

to express an opinion."¹² Officials were to provide information, not views on policy or projections thereof. Members did not regard the committee as an agent for changing foreign policy. As one member explained in promoting a discussion of the International Civil Aviation Organization: "My reason for raising this question is to, first of all, secure some information, from the officials, and also to try and give a little publicity, through this committee, to the public of Canada about some of the activities of this organization."¹³ Further confirmation of this attitude is found on the fact that except for the 1957-58 session, few members showed much interest in having an input into the committee's reports to the House. (See Table 1). Moreover, foreign policy was a non partisan issue as members in all parties kept reminding their colleagues on the committee. As the Conservative External Affairs critic told his colleagues: "everyone in this chamber is anxious that, so far as one can, we should try to find common ground on at least the major points of our policy with respect to world affairs...whatever may be our differences at home, we should try very hard to have one voice for Canada in the councils of the world."¹⁴ Since the committee's deliberations were in the public, partisan differences were to be avoided. This practice was made easier to follow by the fact that foreign policy was seldom an issue on the hustings and the committee had, unlike other committees, very few bills to vote on.

At first the Liberals had difficulty in getting their members to attend but an initial 39 per cent attendance record improved after 1949 thanks to the encouragement of Prime Minister St. Laurent and Secretary of State for External Affairs, L.B. Pearson. The Conservatives also had difficulty while in opposition persuading half of their members to attend although those who did attend participated in the discussion more than members of the other three parties. Social Credit members maintained a better than 70 per cent average attendance while those in the CCF had just over 50 per cent. When the Liberals became the Official Opposition in 1957, their attendance dropped to 33 per cent and they remained far less active in asking questions than the Conservatives had been while in the opposition. (See Table 3).