

this general interest in administration there were few recommendations that emerged from the committee. Even these were always rather vague, such as one in 1958 urging that paintings being purchased for embassies and chancelleries be truly representative of Canada and one the following year favouring the purchase rather than leasing of properties abroad. In any case, both recommendations were already part of official policy therefore it was not surprising that the committee's final report ended with commending the department for its expenditure of appropriations voted by parliament.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the extensive hearing on the Columbia River Basin, the committee tended to hold short inquiries into foreign policy issues. There is no indication that the committee felt unduly constrained by the Government's limitation on its activity. It regularly sought and received the permission of the House to investigate subjects of interest to its sub-committee on agenda and procedure. On one occasion it even entertained a request by the Zionists to appear before the committee but ruled that the Arabs must be given equal time to present their case on the future of Palestine. Members, however, showed little interest on the four meetings devoted to this subject. Only 36 per cent of them came out and the meetings were the shortest on record. Those few members who were interested in the subject, however, maintained a lively dialogue with the witnesses. This unusual procedure of receiving outside witnesses was regarded as an educational experience for the members. The chairman was careful to stress that no recommendation arising out of the hearings would be sent to the House.<sup>11</sup>

Major foreign policy subjects were handled by the minister in meetings that were consistently well attended. There was, in this early period, a very clear distinction drawn between ministers and public servants' roles as witnesses. When the Under Secretary was asked in 1952 about unrest in Tunisia he replied: "I would not care to express an opinion categorically in answer to the member's question... it touches pretty closely on policy, something on which I am not supposed