

interference with radio and television reception, as well as technical specifications; tests and approves telecommunication equipment for use in Canada and issues technical and operating certificates for broadcasting stations. Daily management of the radio frequency spectrum is conducted by offices in the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, central and Pacific administrative regions.

The department's government telecommunications agency is responsible for the overall co-ordination and planning of telecommunications services used by the federal government and its agencies.

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) 16.3.2

The CRTC came into existence when the federal Broadcasting Act of 1968 was proclaimed. Then known as the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, it was responsible for regulating only radio and television broadcasting — including cable companies — except in their purely technical aspects.

In the early 1970s, there was a growing recognition in government that the new information technologies were bringing about a sharp convergence of telecommunications and broadcasting. Activities in one field could have a profound effect in the other. Parliament passed the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act, effective April 1, 1976. The commission became the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and was given regulatory power over certain telecommunications carriers. This power had previously belonged to the Canadian Transport Commission. Telephone and telegraph companies incorporated under federal legislation are now subject to CRTC jurisdiction. These companies are Teleglobe Canada, Bell Canada, the British Columbia Telephone Company, Canadian National Telecommunications and Canadian Pacific Telecommunications. The remaining carriers are provincially incorporated or owned and fall under provincial jurisdiction.

International telegraph and telephone communications are subject to an international telecommunication convention and its regulations or regional agreements, or both. Overseas cables landed in Canada are subject to external submarine regulations under the Telegraphs Act.

Under the Railway Act, the commission is required to ensure that all tolls, including rates or charges for the public or any individual for telecommunications services, are just and reasonable. The commission must ensure that carriers do not discriminate unjustly in rates, services or facilities. The act requires the commission to approve any agreements entered into by carriers on the interchange of traffic or limitation of liability and, among other things, gives the commission jurisdiction over interconnections between the telecommunications carriers.

The CRTC developed rules of procedure to assist in the regulation of telecommunications carriers. They came into effect in August 1979.

These rules are intended to ensure commission proceedings of sufficient focus and depth to permit the highest possible quality of decision making; assist regulated companies to deal effectively with commission concerns; facilitate involvement of the public in the regulatory process through greater informality and public access; increase the capacity of interveners to participate at public hearings in an informed way; and eliminate unnecessary delay in the regulatory process. During hearings over general rate increases, these rules permit the commission to require that a carrier pay costs to an intervener which meets certain conditions.

As a result of four major parliamentary examinations of broadcasting since the 1920s, Canadian law has come to regard publicly owned broadcasting, commercially based radio and TV, and cable television as constituting a single system. This wording comes from the 1968 Broadcasting Act which still provides the authority under which the CRTC regulates the Canadian broadcasting system. The act directs the CRTC to regulate and supervise all aspects of the Canadian broadcasting system with a view to implementing certain policy objectives: effective Canadian ownership and control of broadcasting facilities; a wide variety of programming which provides reasonable, balanced opportunity for the expression of differing views on matters of public concern; availability of service in English and French to all Canadians; and programming of high standard that makes use of predominantly Canadian creative and other resources.