



INTRODUCTION TO THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

MANDATE

The Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications has the mandate to examine legislation and study issues related to transport and communications by land, air, water, and space, whether by radio, telephone, wire, cable, microwave, wireless, television, satellite, broadcasting, postal communications or any other form, method or means of communications. It also deals with matters relating to tourist traffic, common carriers, shipping and navigable waters.

The committee deals with significant legislation and studies issues important to Canadians. Over the last few years, it has considered bills touching on everything from telecommunications to the transportation of dangerous goods and concluded studies on emerging issues of great significance for Canada's economy and its cultural development.

HISTORY

The Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications has its roots in one of the oldest committees of the Senate. The committee was first created in 1867 under the name of the Banking, Commerce and Railways Committee. By 1879, it had become evident that some of the committees were too large. New committees were formed including the Committee on Railways, Telegraphs and Harbours. It became one of the busiest committees examining 149 government bills from 1925 to 1963.

In 1945, the establishment of a Committee on Transport and Communications was recommended because it was thought that this committee should handle all matters pertaining to radio, airways and other related subjects. Amendments to the *Rules of the Senate* in 1969 and 1983 further defined what matters are generally referred to the committee.

SELECTED STUDIES

Over the last several years, the committee has conducted several studies dealing with transportation policy. It tabled comprehensive reports into the intercity bus industry (2002), containerized freight traffic in Canada's ports (2008) and airports (2012 and 2013). Its most recent transportation study focused on four main issues in the Canadian airline industry: the global context, domestic market, the industry's business relationship with its passengers, and the economic impact of airports. The final report, entitled *One Size Doesn't Fit All: The Future*



Growth and Competitiveness of Canadian Air Travel, recommended, among several other things, to treat Canada's airports as "economic spark plugs rather than as a source of public revenue."

Within its communications mandate, the committee examined the Canadian media industry (2006), issues relating to the Canadian Television Fund (2007) and the wireless communications sector (2010). During the 41st Parliament (2013-2015), it undertook a comprehensive review of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, following its loss of the rights to broadcast National Hockey League games. Through the lens of a rapidly changing environment for broadcasting, it looked at the CBC's overall mandate, governance structure, funding model and programming and came up with 22 recommendations in these areas.

SELECTED LEGISLATIVE WORK

The Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications is often asked to review wide range of pieces of legislation. Recent examples include such topics as railway safety, personal electronic information protection and mail delivery. It has also been asked to report on matters contained in budget implementation bills. In 2014-2015, legislation relating to the *Aviation Industry Indemnity Act*, the *Aeronautics Act*, the *Canada Marine Act*, the *Marine Liability Act*, the *Canada Shipping Act*, the *Canadian Transportation Act* and the *Railway Safety Act* were all referred to the committee for examination.

CURRENT WORK

For information on the current work of the committee, you may wish to review the orders of reference the committee has received from the Senate, or review the committee proceedings. Detailed information on current work of the committee can be found on the parliamentary website at senate-senat.ca/trcm.asp.