

As provided by the Transport Act, the commission grants licences for ships to transport goods and passengers between ports or places in Canada on the Great Lakes and on the Mackenzie and Yukon rivers. Provisions of the act do not apply to the transport of goods in bulk on waters other than the Mackenzie River. The commission must determine that the service is required. Tariffs of tolls must be filed and the commission has regulatory powers over such tolls.

The commission, under the Pilotage Act, is empowered to investigate objections to proposed tariffs of pilotage charges, to hold public hearings, and to make its recommendations to the appropriate pilotage authority. Under the Shipping Conferences Exemption Act, ocean carriers which are members of a shipping conference are required to file with the commission copies of their agreements, arrangements, contracts, patronage contracts and tariffs. These documents are made available for public inspection.

The commission is also authorized, under the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act, to consider any complaint of unjust discrimination in existing tariffs and to report its findings to the authority.

In Canada the coasting laws restrict the operation of ships from one point to another to Canadian or British ships, depending upon the area. To enable a ship of any foreign country to engage in such operations, application has to be made to the national revenue minister to obtain a waiver of the coasting laws. The commission is then called upon to advise the minister as to the availability of a suitable Canadian ship.

Rail transport

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Canadian railway transport is dominated by two transcontinental systems, supplemented by a number of regional railways. The government-owned Canadian National Railway system is the country's largest public utility and operates the longest trackage in Canada. It serves all 10 provinces as well as the Great Slave Lake area of the Northwest Territories. It also operates a highway transport service, a fleet of coastal steamships, a chain of large hotels and resorts, a telecommunications service, and as an autonomous subsidiary a scheduled Canadian and international air service, Air Canada. Canadian Pacific Ltd. is a joint-stock corporation operating a railway service in eight provinces. Similar to and competitive with the Canadian National Railway system, it is a multi-transport organization with a fleet of inland and ocean-going vessels as well as coastal vessels, a fleet of trucks, a chain of year-round and resort hotels, a telecommunications service, and a domestic and foreign airline service. Through a major subsidiary, Canadian Pacific Investments Ltd., interests are held in mining (for example, Cominco Ltd.), oil and gas, forest products, real estate and related operations, hotel and food services, and steel production and associated services. The British Columbia Railway operates over a 2045-kilometre route from North Vancouver to Fort Nelson in northeastern British Columbia. The Northern Alberta Railway, jointly owned by CP and CN, serves the area north of Edmonton with a 1484-km system. Northern Ontario is served by the provincially owned Ontario Northland Railways with a 925-km system stretching from North Bay to Moosonee, and by the privately owned Algoma Central Railway operating over 500 km of line between Sault Ste Marie and Hearst.

In addition, a US-Canada passenger service inaugurated by the National Railroad Passenger Corp., AMTRAK, is operated between Seattle, Wash. and Vancouver, BC and between Montreal, Que. and Washington, DC via New York City, Springfield, Mass. and resort areas in Vermont.

The largest contributors to Canada's total 1976 railway revenue were Canadian National (54.5%) and Canadian Pacific (36%). The Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway, built to transport ore and concentrates from the iron mines of the Schefferville and Wabush areas of Quebec and Labrador to water transportation facilities on the St. Lawrence River, accounted for 2% of the revenues. Other individual railways contributing 1% or more of the total revenue were the British Columbia Railway (1.7%) and the Ontario Northland Railways (1.1%).

In recent years, railways have faced strong competition from highway and air transport. Still indispensable for carrying bulk commodities, railways are necessary to