

quite clear that he no longer wanted defence considerations to preempt general foreign policy considerations.¹⁵ The committee would require more meetings in order to consider defence estimates but otherwise there seemed to be little change.

Over the next few years, however, the combining of these two subject areas caused a substantial increase in the number of substitutions which in turn affected the continuity of members on the committee. Before 1968 the rate of substitution had never gone above an average of one per meeting. Considering the number of legitimate reasons that take a member away from the committee's meetings, this was not very high. In the 28th parliament it became even less when the average for all standing committees stood at 2.4 members per meeting. Beginning in the mid seventies, however, the Conservatives, more than the other parties began developing batteries of experts in both areas who appeared in accordance with the subject matter under consideration. While the overall rate of substitutions remained less than in other committees which handled legislation requiring members to rally for votes, there was a discernible impact on the consistency of the committees operations that has led some members to question whether a return to the old division of external affairs and national defence might be preferable. Since 1973 there have been 33 meetings at which 6 to 12 substitutions were made. While there was bound to be changes after a summer or Christmas recess these changes occurred during regular weekly meetings, sometimes from one day to the next.¹⁶ This is also a reflection of the increased partisan nature of the discussion that has caused the party whips to try and ensure better attendance when votes were being held on controversial subjects contained in committee reports to the House and in order to guide the discussion in the right direction.

Not long after the 28th parliament began in the autumn of 1968 the committee found itself the object of much attention. Canada's potential involvement in the Nigerian Civil War had become a politically