

other perspectives on the issue under discussion. These same members also feel a responsibility to ensure that the committee's reports will be in keeping with the Government's general position or what the minister is willing to accept as a set of recommendations. A rebel who will not play the game is not good material for cabinet where solidarity must prevail. There have been more than one chairman who has seen his hopes for a cabinet position flounder during controversial hearings when loyalty to the party and the committee process came into conflict. It is also interesting to note that no member or chairman who played an active part in the committee has ever become Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Members more experienced with the committee and the witnesses tend to become more selective in their attendance. They know when a courtesy call on the committee is appropriate and what witnesses will likely provide good value for the time expended in waiting for an opportunity to raise their questions. Those most interested in foreign affairs realize that much can also be accomplished outside the committee. Officials can be lobbied at cocktail parties and individual members can sometimes find fulfillment in working individually on human rights and refugee cases.

Even though members are fond of citing structural impediments to their participation, few actually exist. The most active members are not impeded by their responsibilities to other committees. Members who devote their attention to committee work can normally find time to serve faithfully on more than one committee. Committee activity is more likely to be hindered by scheduling difficulties than attendance. For example, it was not always easy to schedule the 2,069 meetings of the 21 standing committees, the 393 meetings of their 15 sub-committees along with 974 meetings of the 14 special committees of the House during the first session of the 32nd parliament. Nevertheless, a determined External Affairs and National Defence committee was not deterred, having at times to meet three times in a single day in order to complete its work. By doing so it set a new record of activity in 1982.