

Subsection 1.—Government Control over Telecommunications Agencies

Telephone and telegraph companies incorporated under the Federal Government are subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of Transport Commissioners in the matter of rates and practices under the provisions of the Railway Act (see also p. 804); other companies are responsible to provincial regulatory bodies. In addition, tolls charged to the public for radio communications service are subject to the provisions of the Regulations made under the Radio Act. Overseas cables landed in Canada are subject to the External Submarine Cable Regulations under the Telegraphs Act.

Except for those matters covered by the Broadcasting Act, radio communications in Canada are regulated under the Radio Act and Regulations which include control of any equipment liable to cause interference to radio or television reception (see also p. 896). In addition, all radio communication matters are administered in accordance with the provisions of the International Telecommunication Convention and Radio Regulations annexed thereto and in accordance with such regional agreements as the Inter-American Telecommunications Convention and Inter-American Radio Agreement, and the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement. (See also p. 895.)

National radio broadcasting in Canada entered its present phase in 1936 when, with the passage of the Canadian Broadcasting Act, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation replaced the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. The Act gave the Corporation wide powers in the operation of the system and gave to the Minister of Transport the technical control of all broadcasting stations.

During 1958 the Government established a Board of Broadcast Governors and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Board of Governors was abolished. The Board of Broadcast Governors regulates the establishment and operation of networks of sound and television broadcasting stations, the activities of public and private broadcasting stations and the relationship between them, in the interest of providing a national broadcasting service of high standard, basically Canadian in content and character. While the Minister of Transport is the licensing authority under the Radio Act, the Broadcasting Act requires that the applications for broadcasting station licences or for any change in an existing broadcasting station be referred to the Board of Broadcast Governors for its recommendation before being dealt with by the Department.

Subsection 2.—Telephones

Alexander Graham Bell first transmitted human speech through electrically energized equipment in March 1876, and in August of the same year a one-way call from Brantford to Paris in Ontario marked the first successful long-distance test of the new invention. Soon after the instrument was perfected, telephone exchanges sprang up in many Canadian communities, sometimes two competing companies in one place. As a result, in April 1880 The Bell Telephone Company of Canada was established by Act of Parliament and authorized as the official agent for telephone service in thirty-two cities and towns across the country. However, it came to be recognized that, in the existing state of the industry, one company could scarcely develop and organize service over so wide a territory and separate companies were set up in British Columbia. The Bell Telephone withdrew from the Maritime Provinces in the 1880's and installations in the Prairie Provinces were sold to the respective provincial governments in 1908-09. The seven major telephone systems that developed across Canada worked together to establish long-distance service on a national basis and in 1931 they founded the Trans-Canada Telephone System, which now has eight full members including both shareholder-owned companies and provincial government systems. They are as follows:—

The Avalon Telephone Company Limited (joined in 1957)
Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company Limited
The New Brunswick Telephone Company Limited
The Bell Telephone Company of Canada (serving Ontario and Quebec)
Manitoba Telephone System
Saskatchewan Government Telephones
Alberta Government Telephones
British Columbia Telephone Company.