

By Order in Council P.C. 2526, dated June 8, 1948, responsibility for telegraph and telephone services formerly operated by the Federal Department of Public Works was transferred to the Minister of Transport. The general object of these services is to furnish wire communications for outlying and sparsely settled districts where commercial companies do not enter into the field and where the population must receive adequate communication services in the public interest.

A Crown company, Canadian Overseas Telecommunications Corporation was created by Act of Parliament (Dec. 10, 1949) to acquire for public operation all external telecommunication assets in Canada, in keeping with the Commonwealth Telegraph Agreement signed May 11, 1948. This Agreement was designed to bring about the consolidation and strengthening of the radio and cable communication systems of the Commonwealth.

Land-line telegraph and telephone tariffs and tolls charged by companies incorporated by the Federal Government are regulated by the Board of Transport Commissioners under the provisions of the Railway Act.

Tariffs and tolls charged to the public by individuals or companies for radio telephone or telegraph communications within Canada are likewise regulated by the Board of Transport Commissioners under the provisions of the Railway Act and the Regulations made under the Radio Act, 1938.

PART II.—RAILWAYS*

The treatment of rail transportation is divided into three Sections dealing, respectively, with steam railways, electric railways and express companies.

Section 1.—Steam Railways

The steam railway is the most important transportation agency from the standpoint of investment and of traffic handled and the statistical field is more completely covered for this form of transportation than for any other.

Subsection 1.—Mileage and Equipment

Construction was begun in 1835 on the first steam railway in Canada—the short link of 16 miles between Laprairie and St. Johns, Que.—but only 66 miles of railway were in operation by 1850. The first great period of construction was in the 1850's when the Grand Trunk and the Great Western Railways were built as well as numerous smaller lines. The building of the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific Railways contributed to another period of rapid expansion in the 1870's and 1880's. In the last period of extensive railway building from 1900 to 1917, the Grand Trunk Pacific, National Transcontinental and Canadian Northern Railways were constructed. For the consolidation and organization of the Canadian National Railway System see the 1940 Year Book, pp. 635-638. The Canadian National Railways took over the operation of Newfoundland's railway facilities on Apr. 1, 1949. (See the 1952-53 Year Book, p. 743.)

* Revised in the Public Finance and Transportation Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. More detailed information is given in the annual reports of the Division. Certain of the financial statistics are compiled in co-operation with the Department of Transport.