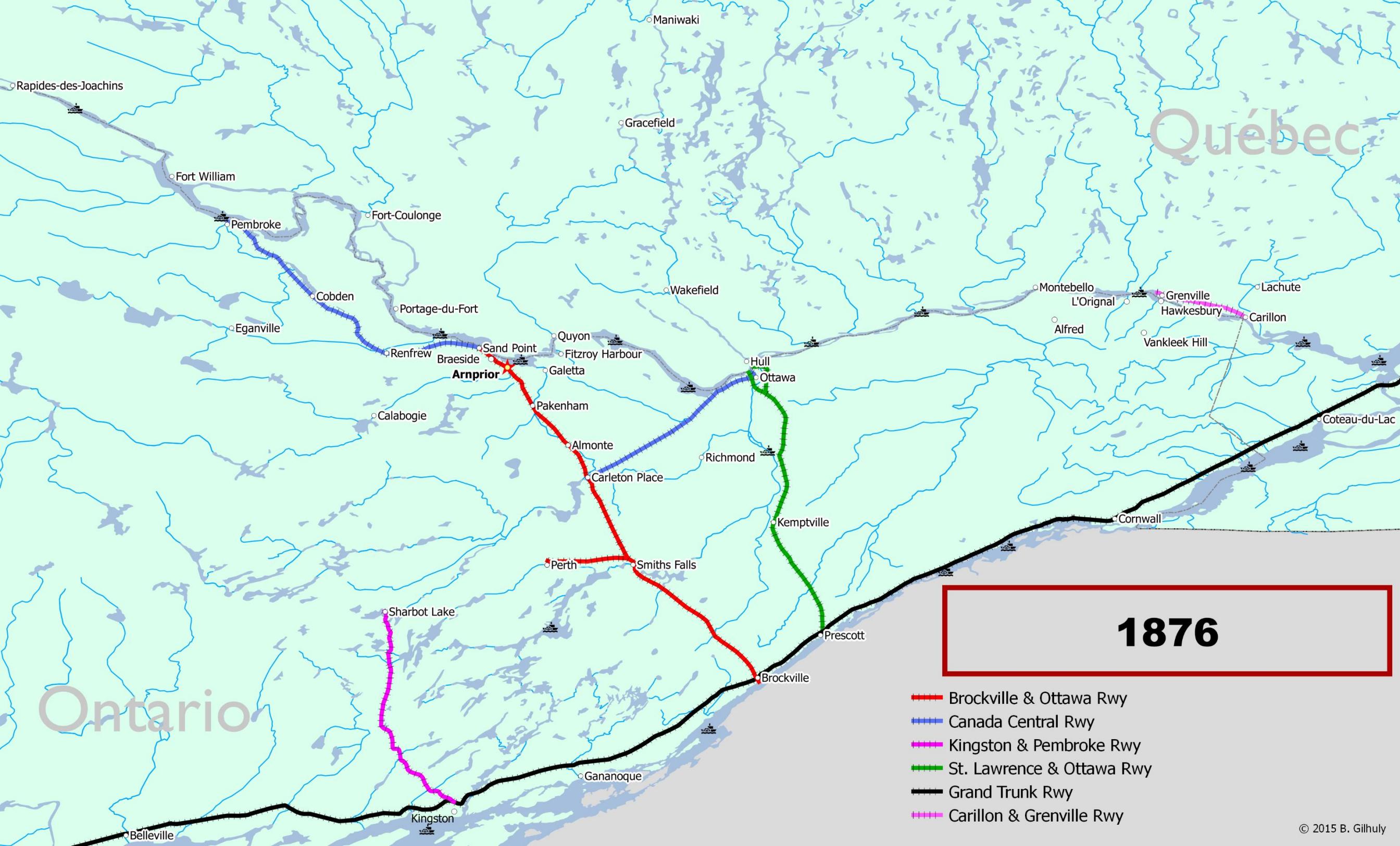


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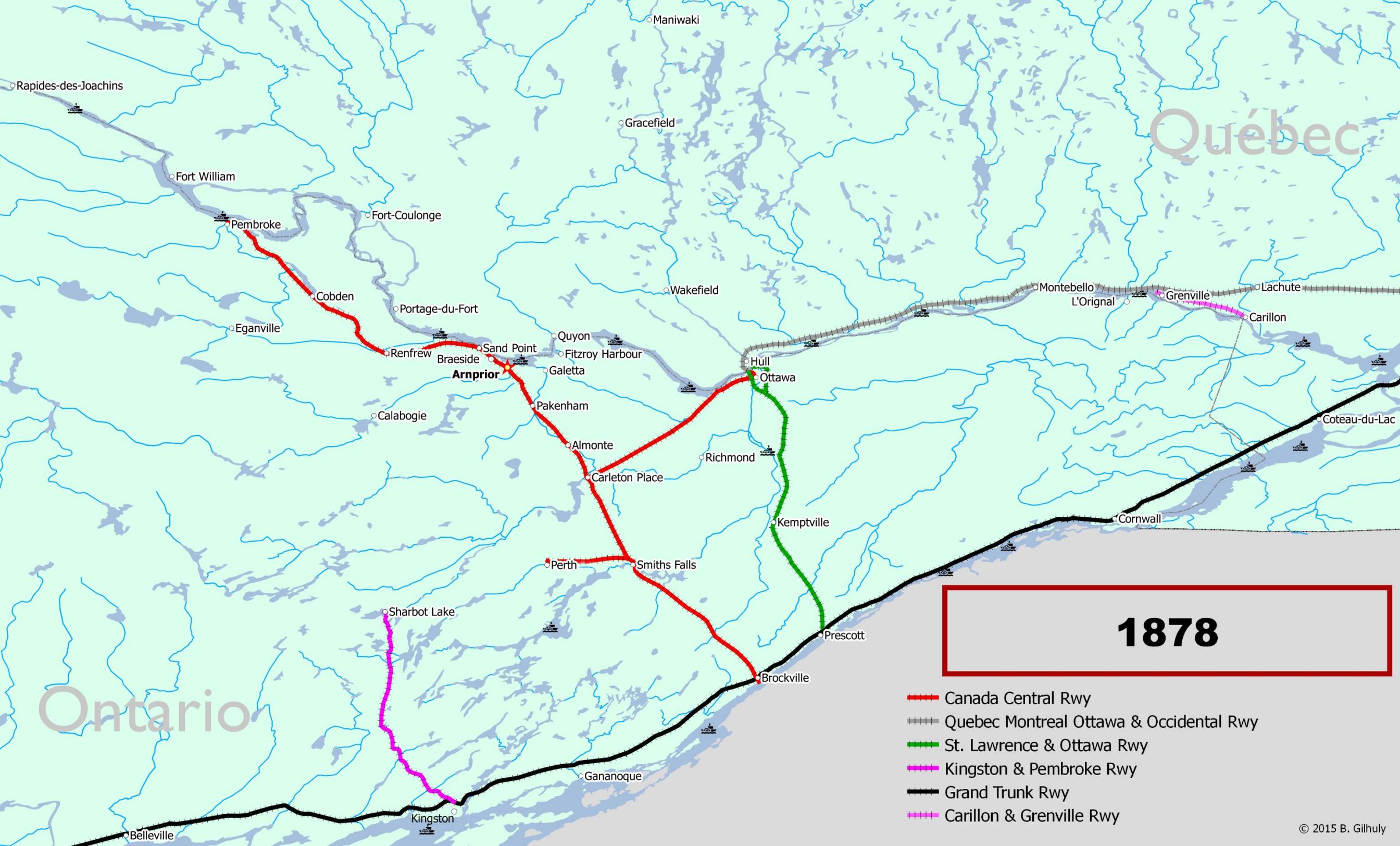
1872

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1876

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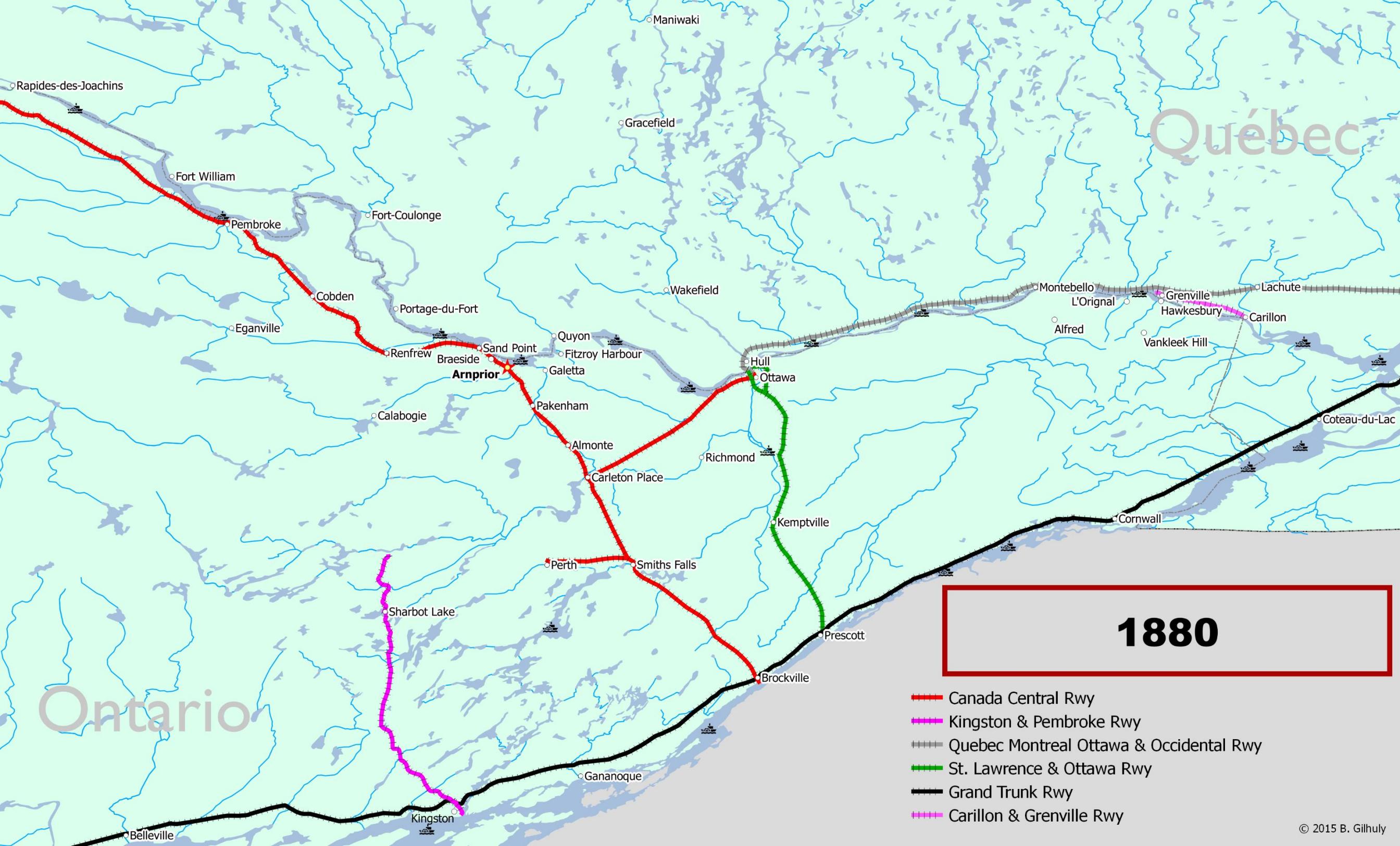


Québec

Ontario

1878

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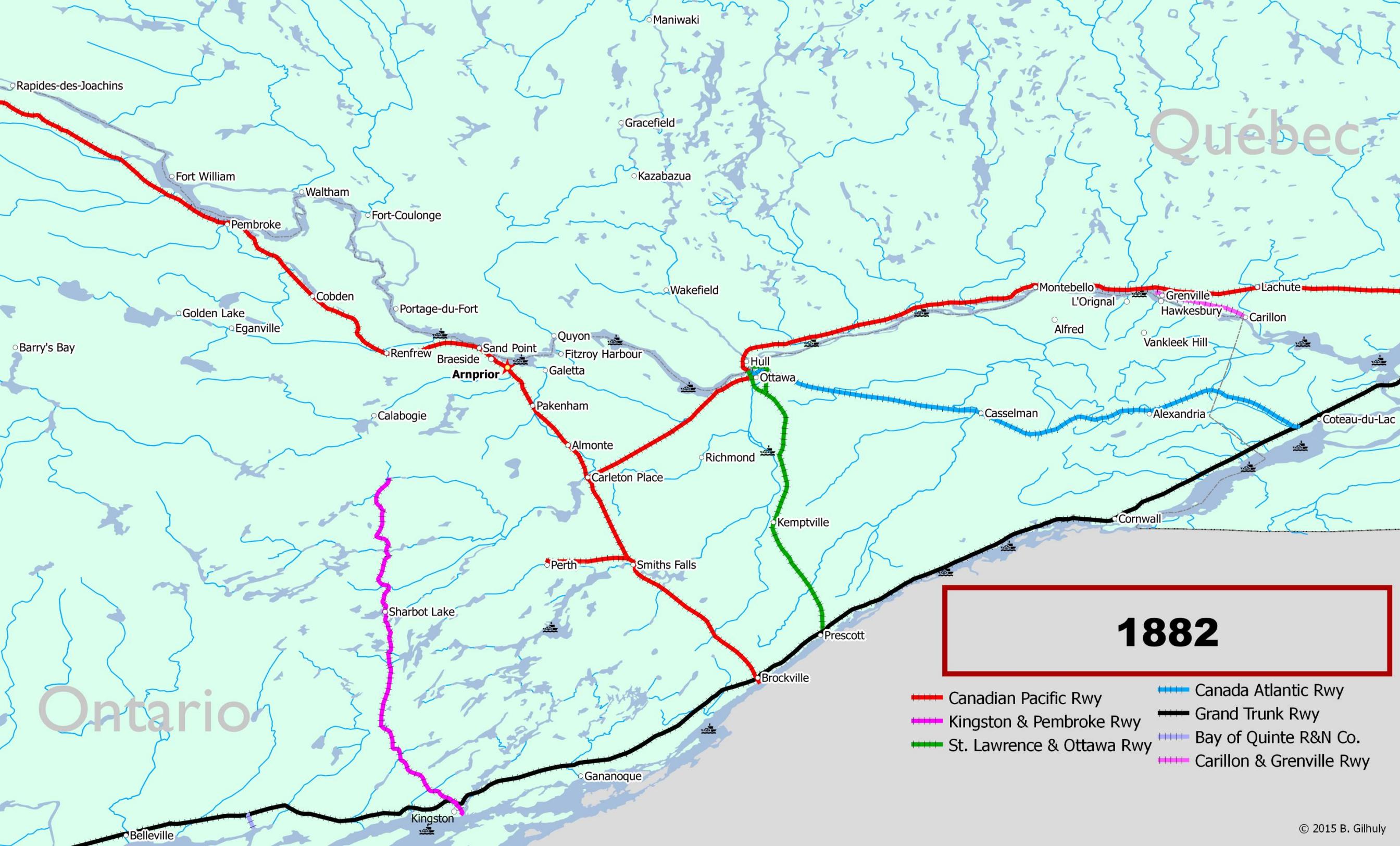


Québec

Ontario

1880

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- Carillon & Grenville Rwy

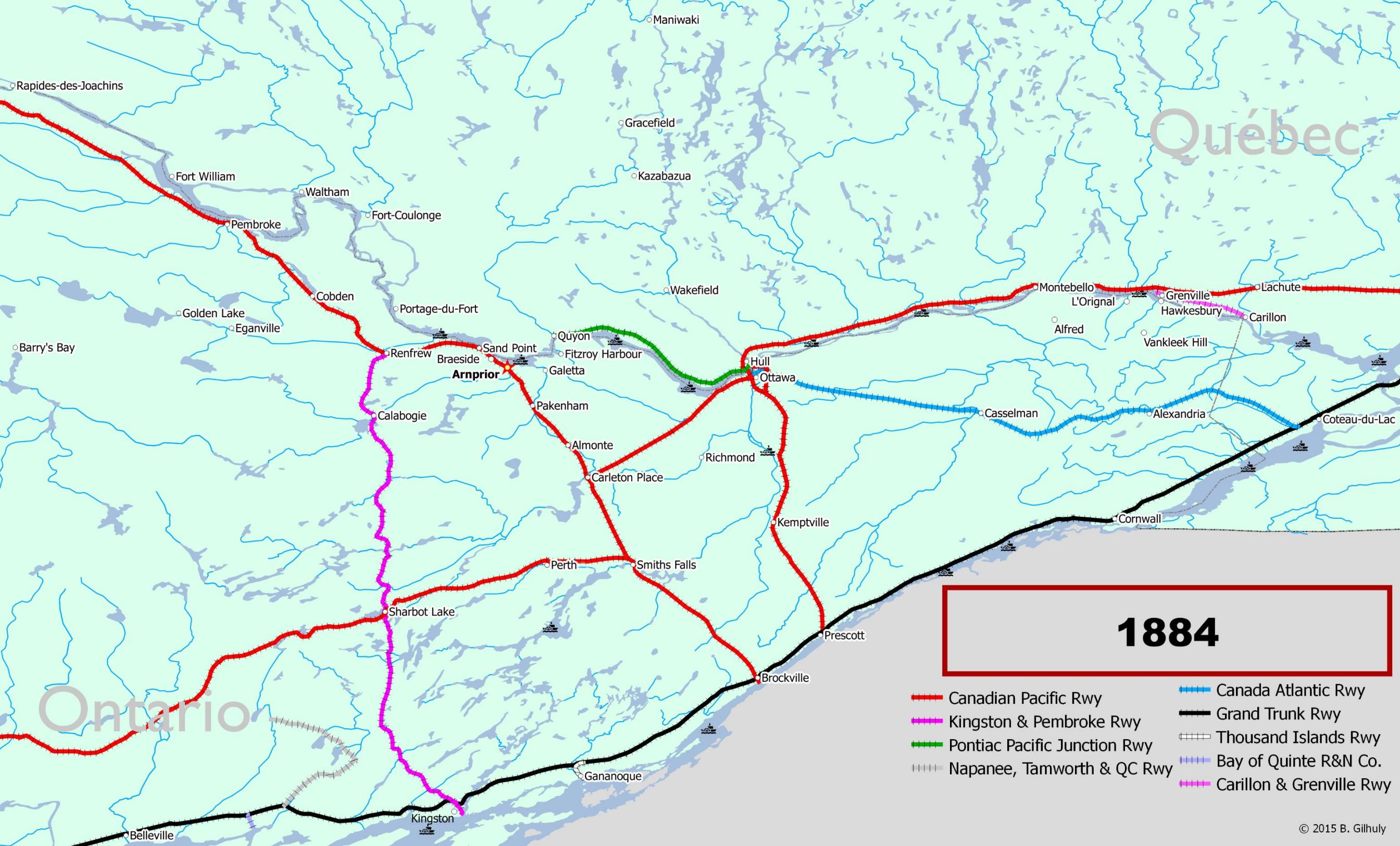


Québec

Ontario

1882

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
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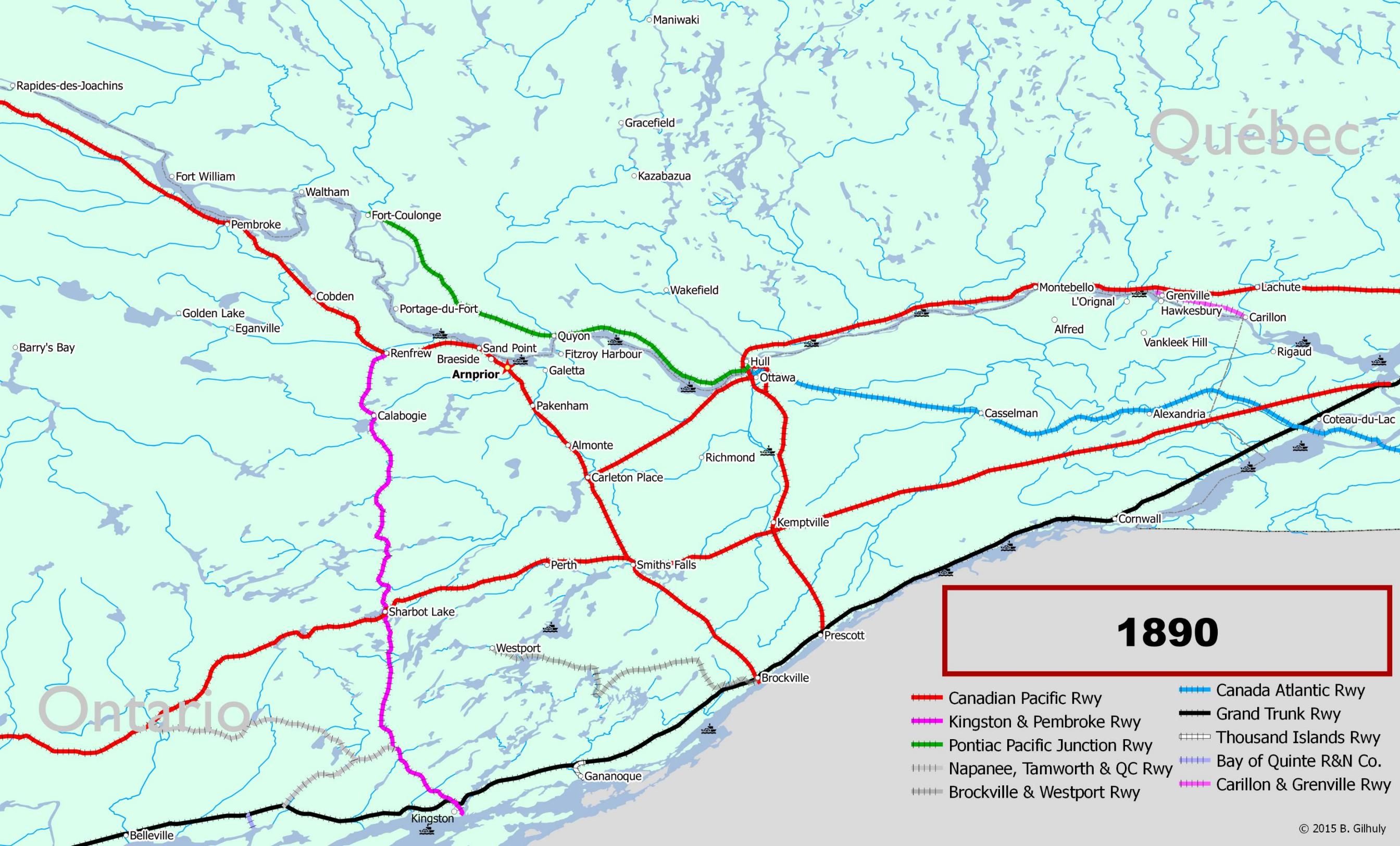


Québec

Ontario

1884

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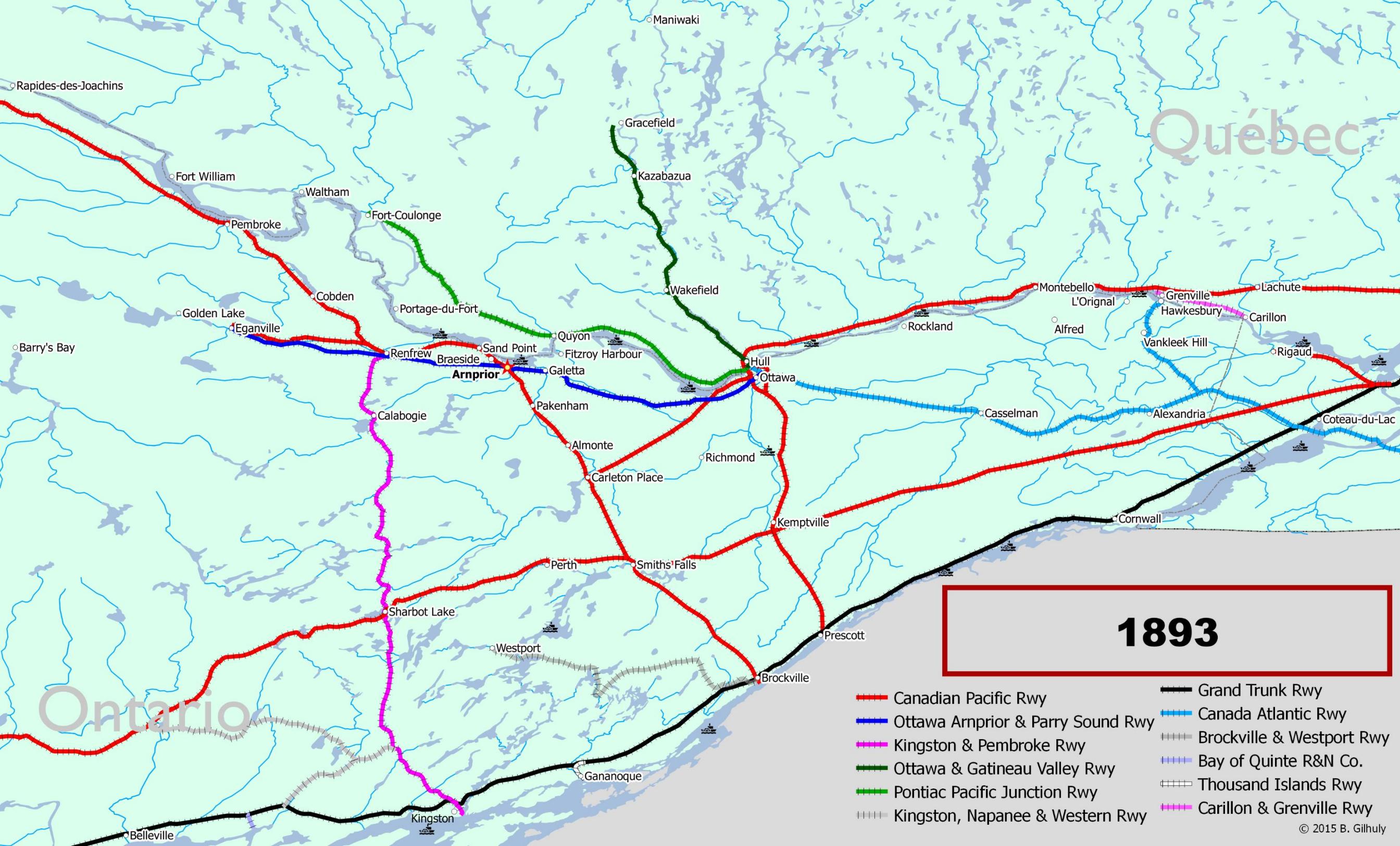


Québec

Ontario

1890

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- Pontiac Pacific Junction Rwy
- Napanee, Tamworth & QC Rwy
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- Canada Atlantic Rwy
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- Bay of Quinte R&N Co.
- Carillon & Grenville Rwy

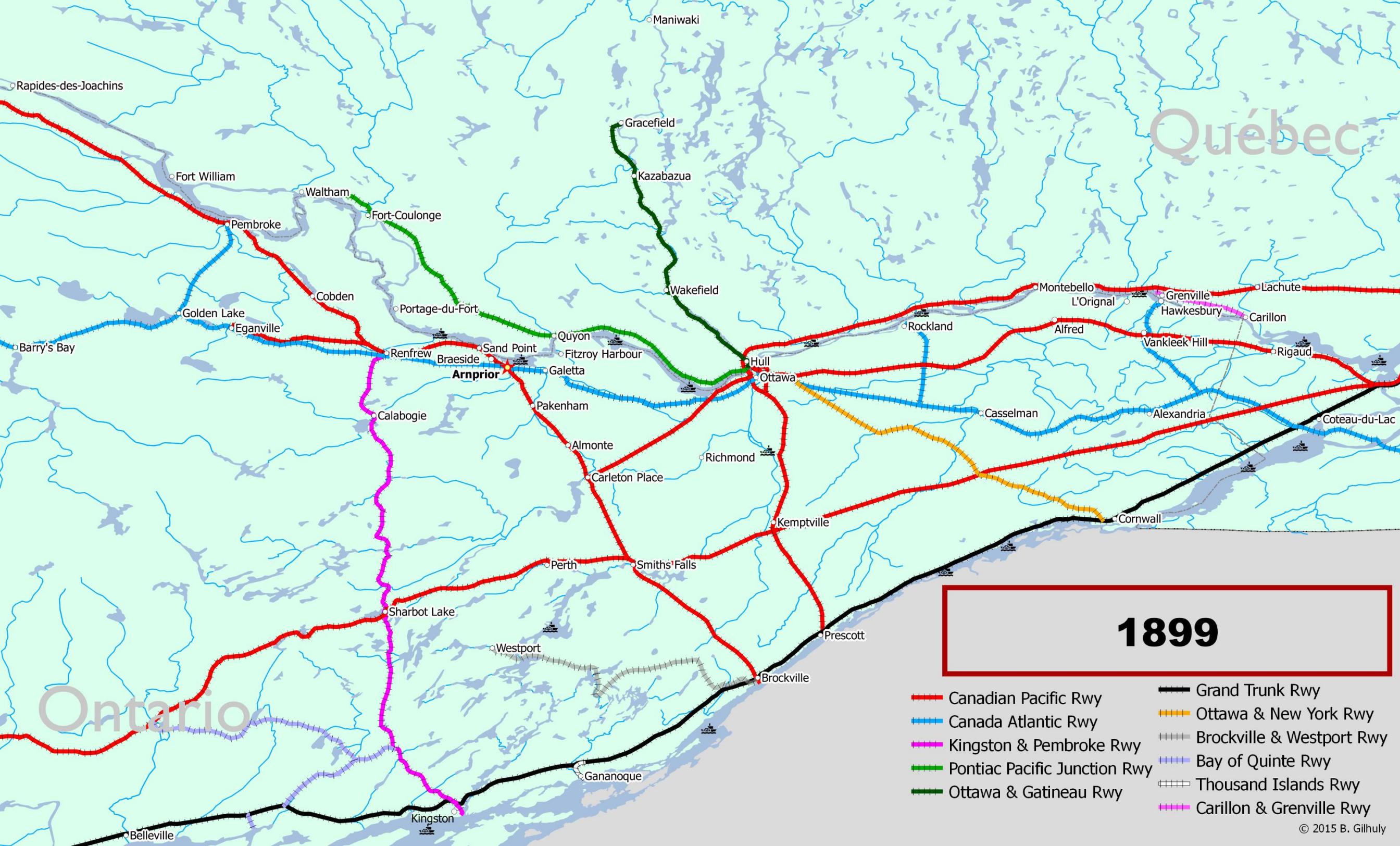


Québec

Ontario

1893

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
- Ottawa Arnprior & Parry Sound Rwy
- Kingston & Pembroke Rwy
- Ottawa & Gatineau Valley Rwy
- Pontiac Pacific Junction Rwy
- Kingston, Napanee & Western Rwy
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- Canada Atlantic Rwy
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- Thousand Islands Rwy
- Carillon & Grenville Rwy

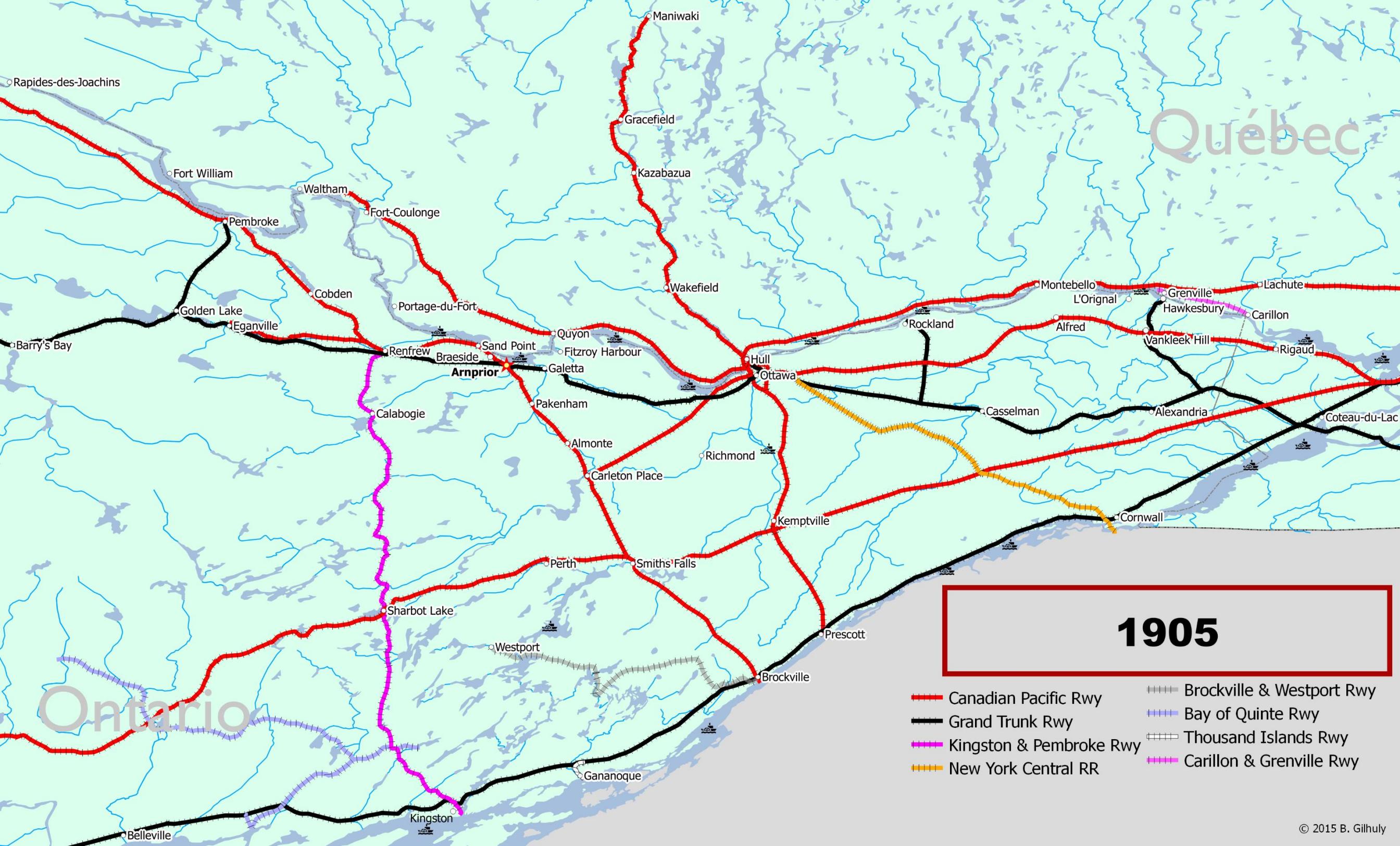


Québec

Ontario

1899

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
- Canada Atlantic Rwy
- Kingston & Pembroke Rwy
- Pontiac Pacific Junction Rwy
- Ottawa & Gatineau Rwy
- Grand Trunk Rwy
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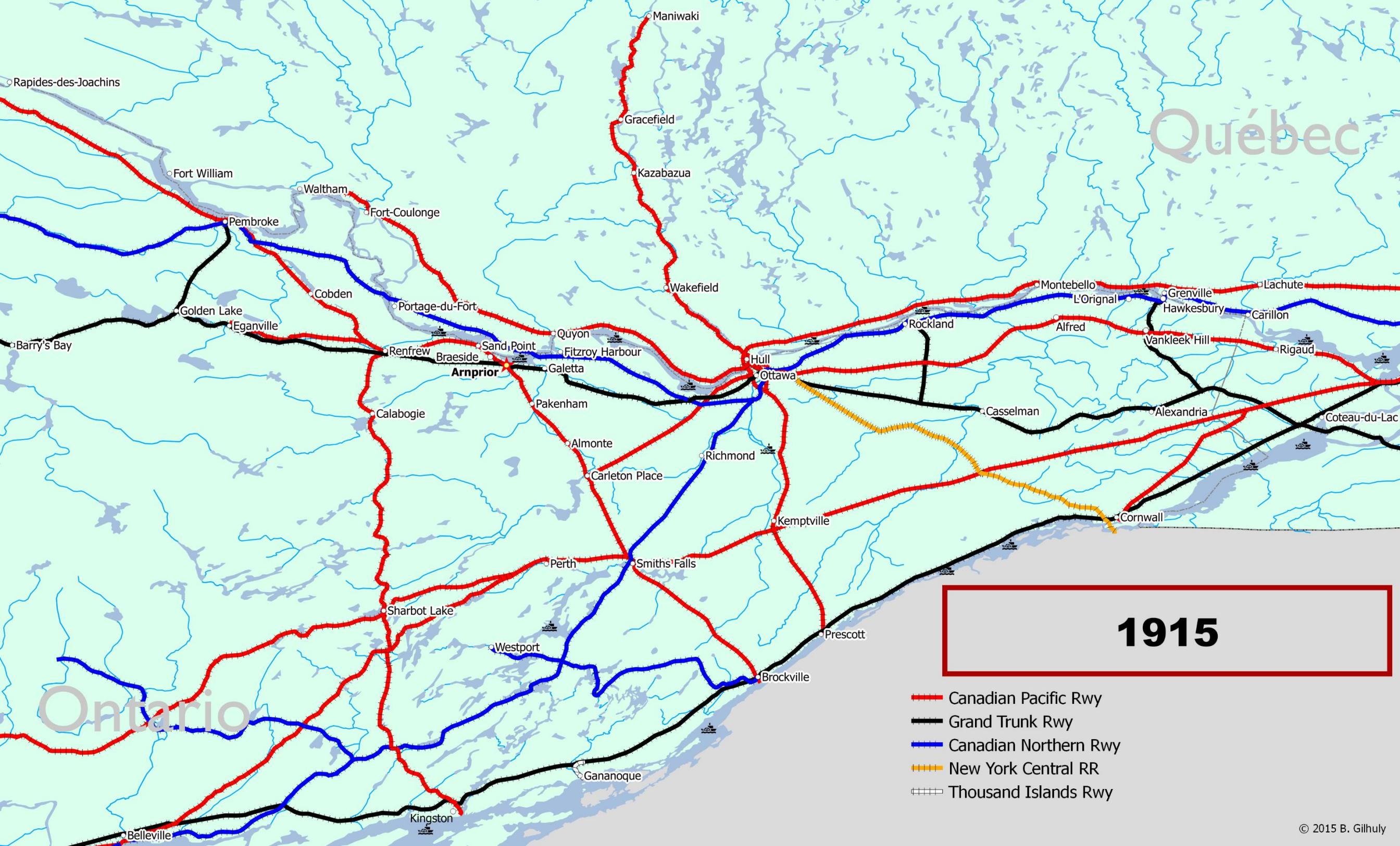


Québec

Ontario

1905

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
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- New York Central RR
- Brockville & Westport Rwy
- Bay of Quinte Rwy
- Thousand Islands Rwy
- Carillon & Grenville Rwy

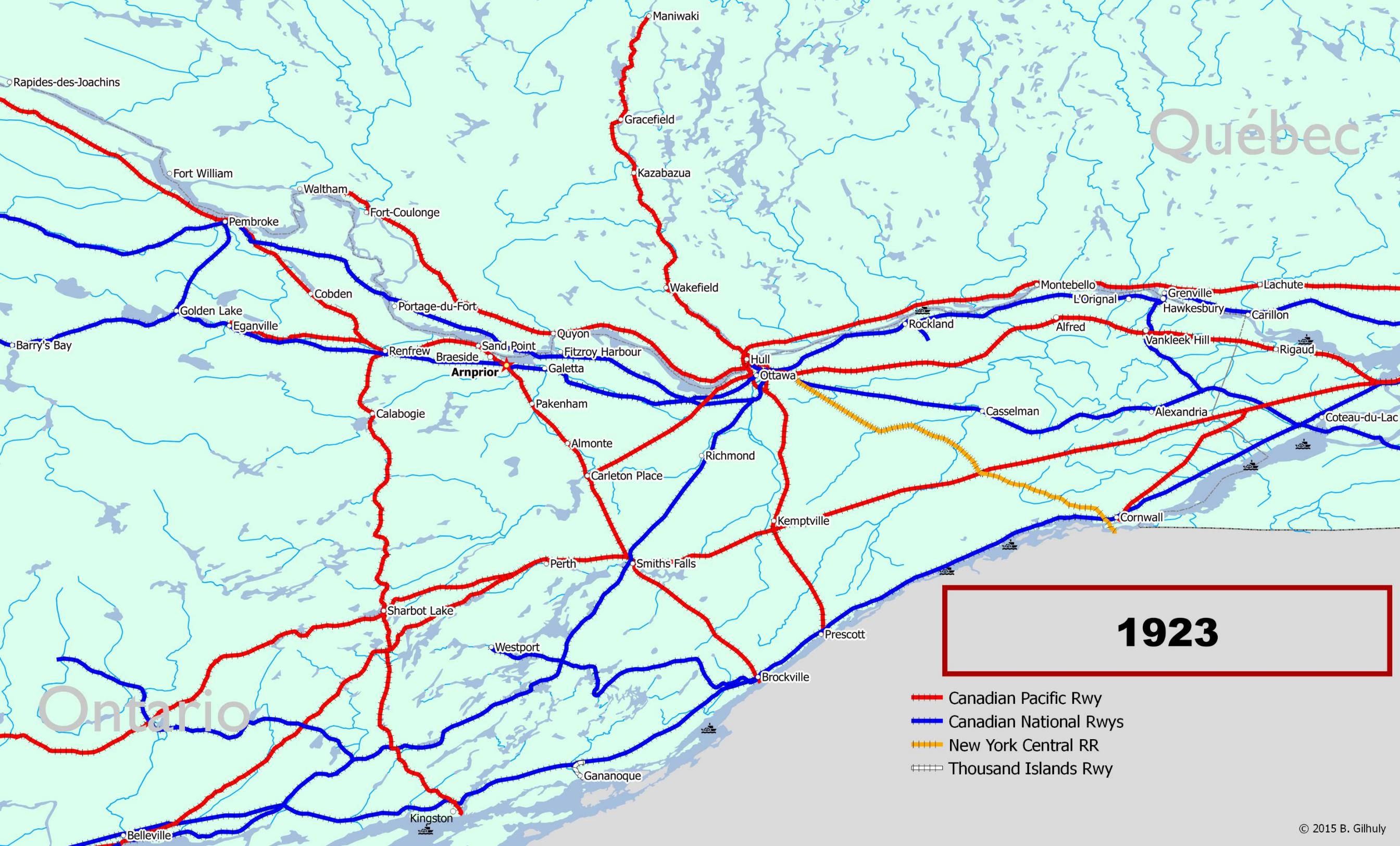


Québec

Ontario

1915

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
- Grand Trunk Rwy
- Canadian Northern Rwy
- New York Central RR
- Thousand Islands Rwy

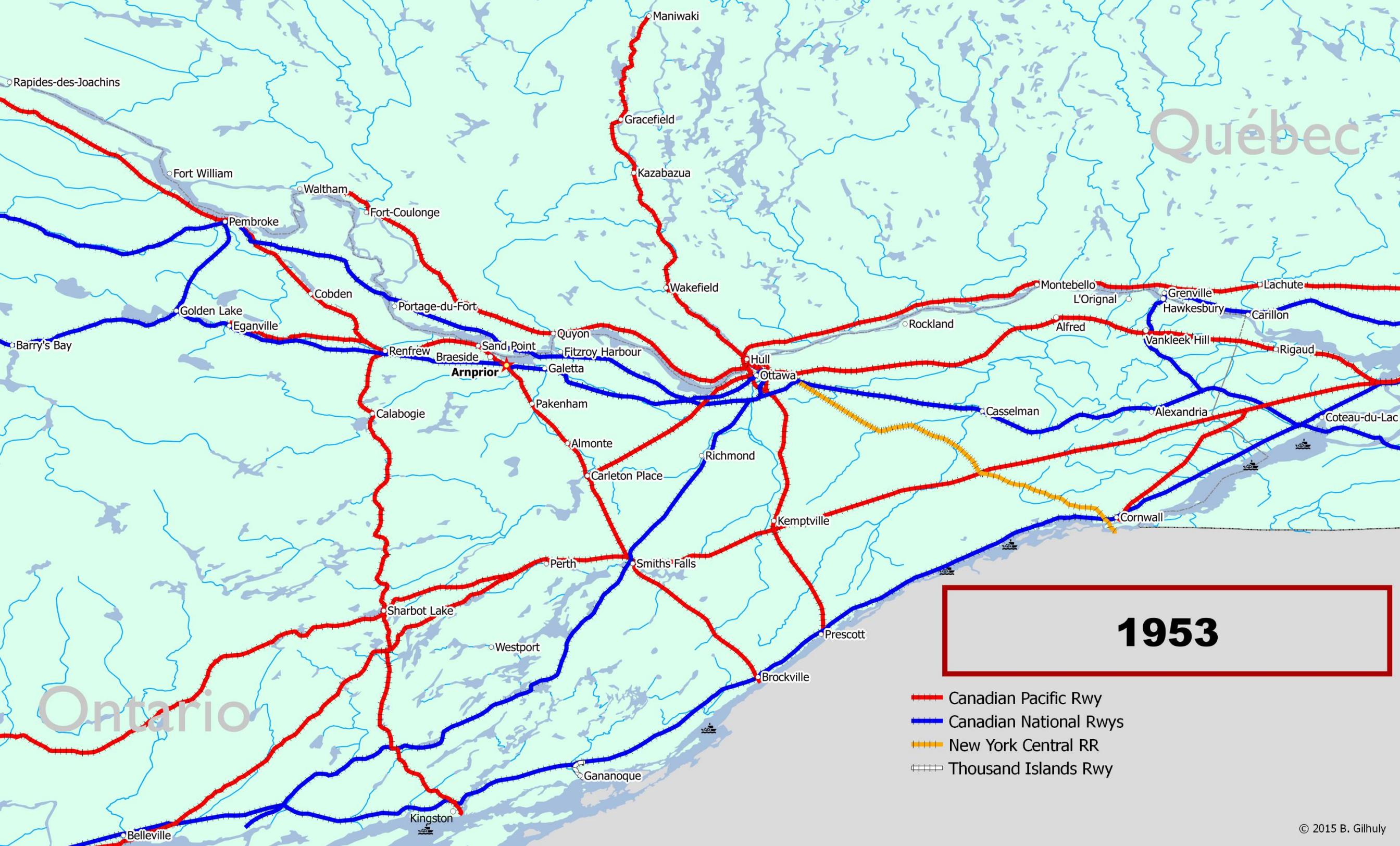


Québec

Ontario

1923

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
- Canadian National Rwys
- - - New York Central RR
- - - Thousand Islands Rwy

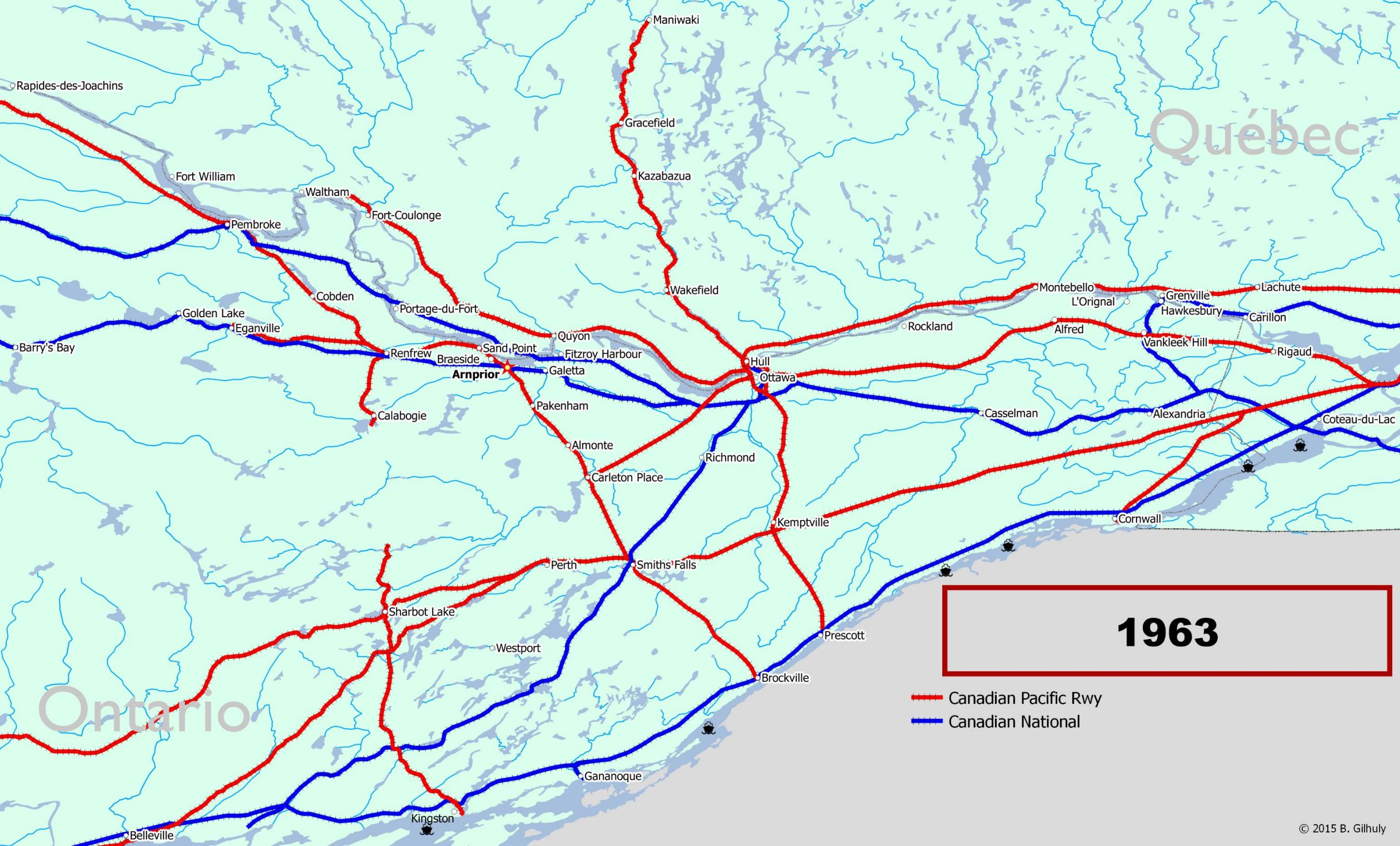


Québec

Ontario

1953

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
- Canadian National Rwys
- New York Central RR
- Thousand Islands Rwy

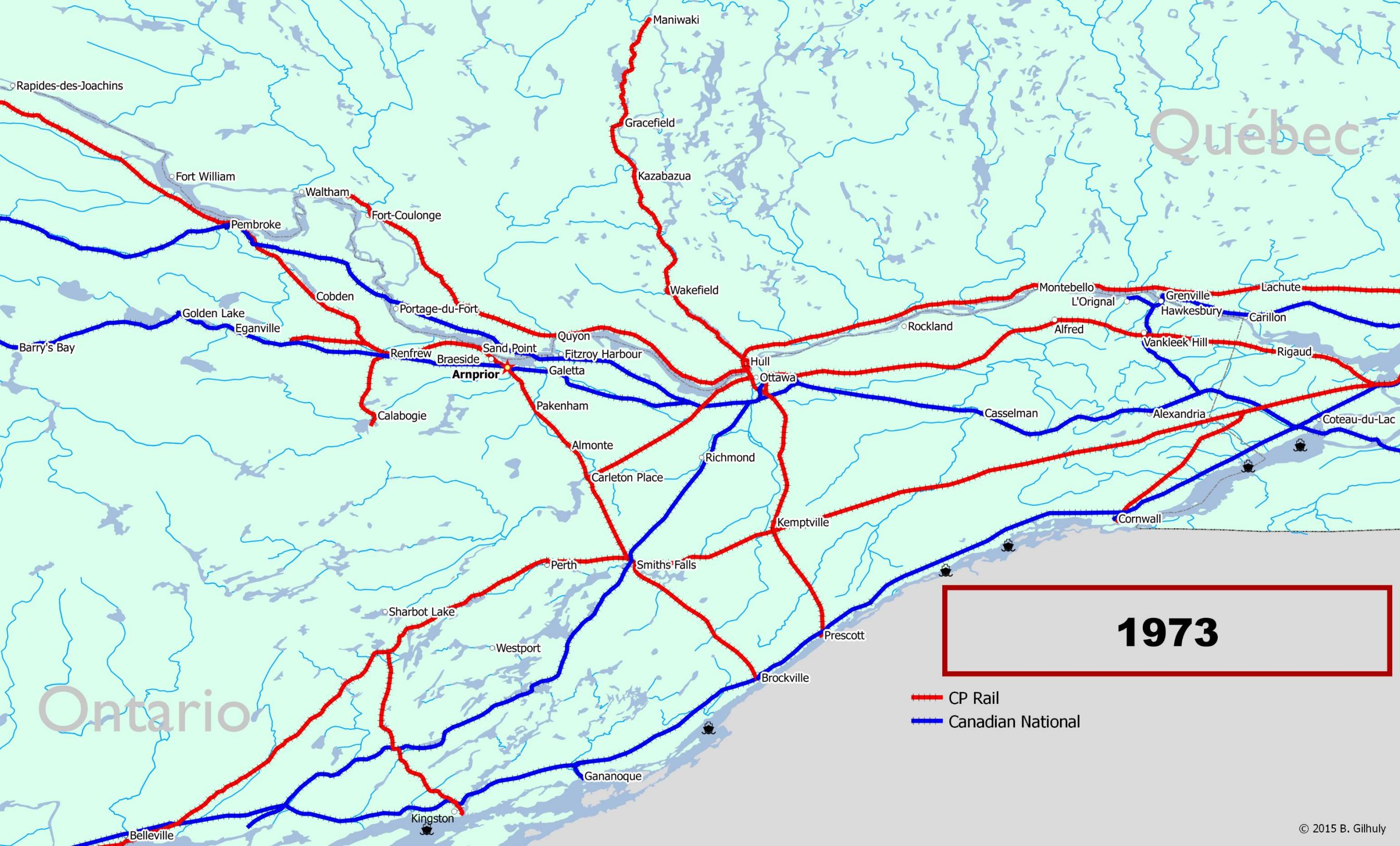


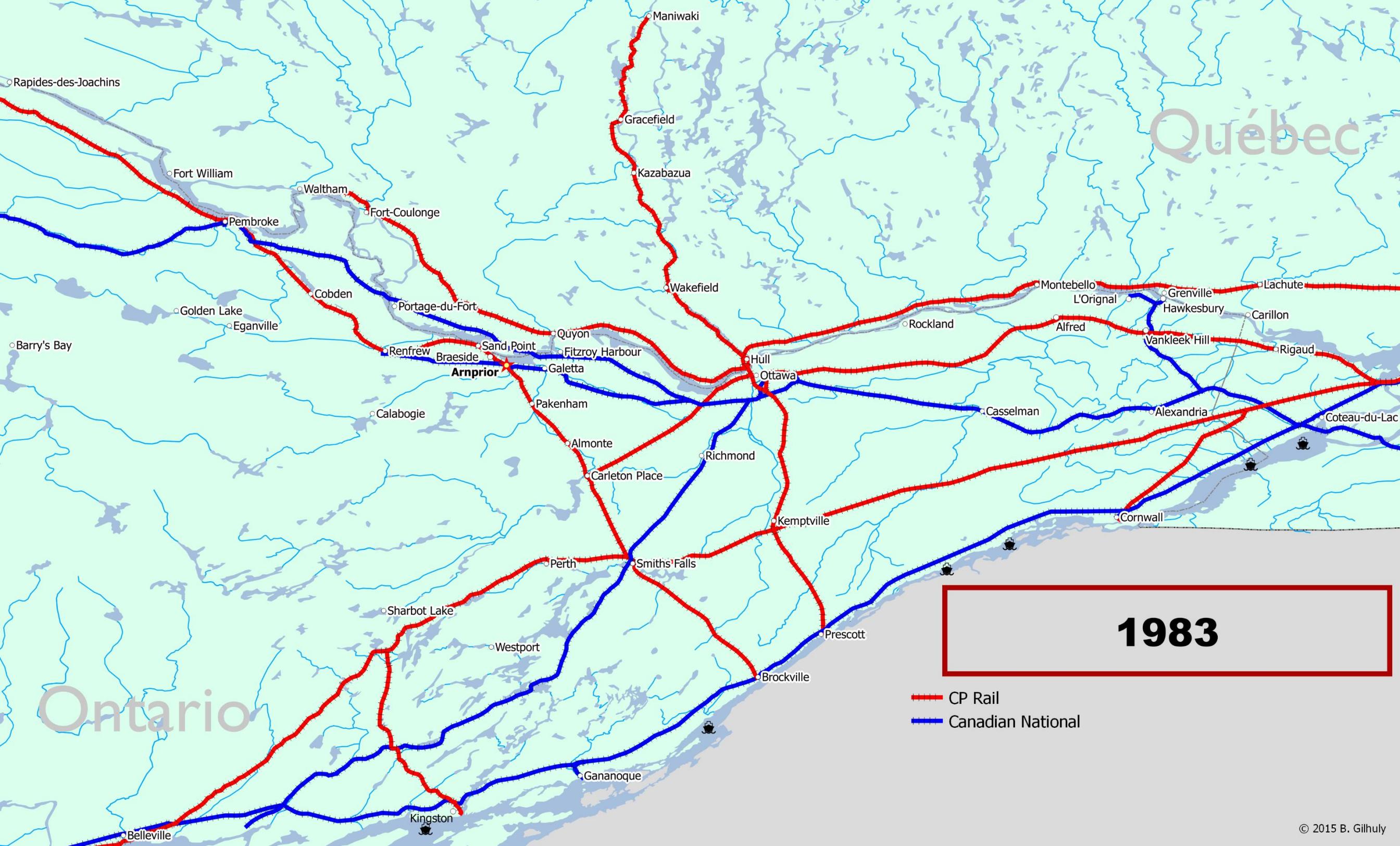
Québec

Ontario

1963

- Canadian Pacific Rwy
- Canadian National



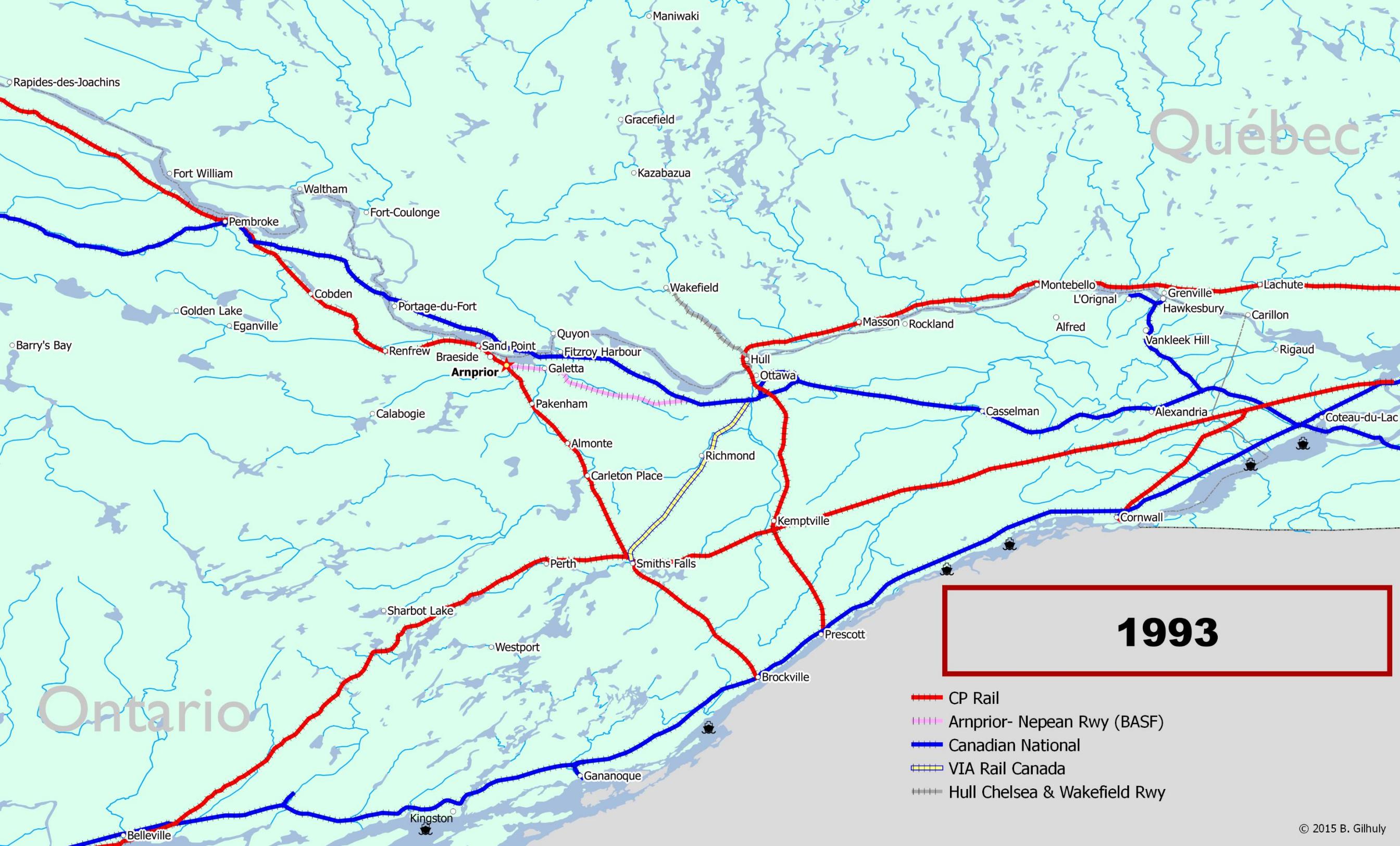


Québec

Ontario

1983

- CP Rail
- Canadian National

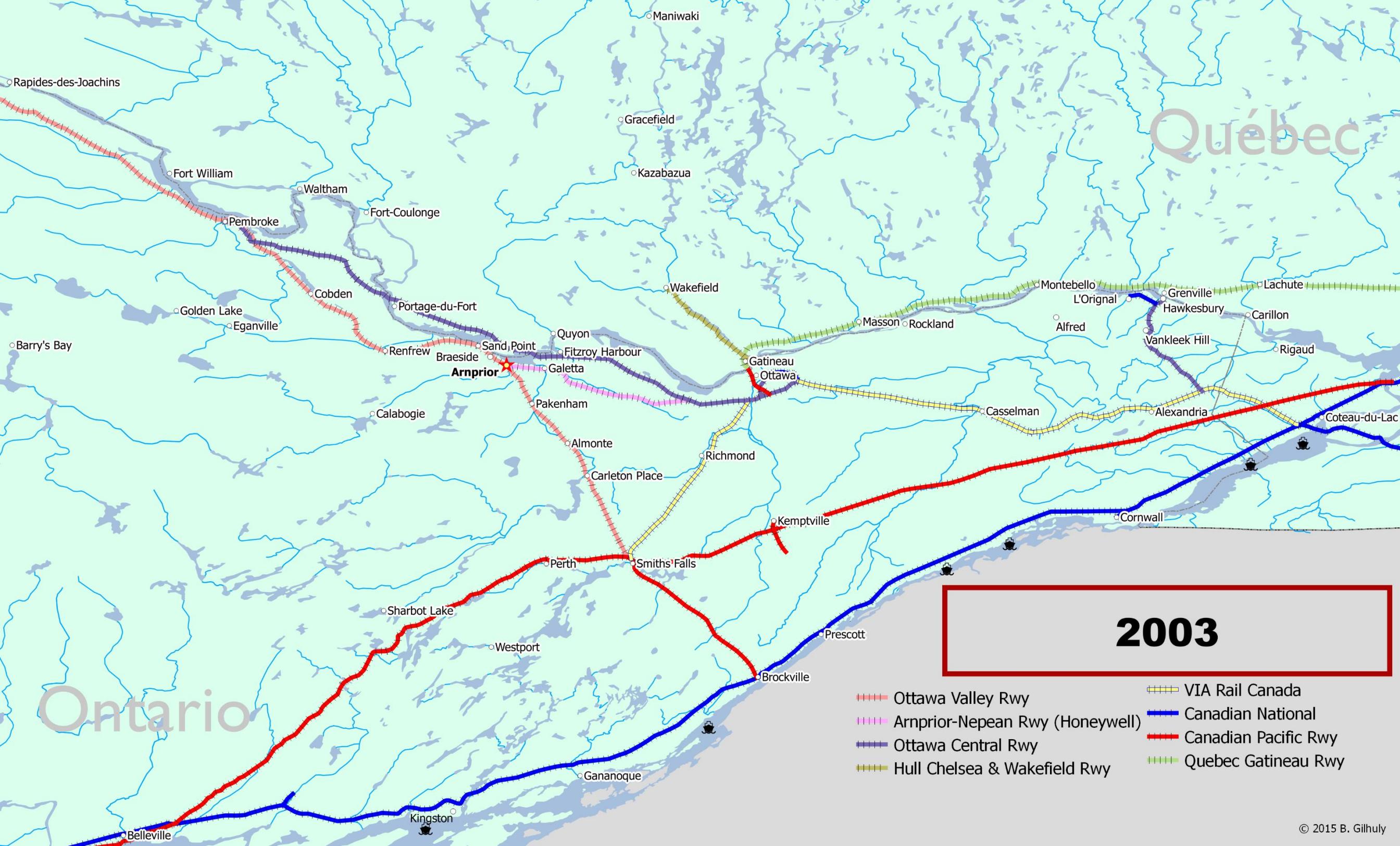


Québec

Ontario

1993

- CP Rail
- Arnprior- Nepean Rwy (BASF)
- Canadian National
- VIA Rail Canada
- Hull Chelsea & Wakefield Rwy

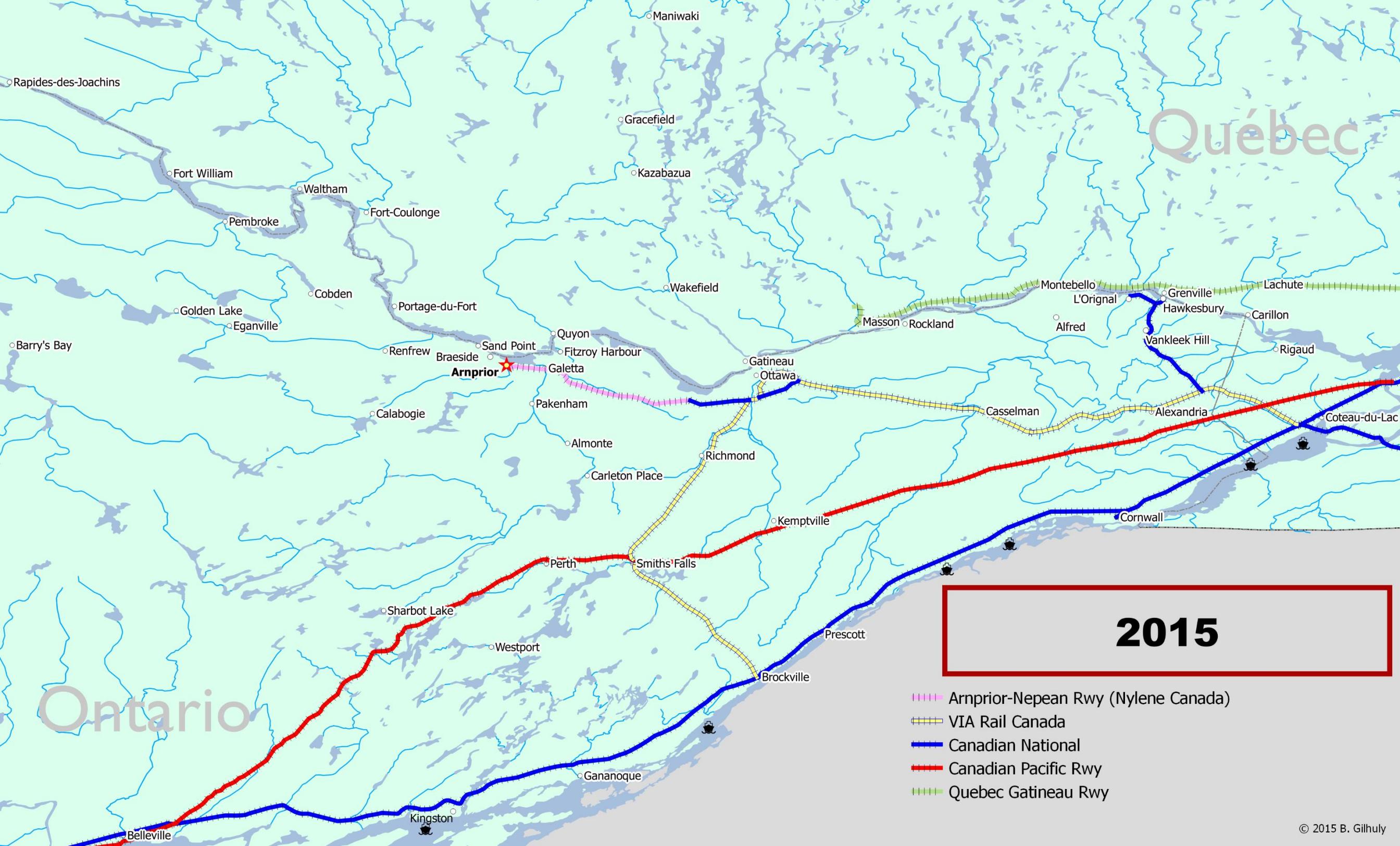


Québec

Ontario

2003

- ▬▬▬ Ottawa Valley Rwy
 - ▬▬▬ Arnprior-Nepean Rwy (Honeywell)
 - ▬▬▬ Ottawa Central Rwy
 - ▬▬▬ Hull Chelsea & Wakefield Rwy
- ▬▬▬ VIA Rail Canada
 - ▬▬▬ Canadian National
 - ▬▬▬ Canadian Pacific Rwy
 - ▬▬▬ Quebec Gatineau Rwy



2015

- Arnprior-Nepean Rwy (Nylene Canada)
- VIA Rail Canada
- Canadian National
- Canadian Pacific Rwy
- Quebec Gatineau Rwy