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TITLE OF THESIS/TITRE DE LA THÈSE Backbench Participation in Legislative
Policymaking: A Test of the Ambition
Hypothesis

UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITÉ Carleton University

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/
GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE Ph.D.

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE DEGRÉ 1978

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BACKBENCH PARTICIPATION IN LEGISLATIVE POLICY-MAKING:
A TEST OF THE AMBITION HYPOTHESIS

by

MICHAEL MEREDITH ATKINSON, M.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate
Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

February, 1978

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The undersigned recommend to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
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BACKBENCH PARTICIPATION IN LEGISLATIVE POLICY-MAKING:

A TEST OF THE AMBITION HYPOTHESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an analysis of the participation of Ontario and Nova Scotia backbenchers in policy-making activities. It has three main objectives: first, to describe the pattern of participation members maintain and their attitudes toward participation; second, to examine the influence of the legislative environment on participation; and, third, to evaluate the role of political ambition in explaining variations in attitudes and behaviour.

To ascertain the frequency, substance, and style of participation personal interviews were conducted with seventy-five private members of the Ontario legislature and twenty-six members of the Nova Scotia legislature. The data derived from these interviews were supplemented by a written questionnaire, an examination of Hansard records, and interviews with cabinet ministers in both provinces.

The thesis shows that members in both legislatures devote considerable time to their constituency work and most of the informal discussions members hold with ministers and public servants concern constituency matters. However, backbenchers cannot be considered disinterested in legislative work, or parochial in their approach to policy matters. Private members do have a wide range of policy interests and a large proportion of members in both provinces define

these interests in broad terms, with little or no reference to their constituencies. Members also adopt different orientations in the pursuit of these interests. The thesis identifies three orientations associated with the role of policy-maker--initiator, critic, and facilitator--and examines the degree of attachment members show to each orientation.

The frequency, substance and style of participation all show the effects of the institutional environment. Nova Scotia members spend more time than their Ontario counterparts on constituency work and less on legislative activities. Informal participation is roughly similar in the two provinces, but in Nova Scotia participation in debates and question period is spread more equally among private members than in Ontario. The provinces differ little in the manner in which interests are defined, but in the choice of their interests Ontario members are more influenced by party leadership and constituency factors. The thesis argues that most of these discrepancies can be accounted for by differences between the provinces in legislative professionalization, internal leadership recruitment, organizational complexity and specialization, and committee autonomy.

Finally, the thesis tests the hypothesis that members who aspire to be cabinet ministers will tend to participate frequently in legislative activities and adopt attitudes toward participation similar to those held by ministers. In both provinces many of the findings support this hypothesis. Ambitious members do tend to

define their policy interests in broad terms, discuss policy matters with ministers and public servants, and make greater use of formal avenues of participation than other members. Ambition has relatively little influence over the setting of priorities, however, or the attachment members show for particular role orientations. In these circumstances the strength of constituency ties and party loyalties, and the absence of cues and models which ambitious members can follow, seem to be responsible for the breakdown of the hypothesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have assisted me during my research and during the long period of analysis and writing. I am deeply indebted, first, to my supervisor, Robert J. Jackson, whose constant support and intellectual guidance made my years as a graduate student pleasant and stimulating ones. His critical judgment saved me from many an error; this thesis owes a great deal to him. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Professors Jon Pammett and Rick Van Loon, both of whom were helpful in the formative stages and provided careful and extensive comments on numerous drafts. I could not have asked for a more conscientious and supportive committee.

William Coleman, Ken Hart, Kim Nossal and Malcolm Punnett read chapters of this thesis, listened to innumerable questions and graciously offered advice. I am also indebted to Gerry Hooper who not only read parts of the manuscript but spent days and nights reading transcripts of the interviews and acting as an auxiliary coder. The research was made possible in the first place by Canada Council Doctoral Fellowships and a Queen Elizabeth II Ontario Scholarship. I am very grateful for the support of these institutions.

Of course, this thesis could not have been written without the indulgence of over one hundred elected members of the legislatures of Nova Scotia and Ontario. I found these men and women kind and receptive

to my questions and I only hope they derived some satisfaction from helping me to understand them.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Pam who has served gladly in a variety of capacities including data grubber, typist, artist, proof-reader and general counsel. Her support and understanding were crucial at every stage.

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INTRODUCTION

An important and recurring theme in academic writing on parliamentary regimes is the role of ordinary backbenchers in the formation of public policy. Since the advent of cohesive political parties the backbencher's role has been in some doubt. Parties are indisputably the main actors on the parliamentary stage and cabinet government itself is sustained by the ability of one or more parties to command the support of a majority of members in the House of Commons. Beyond lending the necessary votes to his party colleagues, what responsibility does the private member have to deliberations on public policy?

This thesis attempts to show how the private members of two provincial legislatures--Ontario and Nova Scotia--answer this question. As subsequent chapters reveal, private members do not participate in legislative affairs with equal enthusiasm, nor do they approach policy questions in the same way. Although party discipline commands uniformity in certain public aspects of participation, such as formal divisions, in other facets of participation there is considerable scope for individual differences. The party does not require that all its members be eloquent debaters or that everyone have the same policy interests. Individuals are permitted to participate in different ways.

This thesis argues that there are three dimensions of

backbench participation in policy-making that merit investigation: frequency, substance and style. The first objective of the thesis is to describe the range and variety of backbench participation in Ontario and Nova Scotia in terms of these dimensions. The thesis also tests the argument that individual variations in the frequency, substance, and style of participation can be attributed to differences in political ambition. The second objective of the thesis is to examine the "ambition hypothesis" in the context of parliamentary government and evaluate its potential for explaining backbench participation.

The behaviour of collectivities, such as parties or the legislative body itself, depends heavily on the character of the individual participants. How individuals approach their policy responsibilities is not a matter of small concern. Many students of legislative behaviour in parliamentary systems assume that the participation of private members can affect the content of public policy and the conduct of representative government. The demonstration of these effects is not an objective of this thesis but it is acknowledged that assumptions such as these need to be tested in a comparative framework. This thesis proceeds toward that goal by suggesting ways in which to characterize backbench participation, and by showing what types of differences are to be found in a comparison of participation in two legislatures.

The explanation of individual differences is equally important. In the study of political elites, it is common for investigators to examine numerous personal attributes any one or more of which may influence the behaviour under consideration. In contrast to this approach, the research presented here is guided by a simplified image of the parliamentary politician. According to this view most of the decisions made by parliamentary politicians are influenced by their career goals. Specifically, some members wish to achieve more responsible political offices while other members are either satisfied with their present position or wish to abandon it for something less onerous. The former are said to have "progressive" political ambitions. Such ambitions, it is argued, demand a vigorous devotion to policy matters. This involves frequent participation in legislative policy-making and an approach to policy matters that is congruent with that demonstrated by the holders of higher office.¹ The logic underlying this hypothesis is outlined in the first chapter. Subsequent chapters discuss precisely how differences in political ambition can affect various dimensions of legislative participation.

If, as Mayhew suggests, politics is best studied as a struggle among individuals to gain and maintain political power,²

¹Joseph Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), esp. chapter 1.

²David R. Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 6.

an emphasis on political ambition as a driving force in the behaviour of politicians seems a most appropriate approach. It is particularly attractive in a parliamentary setting where most of those with progressive ambitions are intent on reaching cabinet rank. Their performance as backbenchers can be scrutinized by party leaders and they can be exposed to the requirements of ministerial office.

Private members may have acquired their ambitions long before reaching the legislature but now they have the opportunity to perform before the constituency of primary concern--the one composed of their party colleagues.

This does not mean that ambitious backbenchers can afford to ignore their electorate. Aspiring ministers must take care to maintain the support of constituents. It might be suggested, furthermore, that electoral strength is an advantage to a would-be minister, especially if it is assumed that he has a following outside of his own riding. But unlike his unambitious colleagues, the backbencher with progressive ambitions cannot afford to permit this constituency to be the only, or even the dominant, one. Few members can be expected to gain the cabinet on the strength of their service to constituents. Instead, the ambitious member must demonstrate that he has the necessary skills and abilities to be considered for the cabinet. To do this he must devote attention to his responsibilities as a contributor in the policy-making process.

Like all simplified assumptions about the source of variation in legislative behaviour, the argument based on political

ambition has limitations. It would be unreasonable to expect this hypothesis to fit the data perfectly. There are, after all, other factors which have a *prima facie* appeal as predictors of legislative participation and these are not ignored in the chapters that follow. In fact, attention is devoted to anticipating and explaining the limitations of the ambition hypothesis. In cases where ambition is a poor or unreliable guide to participation, other factors, discussed in chapter one, are introduced as alternative sources of variation.

By adopting a comparative framework, even one limited to two legislatures, the study of legislative participation and the role of ambition naturally becomes more complicated. In addition to being affected by personal attributes such as ambition, variations in individual participation are also a function of the structure of opportunities within which private members operate. Some legislatures offer a wide variety of opportunities and incentives for backbenchers to participate in legislative policy-making, while in other legislatures active participation is either difficult or goes unrewarded. A legislative body which meets only one month of the year, for example, is likely to encourage different attitudes toward participation than one which meets almost continuously. Thus differences in the legislative environment, and particularly in the structure of incentives and opportunities for participation, can have a direct effect on individual behaviour and attitudes.

These differences can also have an indirect effect. This is of particular importance for assessing the role of ambition in different legislatures. It will be recalled that one of the attractive features of the ambition hypothesis in the parliamentary setting is the opportunity legislative work provides for ambitious politicians to demonstrate skills and learn the norms associated with cabinet office. But these opportunities must exist and active participants must be ultimately rewarded. Where these requirements are not met members are less likely to act on the basis of their ambitions. There are fewer opportunities to do so and there is no particular reason for believing that participation and promotion are related.

As chapter three will show, the legislatures of Ontario and Nova Scotia possess, to some degree, different opportunity structures. Both legislatures are modelled on Westminster but each has developed its own traditions and institutions for the conduct of business. A third objective of the thesis is to examine the importance of these traditions and institutions for legislative participation and the role of political ambition.

Studying two legislatures, rather than the usual single case, raises a variety of problems associated with the logic of comparative inquiry. Among these problems is one Lijphart refers to as the problem of "many variables, small number of cases".³

³ Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method", American Political Science Review, Vol. LXV, no. 3 (September 1971), p. 685.

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It is particularly important here. In addition to differences in the legislative environment, there are many political and economic differences between the two provinces any number of which could affect the attitudes and behaviour of politicians. In a comparative study limited to two legislatures it is impossible to control for these "many variables". Suffice it to say that while other differences between these provinces may exert an influence on attitudes and behaviour, our expectations are based on a relatively narrow set of differences in legislative organization. The appropriateness of this assumption can be judged, in the first instance, by the findings and arguments presented below.

The first chapter of the thesis contains a review of research on legislative participation in Canada and an outline of how the problem is approached in subsequent chapters. It also contains a more detailed discussion of the ambition hypothesis. In chapters four through seven specific hypotheses are developed and used in explaining the frequency, substance and style of participation. The thesis will not examine every aspect of legislative participation, nor will the ambition hypothesis explain all those aspects that are examined. The goal is to describe important elements and to account for a significant part of the variance.

CHAPTER I

LEGISLATIVE PARTICIPATION AND THE AMBITION HYPOTHESIS

In Canada, knowledge of the participation of backbenchers or private members¹ in policy matters is much more limited than knowledge of parliamentary institutions. Perhaps for this reason expectations about the behaviour and attitudes of backbenchers at all levels are influenced considerably by an appreciation of the constitutional constraints that parliamentary government imposes on them. The erosion of the prerogatives of the private member has been well documented² and it is generally agreed that the increase in public legislation and the growth of cohesive political parties have imposed significant constraints on their policy aspirations.³ The principle of collective ministerial responsibility for policy implies that there is very little opportunity for formal policy

¹The terms "private member" and "backbencher" are used synonymously to denote all members of the legislature who are not cabinet ministers or leaders of a political party. The only exception is the leader of the New Democratic Party in Nova Scotia who is considered a "backbencher" for our purposes.

²William F. Dawson, Procedure in the Canadian House of Commons (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 92.

³Roman March, The Myth of Parliament (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1974); Allan Kornberg, "Parliament in Canadian Society", in A. Kornberg and L. Musolf (eds.), Legislatures in Developmental Perspective (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1971), pp. 55-128.

amendment by backbenchers and even less for policy initiation. One observer, Robert Presthus, has argued that given these constitutional limitations we should adopt a division of labour approach to the understanding of legislative behaviour in Canada. Cabinet, in this system, looks after policy while backbenchers tend to constituency demands.⁴

In describing political institutions in the province of Ontario, Fred Schindeler seems to concur in this judgment. He portrays private members as essentially appendages to a policy process which has overwhelmed the legislature. The policy role of private members is described rather cynically:

Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario meet during three or four of the slack winter months and use the government's legislative programme as an occasion to wax loquacious according to their respective versions of the received truth. But the actual effect that private members have on legislative output is extremely limited and the control they exercise over the executive is virtually nil.⁵

The proximate cause of this situation, Schindeler argues, is the expansion of the executive branch. While the machinery of government in the executive has adapted to the increase in government

⁴Robert Presthus, Elites in the Policy Process (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 248.

⁵F.F. Schindeler, Responsible Government in Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 261.

functions, the legislature, has remained relatively static. In addition, growth in the size of the cabinet has permitted it to dominate the legislature directly--by simply reducing the contingent of members not in the cabinet--and indirectly--by offering government backbenchers greater opportunities for promotion. When there are several positions to be allotted, he argues, "aspiring politicians are inclined to be rather tractable".⁶

The capacity of cabinets to dominate the legislatures of the provinces has been noted by J.R. Mallory.⁷ Writing in 1957 he observed that a variety of factors, including the weakness of party discipline on the prairies, the lack of political reformism in the Atlantic provinces, and the prevalence of coalitions in British Columbia and Manitoba had "eroded the clear lines of executive responsibility that cabinet government requires."⁸ In some cases, as Donnelly has noted of Manitoba, debate in the legislature comes to be viewed as a waste of time.⁹

⁶F.F. Schindeler, "The Ontario Cabinet: Definition, Size and Representative Nature", Canadian Public Administration, Vol. IV, no. 3 (September 1966), p. 338.

⁷James R. Mallory, "Cabinet Government in the Canadian Provinces", McGill Law Journal, Vol. 3, no. 2 (1957), p. 196.

⁸Ibid., p. 201.

⁹M.S. Donnelly, "Parliamentary Government in Manitoba", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XXII, no. 1 (February 1957), pp. 31-32.

One of the most important factors contributing to the influence of provincial cabinets has been the dominance of a single party in many of the provinces. This has provided cabinets with the opportunity to consolidate their resources, including their own backbench and the public service. The dominance of a single party in the legislature, it is argued, eventually undermines the confrontation style of politics that characterizes Westminster institutions.¹⁰ As Schindeler puts it, "it is inevitable that after twenty-two years or thirty-four years, the distinctions between executive and party or between legislature and administration tend to break down."¹¹

Finally, it is argued that the traditionally short legislative session in most provinces does not motivate backbenchers to exercise much diligence in policy matters.¹² In fact, Mallory notes that the largely part time nature of *ministerial* responsibilities permitted premiers like Duplessis, Abehart and Hepburn to run "one-man administrations".¹³ In this regard one might add that the full time participation of private members may be further discouraged by low salaries

¹⁰ Lawrence LeDuc Jr. and Walter White, "The Role of the Opposition in a One-Party Dominant System: The Case of Ontario", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VII, no. 1 (March 1974), pp. 86-100.

¹¹ Schindeler, Responsible Government in Ontario, p. 265.

¹² Ibid., pp. 261-262.

¹³ Mallory, op. cit., p. 202.

and inadequate research facilities.

Given the impressive list of factors that could inhibit backbench participation in government policy-making, it is perhaps not surprising that most descriptive works on legislative-executive relations in the provinces are either silent or cynical on the matter. There seems to be few incentives or opportunities for members to extend their activities much beyond the service of constituent needs. Perhaps as a consequence the research on provincial legislative behaviour has concentrated on the extent to which private members have adopted the norm of constituency service. Research that focuses specifically on legislative policy-making is meagre.

The findings of two major studies on participation at the provincial level lend support to the view that a constituency service orientation is strong among legislators. Using a mail survey of provincial backbenchers, Clarke, Price and Krause investigated the amount of time devoted to "constituency service". Concerning the overall distribution across the provinces they concluded that "the data confirm the conventional wisdom that MLAs tend to devote substantial amounts of time to constituency service work".¹⁴ This conventional wisdom has its source primarily in several works on provincial political institutions, particularly those dealing with the

¹⁴ Harold D. Clarke, Richard G. Price, and Robert Krause, "Constituency Service among Canadian Provincial Legislators: Basic Findings and a Test of Three Hypotheses", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VIII, no. 4 (December 1975), p. 529.

Maritime provinces where the service of local interests is presumed to be part of the provincial political culture.¹⁵ Similar findings on the time devoted to constituency problems are reported by LeDuc and White in a paper on Ontario legislators. Only a small proportion of the members canvassed reported spending more than 75% of their time on legislative work.¹⁶ Other information collected by LeDuc and White confirms, they argue, the dominance of a constituency service role. In terms of personal interest, for example, more respondents were interested in constituency problems than any other legislative activity, and most of their contact with cabinet ministers involved constituency rather than policy matters.¹⁷

The idea that provincial backbenchers are completely consumed by constituency problems is not entirely accurate. Although they argue that "constituency service represents the accepted norm among legislators", LeDuc and White found that 59% of their respondents claimed to have "some", and 15% "much", influence on policy questions.¹⁸

¹⁵See, for example, Hugh G. Thorburn, Politics in New Brunswick (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961); and S.J.R. Noel, "Leadership and Clientelism", in David J. Bellamy, Jon H. Pammett and Donald C. Rowat (eds.), The Provincial Political Systems (Toronto: Methuen, 1976), p. 209.

¹⁶LeDuc and White, op. cit., p. 95, calculated from Table VIII.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁸Ibid., calculated from Table VII.

Furthermore, the largest category of members, 43%, believed their views were considered often by cabinet ministers, while only 16% claimed that they were considered "seldom or never".¹⁹ Apparently Ontario backbenchers do not consider themselves entirely alienated from the process of policy-making. Moreover, the tendency of provincial politicians to favour constituency service work is not overwhelming. Clarke et al. concede that "for many legislators constituency service work does not consume a majority of their time".²⁰ Both studies suggest that private members in provincial legislatures are not completely passive or frustrated in their efforts to affect policy.

In the House of Commons researchers have explored the general orientations of Canadian MPs toward their job under the headings of "purposive roles" and "legislative goals". The object has been to ascertain what the legislator feels is the "ultimate aim" of his activities.²¹ In the 25th Parliament Allan Kornberg asked MPs what they wished to accomplish and on the basis of answers to this question established a "goals dimension" which ranged from policy-centered goals through mixed goals to area-oriented goals. The largest proportion of his respondents, 47%, chose policy-oriented goals.²²

¹⁹ Ibid., calculated from Table VII.

²⁰ Clarke, et al., op. cit., p. 529.

²¹ Roger Davidson, The Role of The Congressman (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 79.

²² Allan Kornberg, Canadian Legislative Behaviour (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 149.

In a similar effort to determine purposive roles Hoffman and Ward asked members of the 26th Parliament to describe the job of MP. Of the characterizations offered the most popular was what they described as "liaison officer", but over 50% of both French and English respondents characterized themselves as "lawmakers" (they were permitted more than a single description). The latter saw at least part of their job in terms of influencing the course of legislation.²³

The authors of these studies expressed surprise at the proportion of respondents interested in policy matters. Kornberg, in particular, was impressed given the structure of opportunities as he saw it:

It has already been pointed out that although institutionalized opportunities exist for mass membership participation in policy evaluation, the opportunity for the average MP to actually initiate or seriously affect the substantive content of a government's program is rather limited ... The question arises as to why a virtually similar proportion of Canadian MPs and American Congressmen should have structured their purposes essentially in policy terms.²⁴

Except for suggesting that the circumstance of minority government, which prevailed during both of these surveys, might have affected responses, none of the authors gives a particularly satisfying

²³David Hoffman and Norman Ward, Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the Canadian House of Commons (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), pp. 83-86.

²⁴Kornberg, Canadian Legislative Behaviour, pp. 81-82.

answer to this question. In fact, commenting on the influence of minority government, Hoffman is somewhat sceptical, offering the opinion that there are probably a considerable number of "lawmakers" on the backbenches during periods of majority government as well.²⁵

In a more recent work on the Canadian parliament Kornberg and Mishler have suggested that changes to the committee system may have encouraged more private members to participate vigorously in discussions of public policy.²⁶ Members themselves have expressed positive attitudes toward committee work and the authors report that 72% of members interviewed felt they were developing an expertise in a particular policy area.²⁷ Moreover, the tendency to cite "policy goals" as the most important things members wished to accomplish was greater in this 1972 study than it had been in the previous study of the 25th Parliament. The findings of the Kornberg-Mishler study are discussed in more detail in chapter five, but it is worth noting here that although MPs, like provincial members, seem favourably disposed to the service of constituency needs, they have by no means abandoned an interest in policy matters.

²⁵David Hoffman, "Liaison Officers and Ombudsmen: Canadian MPs and Their Relations with the Federal Bureaucracy and Executive", in Thomas Hockin (ed.), Apex of Power (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 149.

²⁶Allan Kornberg and William Mishler, Influence in Parliament: Canada (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1976), p. 305.

²⁷Ibid., p. 306.

In summary, research on the orientations of provincial legislators has offered evidence for the existence of a norm of constituency service, although it is not clear that this necessarily excludes interest in policy matters. Research on the orientations of federal MPs has revealed a widespread interest in policy evaluation, although it is uncertain how members might satisfy such an interest. What seems to be required is a framework for researching and discussing the participation of backbenchers in policy-making, and it is to that issue that we now turn.

Legislative Participation

Whatever might be said of their influence, backbenchers in parliamentary regimes do channel demands, discuss general problems, and scrutinize the actions of the executive. In this general sense, they participate in legislative policy-making. Participation, however, seldom involves the taking of decisions, except those that have been approved or ratified by the executive. It refers, instead, to the process of being attentive to and communicating ideas and preferences on matters that bear directly on the passage of legislation or the scrutiny of executive performance.

Strictly speaking, the term "participation" denotes some form of activity, in this case activity which involves the making of public policy on the part of provincial backbenchers. Perhaps the most common question asked, therefore, is a behavioural one, namely,

"how often?" In this thesis emphasis is also placed on attitudes toward participation. Not only the frequency of participation, but also the substance of policy interests and communications, and the approach members take to policy matters are legitimate and important issues in any evaluation of legislative participation. The terms "legislative participation" and "backbench participation" are used, therefore, to refer not only to actual behaviour, but also to attitudes toward behaviour. Three aspects of legislative participation are examined: frequency, substance and style. These three dimensions of participation form the basis of the research reported here, and one of the main objectives of this thesis is a systematic comparison of individuals and legislatures on each of these dimensions.

The frequency of participation is important inasmuch as it suggests the proportion of members who are interested or engaged in policy-related discussions. All members are guaranteed certain opportunities to influence the course of public policy. They can make speeches, ask questions, introduce motions, and discuss policy matters in caucus or with ministers and bureaucrats. Members differ, however, in the frequency with which they take advantage of these opportunities. Some members are active, vocal participants; others are silent. Some devote all or most of their time to policy questions; others devote practically none. An assessment of legislative participation begins, then, with an examination of how frequently

members employ the opportunities available.

One of the most important decisions a member must make is the relative weight to be assigned to legislative work. Vigorous participation in the legislature inevitably involves the sacrifice of other aspects of the job. Some members sacrifice time which might be devoted to party organization and promotion, but for most members the primary sacrifice is made in the attention they can give to constituents. Constituency tasks usually involve personal intervention on behalf of individuals or groups of constituents who have some claim or grievance that has not been adequately handled through routine channels. As later chapters will show, issues that have their origin as constituency problems sometimes have policy implications. A clear and unambiguous distinction between policy and constituency matters is impossible. Most members, however, are comfortable with the suggestion that a certain amount of the time they devote to their job is consumed with constituency work, while another major part of the job entails work in the legislature. Chapter four examines this division of time in both provinces and the extent to which legislative work is a priority among provincial backbenchers.

The time members devote to various aspects of their job is one indicator of the frequency of participation. It is also necessary, however, to determine how often members communicate ideas and preferences to one another, and to members of the cabinet and the public service. Chapter five concentrates on active

participation in debates and question period and the informal contacts members establish with ministers and public servants.

The frequency of participation is important for any assessment of backbench involvement in policy-making because it suggests what proportion of the legislature is actively involved in matters of policy. Are legislative debates, for example, dominated by a small clique of members, or does each member assume a roughly equal share? Do all members devote a similar portion of their time to legislative work, or is the burden carried by a few? To some degree the concentration of participation is probably inevitable, but as it increases so does the importance of determining who the primary participants are.

The second dimension of participation investigated is that of substance or content. What kinds of problems interest members? Once again, it is necessary to begin with a broad distinction between a member's constituency problems and his policy interests. This is particularly important in assessing the frequency of participation. Some members who contact ministers frequently, for example, do so exclusively on behalf of individual constituents. Others, whose contact is also frequent, are occupied exclusively with the policy intentions of the ministry.

Beyond simply distinguishing between constituency and policy concerns, it is also necessary to identify those aspects or areas of policy that are of particular interest to members. The range and substance of members' policy interests provides some indication of

the legislature's capacity to respond to executive initiatives. One can expect legislative-executive relations to be quite different in a legislature where members' interests are confined to a few areas compared to one in which members' interests include a broad range of items. Of course, the legislature may be deliberately organized so that its membership reflects a wide variety of substantive concerns. This can occur when opposition leaders assign portfolio responsibilities to their followers or when government leaders institute a system of parliamentary assistants. In chapter six both the content and origin of members' policy interests are investigated and attention is paid to whether members are encouraged to develop particular interests or permitted to pursue their own.

The final dimension of legislative participation considered in this thesis is that of political style. In this context, political style refers to the manner in which members approach their responsibilities as policy-makers and pursue their policy objectives. Roughly speaking, it is the question of *how* members participate. Two aspects of political style are given detailed consideration: the definition of policy interests and the adoption of policy roles.

Since politicians cannot be active participants in every area of policy, they are obliged to establish some limits to their policy interests. In doing so, members employ a frame of reference which guides their participation. For some members this frame of reference is very narrow and exclusive. They are concerned only with a

specific aspect of policy development, not with the broader implications of policy. For others, the frame of reference is broad and inclusive. Their interests encompass a wide range of activities and are not limited to particular programmes or decisions. One of the primary tasks of chapter six is to establish the breadth of interests i.e., just what is encompassed in an individual's choice of policy interests. The generality, comprehensiveness and coherence of policy interests are all features of policy definition on the basis of which the breadth of interests is determined.

A second aspect of interest definition considered in chapter six is the importance of the constituency. While some members discuss their policy interests, in an interview situation, without alluding to their constituencies, others employ the constituency as a touchstone and the primary guide to the choice of policy interests. The importance of the constituency and the breadth of policy interests are both aspects of interest definition that have a potential to affect the performance of the entire legislature in its scrutiny of government actions and its contribution to policy discussions. One might speculate, for example, that members whose interests in policy matters are confined to narrow or constituency-related issues are less likely to pose a serious challenge to the government than are members who have broad interests unbounded by constituency considerations.

The issue of political style goes beyond the definition of interests however. Politicians also differ in the manner in which they pursue their interests. In chapter seven an attempt is made to characterize the behavioural dispositions of members by means of a role analysis. For private members in a parliamentary system the role of policy-maker is a complex and ambiguous one. While few members can expect to be actively engaged in decision-making, most wish to have their interests expressed and their ideas and preferences heard. Not surprisingly, there is only limited agreement on the most appropriate means of accomplishing this. In chapter seven three role orientations are identified and members are classified by the degree to which each orientation is endorsed.

The frequency, substance and style of backbench participation constitute, in many respects, the atmosphere of legislative policy-making. The degree to which members are actively involved in matters of policy presumably has important consequences for the conduct of government and the outcome of political issues. In legislatures where most members concentrate on constituency service, participate erratically in legislative debates and have narrow, parochial interests, serious doubts may be raised about the capacity of the legislature to affect policy outputs or to hold the executive accountable for its actions. In short, the character and quality of representative democracy may be affected by the participation of individual politicians.²⁸

²⁸It should be pointed out that "political factors", including various aspects of legislative development, have not been strong predictors of policy output in Canada. See, for example, Allan Kornberg, David Falcone, and William Mishler, Legislatures and Societal Development: The Case of Canada (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973).

The Ambition Hypothesis

It is the argument of this thesis that the primary source of variation in the participation of backbenchers is the nature of their political ambition. Individuals have many types of ambitions, of course, but only one is of interest here and that is ambition for a future public office. According to the ambition hypothesis, what an individual expects or wants to do in terms of future office-holding has an immediate effect on his behaviour in the office he currently holds. As Schlesinger puts it:

The central assumption of ambition theory is that a politician's behaviour is a response to his office goals. Or, to put it another way, the politician as office seeker engages in political acts and makes decisions appropriate to gaining office. His problem consists, first, in defining his office goal or goals and, secondly, in relating his current activities to them.²⁹

The investigator's problem is also two-fold: to isolate the type of ambition a politician holds and to offer testable hypotheses which link current activities and future office-holding.³⁰

²⁹ Joseph Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), p. 6.

³⁰ As the discussion suggests, this thesis is concerned primarily with the consequences and not the determinants of political ambition, and with office ambition, not achievement motivation. However, a fully elaborated theory of political ambition may wish to draw on the insights and techniques of social psychologists, particularly those whose work is concentrated in the area of achievement motivation. See, for example, several of the essays in John W. Atkinson and Joel O. Raynor (eds.), Motivation and Achievement (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974).

Not all politicians are ambitious for other offices. Some are content with the office they occupy, while others actually wish to leave politics altogether or assume a less burdensome office.³¹ Even those who are ambitious for other offices do not necessarily have unqualified aspirations. Only under certain circumstances would they be prepared to assume another office. The typology outlined below is an adaptation of the one suggested by Schlesinger, the major change being the addition of a qualified progressive ambition.³²

1. Progressive Ambition: includes those who have an unqualified desire for another, more burdensome public office.
2. Mildly Progressive Ambition: includes those who wish to assume another office, but have some reservations.
3. Static Ambition: includes those who are content with the office they presently occupy and are concerned only to maintain it.
4. Discrete Ambition: includes those who wish to retire or assume a less burdensome office.

Two points must be made about this typology. First, the members in the first two categories share with those in the third a desire to retain their present office, at least until they can

³¹For an excellent discussion of the impact of volunteerism on electoral accountability see Kenneth Prewitt, "Political Ambitions, Volunteerism, and Electoral Accountability", American Political Science Review, Vol. 64, no. 1 (March 1970), pp. 5-17.

³²Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 10. The addition of "mildly progressive ambition" is a reflection of the responses of members to the question of ambition, an issue taken up in Chapter II.

assume another. Moreover, in a parliamentary system those members who are anxious to assume cabinet positions must retain their legislative seats even though they have realized their ambition. This desire to retain legislative office is, of course, a type of ambition as well. The difference, however, in a parliamentary system, is that some members wish to hold an office for its own sake while others do so because it is a prerequisite for a cabinet post. The second point is that while this typology can be usefully treated as a hierarchy of ambition--ranging from negligible ambition for other offices to very strong ambition--the most important distinction is between those in the first two categories and those in the last two. Most of the analysis which follows employs this division point and treats ambition as a dichotomous variable. This amounts to comparing those with and those without progressive ambitions. The reason for this more simplified characterization of political ambition requires an unravelling of the logic behind the ambition hypothesis.

Recent research on political ambition has treated ambition primarily as a dependent variable. Researchers pose the question of what accounts for the different types of political ambition and suggest answers which include differences in the opportunity structures which face incumbent politicians and the costs of contesting political office.³³ Even Schlesinger, who asserts that what is needed

³³William H. Dunton, "The Political Ambitions of Local Legislators: A Comparative Perspective", *Polity*, Vol. VII, no. 4 (Summer 1975), pp. 504-522; G.S. Black, "A Theory of Political

is a theory of politics which accepts personal ambitions rather than attempting to explain them,³⁴ directs most of his efforts toward the latter objective. Part of the difficulty in predicting from ambition seems to lie in anticipating the kind of behaviour which distinguishes ambitious politicians, i.e. those with progressive ambitions, from their unambitious colleagues.

In the final analysis, the ambition hypothesis is a purposive model of legislative behaviour.³⁵ In the style of the economist the researcher attributes a single, overriding motivation to the actor and expects behaviour that is consonant with that motivation. When the ambition for public office is the overriding motivation the actor is expected to behave in a manner that maximizes his chance of obtaining the office he desires. The ambitious politician calculates which type of behaviour is most likely to secure promotion and acts on the basis of his calculation. Although

Ambition: Career Choices and the Role of Structural Incentives", American Political Science Review, Vol. LXVI, no. 1 (March 1972), pp. 144-159; and Paul L. Hain, "Constituency Characteristics, Political Ambition, and Advancement", American Politics Quarterly, Vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1976), pp. 47-62.

³⁴ Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁵ For a general discussion of the appeal of purposive models in the study of legislative behaviour see John A. Ferejohn and Morris P. Fiorina, "Purposive Models of Legislative Behaviour", Papers and Proceedings of the 87th Annual Meeting of The American Economic Association (1975), pp. 407-414.

Schlesinger does not discuss the ambition hypothesis at length there is every indication that this is the interpretation intended. He sees politicians adopting "proper strategies" to secure their objectives³⁶ and draws attention to what he considers to be the "elementary relation" between the purpose and behaviour of the politician.³⁷

This interpretation of the ambition hypothesis has been extended and elaborated within an older, sociological tradition in the study of legislative behaviour. It has been argued that members' ambitions are a good guide to their attitudes and behaviour because while holding their present office ambitious politicians learn and act on the norms inherent in the office to which they aspire. Members mold their attitudes and behaviour to be consistent with incumbency in that office.³⁸ This is a process referred to as "anticipatory socialization". By anticipating promotion ambitious politicians prepare for positions long before they assume them.

This more precise rendering of the hypothesis is based on reference group theory which is instructed by the process of social conformity. In this case, instead of conforming to the norms of

³⁶Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 195.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 1-2.

³⁸Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, "Political Ambitions and the Behaviour of Incumbent Politicians", Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 22 (June 1969), pp. 298-300; and Richard E. Dawson

his membership group, namely the contingent of private members in the legislature, the ambitious politician assumes a "positive orientation to the norms of a non-membership group that is taken as a frame of reference".³⁹ The behaviour and attitudes of politicians with progressive ambitions can therefore be expected to differ from those of their unambitious colleagues as long as there are clear norms to which these members can adhere. Merton suggests that this adherence to the values of the group to which the individual aspires "may serve the twin functions of aiding his rise into that group and of easing his adjustment after he has become part of it."⁴⁰

It is particularly important for the application of the ambition hypothesis that the researcher specify the nature of the office which the ambitious politician seeks. This amounts to identifying the constituency whose judgments are important for eventual promotion. One of the difficulties involved in applying the ambition hypothesis to the behaviour of American state legislators, for example, has been the wide variety of offices to which they can aspire.⁴¹

and Kenneth Prewitt, Political Socialization (Boston: Little Brown, 1969), pp. 75-76.

³⁹ Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan, 1957), p. 264.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 265.

⁴¹ This point is emphasized in John Soule, "Future Political Ambitions and the Behaviour of Incumbent State Legislators", Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 13 (August 1969), p. 454.

In Canada, provincial and federal political careers are normally separate. According to Donald Smiley, of the 565 members of provincial legislatures in 1974, only thirty, or 5.3%, had even contested a federal election, and only twelve had ever served as MPs.⁴²

As chapter two will show, almost all of the members interviewed in this study and classified as having progressive ambitions identified the office of provincial cabinet minister as the one to which they aspired. The constituency of most importance, the provincial cabinet, is an internal one, and, as Heclo puts it, "the...apprentice moves upward by ingratiating himself with his guild masters."⁴³ The researcher can therefore proceed with a reasonably clear idea of the audience whose favour is sought and whose behaviour and attitudes are to be emulated.

To apply the ambition hypothesis, however, other requirements must be met. The ambition hypothesis, as examined here, is based on the proposition that ambitious members of the legislature emulate the attitudes and behaviour of cabinet ministers and make choices in their legislative participation which are designed to improve their chances for promotion. To prevent this proposition from deteriorating

⁴² Donald Smiley, Canada in Question: Federalism in the Seventies, (2nd ed., Scarborough. Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 97.

⁴³ Hugh Heclo, "Presidential and Prime Ministerial Selection", in D.R. Matthews (ed.), Perspectives on Presidential Selection (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1973), p. 33.

into an empty tautology in which every action of the ambitious politician is a calculated effort to further office goals, empirical hypotheses are required which link ambition to particular attitudes and behaviour. Although none of them are unscalable, there are some obstacles to the development of these hypotheses.

In calculating how to further their office ambitions, members may be unable to agree on which attitudes and behaviour represent the fastest and surest route to promotion. Students of parliamentary government themselves have found it difficult to identify strategies that usually culminate in advancement for the aspiring backbencher. It may be true, as Mackintosh has pointed out, that "for the ambitious backbencher, the task is to impress ministers and particularly the Prime Minister",⁴⁴ but it is not entirely clear just how this is accomplished. Loyalty to the party, for example, may be considered a necessary, but hardly a sufficient condition for elevation to the cabinet.⁴⁵ Frequent and effective performance in legislative debates has been suggested as one activity which might affect backbenchers' chances for promotion,⁴⁶

⁴⁴John Mackintosh, "Reform of the House of Commons: The Case for Modernization", in G. Lowenberg, (ed.), Modern Parliaments: Change or Decline (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 39.

⁴⁵Robert J. Jackson, Rebels and Whips: An Analysis of Dissension Discipline and Cohesion in British Parliamentary Parties (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 245-246.

⁴⁶In Canada, see William A. Matheson, The Prime Minister and the Cabinet (Toronto: Methuen, 1976), p. 184; in Britain, Bruce.

but it has also been argued that "a minister's job differs in important respects from that of an MP".⁴⁷ Prime ministers and premiers presumably seek a variety of abilities in their ministerial appointees, only one of which is the oratorical skill acquired in parliamentary debate.

There is nothing in this line of argument which suggests that ambitious members will be unwilling to employ strategies for advancement based on limited information. Ambitious members may not know precisely what is expected of them, but a consensus on acceptable attitudes and behaviour can emerge. It seems reasonable, in this regard, to expect that the debating skills acquired in frequent parliamentary combat will be considered an asset, despite the fact that other skills are needed for the ministry.

A similar problem emerges when members are unable to emulate the behaviour and attitudes of ministers in anticipation of ministerial office because of the absence of a clear and unambiguous model on which behaviour and attitudes can be based. Because little is known about the qualities which provincial premiers seek in their ministers, or about the norms and values which dominate the

Heady, British Cabinet Ministers: The Roles of Politicians in Executive Office (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1974), pp. 89-90. In the United States, Matthews points out that Senate parliamentary skills are employed, not to impress colleagues, but a wider audience capable of electing a President. See Donald Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World (New York: Vintage, 1960), p. 110.

⁴⁷ Richard Rose, "The Making of Cabinet Ministers", British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 2, Part 4 (October 1971), pp. 403, 411.

operation of provincial cabinets, the aspiring minister may have only a vague outline of what is expected of ministers. This problem is more likely to affect the style of participation than it is the frequency or substance. It may be safely assumed that most ministers spend considerable time explaining and defending departmental and government policy, for example, but precisely which orientation they normally adopt in their role as a policy-maker is a more complex question. Hypotheses must anticipate those aspects of participation for which a model exists.

Finally, it is possible that members will perceive no connection whatsoever between legislative participation and eventual promotion because the types of skills acquired in active legislative participation are considered unimportant for the performance of ministerial duties. Ambitious members may still adopt strategies designed to improve the likelihood of advancement, but not apply these strategies to decisions about legislative participation. This is most likely to occur where the legislature is not a focal point of policy-making activity because it meets infrequently or possesses few institutional resources. In short, if members' legislative participation is to be governed by their ambitions, there must be some evidence that the skills and perspectives acquired by back-benchers in the course of contributing to policy-making are considered useful and valuable at the ministerial level. Chapter three will argue that there is less evidence to support this view in Nova Scotia than in the Ontario legislature.

Despite the obstacles outlined above, political ambition can still be employed to guide our understanding of a wide variety of legislative behaviour. In chapters four through seven specific hypotheses are offered which link progressive ambition with variations in legislative participation. It does seem reasonable, however, to expect ambition to be a more successful predictor of some aspects of legislative participation than others. In the field of legislative behaviour no single variable has succeeded in accounting for all behaviour and attitudes.⁴⁸ Part of the objective in testing the ambition hypothesis is to determine its weaknesses as well as its strengths; those aspects of legislative participation and those circumstances to which it can be successfully applied and those to which it can not.

Since it seems safe to anticipate that political ambition will not account for the entire range of participation, it is prudent to suggest other, alternative explanations. Two types of explanation have been particularly important in legislative studies: explanations based on constituency factors and explanations based on institutional factors, particularly party affiliation.

⁴⁸ This applies, of course, well beyond legislative elites. See the comments of Robert Putnam, The Comparative Study of Political Elites (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 93.

The constituency approach to legislative behaviour is founded on the working hypothesis that legislators are concerned with the attitudes of constituents and regularly accede to constituent pressures. These pressures may take the form of specific demands from constituents as evidenced in the recent debates on capital punishment.⁴⁹ Or, indirect pressure may be exerted, as when legislators themselves consider the general nature of their constituency--its economic and social composition or its political character--in choosing a particular course of action or adopting a particular set of priorities to govern day to day activities. Direct pressure will vary from issue to issue, but indirect pressure is more diffuse, and more likely to affect the pattern of legislative participation.

It is indirect pressures that will occupy us in considering the importance of constituency factors in Ontario and Nova Scotia. Particular attention will be paid to the strength of constituency ties as a source of variation in legislative participation. Members with strong constituency ties can be expected to place greater emphasis on the service of constituents' needs, for example, and less on legislative participation. Attention to constituency problems at the expense of legislative matters may occur because members feel the threat of electoral defeat or because they have

⁴⁹David Chandler, Capital Punishment in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), chapter 3.

developed a genuine interest in their constituents over years of service or residence.⁵⁰

Once a politician achieves elected office an entirely new set of factors begins to influence behaviour. Training and experiences within the legislature now become important in shaping his attitudes toward legislative participation. Position or role within the institution demands certain types of attitudes and behaviour. The significance of these factors has moved one author to write that "legislative behaviour in a British model parliamentary system largely is a function of attitudes and perspectives developed after incumbency."⁵¹

Of particular importance in parliamentary systems is the difference between government and opposition members and the influence of political parties as agencies of post-recruitment socialization. The most obvious manifestations of parliamentary party

⁵⁰ A useful discussion of coercive and non-coercive models of representative responsiveness is provided in Norman Luttbeg, Public Opinion and Public Policy (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1974), pp. 1-10. In Canada, there is little evidence for the impact of electoral competition on legislative behaviour. See Kornberg, op. cit., pp. 92, 109, 111. Non-coercive models seem to have more empirical support as evidenced by the findings of LeDuc and White on the role of constituency residence, op. cit., p. 92. In fairness, however, it should be emphasized that the research available is not extensive, particularly at the provincial level.

⁵¹ Kornberg, op. cit., p. 148.

influence are the formal votes taken on the floor of the legislature. There are, however, many other aspects of legislative behaviour which appear to be governed, at least partially, by party loyalty. As Kornberg has put it, in the context of the House of Commons, "once a cohesion norm has been internalized completely the Canadian MP, with few improvisations of his own, plays roles ascribed to him by his party."⁵² In this regard members are generally encouraged to subordinate their own views and preferences for what the party leadership considers to be the good of the party. To this end party caucuses and party whips serve to inform members about appropriate and expected behaviour and to act as outlets for criticism of the leadership.

The result of this process is that in Canada, where the parties are not overtly ideological, party affiliation may still be a reliable guide to legislative participation. Research has demonstrated, for example, the influence of party affiliation on attitudes toward the legislature and the policy-making potential of backbenchers. From their study of the House of Commons Hoffman and Ward concluded that "on matters involving attitudes toward Parliament or the party caucus ... the major factor distinguishing respondents was their party."⁵³ Kornberg also found that attitudes toward legislative goals and representative roles were influenced by party

⁵²Ibid., p. 149.

⁵³Hoffman and Ward, op. cit., p. 169.

affiliation, although not dramatically.⁵⁴ More evidence for the influence of party affiliation has been gathered at the provincial level. In their study of the Ontario legislature LeDuc and White described Liberals as the proponents of a "cooperative strategy" in their opposition role. The cohesiveness of the New Democrats, on the other hand, has encouraged the precedence of group strategies and the predominance of competitive goals and behaviour.⁵⁵ In the research that follows considerable attention is paid to the differences between government and opposition members. Parliamentary government is organized to emphasize this difference and its impact on legislative participation is closely considered.

Institutional and constituency factors represent plausible alternative approaches to the explanation of legislative participation. As subsequent chapters reveal, these variables also confound the relationship between ambition and participation. Relationships naturally become more complex with the addition of other variables. No effort is made, however, to erect complex causal models of

⁵⁴Kornberg, op. cit., pp. 92, 112-113.

⁵⁵LeDuc and White, op. cit., p. 99.

legislative participation⁵⁶ or to speculate on the determinants of political ambition. These are important questions and the findings presented below do suggest some answers. But a more direct confrontation of these problems must await an assessment of the importance of political ambition in the first place. The main task here is to assess the ambition hypothesis as it applies to various dimensions of participation. The consideration of other hypotheses is intended to reflect the realities and complexities of legislative behaviour.

⁵⁶One problem of causality does deserve to be mentioned. The argument presented here assumes that ambition determines legislative participation, but it is not inconceivable that the causal arrow might run in the opposite direction. What little research is available on the acquisition of political ambitions in Canada confirms the former position, namely that ambition is the product of pre-incumbency socialization. See Harold Clarke and Richard Price, "A Note on the Pre-Nomination Role Socialization of Freshmen Members of Parliament", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. X, no. 2 (June 1977), p. 404.

CHAPTER II

DATA AND METHODS

There are many ways of studying politicians. Their social and economic backgrounds can be investigated by appeal to secondary sources, their careers traced in the same way, and their behaviour witnessed through the process of participant-observation. One of the most popular means of studying and learning about politicians, however, has been the personal interview. Although this study relies on secondary sources such as the Parliamentary Guide and provincial Hansards, it is based primarily on personal interviews with private members in Nova Scotia and Ontario. This chapter outlines the context in which these interviews were conducted, discusses the research and coding techniques involved, and provides a brief profile of the members themselves.

The Interviews

A total of 101 private members were interviewed for this study: seventy-five in Ontario and twenty-six in Nova Scotia. In addition twenty cabinet ministers were also interviewed. The inclusion of ministers is intended to illuminate and place in perspective the views and activities of private members. The Ontario interviews were begun in March and completed in May of 1975. Interviews with four Nova

Scotia MLAs were obtained during the summer of 1975, but most were completed in November and December of that year. Since the political atmosphere in each legislature was different, the context in which these interviews took place deserves some comment.

From 1956 to 1970 the Conservatives, first under Robert Stanfield and later G.I. Smith, held office and restored a two-party system to the province of Nova Scotia. The political history of the province prior to 1956 had been one of almost continuous Liberal dominance. Although their popular vote never exceeded 56% after Confederation, superior organization, a shrewd choice of leaders, and the electoral system had maintained the Liberals in power for most of the years prior to 1956.¹ It required three elections and what Beck has called a "massive realignment of voters" to provide for the eventual victory of the Conservative party in 1956.² In 1970 the Liberal party, under the leadership of Gerald Regan, reassumed the reins of government from the Conservatives with a mere twenty-three seats in a legislature of forty-six. That election, however, presaged a further decline for the Tories. Early in 1974 the Liberals consolidated their power with an electoral victory that gave them thirty-one seats, reduced the Tories to twelve and provided three seats

¹J. Murray Beck, "The Party System in Nova Scotia: Tradition and Conservatism," in Martin Robin (ed.), Canadian Provincial Politics (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 180-188.

²Ibid., p. 195..

to the struggling, but persistent New Democratic Party. Research took place, therefore, in the rather comfortable atmosphere provided by a majority government in mid-term.

In the spring of 1975 a majority government was also in power in Ontario. In this case, however, the Progressive Conservative party had been governing since 1943 and the interviews took place in the shadow of an impending election. Inter-party competition in Ontario is distinguished from that in other provinces primarily by the strength of the Conservatives. In the spring of 1975 this party held seventy-four seats in a legislature of 117. The remaining seats were divided almost equally between the Liberals and the New Democratic Party with the former holding twenty-three and the latter twenty. Ontario has been described as having a "three party system in transition"³, although the type of party system that will eventually emerge remains unclear. Before 1967 this three party system was primarily an electoral phenomenon, as Wilson and Hoffman have pointed out.⁴ Only with the 1967 election did the opposition parties gain substantial representation in the legislature. They retained this strength in the 1971 election and increased it in the election which followed the interviews.

³John Wilson and David Hoffman, "Ontario: A Three Party System in Transition," in Robin (ed.), op. cit., pp. 230-239.

⁴Ibid., p. 237.

The seventy-five backbenchers interviewed in Ontario represent 89% of the population of private members in that province with the Speaker, the two opposition leaders, and three former ministers (in the government of William Davis) removed. In Nova Scotia the twenty-six members interviewed represent 92% of the backbench population with the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition removed. Response rates were lowest among Ontario Liberals where three members, or 14% of their caucus, refused to be interviewed but, overall, inter-party differences were minor.

Access to ministers was more difficult, particularly in Ontario. Rather than attempting to interview the entire ministry in Ontario, eight ministers were selected on the basis of the reported interactions of backbenchers. Thus, the ministers interviewed included those with whom backbenchers had reported frequent, occasional, and infrequent interaction. In Nova Scotia twelve ministers, approximately two-thirds of the cabinet, were interviewed.

Research Techniques and Coding Procedures

Most of the respondents to this study were pleased to be interviewed. They were approached first through an introductory letter which stressed the scholarly intention of the interview, guaranteed confidentiality and requested an appointment. No effort was made to enlist the help of party or parliamentary officials.

The tactic was to make a direct appeal for assistance not unlike those which members receive daily from constituents. Most of the interviews in Ontario were conducted in the privacy of the respondent's office. In Nova Scotia, where members have no offices of their own, a variety of sites was used including unused rooms in the legislature and party headquarters and hotel rooms. Interviews were almost never interrupted. All were conducted by the author.

Interviews have been described as "conversations with a purpose", where the main purpose is to gather information.⁵ The research interview is also a form of measurement in that numbers are assigned to a particular population in accordance with a set of rules, even where those numbers only represent nominal categories.⁶ The interviewer's primary goal is to collect information from the respondent in such a manner that this process is facilitated.

Among the choices that have to be made in this process is the choice between open and close-ended questions. In elite interviewing the tendency, particularly recently, has been to rely on open questions.⁷ The majority of questions asked during these interviews were of this kind, although respondents were asked to complete a

⁵Charles F. Cannell and Robert Kahn, "Interviewing", in G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (eds.), The Handbook of Social Psychology: Volume Two (Don Mills, Ont.: Addison-Wesley, 1967), p. 530.

⁶Ibid., pp. 530-531.

⁷See, for example, Robert Putnam, The Beliefs of Politicians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

short written questionnaire at the conclusion of each interview. Open questions are useful where the purpose of the interview is to determine not only whether a person has had a particular experience, or holds a particular attitude, but how he defines the experience and expresses the attitude. In the case of experiences in a policy-making context and attitudes as complex as those toward the policy process, open questions are preferable. They capture the richness and subtlety of response and permit respondents to correct misinterpretations they feel are implicit in the questions, thus improving the likelihood of response validity.⁸ As Dexter observes, "a good many well informed or influential people are unwilling to accept the assumptions with which the investigator starts; they insist on explaining to him how they see the situation, what the real problems are as they view the matter."⁹

Open questions are also preferable in situations where relatively little is known about the range of responses that will be encountered.¹⁰ Research on policy-related behaviour and attitudes in the context of the Canadian provinces must be considered exploratory and therefore suited to open questions. In addition, these

⁸Joel D. Aberbach, James Chesney, and Bert Rockman, "Exploring Elite Political Attitudes: Some Methodological Lessons", Political Methodology, Vol. 2, no. 1 (1975), pp. 1-27.

⁹Lewis Dexter, Elite and Specialized Interviewing (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 6.

¹⁰Aberbach, et al., op. cit., p. 4; Cannell and Kahn, op. cit., p. 567.

kinds of questions and the conversational style that accompanies them enhance receptivity, not a minor consideration where the elite is small. Most respondents seemed to welcome an opportunity to discuss things that interested them and to educate the interviewer by clarifying perceived (and actual) misconceptions.

To facilitate this conversational style and to permit intensive analyses of the responses, permission was asked of respondents to tape-record the interviews. Only three of the Ontario MPPs and none of the Nova Scotia MLAs refused. Each of the conversations was transcribed, providing a verbatim record. The extent to which the tape-recorder may have inhibited responses cannot be calculated accurately, but respondents seemed to lose their consciousness of the tape-recorder rather rapidly.¹¹ Putnam's view of the problem seems the most accurate: "the effect of the recorder on validity and veracity is simply part of the broader problem of frankness in elite interviewing".¹² Most of the questions in this study inquired about personal experiences but some ventured into the more sensitive areas of personal influence and ambition. Questions such as these sometimes gave pause to the respondents, but most were frank and anxious to reveal the reason for their answers.

¹¹For a similar experience, see Putnam, op. cit., p. 20.

¹²Ibid., p. 21. A special problem presented by the tape-recorder should be acknowledged: its presence means that politicians must give up the possibility of denying that something has been said. Their willingness to accept the tape-recorder in the first place suggests that this was not a major consideration in their responses.

The major problem associated with open questions is the reduction of the mass of information generated into a data file. This problem is not encountered where questions are standardized and closed. Open questions require that categories be imposed and rules devised for differentiating respondents. The problems this raises are similar to those of content analysis: "the interviewer or the respondent himself places the subject's response into a category, surely an act of content analysis as generally understood."¹³ Some attention must be focussed, therefore, on devising a coding procedure which imposes a structure on responses, but also preserves much of the substance of the answers. The coding procedure followed here uses both *manifest* and *latent* coding items. Manifest items measure direct responses to particular questions, latent items reflect the style of responses and provide information which the respondent does not intend to convey or which was not specifically asked for.¹⁴ The latter require judgments on the part of coders, but both raise the question of measurement validity.

A valid measure is usually described as one which measures what it is intended to measure.¹⁵ Establishing the validity of

¹³ John Markoff, Gilbert Shapiro, and Sasha R. Weitman, "Toward the Integration of Content Analysis and General Methodology," Sociological Methodology: 1975 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974), p. 9.

¹⁴ Putnam, op. cit., appendix A; Aberbach, et al., op. cit., pp. 14-15.

¹⁵ Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch, and Stuart W. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Dryden, 1951), p. 109.

measures is difficult where open questions are employed and there are few established measures, i.e. measures that have already met the test of validity. Where possible, latent coding items were checked against other items intended to measure the same phenomena. Since validity demands, in effect, that a measure be relatively free of error, reliability tests were also applied. Reliability is usually interpreted as a type of intersubjectivity: the level of agreement reached among different observers on the appropriate measure to be assigned in particular cases.¹⁶ Most latent coding items were coded by an original and an auxiliary coder. In cases of discrepancy a final judgment was negotiated. The original codes were used to generate intercoder reliability coefficients for each item.¹⁷ These are reported in subsequent chapters. The coding instructions provided represent the rules on the basis of which measurement decisions were made. They were more detailed than those for closed questions, but were not extremely explicit. Most decisions do not require elaborate instruction. As Markoff *et al.* put it, in the context of content analysis:

Since we have evidence that the method works, it seems in the worst spirit of academic scientism to complain about the absence of an instruction set specifying in detail the linguistic expressions that qualify such a text for a certain classification since such an instruction set would require a century and hundreds of scholars to produce and a wall of books to contain.¹⁸

¹⁶ Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry* (Scranton: Chandler, 1964), p. 200.

¹⁷ A similar process is described in Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Markoff, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

The study of political elites is plagued by the problem of small samples or, in this case, small populations. The use of open questions compounds this problem. The interviewer sacrifices a degree of control over the interview situation so that the respondent might be permitted to establish his own frame of reference and answer in his own words. Thus, while most interviews lasted between forty and seventy minutes, it was sometimes impossible to cover the entire schedule of questions. Added to the problem of small samples, therefore, is the one of missing data, although efforts were made to insure that the "main" questions were invariably asked.

In the following chapters, the main hypotheses tested involve ambition and various dimensions of legislative participation. Although these are usually straightforward, it is sometimes necessary to examine conditional relationships. This is normally accomplished by the application of statistical controls. Since populations, and not samples, are involved, conventional tests of significance are not reported.

The Backbenchers: A Brief Overview

It is a commonplace observation that legislative elites in Canada and elsewhere seldom mirror the characteristics of the mass public whom they are supposed to represent.¹⁹ They are generally

¹⁹Robert Jackson and Michael Atkinson, The Canadian Legislative System (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 137-139.

a more homogeneous group: older, better educated, and possess a higher socioeconomic status. Respondents to this study seem to conform to this model. The brief overview of their social and political backgrounds which follows is intended to provide some basic information about respondents and act as a prelude to a more pointed discussion, in chapter three, of the differences between these legislative bodies.

In terms of their educational and occupational backgrounds, private members in both legislatures clearly constitute an elite. Of those interviewed in each legislature, a roughly similar proportion--47% in Ontario and 54% in Nova Scotia--hold university degrees, and a large proportion of Nova Scotia members have at least attended university. Moreover, most of the respondents with university degrees have also received graduate or professional training.

An occupational categorization reinforces this image. In terms of the seven categories employed by Kahan, Butler and Stokes,²⁰ 42% of the Nova Scotia members interviewed were placed in the first "grade" which contains higher managerial and professional occupations. Among these are included doctors, lawyers, university teachers, engineers and scientists with professional qualifications. A smaller

²⁰Michael Kahan, David Butler, and Donald Stokes, "On the Analytical Division of Class," British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 17 (1966), pp. 122-132. Members were asked their occupations before entering the legislature and where necessary the Parliamentary Guide was used to supplement this information.

proportion of Ontario respondents, 27%, held similar occupations. A second occupational category contains those who hold lower managerial or administrative posts or who held such positions before entering public life. In Ontario, this is the modal category, holding 47% of respondents; in Nova Scotia 39% of those interviewed were placed in this category. The owners of small businesses and farmers with less than 500 but more than 100 acres were the most common occupations represented. Less than 20% of respondents in each province were judged to hold, or have held, "skilled or supervisory non-manual" positions, while less than 10% were "skilled manual" workers.

The most striking difference between the provinces lies in the higher proportion of Nova Scotia members in the first category of higher managerial or professional occupations. This may be related to the fact that a large minority of the members in Nova Scotia--38% compared with 5% in Ontario--do not consider their job as MLA to be their principal occupation. Certain occupations can be accommodated more readily than others to a legislative life based on a part time devotion to duties. Professional occupations seem to be among the most adaptable. Doctors and lawyers, for example, may be better able than most to devote a portion of their time to the legislature. However, if they are required to place their political life before their profession, fewer may be prepared to make the sacrifice. The relative burdens of legislative office in the two provinces are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Respondents in the two provinces closely resemble one another in terms of their background and experience in party organizations. Slightly more than 60% of the members in both legislatures were prepared to describe themselves as "active party workers" prior to contesting a seat in the legislature. Approximately 50% of respondents had held a riding office, while 30% had held a provincial office in their party.

Members from each province differed considerably, however, in their experience in elected positions. Almost two-thirds of the Ontario members interviewed had held some type of elected office, usually at the municipal level, prior to entering the legislature. Less than one-third of Nova Scotia members had equivalent experience. Of those Nova Scotia members who had held an elected position, only two had held more than one, compared with 28 members in Ontario. This lack of experience is also revealed at the legislative level. Ontario members could claim an average of almost ten years of legislative experience apiece, whereas Nova Scotia members had an average of slightly more than three years in the legislature.²¹ These discrepancies underline the amateur status of many Nova Scotia politicians. Their preparation for legislative office is usually

²¹ The Ontario legislature had been in session for four years when the interviews were conducted and the Nova Scotia legislature for one and a half years. Allowing for this discrepancy, legislative experience in Ontario still exceeded that in Nova Scotia by a considerable margin.

confined to party experiences and many are unwilling to give their job as legislator priority over their chosen occupation.

Two characteristics of members deserve special comment because of their use as independent variables and the measurement problems they pose. The first, electoral competition in the constituency, is not a personal attribute, of course, but a circumstance in which members find themselves. Electoral competition can be measured in several ways. In this study three separate measures were generated. First, respondents were asked to evaluate the level of competition in their constituencies and describe it as "very competitive," "moderately competitive", or "not very competitive." A majority of members in both provinces--54% in Ontario and 72% in Nova Scotia--estimated that their constituencies were "very competitive". Less than 8% of members in each province were prepared to describe their constituencies as "not very competitive". The lack of variance reduces the usefulness of this measure, but it does indicate that members do not take their reelection for granted.

Two "objective" measures were also calculated. The first, based on the Rae-Taylor fragmentation index, measures the overall competitiveness of each riding by taking into consideration the strength of all of the parties contesting the riding during the last election.²² The second measure is the ratio of the incumbent's

²²Douglas Rae and Michael Taylor, The Analysis of Political Cleavages (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 32.

plurality to the total votes cast in that riding during the last election. It has the advantage of stressing the distance between the winner and his nearest rival while taking into consideration the size of the voting population. Both measures were employed in analysing the data, but the second invariably produced higher correlations, and it is this measure on which the discussion of electoral competition is based.

The second characteristic of backbenchers which deserves particular attention is their political ambitions. Students of legislative behaviour have noted that there is no consensus on the most appropriate means of measuring ambition.²³ In this study members were simply asked:

Are there any other offices, elected or appointed that you would like to hold in the future? Which offices are these?

The question was always placed near the end of the interview and most members answered without hesitation. Where members paused or responded with uncertainty, every effort was made to create the impression that a variety of responses was legitimate in the eyes of the interviewer.²⁴ No member refused to answer this question (although one response proved to be uncodable) and most explained in some detail the reasons for their response.

²³Harold D. Clarke, Richard G. Price, and Robert Krause, "Constituency Service Among Canadian Provincial Legislators: Basic Findings and a Test of Three Hypotheses," Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VIII, no. 4 (December 1975), p. 528.

²⁴Dexter, op. cit., p. 63.

Almost all members with progressive ambitions singled out the office of provincial cabinet minister as the object of their ambition. One member expressed the desire to become a member of the House of Commons, another a Senator. Both were asked their intentions regarding the provincial cabinet and both affirmed an interest.

Despite a generally low level of experience in elected office, more than half of the private members interviewed in Nova Scotia expressed an interest in achieving cabinet rank. This compares with approximately 42% of Ontario backbenchers. On the other side of the ledger, Table 2.1 shows that in both provinces most of the members without progressive ambitions were content to retain their legislative seats. All of those with discrete ambition intended to resign their seats at the next election, but all had spent more than one term in the legislature. In this sense, at least, neither legislature appears to be nurturing a spirit of volunteerism among its membership.

Table 2.1

The Distribution of Types of Ambition
in Ontario and Nova Scotia (percentages)

	<u>Ontario</u>	<u>Nova Scotia</u>
Very Progressive	27.0	34.6
Mildly Progressive	16.2	19.2
Static	40.5	34.6
Discrete	16.2	11.5
Total	99.9	99.9
	n=74	n=26

In an article on the British cabinet Richard Rose estimated that only about 10% of private members do not entertain an ambition at some point in time to become ministers.²⁵ Could it be that the figures in Table 2.1 underestimate the extensiveness of progressive ambitions? If so, one group in which one might expect ambition to be artificially depressed is the opposition. Opposition members may wish to become cabinet ministers and yet hesitate to openly declare what may appear to be a futile ambition. The data, however, do not bear this out. In Ontario ambitious members were found in disproportionate numbers among the opposition. Almost half of the Liberals interviewed and approximately 70% of the New Democrats expressed progressive ambitions. Less than 30% of Conservative backbenchers coveted cabinet office. In Nova Scotia almost two-thirds of the opposition had progressive ambitions while 40% of government members were in the same category.

Of course, members may wish to deny ambition for a variety of other reasons. Those who have been passed over before may prefer a "sour grapes" response to the frank admission that their ambition had been disappointed. Members had other answers however. Those who were unenthusiastic about the cabinet stressed the rigors of the job, and particularly the cost to one's private life. As chapter four shows, the costs of simply being a private member

²⁵ Richard Rose, "The Making of Cabinet Ministers," British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 2, Part 4 (October 1971), p. 402.

are considered a heavy burden by many members. Others drew attention to their age or personal liabilities which they felt rendered them unsuitable for the cabinet. Many members were concerned that any extra burdens would force them to sacrifice local ties which they obviously valued.

The veracity of these responses is a problem of measurement validity and the adequacy of this measure cannot be fully estimated until researchers in other environments pose this and other questions. However, there is no *prima facie* reason for believing that these responses are less than truthful. Electors may consider political ambition a rather distasteful personal quality, but politicians have already given expression to some ambition by contesting public office at the provincial level. No one is sacrificing their innocence by acknowledging still greater ambitions.

In this chapter the basic elements of the research design have been outlined and the backgrounds of respondents summarized. The next chapter is devoted to a comparison of the two legislatures which provide the research focus. Subsequent chapters employ data collected primarily by the methods described in this chapter. Much of the analysis is conveyed by quantitative techniques and the conclusions of each chapter are based largely on distributions and relationships. This mode of analysis, despite its usefulness and appropriateness for the study of political elites, can seldom capture the subtleties and nuances that politicians convey in their

conversations. An effort is made in the following chapters to supplement a quantitative appreciation of the findings with one based on the responses of politicians in the interview situation. It is hoped that a balance can be struck between precision and sensitivity to the benefit of the entire enterprise.

CHAPTER III

THE LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

No observer upon visiting the legislative assemblies in Ontario and Nova Scotia could fail to notice differences between these two bodies. Most apparent is the difference in size. In 1975 the Ontario legislature comprised one hundred and seventeen members (and its membership has since been raised to one hundred and twenty-five), more than twice as many as the Nova Scotia Assembly. Rules and procedures in both legislatures derive from British practice and, broadly speaking, the conduct of business and the distribution of authority follow similar lines; none the less, in each legislature these procedures have been molded to suit particular circumstances, and in this manner different traditions have developed. Perhaps more important for the observer are differences in the behaviour and demeanor of members. Although debate is vigorous and lively in both legislatures, an outsider might detect a higher level of attendance and a greater respect for decorum in the smaller chamber.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss differences in the legislatures of Ontario and Nova Scotia that might affect the participation of backbench members in legislative activities. It is premised on the working hypothesis that members' participation is, to some extent, dependent on the incentives and opportunities available

in each setting. If participation is encouraged and rewarded, more members should participate actively in legislative policy-making, and the role of ambition in predicting participation is likely to be enhanced.

The idea that incentives and opportunities affect legislative behaviour is by no means new. Most legislative reformers, for example, proceed on the implicit assumption that changes in rules and procedures or in the facilities and resources available to private members will alter their behaviour and change their attitudes in predictable ways. This does not always occur. Indeed, parliamentary reforms are sometimes more memorable for their unintended consequences than for those expected by reformers. The point, however, is that it is normally assumed that differences in legislative organization influence the behaviour and attitudes of members.

This chapter discusses four aspects of the incentive and opportunity structure which are likely to affect legislative participation among backbenchers:

1. legislative professionalization;
2. internal leadership recruitment;
3. organizational complexity and specialization; and,
4. committee autonomy.

Legislative professionalization refers to the creation of a full time legislative career for members based on increased workload and remuneration. Internal leadership recruitment is the establishment of legislative experience as a positive and even

necessary attribute in judging promotion and political advancement within the legislature. Both suggest what kind of incentives, if any, exist for backbenchers to emphasize legislative participation in making decisions about orientations and behaviour. When the legislative career demands a full time devotion to duties and leadership recruitment becomes more firmly based on legislative experience, members can be expected to adjust the frequency, substance and style of their participation.

The nature of the opportunity structure is indicated by organizational complexity and specialization, and by committee autonomy. The level of organizational complexity and specialization a legislature has attained is the degree to which a variety of tasks associated with the job of provincial legislator, including those that involve policy work, are worthy of formal support. Committee autonomy refers to the degree to which the committee system is independent of the executive and the members are able to employ this system as an institution through which their own ideas and values can be expressed.

Each of these aspects of legislative development is considered over a period of at least ten years. Procedures and practices in provincial legislatures have been changing rapidly and analysis needs to be based on more than an appreciation of contemporary conditions. Thus while the analysis concentrates on differences between the two provinces, the speed and direction of change within each legislature is also considered.

It must be acknowledged that these four areas are not the only ones that might be cited as aspects of the incentive and opportunity structure.¹ The mere difference in the size of these legislatures can be expected to influence participation, and reference is made to it in subsequent chapters. Moreover, it cannot be stated unequivocally that the differences which are cited are significant ones given the wide variety of legislative structures in existence. A study which encompasses only two legislatures forfeits the advantages of a wider comparison although it does provide the opportunity for a more detailed analysis of differences in the legislatures selected. In the discussion below attention is drawn to those aspects of the incentive and opportunity structure which appear to represent significant and unmistakable differences between the legislatures in Ontario and Nova Scotia, and to those where the degree of dissimilarity is considerably less.

¹Differences in legislative structure are often considered aspects of legislative development. It is not uncommon for researchers to employ general concepts such as "institutionalization" and "professionalism" to describe the developmental process. Several essays which focus on legislative institutionalization can be found in Allan Kornberg (ed.) Legislatures in Comparative Perspective (New York: McKay, 1973). In the context of provincial legislatures see David Falcone and William Mishler, "Legislative Determinants of Provincial Health Care Policy: A Diachronic Analysis", Journal of Politics, Vol. 39, no. 2 (May 1977), pp. 345-367. Like many discussions of professionalism and institutionalization this essay is rich in indicators but weaker in explicit definitions.

Legislative Professionalization

Professionalization is a concept that has been used in a variety of ways in legislative research.² For our purposes professionalization is used to denote an aspect of legislative development in which the job of legislator becomes the full time, primary occupation of all or most members of the legislature.³ Professionalization implies that the legislative career tends to converge quantitatively with other positions in the occupation structure.⁴ Thus the legislature becomes professionalized as the legislative career becomes as demanding as other careers outside of the legislature and full time devotion to political duties becomes the norm.

In legislatures in which members devote considerable time to their work and come to consider their political tasks as primary, the idea of a division of labour between backbench and

²Each of the following, for example, treats the term in a different way: Heinz Eulau and John Sprague, Lawyers in Politics (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964); G. Sartori, "The Professionalization of Italian MPs", in M. Dogan and R. Rose (eds.) European Politics: A Reader (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 408-412; G.S. Black, "A Theory of Professionalization in Politics", American Political Science Review, Vol. LXIV, no. 3 (November 1970), pp. 865-878; and K.A. Eliassen and M.N. Pedersen, "The Professionalization of the Danish and Norwegian Legislatures", a paper prepared for the International Political Science Association meetings, Montreal, 1973.

³For a similar definition see Dale Poel, "The Diffusion of Legislation among the Canadian Provinces: A Statistical Analysis", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. IX, no. 4 (December 1976) p. 620.

⁴Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), From Max Weber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, pp. 77-128.

frontbench tends to breakdown. The backbencher is compelled to attend more sessions of the legislature and become more immersed in its everyday tasks. The role of the legislator, in terms of the variety of tasks he is expected to perform, becomes broader and interest and participation in legislative matters becomes more legitimate. Professionalization means, as Polsby puts it, "a shift of emphasis away from the representational values of legislators as amateur citizens embedded in their local communities".⁵

How do we know the level of professionalization a legislature has achieved? Most researchers rely on indirect measures that emphasize workload and remuneration.⁶ Long sessions and high levels of compensation encourage members to give their full attention to legislative tasks. They also make the legislative career a distinctive one since they dissuade members from attempting to combine their legislative duties with other occupations to enhance their income.

The view of the legislative career as a part time one that does not require members to abandon their personal interests

⁵ Nelson Polsby, "Legislatures", in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby (eds.), The Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 5 (Reading: Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975), p. 297.

⁶ John Grumm, "Structural Determinants of Legislative Output", in A. Kornberg and L. Musolf (eds.), Legislatures in Developmental Perspective (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1970), pp. 447-451; Edward G. Carmines, "The Mediating Influence of State Legislatures on the Linkage Between Inter-Party Competition and Welfare Policies", American Political Science Review, Vol. LXVIII, no. 3 (September 1974), pp. 1118-1124; and Jean Blondel, Comparative Legislatures (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 91.

has been slow to die in Great Britain.⁷ Of the members of the British House of Commons interviewed in a 1967 study, only 36% could be described as "full time".⁸ The legislative career, in short, is not entirely separate from other careers or endeavors.

While some Canadian provinces seem to resemble Britain in this regard, others have begun to abandon the older tradition of legislative service by providing salaries more in keeping with duties performed. Ontario and Nova Scotia are both illustrative of legislatures that have embarked on a professionalization of the legislative career. Ontario, however, began this process earlier and has reached a considerably higher level of remuneration. From 1945 to 1960 Ontario MPPs were paid slightly more in both basic indemnity and expense allowance than Nova Scotian MLAs, but the total amounts were small and the difference never more than \$1600, as Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show. In 1961 Ontario members began receiving \$7000, a sum which was subsequently raised to \$12000, then \$18000, and presently stands at \$22,500 following the Camp Commission's recommendations of May, 1973.⁹

⁷An eloquent defense of this view can be found in John P. Mackintosh, "How Much Time Left for Parliamentary Democracy?", Encounter Vol. 43 (1974), pp. 48-52.

⁸Anthony Barker and Michael Rush, The British Member of Parliament and His Information (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 372-374. The authors note significant inter-party differences; with Labour members considerably more likely to cite the legislative career as their full time occupation.

⁹In December, 1976 a consultants' report recommended an increase in the basic indemnity that would raise the overall income of members to \$27,500. See Ontario, Legislative Assembly, Select Committee on the Legislature, Final Report, February 9 1977, Appendix C and p. 45.

Figure 3.1

Sitting Days and Compensation in the
Ontario Legislature (1945-1974)

Source: Provincial Hansards; Parliamentary Guide

Figure 3.2

Sitting Days and Compensation in the
Nova Scotia Legislature (1945-1974)

Source: Provincial Hansards; Parliamentary Guide

Nova Scotian salaries experience no such take-off until 1974 when the McKay Commission recommended, and the Legislature enacted, legislation that provides Nova Scotian MLAs with a \$9,600 indemnity and a \$4,800 expense allowance. This represents an increase of almost 50% over the \$7,500 total that MLAs had received since 1970.

In Ontario the Camp Commission justified its call for increased remuneration on the basis of increased workload. After examining workload and remuneration in other jurisdictions the Commission concluded that:

[C]ompared to those whose workload related most clearly to that of the Ontario MPP, Ontario Members have been underpaid and, so far as support services and transportation services are concerned . . . Ontario Members have been similarly disadvantaged.¹⁰

Figure 3.1 indicates, moreover, that previous salary increases in Ontario have followed increases in workload as measured by sitting days per year. The length of legislative sessions in Ontario have traditionally been erratic, as Schindeler has observed,¹¹ but it seems unlikely that sessions will ever again be as short as they were before 1960. Schindeler has calculated that from 1867 to 1964 the average session lasted 45.5 days, but the legislature has never sat for less than fifty days since 1960, and in the last ten years only two sessions have had less than 100 sitting days.

¹⁰ Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, First Report (May 1973), p. 28. Referred to in the text as the Camp Commission.

¹¹ Fred Schindeler, Responsible Government in Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 261-262.

The McKay Commission in Nova Scotia also based much of its recommendation for salary increases on increased workload. Among other things they wanted to provide those members who choose to devote all of their energies to the task of MLA with the opportunity to do so.¹² There was no anticipation, however, that either the workload or the new salary levels would induce everyone to make the legislative career a full time one:

In some provinces, as in the case of the Parliament of Canada, it appears to be accepted that members do serve full-time. This is not necessarily the case as yet in Nova Scotia, though we again underline that the functions of the Member continue through the year.¹³

While sessions seem to be increasing in length in Nova Scotia, it was the feeling of the McKay Commission that other occupations, depending on their flexibility, need not be sacrificed. The Nova Scotia legislature has recently engaged in some of its longest sittings since 1945, but as Figure 3.2 indicates, only three times in the last decade has the legislature met for more than fifty days.

In justifying their recommendations for salary increases, Commissioners in both provinces implicitly rejected the idea that members can or should remain interested amateurs who participate in politics solely out of a sense of public service. As the responsibilities increase, salaries are assumed to increase as well until, in

¹² Nova Scotia, Commission of Inquiry, Legislature Salaries and Allowances, Report (November 1974), p. 27 and passim. Referred to in the text as the McKay Commission.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

the case of Ontario, most members regard the job of MPP as their primary occupation. This relationship between salary and workload seems to prevail across the provinces. Figure 3.3 indicates that, while some anomalies exist, a moderately strong relationship prevails between sitting days per session and the salaries of ordinary members of the legislature (Pearson $r = .50$).

Salaries and sitting days are, of course, only indicators of career professionalization. They indicate the amount of effort required to be a provincial member, and the value placed on the job. As effort and value increase the occupation becomes distinct and comparable to other occupations. That differences exist in the status of the legislative occupation in Ontario and Nova Scotia is also suggested by the assumptions of the McKay and Camp Commissions. The Camp Commission assumed that being an MPP constitutes a full time occupation. The Commissioners compared the job of MPP to other occupations and observed that "there may be some similarity between the MPP's role and that of a person in the 'middle management' ranks of the private sector".¹⁴ The McKay Commission, on the other hand, did not treat the MLA as a career politician with a distinct occupation. In providing a salary level that may permit members to relinquish

¹⁴ Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, First Report, p. 28. An even stronger plea for the use of an "external yardstick" in assessing legislative salaries was made recently in Ontario, Legislative Assembly, Select Committee on the Fourth and Fifth Reports of the Ontario Commission on the Legislature, Final Report, Appendix C, p. 9.

Figure 3.3

other occupations, the Commissioners made continuous reference to the "normal vocation" and "regular occupation" of members.

If the Ontario legislature is the more professionalized body, as these indicators seem to suggest, does this result in a higher level of membership stability in Ontario than Nova Scotia? The importance of this question stems from the argument that membership continuity permits the establishment and maintenance of behavioural norms in a legislative body which, in turn, encourages the development of a more complex skill structure among legislative elites.¹⁵ As legislative experiences become more diverse and apprenticeship systems are established, behavioural norms are more likely to include and emphasize legislative participation and the development of long-term policy concerns. Polsby, for example, has argued that in the House of Representatives institutionalization, of which membership stability is a part, "has ... served to increase the power of the House within the political system, and to spread, somewhat more widely, incentives for legislators to participate actively in policymaking".¹⁶ If Nova Scotia

¹⁵ Richard Sisson, "Comparative Legislative Institutionalization: A Theoretical Exploration", in Allan Kornberg (ed.), Legislatures in Comparative Perspective (New York: McKay, 1973), p. 30. See also Allan Kornberg, "Parliament in Canadian Society", in A. Kornberg and L. Musolf (eds.), op. cit., pp. 121-128, esp. p. 128; and John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 402.

¹⁶ Nelson, Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives", American Political Science Review Vol. LXII, no. 1 (March 1968), p. 166. For a similar opinion which stresses the importance of membership stability see W.J. Keefe and Morris Ogul, The American Legislative Process: Congress and the States (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.; Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 126-127.

members routinely retire from legislative service, as they might from a voluntary association, active participation in legislative work might be limited to a small coterie of career politicians.

An examination of membership stability, however, reveals very few major differences between the provinces. A common and useful measure of membership stability is the number of first-term legislators in each session. Since Confederation the legislatures of both Ontario and Nova Scotia have experienced decreases in the percentage of first-term members similar to those recorded in American state legislatures and the House of Representatives.¹⁷ Table 3.1 indicates, however, several reversals in this trend and the occasional period during which a plateau was reached. The steadier decline in freshmen in Ontario seems attributable, in part at least, to the grip maintained by the Conservatives on electoral politics since 1943. In Nova Scotia, changes of government in 1956 and 1970, for example, sent the proportion of freshmen legislators over 50% in the former year, and to almost 60% in the latter. In Ontario, by contrast, the proportion of newcomers compares favourably with the pre-1900 period in which five of the eight elections held resulted in a membership turnover in excess of 50%. Despite these differences, it is clear from Table 3.1

¹⁷ Polsby, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147; Charles S. Bullock, "House Careerists: Changing Patterns of Longevity and Attrition", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXVI, no. 4 (December 1972), pp. 1295-1300; David Ray, "Membership Stability in Three State Legislatures: 1893-1969", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXVIII, no. 1 (March 1974), pp. 107-108; and David Ray, "Voluntary Retirement and Electoral Defeat in Eight State Legislatures", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 38, no. 2 (May 1976), pp. 426-433.

Table 3.1

Percentage of First-Term Legislators:
An Average Over Three
Elections

Ontario		Nova Scotia	
1871	68		
1875-1883	51	1871-1878	55
1886-1894	48	1882-1890	58
1898-1905	49	1894-1901	38
1908-1914	36	1906-1916	46
1919-1926	58	1920-1928	60
1929-1937	48	1933-1941	47
1943-1948	48	1945-1953	41
1951-1959	37	1956-1963	37
1963-1971	33	1967-1974	40

Source: Parliamentary Guide; Parliamentary Companion

that the two legislatures have attained comparable levels of membership stability since the Second World War and that in both cases these levels are lower than most other pre-war periods.

Inferences about membership stability should not be based solely on the proportion of first-term legislators. As Ray has pointed out, "the percentage of freshman legislators tells us virtually nothing about non-freshmen legislators".¹⁸ How extensive is the legislative experience of all members of the legislature?

In both Ontario and Nova Scotia the prior experience of the membership at the outset of each legislature has fluctuated considerably. The Ontario legislature increased its membership experience earlier than the Nova Scotia Assembly, as indicated in Table 3.2, but from the turn of the century to the end of the Second World War, there was little difference between them. This was a period in which Ontario elections were typically three years apart, and this measure of experience does not take that factor into account. From 1951 to 1971, however, Ontario members consistently entered the legislature with an average of over five years of experience per member. In the last twenty years Nova Scotia has attained this level only once--in 1967. Once again, this difference is attributable, in part at least, to Conservative electoral strength in Ontario. The result has been that the highest level of legislative experience attained in either legislature at any time since 1867 occurred in the early seventies in Ontario.

¹⁸Ray, "Membership Stability in Three State Legislatures", p. 110.

Table 3.2

Years of Legislative Experience Per Member:
An Average Over Three
Elections

Ontario		Nova Scotia	
1871	2.3		
1875-1883	3.4	1871-1878	2.2
1886-1894	4.8	1882-1890	2.5
1898-1905	4.1	1894-1901	4.7
1908-1914	4.8	1906-1916	4.1
1919-1926	3.0	1920-1928	3.4
1929-1937	3.9	1933-1941	4.6
1943-1948	3.5	1945-1953	5.2
1951-1959	6.0	1956-1963	4.2
1963-1971	5.7	1967-1974	4.7

Sources: Parliamentary Guide; Parliamentary Companion

That higher levels of membership continuity in Ontario are probably influenced by electoral considerations emphasizes the fact that membership turnover does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest or commitment on the part of legislative politicians.

According to John Porter, Canadian politicians are guilty "of the practice of avocational politics, where a stint in politics is an interstitial stage in a career devoted to something else".¹⁹ In Ontario and Nova Scotia, however, a consistently high proportion of members have sought re-election since 1867. Table 3.3 indicates that Ontario members in particular have demonstrated a strong desire to return to the legislature. However, in recent years the differences between the provinces have been slight.

The data on remuneration and workload, and the assumptions of the Commissions charged with reviewing the status of legislators in the two provinces, strongly suggest that the Ontario legislature is considerably more professionalized than the Nova Scotia Assembly. This does not mean, however, that Ontario members are more committed to the legislative career, or that a tradition of volunteerism has been established in Nova Scotia. In both provinces a large majority of the members are willing to return to the legislature. What the

¹⁹Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 402; Similar sentiments are expressed in Ronald Blair, "What Happens to Parliament?", in Trevor Lloyd and Jack McLeod (eds.), *Agenda 1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 237.

Table 3.3

Percentage Seeking Reelection:
An Average Over Three
Elections

Ontario		Nova Scotia	
1871	85		
1875-1883	74	1871-1878	61
1886-1894	75	1882-1890	68
1898-1905	78	1894-1901	78
1908-1914	76	1906-1916	62
1919-1926	72	1920-1928	67
1929-1937	80	1933-1941	80
1943-1948	83	1945-1953	74
1951-1959	87	1956-1963	82
1963-1971	76	1967-1974	77

Sources: Parliamentary Guide; Parliamentary Companion

data suggest are that members are returning to positions that place unequal demands on incumbents.

Internal Leadership Recruitment

In parliamentary systems the preeminent leadership positions are held by members of the cabinet. The fact that members of the cabinet must also be members of the legislature means that cabinet office is inextricably linked to a parliamentary career. However, this link is weakened when members of the legislature are elevated to the cabinet with little or no parliamentary experience. This latter pattern may exist for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the need to balance geographic and, to a lesser extent, economic interests within the province.²⁰ None the less, it undermines the value of legislative experience and the relationship between cabinet and parliament. As John Porter puts it: "When interest representation becomes an overriding factor in cabinet formation, a gap sets in

²⁰According to Fred Schindeler, "Not only does the prime minister need to listen to the demands of industrial centers like Toronto: ministers must be chosen from every section of the province and the other economic interests expect to have at least one minister in the Cabinet knowledgeable about, and sympathetic towards, their activities", *op. cit.*, p. 33. Beck notes similar constraints on cabinet making in Nova Scotia. "All the Premiers keep the representative character of the cabinet broadly in view, and the modern tendency has been that, whenever feasible, at least one Executive Councillor shall be chosen from each of the six regions into which the provinces divides more or less naturally". J. Murray Beck, The Government of Nova Scotia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 192.

between Parliament and cabinet, tending to destroy the historic relationship of these two bodies within the political system."²¹

In systems in which legislative experience is considered a positive or necessary attribute for a cabinet position, the value of legislative experience increases considerably. Members who aspire to more responsible positions are more likely to consciously adopt a level and style of legislative participation that will enhance their prospects of promotion. In short, ambition is likely to become an important factor in decisions about legislative behaviour. This does not mean that the cabinet necessarily becomes more competent. Parliamentary experience is useful for some ministerial tasks, but, as Rose points out, it is of little help in other areas.²² Instead, the absence of lateral entry to leadership positions and the development of apprenticeship systems, is important because it establishes the legislative body as a major source of experience necessary for assuming leadership positions.

The tradition of extensive parliamentary experience prior to assuming a cabinet spot is firmly entrenched in Great Britain. From 1868 to 1958, Willson found that the average cabinet minister had

²¹Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 398. It must be pointed out, however, that the only "interests" consistently represented in the federal cabinet are those based on French-English and territorial divisions. See Richard J. Van Loon and Michael S. Whittington, *The Canadian Political System* (2nd. ed., Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1976), pp. 315-319.

²²Richard Rose, "The Making of Cabinet Ministers", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 2, Part 4 (October 1971), pp. 403-404.

fourteen years of experience in the House of Commons prior to his entry into Cabinet,²³ a waiting period which lengthened slightly between 1959 and 1968.²⁴ This prevalence of what he refers to as the "orthodox" entry leads him to observe that: "the chance of a career politician entering the cabinet without being thoroughly versed in the life of the House of Commons is very slight".²⁵ One of the reasons that the House of Commons is "a school for ministers"²⁶ is the strong convention against the immediate promotion of new MPs plus the presence of an apprenticeship system which involves the acquisition of official experience in a ministerial or secretarial capacity prior to cabinet entry.

Membership stability and a large legislative body have undoubtedly encouraged the development of this recruitment pattern in the British House. Neither of the provincial legislatures considered here, nor the federal Parliament, have had these advantages. All are smaller and experience a higher level of membership turnover

²³F.M.G. Willson, "The Routes of Entry of New Members of the British Cabinet, 1868-1958", Political Studies, Vol. VII (1959), pp. 222-232.

²⁴F.M.G. Willson, "Entry to the Cabinet, 1959-1968", Political Studies, Vol. XVIII (1970), pp. 236-238. See also D.J. Hasman, "Parliamentary Paths to High Office", Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. XVI, no. 3 (Summer 1963), pp. 315-330.

²⁵Willson, "The Routes of Entry of New Members of the British Cabinet, 1868-1958", p. 227.

²⁶Rose, op. cit., p. 403.

than the British House of Commons.²⁷ Consequently, in each of these legislatures cabinet ministers have considerably less prior legislative experience. None the less, significant differences are evident.

Table 3.4 shows the average years of prior legislative experience held by each cabinet minister in each legislature since 1945. The federal and Nova Scotia cabinets maintained comparable levels of experience from 1945 until new governments were formed in the mid-fifties. In the Stanfield cabinet of 1956 prior legislative experience decreased to an average of just over three years. By contrast, ministers in the Diefenbaker cabinet of 1957 had about three and a half years more experience than ministers in the latter years of the St. Laurent government. Subsequent leadership changes in both legislatures produced changes in the legislative experience of ministers but in both legislatures the trend has been toward a decline in prior legislative experience.²⁸ In Nova Scotia where the problem of legislative size is

²⁷For a comparison of the British Parliament and the Canadian House of Commons see J.A.A. Lovink, "Is Canadian Politics Too Competitive?" Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VI, no. 3 (September 1973), pp. 357-360. The major work on Canada is Norman Ward, The Canadian House of Commons: Representation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963).

²⁸In the House of Commons this trend has been identified by Richard J. Van Loon and Michael S. Whittington, op. cit., p. 322: "The relative importance of parliament in a minister's activities has decreased steadily over the years, while the importance of administrative, departmental, federal-provincial, and general priority-setting duties has steadily increased. For this reason it has become increasingly conventional to choose ministers not on the basis of parliamentary experience but rather on the basis of policymaking skills, administrative capabilities, or, occasionally, tactical skills in electioneering". For a detailed discussion which affirms this argument see Allan Kornberg and William Mishler, Influence in Parliament: Canada (Durham, N.C.; Duke University Press, 1976), pp. 263-267.

2

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Table 3.4

Ministers' Years of Prior Legislative Experience:
A Three Year Average*

	Ontario	Nova Scotia	House of Commons
1945-47	2.5	4.4	4.8
1948-50	2.5	5.8	5.0
1951-53	2.6	5.9	5.0
1954-56	2.8	6.6	5.2
1957-59	3.7	3.1	7.4
1960-62	4.0	2.7	7.2
1963-65	4.1	2.8	5.6
1966-68	4.0	3.7	3.9
1969-71	4.7	3.6	3.7
1972-75	4.6	1.9	3.6

*Excludes experience at other levels of government. The last entry is a four year average.

Sources: Parliamentary Guide; Canada Year Book

acute, and electoral; reverses significant, recent cabinets, have been composed of members with very little experience in the legislative process.

Ontario has exhibited the opposite trend. Since 1945, there has been a fairly steady increase in the amount of backbench experience ministers bring to the cabinet and the average experience of ministers has dropped below four years only three times since 1960. More dramatic, however, has been the decrease in those recruited to the cabinet with no experience whatsoever in the Ontario Legislature. At the outset of the postwar period over half of Ontario ministers entered the cabinet directly upon election, but Table 3.5 shows that since 1971 no minister in the Ontario cabinet has had less than one year of experience as a government backbencher.²⁹ While the proportion of novitiates has occasionally approached the zero level in the federal cabinet, and achieved it once in Nova Scotia, neither of these legislatures has been able to sustain a recruitment pattern similar to that of Ontario.

The establishment in 1971 of a formal apprenticeship system based on parliamentary assistants has reinforced and complemented this pattern. Unlike parliamentary secretaries in Ottawa, who regularly receive and forfeit their positions, or backbenchers in

²⁹The cabinet formed following the 1975 election marked a minor reversal in this pattern as two prominent ministers, Roy McMurtry and Bette Stephenson, entered the cabinet without experience in the legislature.

Table 3.5

Percentage of Ministers with NO Prior Legislative
Experience Upon Entry: A Three Year Average*

	Ontario	Nova Scotia	House of Commons
1945-47	47.3	48.3	25.0
1948-50	40.3	28.0	24.7
1951-53	33.7	18.0	28.0
1954-56	24.7	15.3	34.0
1957-59	15.7	23.0	22.7
1960-62	12.3	35.0	10.0
1963-65	8.7	33.7	25.7
1966-68	6.3	16.7	21.7
1969-71	4.7	21.3	17.0
1972-75	0.0	48.8	21.8

*Excludes experience at other levels of government. The last entry is a four year average.

Sources: Parliamentary Guide; Canada Year Book

Nova Scotia, who have a special, but tenuous and uncompensated relationship with ministers; parliamentary assistants in Ontario can justifiably interpret their position as a stepping stone to cabinet entry. Of the seven parliamentary assistants appointed in 1971, five were elevated to the cabinet by 1975, and of those reelected in 1976, all either became ministers or were reappointed as parliamentary assistants.

Ontario's governmental stability and, in recent years, its membership stability, has undoubtedly facilitated the development of a career pattern based more firmly on legislative experience. Indeed, it might be argued that one-party dominance in this province is the real, and perhaps only, reason that such a recruitment pattern has been established. The Conservative party leadership may put little emphasis on the value of legislative experience but since it has never been forced to form a government with a large contingent of newly elected members, the appearance is created that the leadership values experience on the backbenches.

While this interpretation is certainly plausible, it should be pointed out that the responsibilities of Ontario ministers in the legislature are probably greater than those of their Nova Scotia counterparts. Not only is the legislature in session longer, but each minister must answer two sets of critics, one from the NDP, the other from the Liberals. The establishment of a parliamentary assistant program can be interpreted as a recognition that members require a certain amount of time to become acquainted with the skills

necessary to manage this part of the job. In the final analysis the motives of the leadership, and specifically the Premier, in the choice of ministers remain largely unknown. However, electoral circumstances have given the Ontario Premier the opportunity to choose from among his backbenchers on the basis of demonstrated ability, and have given backbenchers, in turn, an opportunity to respond to the challenge. Even the appearance of a system, genuine or not, which values legislative experience, can presumably have an effect on attitudes and behaviour.

Of course, the presence of an apprenticeship system and a recruitment pattern based in the legislature is of greatest importance to members of the government backbench. None the less; if the exigencies of legislative politics are responsible, to some extent, for the emphasis placed on backbench experience in the recruitment of ministers, presumably the lesson will not be lost on the opposition. Successful opposition leaders will also require ministers schooled in the techniques of parliamentary combat. Furthermore, if practices such as this one give rise to expectations on the part of backbenchers, a new Premier, regardless of his party, may find it not only undesirable but also difficult to abandon internal leadership recruitment.

Organizational Complexity and Specialization

Professionalization and internal leadership recruitment are likely to encourage norms of participation in legislative activities. However, members must have opportunities to act on these norms. For this reason most of the research and writing on legislative institutions in Canada has been aimed at an evaluation of opportunity structures--those practices and procedures that encourage or facilitate the participation of members in legislative decisionmaking.

One means of estimating opportunities is to examine the level of organizational complexity and specialization that a legislature has attained. Organizational complexity refers to the division of labour and role differentiation that occurs within the organization.³⁰ As a legislature becomes more complex, more opportunities exist for members to acquire skills and to act in a variety of capacities. Specialization refers to the process of establishing support services that facilitate particular legislative tasks. Complexity is usually indicated by the legislature's financial resources; specialization by the degree to which these resources are translated into specific services.³¹

³⁰ Polsby, "The Institutionalization in the U.S. House of Representatives", p. 145, and Colin Campbell, "The Interplay of Institutionalization and the Assignment of Tasks in Parliamentary and Congressional Systems: The House of Commons and the House of Representatives", International Journal of Comparative Sociology, Vol. XVIII, nos. 1-2 (1977), p. 133.

³¹ Campbell, op. cit., and Colin Campbell, "Institutional Modernization in a Parliamentary System: The Canadian Senate Since 1960", a paper prepared for the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Toronto, June, 1974, pp. 9-11.

It is a commonplace observation that government spending at all levels has grown enormously since the Second World War. One of the main problems faced by legislative bodies, it is asserted, is their apparent inability to comprehend this level of activity and hold governments responsible for their actions.³² Not only is government involvement so widespread that scrutiny of all activity becomes impossible, but legislative bodies have not begun to acquire resources adequate to the task.

This was the judgment rendered by Fred Schindeler in his analysis of executive-legislative relations in Ontario in the mid-1960s. He concluded that despite an impressive aggrandizement in executive functions, "there has been very little enlargement of the legislative branch of government in Ontario, and its organization has remained virtually unchanged until quite recently".³³ The reorganization Schindeler alludes to was concentrated in the committee system, and, according to him, did little to alter the subordinate position of the legislature in the constitutional balance.³⁴ Beck's evaluation of the Nova Scotia legislature in the mid-1950s was similar. Although he was less concerned to document the growth of government functions,

³² Many authors have taken up this theme. See, for example, Ghita Ionescu and Isabel de Madariaga, Opposition (London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 132-133, and Bernard Crick, The Reform of Parliament (New York: Anchor, 1965), passim.

³³ Schindeler, op. cit., p. 23.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 106.

he concluded that, despite several attempts to improve the status of the legislature, "the government still lacks a genuine critic of its financial procedures".³⁵

The formal rules that guide procedure in the Nova Scotia legislature have been in effect since 1955 although a review has recently begun.³⁶ Spending on the legislature has increased since then, but as Table 3.6 shows, during the 1960s the increase was by no means as rapid as the increase in total government spending. In fact, most of the legislative spending in Nova Scotia has been absorbed by member's indemnities, allowances and expenses. The enormous increase in legislative spending in 1974, for example, is the direct result, as Table 3.7 shows, of an increase in legislative salaries. Over three-quarters of all legislative spending in that year is accounted for by that source.³⁷

In Ontario the apparent neglect of the legislature's resources, noted by Schindeler underwent at least a partial reversal during the

³⁵Beck, op. cit., p. 285.

³⁶This review is alluded to by Philip Laundy, "Legislatures", in D.J. Bellamy, J.H. Pammett and D.C. Rowat (eds.), The Provincial Political Systems: Comparative Essays (Toronto: Methuen, 1976), p.282. The focus for this review has been provided by Michael Ryle, The Procedures and Practices of the House of Assembly, Mimeo., March 26, 1976.

³⁷Two points must be made regarding these figures. First, the discrepancies that appear in the 1969-70 totals between Table 3.6 and Tables 3.7 and 3.8 are the result of drawing information from two sources: the provincial Public Accounts and Statistics Canada. This was made necessary by a change in the format of Statistics Canada data presentation. Second, expenditures on the Legislative Library in Nova Scotia are not included in the legislative expenditure totals. However, since library spending was only \$50,000, this omission does not effect the conclusions.

Table 3.6

The Growth of Provincial Spending and Legislative
Expenditures in Ontario and Nova Scotia (1956-1969)

Year(s)	Total Legislative Spending (\$t)		Total Provincial Spending (\$b)	
	Ont.	N.S.	Ont.	N.S.
1956-61 (avg.)	1,992 (100)*	440 (100)*	.870 (100)*	.106 (100)*
1961-62	1,680 (.84)	314 (.71)	1.251 (144)	.137 (129)
1962-63	1,587 (.80)	359 (.81)	1.523 (175)	.148 (137)
1963-64	5,166 (259)	736 (167)	1.240 (143)	.125 (118)
1964-65	2,467 (124)	373 (.85)	1.681 (193)	.172 (162)
1965-66	2,743 (138)	382 (.87)	1.960 (225)	.204 (192)
1966-67	3,006 (151)	471 (107)	2.406 (277)	.264 (249)
1967-68	7,219 (362)	1,075 (244)	2.992 (344)	.323 (305)
1968-69	4,275 (215)	625 (142)	3.611 (415)	.378 (357)
1969-70	5,486 (275)	645 (147)	4.266 (490)	.455 (429)

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentage change in spending from the five year average of fiscal years 1956-57 to 1960-61.

Source: Statistics Canada, Financial Statistics of Provincial Governments, Revenue and Expenditure.

Table 3.7

Spending on the Legislature in Nova Scotia
Since 1969

Year	Total Legislative Spending (\$millions)	Indemnities, Allowances and Expenses (\$millions)
1969-70	.504 (100)*	.406 (100)*
1970-71	.572 (113)	.407 (100)
1971-72	.611 (121)	.457 (112)
1972-73	.660 (131)	.452 (111)
1973-74	.324 (64)	.137 (34)
1974-75	1.768 (351)	1.355 (334)

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentage change in spending
from the base year, 1969-70.

Source: Nova Scotia, Public Accounts.

premiership of John Robarts.³⁸ Table 3.6 indicates that while spending on the legislature did not increase at the rate of provincial spending during the 1960s, by the end of the decade it stood at more than two and a half times the average for the years 1956 to 1961. In both provinces legislative spending has been subject to fluctuations, but Ontario's rate of increase has been consistently greater than that of Nova Scotia. In the fiscal year 1969-70, Ontario's legislative spending averaged almost 47 thousand dollars per member, whereas in Nova Scotia the average was 14 thousand. The Public Accounts for Ontario show, moreover, that increases in legislative spending since 1970 reflect a growing commitment to the provision of secretarial and research resources. This item of expenditure received more than twice as many funds in 1974 as in 1969 and, as Table 3.8 shows, has been growing faster in the last six years than either indemnities and allowances or total legislative spending.

It is generally anticipated that an increase in institutional resources will contribute to the specialization of members' interests and to an internal division of labour that parallels these interests.³⁹

³⁸ Some commentators attribute this reversal directly to Robarts' personal sensitivity to the legislature's problems. See, for example, Donald C. MacDonald, "Modernizing the Legislature," in D.C. MacDonald (ed.), Government and Politics of Ontario (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 101.

³⁹ Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives", p. 164 and Campbell, "Institutional Modernization in a Parliamentary System", pp. 9-10.

Table 3.8

Spending on the Legislature in Ontario Since 1969

Year	Total Legislative Spending (\$millions)	Indemnities and Allowances (\$millions)	Services** (\$millions)
1969-70	4.40 (100)*	2.24 (100)*	.410 (100)*
1970-71	4.60 (105)	2.29 (102)	.698 (170)
1971-72	10.72 (244)	2.95 (132)	.649 (158)
1972-73	8.06 (183)	3.27 (146)	.702 (171)
1973-74	6.45 (146)	3.59 (160)	.999 (244)
1974-75	7.73 (175)	4.18 (187)	.964 (235)

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentage change in spending from the base year, 1969-70.

**Services include secretaries, office, research and supplies.

Source: Ontario, Public Accounts.

There are not only more opportunities but also more pressures to become involved in particular tasks or to develop policy specialties. This internal division of labour is given organizational expression as specialized units are formed to service an increasingly complex set of needs. In Ontario this began as a rather diffuse process. Increasing resources supplied under the heading of "services" in the Public Accounts were initially used to equip members with their own offices and at least some degree of secretarial help. Until 1974 private members received these services on the basis of a system of caucus grants. The precise amount allocated to each caucus was determined on the basis of caucus membership by the Premier in consultation with the opposition party leaders.⁴⁰ No requirements were placed on how this money was to be spent, but most of these resources were being used to help members cope more adequately with the increasing "case load" of constituency requests. In short, more money was being offered to MPPs via the caucus, but little concern was expressed about which aspects of the job actually required increased formal support.

The recommendations of the Camp Commission, which took effect in 1974, were intended to insure that the legislative tasks of members received explicit support. The Commission was concerned to break or at least modify what it called "the constituency syndrome",

⁴⁰ Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, Second Report (December 1973), p. 44.

the belief that a member's priority should be his constituency work rather than his responsibilities as a scrutinizer of government policy.

"We would leave the Member, through our recommendations, with as little excuse as possible for diversion of his time and talents away from the exacting work of making law and examining administration and spending."⁴¹ The Commission recommended that each member have his own secretary and personal assistant and a budget for his own supplies. They also recommended that additional funds be given to each caucus for the specific purpose of enhancing their research capacity. These funds, the Commission emphasized, "are intended to be for caucus research and no other purpose ..."⁴² Caucuses would no longer have to divert funds for research purposes. The legislative budget would implicitly acknowledge the existence of different tasks and funds would be provided for particular specialized services.

The creation of caucus research units does not mean that they will consistently be employed to enhance members' capacities to scrutinize or contribute to government initiatives. Ontario's experience with caucus research illustrates the important difference between government and opposition needs. For the Progressive Conservative research staff the main priority is to help caucus members communicate with constituents. Researchers concentrate on helping members prepare speeches for delivery in the constituency and news

⁴¹ Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, First Report, p. 17.

⁴² Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, Second Report, p. 53.

stories for the local newspapers.⁴³ They also assume responsibility for the preparation of Caucus Commentary, a publication destined for those on the party's mailing list. Before the 1975 election, when five full time members were employed, the staff included a "communications coordinator" who was responsible for the television series Provincial Affairs and the scripting of radio and television features. Staff members were assigned responsibility for policy fields but this was subordinate to the primary task of helping members communicate with constituents.⁴⁴

The task of constituency liaison is not a prominent part of the duties assumed by the research staff of either opposition caucus. The NDP has traditionally spent greater sums on research than the Liberals and maintained a larger research establishment. Prior to the 1975 election the staff was comprised of one research director, four researchers, and one personal researcher for the leader, Stephen Lewis. The Liberals, on the other hand, employed a research director and two researchers but augmented this staff during the summer using general caucus funds. Both research units consider "information gathering" to be their main priority.⁴⁵ Each has sought to establish some degree

⁴³ From an interview with Michael Gee, Research Director, Conservative Caucus, November 12, 1975.

⁴⁴ From an interview with John Hastings, Research Writer, Conservative Caucus May 22, 1975.

⁴⁵ From interviews with Jean Rowlands, Research Director, Liberal Caucus November 11, 1975 and Beatrice Schrieber, Researcher, NDP Caucus, November 13, 1975.

of subject matter specialization but staff size imposes restrictions. For the same reason virtually no long-term work can be undertaken. In both caucuses the research staff concentrates on making information available to caucus members and to that end rely heavily on the public service. Researchers in the NDP take greater responsibility for giving their research an ideological focus and urging members to fulfill obligations assigned by caucus. The Liberal research staff concentrates on providing secretarial assistance to caucus committees and developing a coherent overview of the results of caucus deliberations. Both, however, are committed to enabling the caucus membership to devote more time to the legislature and participate more effectively.⁴⁶

In Nova Scotia, where fewer resources have been made available to the legislature, the process of creating specialized units has proceeded much more slowly. Members do not have their own offices, let alone their own secretaries, and no facilities are provided to assist members in their constituency work. It is perhaps not surprising that research assistance has been a secondary consideration. In a calculated understatement of the discrepancies between Nova Scotia

⁴⁶From interviews and M. Bryden, "Brief on the Need and Functions of a Research Department for Opposition Caucuses", unpublished manuscript (n.d.). For a balanced discussion of the effects of staffing in small legislatures see Alan Rosenthal, "The Consequences of Legislative Staffing" in A. Rosenthal and D. Herzberg (eds.) Strengthening the States: Essays on Legislative Reform (New York: Doubleday, 1971), pp. 85-97.

and other provinces, the McKay Commission noted that "in many other provinces better arrangements prevail than in Nova Scotia, for telephone services and for mail, office facilities and secretarial services while the House is in session".⁴⁷ The Commission argued that this should be rectified but in a different way from that proposed by the Camp Commission. The latter had argued for a funding arrangement that recognized both constituent and legislative responsibilities, but the McKay Commission argued that "Members themselves know best how their work can be assisted, and that with the role of the Member evolving, arrangements should be flexible to ensure that the most pressing needs are best met".⁴⁸ The Commission's recommendations⁴⁹ clearly indicate that in their opinion the most pressing needs involve constituency service.

The Commission did recommend research assistance,⁵⁰ but instead of being directly responsible to the entire caucus, as in Ontario, the two researchers in the Conservative Party and the one

⁴⁷ Nova Scotia, Commission of Inquiry, Legislature Salaries and Allowances, Report, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 39-40.

⁵⁰ The Commission suggested that the government caucus receive no assistance, on the assumption that government backbenchers have the civil service at their disposal. The Official Opposition would be granted up to four full time persons in either a research or clerical capacity, while other opposition parties would receive two such positions.

in the NDP have their primary responsibility to the party leadership. These differences in the lines of responsibility complement differences in caucus organization. In Ontario individual members of the opposition caucuses assume responsibility for the scrutiny of particular departments. All departments are covered, sometimes by more than one departmental critic, and researchers are expected to help individuals with their specialized needs. In Nova Scotia caucus organization in the opposition is not as formal and in the official opposition groups of MLAs, not individuals, assume departmental responsibilities.⁵¹ Organizing research around the party leader reinforces this diffuse approach to legislative surveillance.

The legislatures of Ontario and Nova Scotia differ not only in the magnitude of financial resources devoted to the legislature but also in the manner in which these funds are administered. These findings provide an indication that organizational complexity and specialization is considerably more advanced in Ontario than in Nova Scotia. Increases in complexity and specialization in turn provide opportunities for backbenchers to enhance their participation in the affairs of the legislature, suggesting once again that differences may exist in the behavioural patterns and attitudes of members in Ontario and Nova Scotia.

⁵¹ From an interview with Joe Clarke, Research Director, Conservative Caucus, December 8, 1975.

Committee Autonomy

In recent years most parliamentary reformers have included among their proposals the suggestion that parliamentary committees become more active and specialized. This is one way, it is argued, that legislatures can attempt to redress the imbalance that exists between executive and legislative authority.⁵² Committee service provides an opportunity for members to acquire specialized interests and knowledge that would presumably be of use in developing proposals or in confronting ministers and public servants. Governments have seldom been anxious to follow the advice of these reformers. Committees, they contend, represent a devolution of government authority and undermine the system of adversary politics on which parliamentary government is founded.⁵³

⁵²One of the strongest advocates of a strengthened committee system for the British House of Commons is John P. Mackintosh, "Reform of the House of Commons: The Case for Specialization" in G. Lowenberg (ed.) Modern Parliaments: Change or Decline? (Chicago: Aldine - Atherton, 1971), pp. 33-64. In Canada committee reform has been advocated or applauded by: Peter Bishop, "Restoring Parliament to Power", Queens Quarterly, Vol. LXXVII, no. 2 (Summer 1970), pp. 149-156; Thomas Hockin, "The Advance of Standing Committees in Canada's House of Commons", Canadian Public Administration, Vol. XIII, no. 2 (Summer 1970), pp. 185-202; and C.E.S. Franks, "The Dilemma of the Standing Committees of the Canadian House of Commons", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. IV, no. 4 (December 1971), pp. 461-476.

⁵³For a summary of arguments for and against see Mackintosh, "Reform of the House of Commons: The Case for Specialization", pp. 35-40, and Wilhelm Hennis, "Reform of the Bundestag: The Case for General Debate", in G. Lowenberg (ed.), op. cit., pp. 65-80.

Despite the reluctance of government and opposition leaders, the Parliaments at both Westminster and Ottawa now have more active parliamentary committees than existed only a decade ago. In Ottawa the government's agreement was prompted in part by the increasing workload that the House of Commons was assuming. Cabinet expected that committees would handle some of the more detailed aspects of legislative and estimate review thus freeing the time of the House for other government measures.⁵⁴ That was not the only reason, however, for the expansion of committee activities. The Special Committee on Procedure which had recommended a more active committee system also expected "debate in the standing committees to be well-informed and pertinent, and their members to become influential in the areas of their specialized expertise".⁵⁵ The committee system was to be a place where individual members, regardless of party, could express views on a variety of policy matters and, in Franks words, "provide in parliament a counter-balancing force to the executive".⁵⁶

For any committee system to live up to the expectations of the Special Committee it must be, to some degree, independent of executive direction. If committees are activated merely to facilitate

⁵⁴ Donald MacDonald, "Change in the House of Commons: New Rules", Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1970), pp. 30-39.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Franks, op. cit., p. 463.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 462.

the passage of legislation and the consideration of estimates according to procedures dictated by party leaders and enforced by party discipline, there is little reason to expect much enthusiasm on the part of private members. Partisan conflict will not encourage committees to effectively counter-balance cabinet authority. Unfortunately, demands for committee autonomy in the House of Commons have created a dilemma in committee development. As Franks summarizes it: "On the one hand they [committees] have been expected to be non-partisan and develop a corporate identity, while on the other most of their work has been on the government's program which is the natural focus for partisan controversy."⁵⁷

Until recently legislatures in the provinces have not had to face the problem of committee responsibilities. Short sessions and small assemblies have meant that much of the work normally assumed by standing committees at Westminster or Ottawa could be accomplished in Committee of the Whole.⁵⁸ Most provinces, in fact, still employ the Committee of the Whole for the consideration of most legislation and estimates.⁵⁹ The standing committees in both Quebec and Ontario, however, have undergone a recent reorganization. In the case of Quebec this reorganization has included the elimination of the

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 464.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 462, fn. 2.

⁵⁹ Laundy, op. cit., p. 284.

Committee of the Whole and greater responsibilities for the standing committee system.⁶⁰ According to Alex McLeod these developments have resulted in increased committee autonomy and membership interest. Committees have not become completely independent of the Assembly, but, "there is already enough evidence to indicate that they have made a solid contribution to improving governmental effectiveness and have increased significantly the participation of deputies in the affairs of the Assembly".⁶¹

The evaluation of the committee systems in Ontario and Nova Scotia has not been as favorable. Bryden argues that, in Ontario, committees are basically "overflow tanks for estimates" and that they "have less efficacy than theorists have been prone to attribute to them".⁶² This evaluation was echoed in 1973 at the Annual Conference of the Association of Clerks-At-The Table. Mr. McFedries claimed of Ontario's committees that "their hands are so tied they can't perform any useful function at all".⁶³ In Nova Scotia the standing committee system has changed imperceptibly since 1955, when Beck wrote of the

⁶⁰J.N. Lavoie, "New Standing Orders for the National Assembly of Quebec", The Parliamentarian, Vol. 4 (1973), pp. 266-274.

⁶¹Alex McLeod, "The Reform of the Standing Committees of the Quebec National Assembly", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VIII, no. 1 (March 1975), p. 38.

⁶²Kenneth Bryden, "Executive and Legislature in Ontario: A Case Study on Governmental Reform", Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 18, no. 2 (Summer 1975), p. 250.

⁶³Quoted in Laundy, op. cit., p. 286.

eight "standing select committees" that "seven of these committees-- agriculture, lands and forest, education, mines and minerals, industry, humane and temperance--now play no significant role in the governmental process".⁶⁴ The same point was made unintentionally in 1973 by James Connolly, then Speaker designate of the Nova Scotia Assembly: "We have 11 Standing Committees of the House. But I think the most important committees in our House are the Committee of the Whole House and the Committee of Supply."⁶⁵

Although neither province is considered to have a particularly potent committee system, important differences exist in organization and activity that suggest different levels of committee autonomy. An evaluation of committee autonomy depends, first, on an assessment of the level and scope of committee activity and, second, on the nature of committee leadership.

In most parliamentary systems committees can meet and discuss matters only when they receive a reference from the House. Theoretically at least, they are bound to confine their deliberations to the matters covered in the reference. Committees are naturally constrained by this requirement but, depending on the government's attitude, need not be stifled. McLeod bases much of his favourable evaluation of Quebec's committees on the range of activities they have assumed.

⁶⁴ Beck, op. cit., p. 281.

⁶⁵ First Canadian Regional Seminar on Parliamentary Procedure and Practice, Proceedings, Ottawa, November 12-16, 1973, p. 137.

This is indicated, in the first instance, simply by the incidence of committee meetings. After the consolidation of committees and the expansion of their responsibilities in 1972, standing committees in the National Assembly met three times as often as they had in the previous session.⁶⁶ Most legislation and all estimates, save the budget of the National Assembly itself, are now the responsibility of the standing committee system. In addition, however, committees have conducted pre-legislative hearings, inquired into public service disputes and conducted "miscellaneous inquiries".⁶⁷

Examining Ontario's committee system in the early 1960s, Schindeler showed that relatively few items were referred to committee and concluded that standing committees were generally underutilized. In 1960 each committee met an average of only 5.5 times and a re-organization and consolidation in 1964 had little effect on the level of their activity.⁶⁸ Table 3.9 shows that using Schindeler's measure of activity--average meetings per committee--the standing committee system was at least twice as active during each session of the 29th Parliament (excluding the first session), as it was between 1960 and 1964. Sessions, of course, have lengthened as well. The average meetings per sitting day suggest how rapidly activity in the standing committee system has increased relative to activity in the legislature

⁶⁶McLeod, op. cit., p. 30, Table 1.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 30-35.

⁶⁸Schindeler, op. cit., pp. 102-106.

as a whole. In 1964 the ratio of committee meetings to sitting days was .80, or less than one meeting per day. Table 3.9 shows that by the 29th Parliament standing committee activity had surpassed this mark but the increases have not been dramatic. Also, the standing committee system is now smaller having been reduced from sixteen committees in the 28th Parliament to eight at present. This has probably had the effect of concentrating the attention of members and providing greater continuity in deliberation although it is by no means certain that this was the government's intention.⁶⁹

In addition to being rather quiescent, standing committees in Ontario confine most of their activity to legislation and estimates. Of the standing committee meetings held in the fifth session of the 29th Parliament, 36% were devoted to the consideration of government estimates. But once the committees have concluded their deliberations only the votes are reported to the House. Furthermore, the standing committee system is not responsible for all estimates as it is in Quebec, for example. Selected departmental estimates are sent to committee on a rotating basis and time is deducted from the

⁶⁹Bryden argues, in fact, that reform of the legislature is an afterthought of the government that followed the recommendations of the Committee on Government Productivity. The reform of the standing committee system was accomplished to reflect the reorganization of the cabinet committee structure. See Bryden, op. cit., pp. 247-249.

Table 3.9

Meetings of the Standing Committees of the Ontario Legislature:
29th Parliament

	Sessions*				
	2nd (1972)	3rd (1973)	4th (1974)	5th (1975)	Total
Regulations	4	2	-	-	6
Estimates	29	13	4	9	55
Resource Dev.	2	19	31	17	69
Social Dev.	21	28	35	29	113
Private Bills**	7	-	7	10	24
Justice	11	15	31	12	69
Procedural Affairs	4	4	5	9	22
Public Accts.	17	25	27	18	87
Total	95	106	140	104	445
Meetings/Sitting Day	.95	.88	1.20	1.51	1.14 (avg.)
Avg. Meetings/Com.	11.8	13.3	17.5	13.0	55.6 (avg.)

*The first session lasted only 4 days

**This committee is composed of the Procedural Affairs Committee and the Administration of Justice Committee combined under the chairmanship of the latter.

Source: Minutes deposited with the Clerk of the Assembly; The Legislative Assembly, Journals.

Committee of Supply. Thus the government retains considerable control over committee proceedings even though most critical commentators agree that the estimates provide the best opportunity for a scrutiny of government performance.⁷⁰

It is the government's control of legislation, however, that has drawn the most consistent criticism from members of the opposition. Until very recently the legislative work of the standing committees was determined entirely by individual ministers responsible for legislation before the House. Legislation is normally sent to a committee after Second Reading, but it was the ministers who chose the committee. Over the objections of opposition members, ministers frequently chose the Committee of the Whole rather than submit their bills to the detailed scrutiny of the standing committees.⁷¹ The lack of committee autonomy implied in this procedure has been the subject of considerable debate in recent years,⁷² but on the recommendation of the select committee charged with reviewing the

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 250; Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, Fourth Report (September 1975), p. 67.

⁷¹ Private bills are another matter. They are regularly sent to committee and of the 42 meetings devoted to legislation in 1975, 10 were spent on private bills. These bills attract the attention of members whose communities are involved and the meetings are usually well attended. In fact, the Camp Commission showed some dismay at the significance of the Private Bills Committee: "It is not entirely equitable ... that bills with a local and usually particular import should receive such a high proportion of legislative time. That they do so is probably another indication of the strong constituency orientation among Members of Queen's Park". Fourth Report, p. 68.

⁷² See, for example, Ontario, The Legislative Assembly, Debates, March 21, 1975.

Camp Commission proposals, the Cabinet has agreed to a modification of this procedure. Now, if twenty members request it, the minister must refer the bill to the standing or select committee of his choice.⁷³

Inasmuch as committee autonomy has been circumscribed by infrequent meetings, narrow references, and the absence of automatic referrals, it is tempting to conclude that committees in Ontario operate under the firm control of the government solely for the purpose of easing the workload in the House. This is only partly true. The standing committee system has been reorganized with fewer committees and fewer members on each committee, a development generally considered the sign of a more efficient and effective system. In addition, the increased activity of standing committees, and particularly the referral of estimates to committees, has permitted more frequent contact between members and senior government officials, a privilege previously limited to members of the Public Accounts committee. The main reason, however, for revising this judgment on committee autonomy is the work of select committees.

During the 29th Parliament seven select committees were formed to consider Company Law, Economic and Cultural Nationalism, Snowmobiles and All Terrain Vehicles, Land Drainage, the Ontario Municipal Board, the Utilization of Educational Facilities and the Ontario Hydro

⁷³ It must be emphasized that this is a recent change not in effect when this research was undertaken. Ontario, The Legislative Assembly, Journals, December, 1976, p. 342.

Building. Even critics of the legislature's development agree that these committees "have made important inputs into the policy-making process, and they have occasionally performed useful investigative roles".⁷⁴ Comparing their work to the standing committees the Camp Commission concluded that "select committee work has generated greater interest and participation among Members ..."⁷⁵ The main reason for this apparent popularity among both members and outsiders is probably the focus provided by a particular subject. Select committees are created to consider a single problem and members are given the opportunity to concentrate their general interests and obtain a certain degree of expertise. The fact that the government has been receptive to many select committee proposals has probably enhanced their popularity as well. Although the creation of select committees is entirely a prerogative of the government, once in place they generally assume considerable autonomy. Bi-partisanship is encouraged by the small size of these committees (usually eleven members), the fact that their membership is permanent, and the extended time frame of their deliberations. The authority of select committees to hire specialized staff further insures their ability to operate without complete dependence on government sources of information.

The pattern and scope of activity which defines the committee system in Nova Scotia is considerably different from that found in

⁷⁴Bryden, op. cit., p. 248.

⁷⁵Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, Fourth Report, pp. 64-65.

Ontario: Although standing select committees (the equivalent of standing committees in Ontario) are occasionally reconstituted as select committees to permit them to meet while the House is not sitting, Nova Scotia does not have a comparable select committee system undertaking broad investigations. Unlike Ontario where standing committee activity is spread across the system, in Nova Scotia it is concentrated in two committees: Law Amendments and Private and Local Bills. Public bills are routinely sent to the former after Second Reading and private bills to the latter. Since neither record their deliberations, nor even the frequency of their meetings, precise comparison with Ontario's most active committees is impossible. But during the session it is not uncommon for these committees to meet three times a week.⁷⁶ Both examine legislation in a clause-by-clause fashion and in the Law Amendments Committee in particular, amendments are not uncommon.⁷⁷ Most members and officials have a very high regard for the work of these committees, but neither these committees nor any others examine departmental estimates. This is still the preserve of the Committee of Supply.

⁷⁶From an interview with the late Roy Laurence, Clerk of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly, August 22, 1975.

⁷⁷Innis G. McLeod, "Summary of Parliamentary Practice in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly", (Halifax, n.d.), p. 12.

The remainder of the standing select committees--thirteen committees in 1975--have no particular responsibilities. Meetings are almost always called at the behest of the chairman and usually without a reference from the House. This practice may appear to provide these committees with considerable scope to launch investigations,⁷⁸ but with the exception of the Industry Committee, most meet only two or three times in a session. An agenda is rarely provided and members simply discuss matters of common interest. When departmental officials attend, the proceedings frequently acquire the air of a seminar. In a report tabled by the Housing Committee in 1972, the chairman defended the committee's work by writing: "This committee serves a valuable role in making an opportunity available through scheduled meetings to bring to the surface any possible criticisms or problems in the housing field".⁷⁹ A similar defense could probably be made for all of the "non-legislative" committees in the Assembly. The major weaknesses in this system are the infrequent meetings of most committees and the absence of a particular focus for most committee deliberations.

The level and scope of committee activity is the first aspect of autonomy. The second is personnel: membership and leadership

⁷⁸This opinion is offered by W.S. Kennedy, "The Committee System and Amendments" Informal Lectures on Parliamentary Law and Procedure as Practiced in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly (Halifax, 1964), p. 98.

⁷⁹Nova Scotia, The House of Assembly, Journals, 1972, p. 335.

in committees. Committee autonomy is enhanced when members, through sustained participation, identify with particular committees and assume positions of authority within them. This is the process Franks refers to as the acquisition of a corporate identity.⁸⁰

In both legislatures committee membership is relatively stable throughout the session and often over the life of the Parliament. There are no rules to guide committee membership in Nova Scotia, but substitutions are rare.⁸¹ In Ontario the standing committees are divided into those with "wide jurisdiction"--Procedural Affairs, Administration of Justice, Social Development and Resource Development--and those with "specialized duties"--Estimates, Public Accounts and Regulations.⁸² Members of the legislature can belong to only one committee in each category and substitution, until recently, has been restricted to the consideration of estimates. In Ontario's select committees the rules are even more rigid. There can be no substitutions throughout the life of the committee unless a member resigns permanently.

⁸⁰Franks, *op. cit.*, p. 464. A similar process is referred to by Polsby who stresses the development of boundaries that distinguish the institution from its environment. See Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives", pp. 145-153.

⁸¹From an interview with Roy Laurence, August 22, 1975.

⁸²The rationale for the description of this division is found in Ontario, The Legislative Assembly, Journals, Report of Standing Orders and Procedures Committee, November 6, 1970, p. 487.

Rules and norms that encourage membership stability are usually tested as committee activity increases.⁸³ Maintaining membership stability in Nova Scotia, for example, is made easier by the relative inactivity of the committee system. Members in Ontario, however, have successfully urged the government to permit unlimited substitution. This "reform" introduces flexibility for those whose interests are not paralleled by the jurisdictional boundaries of committees. It may also have the effect, however, of disrupting committee deliberations and undermining committee autonomy.⁸⁴

Equally as important as the question of membership continuity in committees is that of leadership. Who is entrusted with committee leadership indicates how much independence the cabinet is willing to grant not only to opposition parties, but to their own backbenchers as well. In this regard the committee systems in Ontario and Nova Scotia differ considerably. In Nova Scotia cabinet ministers are an

⁸³In the House of Commons, for example, the rules limiting substitutions were amended in 1968 to accommodate the increase in committee workload. For an assessment of the effects see Jackson and Atkinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-126; and Dorothy Byrne, "Some Attendance Patterns Exhibited by Members of Parliament during the 28th Parliament", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. V, no. 1 (March 1972), p. 136.

⁸⁴In 1975, for example, the Resources Development Committee held four meetings to discuss the Annual Report of the Workman's Compensation Board. Over half of those in attendance at each meeting were not permanent members of the committee. They were in attendance primarily because of constituency problems related to the work of the Board.

integral part of the standing committees. In 1975 all committees had at least one minister as a permanent member, but most had two or more. The participation of ministers approximates that of ministerial witnesses in the House of Commons. Their main task is to answer questions and defend departmental practices. Nevertheless, ministers do not attend at the Committee's request, but are members in their own right. In addition, ministers chair four of the standing committees, including Law Amendments whose chairperson is the Attorney-General. Until 1976 the Public Accounts committee was chaired by the Minister of Finance, who relinquished this position to an opposition member only on the advice of a member of the Clerk's staff in the British House of Commons.⁸⁵

Although there is no formal prohibition on their membership,⁸⁶ ministers in Ontario are generally not inclined toward active participation on either the select or standing committees. The leadership of these committees is vested in government backbenchers with the exception of the Public Accounts committee whose chairperson

⁸⁵ The problems associated with having the Minister of Finance as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in Nova Scotia are well documented by Simon McInnes, "Watchdogs of Government": A Comparative Study of the Public Accounts Committees and the Auditors General of the Legislative Assemblies of Canada, a paper prepared for the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Quebec City, June, 1976, pp. 43-45.

⁸⁶ From an interview with Roderick Lewis, Clerk of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, May 20, 1975.

is a member of the Official Opposition. Ministers still attend committee meetings as witnesses and will occasionally take advantage of their status to make motions or take an active part in discussion, although that intrusion has not gone unchallenged.⁸⁷ The independence of standing committees from direct ministerial control may contribute, however, to the reluctance of many ministers to have committees examine their legislation.

This discussion of committee autonomy has been premised on the assumption that committees are forums where ordinary backbench members of the legislature can cultivate and extend their policy interests. The more independent the committees are, the more likely this process is to occur. In parliamentary systems committees will never be entirely independent of the legislature and, hence, of the executive. In both Ontario and Nova Scotia autonomy is circumscribed by limitations on the scope of committee activities and in the Nova Scotia Assembly, by the concentration of committee leadership in members of the cabinet. On both counts Ontario has a more autonomous committee system, though not one that necessarily provides sufficient outlets for members' interests and ambitions.

⁸⁷ See the remarks of Michael Cassidy, Ontario, The Legislative Assembly, Debates, March 26, 1975, p. 532.

Consequences

The objective of this chapter has been to point out some of the main differences between the legislatures of Ontario and Nova Scotia in terms of the incentives and opportunities provided for legislative participation. On most of the dimensions discussed the Ontario legislature emerges as an institutional environment more conducive to backbench participation in policy-making. Words of warning are in order however. While some of the differences are impressive, such as the differences in legislative professionalization, others are more ambiguous. It is not clear, for example, that the committee system in either legislature is likely to stimulate legislative participation. A comparative study that embraces two legislatures has the advantage of controlling for certain institutional differences, but it does not guarantee that the differences that exist are substantial enough to affect the behaviour patterns and attitudes of members.

If these differences in legislative organization are great enough to influence attitudes and behaviour, what are the likely consequences for legislative participation? In the first place, we should expect a greater devotion to legislative and policy-related activities in Ontario than in Nova Scotia. This means that Ontario members should devote more time to legislative work and the contacts they establish with ministers and public servants should concern policy matters more often than the same contacts in Nova Scotia.

Second, active participation in debates and question period should be more concentrated in Ontario. A division of labour prevails among private members of all parties in that province. Parliamentary assistants in the Conservative party are given extra responsibilities and both opposition parties have a system of policy critics.

Members are therefore not obliged to speak to every topic, and the fact that some policy areas will be more prominent than others in terms of legislative attention suggests that a large part of the burden of active participation will be assumed by a relatively small proportion of members in each party. In the opposition the work of research units reinforces this division of labour. Nova Scotia MLAs operate under no such constraints: There is no formal system of spokesmen and nothing to deter any member from speaking out on a controversial issue.

Third, Ontario members are more likely to define their policy interests in broad terms and to omit reference to their constituencies in describing their interests. This expectation is premised on the view outlined earlier that the more effort members are required to put into their job, the more likely they are to abandon local or parochial concerns for more general policy interests. For similar reasons Ontario members are also more likely to characterize their role in policy-making as one of initiation. There are more incentives and opportunities to act independently and an active select committee system can be expected to generate the necessary attachment to

specific ideas that is the concomitant of policy initiation.

Finally, political ambition can be expected to be a better predictor of legislative participation in Ontario than Nova Scotia. In the latter province the demonstration of legislative and policy-related skills seems to be less important for promotion. The legislature sits less frequently and does not possess the institutional resources necessary to mount much of a challenge to the executive. Ambitious politicians in Nova Scotia cannot be expected to distinguish themselves in their legislative participation to the degree necessary for their counterparts in Ontario. In the Ontario legislature members who seek advancement are under greater pressures to demonstrate that they can assume the burdens of ministerial office including the necessity of explaining and defending in the legislature the actions of their department.

These expectations are all based on differences in legislative environment discussed in this chapter. Of course, other system-level differences, such as the level of economic development and the type of party system, are alternative or complementary sources of explanation. It can be anticipated, for example, that the substance of members' policy interests will depend heavily on social and economic factors peculiar to each province. This thesis argues, however, that for most aspects of legislative participation differences in the immediate legislative environment are likely to be the most promising source of explanation.

CHAPTER IV

SETTING PRIORITIES: THE LEGISLATURE AND THE CONSTITUENCY

In parliamentary systems every private member makes decisions about which part of his or her job will receive most attention. Since members seldom have the time, or the inclination to attend to all potential tasks, this initial setting of priorities inevitably structures much of the legislative behaviour that follows. In most legislatures this is tolerated and even encouraged because it is assumed that a division of labour will insure that important legislative functions are not ignored.

Most research on legislators in Canada begins with the assumption that members normally adopt one of two distinct approaches to their job.

On the one hand, some MLAs or MPs assume that being a *legislator* necessitates active involvement in the law-making process and, hence, their principal concern is the formulation of public policy. On the other hand, in the face of party discipline and executive domination of the policy-making processes, MPs or MLAs may choose to define their jobs largely in terms of *constituency representation*, and devote their energies to serving the public by engaging in constituency service activities.¹

¹Harold D. Clarke, Richard G. Price and Robert Krause, "Backbenchers"; in David J. Bellamy, Jon H. Pammett and Donald C. Rowat (eds.), The Provincial Political Systems: Comparative Essays (Toronto: Methuen, 1976), p. 228. For a similar distinction in the context of the House of Commons see David Hoffman and Norman Ward, Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the Canadian House of Commons, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), p. 99.

The adoption of one or the other of these approaches is, of course, a matter of degree. Few members can afford to entirely ignore constituency requests and few can abstain entirely from expressing preferences on policy matters. Moreover, the distinction between legislative (or policy) and constituency matters is not always clear, as pointed out in Chapter six. None the less, most members do feel comfortable with this type of distinction and are willing to reveal where their own priorities lie.

The first objective of this chapter is to outline the priorities of members in each legislature in terms of the time they devote to legislative and constituency tasks. It should be noted, in this regard, that the Camp Commission has expressed concern that private members in Ontario devote a disproportionate amount of time to constituency work, presumably at the expense of legislative activities. The Commission goes as far as to argue that, "the constituency obsession is at the heart of the malaise so many divine in the parliamentary system".² This apparent inattention to legislative work on the part of provincial backbenchers has been a common, if underdeveloped, theme in other work on provincial parliamentary institutions.³ Furthermore, recent research on provincial legislators

²Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, First Report (May, 1973), pp. 16-17 and passim.

³See, for example, the recent essays by P.J. Fitzpatrick, J.M. Beck, and Frank McKinnon in Martin Robin (ed.), Canadian Provincial Politics (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

confirms that in most provinces members spend considerable time on constituency work.⁴ In short, substantial doubt has been cast on the view that a division of labour is a natural outcome in a parliamentary system. This chapter provides a reassessment of this conclusion and goes on to indicate those aspects of the job from which members derive the most, and the least, satisfaction.

The second objective of this chapter is to assess the factors that influence individual priority setting, particularly the role of political ambition. According to the ambition hypothesis, outlined in chapter one, legislators with progressive ambitions can be expected to devote more time to their legislative careers and less time to their constituents than those without progressive ambitions. This occurs because members with progressive ambitions seek to demonstrate their commitment to the legislative part of their work and do so by adhering to the norms of participation held by cabinet ministers.

This process is facilitated by the existence of a relatively unambiguous model of ministerial behaviour in terms of priority setting. In both provinces ministers consider it normal, and entirely legitimate, to transfer the bulk of their constituency responsibilities to appointed political assistants. In this respect their job is different from that of the ordinary private member to whom they often

⁴Harold D. Clarke, Richard G. Price, and Robert Krause, "Constituency Service among Canadian Provincial Legislators: Basic Findings and a Test of Three Hypotheses", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VIII, no. 4 (December 1975), pp. 520-542.

assign the task of providing a tangible link between citizens and the political system. The job of the minister centers on departmental affairs and cabinet responsibilities. Very few have time to give personal attention to constituent requests, and some have little inclination to do so:

The guy that is in the cabinet is going to have very little time to serve his constituency if he has a Department. That's why we have Executive Assistants. They serve no function that I can see in any way related to a Department. (Nova Scotia minister)

My constituents don't care about my job here [in cabinet]. If I miss a Chamber of Commerce meeting or something they are all over me saying I don't care about the constituency. And then you have the farmers calling you up wanting a culvert. Well, I can't believe that the politics of the province should pivot on whether or not a farmer gets a culvert. (Ontario minister)

While ministers were not requested to report how their time is divided, the interviews confirm overwhelmingly the conventional wisdom that ministers assign their first priority to legislative and policy work. A major task of this chapter is to determine whether or not ambitious backbenchers do so as well.

Legislative Work and Constituency Service

The substance of their policy work and the style in which it is pursued differs considerably among legislators, as subsequent chapters will show. Similarly, even among members who devote approximately the same amount of time to constituency service, the nature of their work differs depending on the requests they receive. This is usually a

function of the social and economic composition of their constituencies.

A considerable amount of the workload of members from Northern Ontario and Cape Breton, for example, involves constituent complaints against the Workman's Compensation Board, while urban members in Toronto and Halifax devote more time to welfare and immigration cases. Despite this variety, however, the common element in all constituency work is personal intervention with the bureaucracy and the cabinet on behalf of individuals who are nursing personal grievances.

Members in both legislatures were careful to separate this type of work from the reading of bills, the posing of amendments, the questioning of ministers and the delivering of speeches on the floor of the legislature. In responding to questions intended to determine the main burdens and rewards of legislative office, several members were explicit in distinguishing between constituency and legislative tasks:

There are two jobs. You have the job with your constituents, which is a horrendous job in terms of numbers. If you produce and people know about it, they are after you so that you keep producing, almost beyond your capacity... then there are the matters that come up for discussion, in other words the policy matters: new legislation, what we are doing in terms of monetary and fiscal policy, and how all that affects social development. The planning process in a broad sense. (O 58)

The most rewarding part of the job for me is the opportunity that membership gives you to get help for individuals who have problems. The other part of the job is the legislative aspect. My interest has been in whether bills are practical or simply political. In either case I have an opportunity to raise my voice. (N 51)

In both legislatures members left little doubt that the tasks associated with constituency work were their primary source of satisfaction. Acting in the role of ombudsman for constituents was the most frequently cited reward of elected office and a majority of members in both legislatures mentioned this aspect of their work first in replying to this question.⁵ Members enjoy having the opportunity to assist individuals in their communications with government and frequent reference was made to "cutting through red tape" and occasionally to "beating the system". As Table 4.1 shows, other sources of satisfaction, including prestige, feelings of power, and policy achievements, provided gratification to a much smaller proportion of members. The remarkable similarity in the distribution of responses in both provinces suggests that, in terms of satisfaction at least, differences in legislative structure have little influence on members' attitudes.

⁵There is steadily increasing evidence for the popularity of constituency service among elected members at both the federal and provincial levels. LeDuc and White found that more Ontario legislators in the 28th Parliament ranked constituency problems first in terms of "personal interest" than any other aspect of legislative work. Kornberg and Mishler found that in the House of Commons MPs similarly expressed considerable enjoyment in helping constituents while Price, Clarke and Krause encountered the same positive reaction to constituency work among freshman MPs. See: Lawrence LeDuc Jr. and Walter L. White, "The Role of Opposition in a One-Party Dominant System: The Case of Ontario", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VII, no. 1 (March, 1974), p. 91; Allan Kornberg and William Mishler, Influence in Parliament: Canada (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1976), pp. 99, 309; and, Richard G. Price, Harold D. Clarke, and Robert M. Krause, "The Socialization of Freshman Legislators: The Case of Canadian M.P.s" in Jon H. Pammett and Michael S. Whittington (eds.) Foundations of Political Culture: Political Socialization in Canada (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), pp. 213-215.

Table 4.1

Rewards and Gratifications Derived From
Legislative Office

<u>Personal Rewards</u>	<u>Percentage Mentioning in Ontario*</u>			
	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>NDP</u>	<u>Total</u>
Problem-Solving for Constit.	79	74	67	73
Program, Policy Achieve.	28	11	44	28
Exercising Influence	16	26	44	25
Prestige and Respect	24	37	11	24
Leg. Debate; Partisanship	3	15	28	12
Public Service	8	5	0	5
Other	0	5	11	4
				n=75

<u>Personal Rewards</u>	<u>Percentage Mentioning in Nova Scotia*</u>			
	<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>NDP</u>	<u>Total</u>
Problem-Solving for Constit.	73	92	100	85
Program, Policy Achieve.	36	17	0	23
Exercising Influence	27	25	33	27
Prestige and Respect	18	33	0	23
Leg. Debate; Partisanship	27	8	0	15
Public Service	9	0	0	4
Other	18	0	33	11
				n=26

*percentages total more than 100 because multiple answers were permitted

Some of the differences among the parties deserve attention, even though none are exceptionally dramatic. In the first place, the expectation that in Ontario NDP members would be the least likely to cite ombudsman chores as a source of satisfaction⁶ is confirmed but by a very narrow margin. More important are the differences between the Liberals and the NDP on other rewards. The former place more stress on prestige and respect, for example, the latter on policy and program achievements, a qualitative difference discussed by LeDuc and White in terms of the style of opposition each party offers.⁷ In most cases, with the obvious exception of "legislative debate", the proportion of Conservatives citing particular rewards fell between these extremes. Nova Scotia Conservatives, on the other hand, resembled Ontario New Democrats inasmuch as they received fewer rewards from constituency work and more from policy achievements and legislative debate than the members of the other parties. Opposition status may be responsible for providing the members of these parties with a range of experiences that encompass more than constituency problem-solving. Nevertheless, in all parties the vast majority derive at least some satisfaction from their constituency work.

⁶This expectation is founded on previous research on the Ontario legislature, particularly LeDuc and White, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96, 99; and Robert Williams. "Recruitment to the Ontario Legislature", a paper prepared for the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, St. John's, Newfoundland, June 1971, p. 30. Similar tendencies among NDP members in the House of Commons have been noted by Hoffman and Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁷LeDuc and White, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99, distinguish between cooperative and competitive styles of opposition, the former being preferred by the Liberals, the latter by the NDP.

This apparent consensus on the rewards of constituency problem solving is impressive, but it would be premature to conclude that members are disenchanted with legislative work. In fact, when asked about the burdensome and onerous aspects of the job members were most inclined to cite the unattractive side of being an ombudsman for constituents. In both legislatures, members complained of general public pressures including constituency requests and social obligations. In Ontario members also stressed the overall increase in workload that accompanied an increase in constituency requests, while Nova Scotia members expressed a similar complaint in terms of personal costs, including the lack of privacy and the inability to pursue other interests. This latter difference underlines the part time nature of the legislative career in Nova Scotia and the fact that it is still valued by many backbenchers. When Ontario members expressed disenchantment with constituency service it was often because constituency requests were impinging, not on their personal life, but on their role as a legislator:

The job has changed over the years. When we began a politician was a person who dealt with the making of policy, the broad strokes and guidelines and where the community should go. Now what has happened is that politicians have been forced to become social workers. That is most unfortunate, because it is a perversion of what the politician should be: a thinker, not a social worker technician. (077)

It was unusual to encounter this degree of bitterness, but quite common to find members in Ontario complaining that the crushing volume of constituency work imposed considerable limitations on their freedom of action.

Perhaps the most important observation that can be made about these responses is the fact that very few members have formed judgments about the rewarding and unrewarding aspects of their office on the basis of legislative work or policy-related experiences. In Nova Scotia, for example, no member cited a lack of influence over the policy process as their major complaint while in Ontario only nine members, or 12% of those interviewed, did so.⁸ It appears that most evaluations of legislative office in both provinces are based on experience with constituent demands. For most members these are positive experiences and appear to satisfy a need to "help people" in the public realm, although there are inevitably personal costs associated with this type of work.

The apparent significance of constituency-related experiences for provincial members provides further evidence for the conventional wisdom that provincial legislators are oriented primarily toward constituency service. However, a more reliable way of testing the relative significance of legislative and constituency work is to ask members to identify the amount of time they devote to each activity. Two important studies of provincial legislators in Canada have used this technique. In their study of backbenchers in the 28th Ontario legislature, LeDuc and White found that approximately 28% of respondents spent over three-quarters of their time on constituency work.⁹ Over half of

⁸Freshman MPs exhibit a similar lack of concern for the issue of policy influence. See Price, Clarke and Krause, "The Socialization of Freshman Legislators", p. 218.

⁹LeDuc and White, op. cit. Calculated from Table VIII, p. 95.

their respondents fell in the category "about 50%", in all likelihood an attractive response for those who wished to demonstrate some versatility. A more recent study by Clarke, Price, and Krause, that encompassed members in all provincial legislatures, found that a considerably smaller proportion of members--only 8.6%--spent over three-quarters of their time on constituency problems. In Ontario, less than 4% of respondents fell in this category, while in Nova Scotia this category contained only two members, or 10% of respondents.¹⁰ Both studies suggest that private members in provincial legislatures devote a substantial proportion of their time to constituency work and that the provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia are no exceptions in this regard.

In the studies cited above mailed questionnaires formed the basis of analysis¹¹ and members were asked only about their constituency work. To offset the halo effect that might be created by a single question, respondents to this study were asked about both constituency and legislative work. The same format was used for each question:

¹⁰Clarke, Price and Krause, "Constituency Service among Canadian Provincial Legislators". Calculated from Table III, p. 531.

¹¹Both studies aimed at the entire population of backbench respondents. LeDuc and White, working only with Ontario members, received usable responses from 63% of members; Clarke et al. achieved a 51.5% response rate and noted that on comparison with the Parliamentary Guide, the "sample" was not markedly unrepresentative of the population.

Approximately how much of your working time as an MPP (MLA) is spent on constituency problems (policy and legislative work)?

- (1) 76 - 100 percent
- (2) 51 - 75 percent
- (3) 25 - 50 percent
- (4) less than 25 percent

In this manner members were encouraged to consider their response to one question in light of their response to the other.

Two caveats must be entered. While members do see their job as divided into two major components--constituency and legislative--as pointed out earlier, this division is not without some ambiguity and not all members can be expected to agree on precisely what constitutes legislative as opposed to constituency work. Second, while it is reasonable to expect the amount of time devoted to each of these sets of activities to be inversely correlated there is no reason to expect a perfect relationship since these activities do not necessarily exhaust all that members do with their "working time".

Table 4.2 indicates that in the time they devote to constituency work there is very little difference between Ontario and Nova Scotia backbenchers. In both legislatures at least 70% of members devote more than half of their working time to constituency problems. This represents a higher proportion than that found by Clarke, Price and Krause in either legislature,¹² but a smaller

¹²Slightly more than 50% of their Ontario respondents spent more than half of their time on constituency work, while in Nova Scotia nine of their eighteen respondents were in this category. Calculated from Table III, p. 531.

Table 4.2

The Percentage of Time Spent on Constituency Work
in Ontario and Nova Scotia

<u>Province</u>	<u>Time Distribution</u>				Total
	76-100%	51-75%	25-50%	less than 25%	
Ontario	16	54	26	4	100 n=70
Nova Scotia	28	48	16	8	100 n=25

Table 4.3

The Percentage of Time Spent on Legislative Work
in Ontario and Nova Scotia

<u>Province</u>	<u>Time Distribution</u>				Total
	76-100%	51-75%	25-50%	less than 25%	
Ontario	3	25	48	24	100 n=70
Nova Scotia	0	8	60	32	100 n=25

proportion for Ontario than that reported by LeDuc and White.¹³ The only notable difference is the fact that in Nova Scotia a wider distribution prevails with a greater proportion of members occupying the extremes.

The question of time devoted to legislative work, however, reveals greater disparities (see Table 4.3). In Nova Scotia members seem to be much less inclined toward legislative work. Only 8% of members claimed to spend more than half of their time performing activities related to policy and legislation compared with 28% in Ontario. It is evident that in neither legislature have members abandoned a constituency service orientation, the syndrome so prominent in the Camp Commission's evaluation of Ontario's legislative difficulties. It is not clear, however, that in Nova Scotia the remaining time is devoted entirely to legislative work. In this case the apparent lack of incentives and opportunities for participation seems to have discouraged members from paying more attention to legislative tasks.

Perhaps one of the major reasons for the subordinate role of legislative work in Nova Scotia lies in the area of legislative professionalization, in particular the number of days during which the legislature meets. Backbenchers in Nova Scotia spend more time in their constituencies than backbenchers in Ontario since the Nova Scotia

¹³The comparison here is more difficult since LeDuc and White divide the time involved into three categories. However, as noted earlier, 28% of respondents claim to spend more than three-quarters of their time on constituency problems. Calculated from Table VIII, p. 95.

legislature is only in session two, or perhaps three, months of the year. Not only are there more opportunities to become immersed in constituency work, but it is more likely that constituents will come to expect devotion to local affairs. Table 4.4 shows that reported postal communication with constituents is considerably lower in Nova Scotia than it is in Ontario, but the quantity of telephone calls and personal visits are roughly comparable, despite the fact that the average Ontario member represents almost four times the population of his Nova Scotia counterpart.¹⁴ It is likely that the increasing pressures members feel to devote their full time to being an MLA have their origins in the expanding caseload of constituency requests. The following excerpts suggest the importance of the constituency workload in that decision:

In our constituencies, especially in the mining towns we have a lot more casework than in the recent past. People come to you with every kind of problem, and sometimes it doesn't even relate to you but you can't tell them it's not your job. That's why in those mining towns in Cape Breton there's only one MLA out of six that is not a full time member. (NS 12)

I seem to be much busier than the average MLA. People call me from all over the province, even from different parts of Canada, with their problems. My phone is constantly ringing. That's why I just recently made the decision that I have to give it full time. I sold my business. (NS 22)

¹⁴According to the 1971 census, Nova Scotia members represent about 17,000 constituents on average compared with nearly 66,000 for Ontario members.

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Table 4.4

Constituency Contact in Ontario and Nova Scotia

	<u>Ontario</u>	<u>Nova Scotia</u>
Average Letters per week	47	14
Average Phone calls per week	65	45
Average Personal visits per week	16	17
	n=68	n=25

Until the legislative workload in Nova Scotia begins to increase it seems likely that the present imbalance between constituency and legislative work will continue and perhaps become even more acute. As the experience in Ontario demonstrates, however, an increase in legislative work will not transform the job of a provincial member from one based in the constituency to one based in the legislature. Members must still attend to both sets of responsibilities. The following section examines those factors that influence members to make adjustments in the time devoted to these responsibilities, a process referred to here as the setting of priorities.

The Role of Ambition and Legislative Position in the Setting of Priorities

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, it is expected that most of the variation in the time devoted to both legislative and constituency work will be accounted for by the nature of political ambition. Those with progressive ambitions will be

inclined toward legislative work and will spend relatively little time attending to constituency problems. The data presented in Table 4.5 and 4.6 reveal that among Ontario backbenchers both expectations are confirmed, although the relationships may be somewhat weaker than expected.

In this regard it is interesting to note that the priorities established by those *without* progressive ambitions contribute most to the explained variance. While almost all of these members devote more than half of their time to constituency work (and less than half to legislative tasks) approximately 50% of those with progressive ambitions also spend more than half of their time on constituency work, and an even greater proportion, 59%, spend less than half of their time on legislative work. In short, while it is relatively easy to predict the priorities of those without progressive ambitions, it is much more difficult to predict the orientations of ambitious members. The desire to be a minister does influence some members to give priority to their legislative responsibilities, but others prefer to partition their time in the same way as almost all of their unambitious colleagues. This suggests that even for ambitious members constituency ties may have an important role to play in the setting of priorities.

In contrast to Ontario backbenchers, the inclination of backbenchers in Nova Scotia toward either constituency service or legislative work does not seem to depend at all on the nature of their ambitions. Although the tables are not reproduced, the corresponding

Table 4.5

Political Ambition and the Time Spent on Constituency Work
in Ontario (percentages)

<u>Constituency</u> Time	<u>Ambition</u>	
	<u>Progressive</u>	<u>Not Progressive</u>
76-100%	15.6	15.8
51-75%	34.4	71.1
25-50%	43.8	10.5
less than 25%	6.3	2.6
Total	100.1	100.0
	n=32	n=38
	tau _c = -.30	
	eta = .29	

Table 4.6

Political Ambition and the Time Spent on Legislative Work
in Ontario (percentages)

<u>Legislative</u> Time	<u>Ambition</u>	
	<u>Progressive</u>	<u>Not Progressive</u>
76-100%	3.1	2.6
51-75%	37.5	13.2
25-50%	37.5	57.9
less than 25%	21.9	26.3
	100.0	100.0
	n=32	n=38
	tau _c = .21	
	eta = .19	

tau c coefficients for Tables 4.5 and 4.6 in Nova Scotia are .06 and .02. Members in Nova Scotia seem to reject any connection between the time they devote to legislative work and the achievement of higher office. Many with progressive ambitions choose to spend considerable time on constituency work and very little on legislative matters. In short, the hypothesis advanced fails to find confirmation among Nova Scotia backbenchers. Of course, the differences between the Ontario and Nova Scotia legislatures discussed in chapter three anticipate these findings. Where incentives and opportunities for legislative participation are as few as they seem to be in Nova Scotia, members respond by devoting less time to the legislature and refusing to base their career aspirations on devotion to legislative work.

If political ambition has little effect on how members in Nova Scotia set their priorities, what independent variables are structuring their responses? One of the most common, and useful, means of explaining the attitudes and behaviour of legislative elites is to examine party affiliation.¹⁵ As chapter one pointed out, this is a particularly viable alternative in parliamentary systems where the norms of party cohesion are thoroughly accepted.¹⁶ LeDuc and White,

¹⁵Robert D. Putnam, The Comparative Study of Political Elites (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 80-88. In Canada the importance of party affiliation has been stressed by Allan Kornberg, Canadian Legislative Behaviour (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), esp. chapter 7.

¹⁶It has been argued, however, that there are many aspects of legislative behaviour that are not subject to party discipline and over which party loyalty has little effect. See Harold D. Clarke, Richard G. Price, and Robert Krause, "Backbenchers", in David J. Bellamy,

for example, characterized the style of opposition offered by the NDP in Ontario as competitive, compared to the cooperative style preferred by the Liberals. Their conclusions were based, in part, on the assiduity with which NDP members pursued their legislative and policy responsibilities.

This division is much less viable in Nova Scotia, however, where there are only three NDP members. In addition, the failure of ambition to structure responses suggests that the major difference will emerge between government backbenchers and opposition members. While opposition members are required to clash periodically with cabinet, government members can afford to cultivate a moderately passive role in legislative and policy matters, even during sittings of the House. This is particularly the case if they are not induced into legislative work by their ambitions. In addition, the ratio of ministers to members is relatively high in Nova Scotia¹⁷ which also suggests that those backbenchers left out of the cabinet will be inclined to give constituency tasks a high priority, if only because the surfeit of ministers encourages it. Ministers in Nova Scotia seldom fail to credit their own backbenchers with a role in policy-making, but they also stress the primacy of constituency service:

Jon H. Pammett, Donald C. Rowat (eds.), The Provincial Political Systems (Agincourt: Methuen, 1976), pp. 214-215.

¹⁷ The ratio in Nova Scotia is .37, second only to Newfoundland which has a minister to member ratio of .45. Ontario, in 1975, had the lowest ratio among the provinces, .21.

As a private member I think the main role, of course, is to represent your constituency and its needs to the ultimate. (Nova Scotia minister)

Number one, he should be there to attempt, and I say attempt, to serve his constituency and his people ... I think it's extremely important that members keep the government, the cabinet ministers, informed of what's going on in their communities, where our policies are working, where they're not working and so forth. (Nova Scotia minister)

First, he should look after his people and their problems. Second, he should have input into policy because he's out there. And he should support the government. (Nova Scotia minister)

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 confirm that government backbenchers in Nova Scotia are inclined to spend more of their working time on constituency problems than their opposition counterparts. In the case of legislative work there is very little variance and, not surprisingly, the relationship is considerably weaker, although in the expected direction. It should be stressed that both government and opposition members display similar tendencies: considerable concern for constituency work and a minor role for legislative tasks. In the case of the opposition, however, these tendencies are not as pronounced. In terms of priorities, therefore, it seems justifiable to divide the Nova Scotia legislature into three groups: ministers, all or most of whom spend the majority of their time on legislative and policy work; government backbenchers, most of whom spend the majority of their time on constituency work; and opposition members who are inclined toward constituency work, but at least some of whom resemble ministers in their devotion to legislative duties. It must be

Table 4.7

Legislative Position and the Time Spent on Constituency Work
In Nova Scotia (percentages)

<u>Constituency</u> <u>Time</u>	<u>Legislative Position</u>	
	<u>Government</u>	<u>Opposition</u>
76-100%	41.7	15.4
51-75%	50.0	46.2
25-50%	8.3	23.1
less than 25%	0.0	15.4
Total	100.0	100.1
	n=12	n=13
	tau c = .43	
	eta = .41	

Table 4.8

Legislative Position and Time Spent on Legislative Work in
Nova Scotia (percentages)

<u>Legislative</u> <u>Time</u>	<u>Legislative Position</u>	
	<u>Government</u>	<u>Opposition</u>
76-100%	0.0	0.0
51-75%	8.3	7.7
25-50%	50.0	69.2
less than 25%	41.7	23.1
Total	100.0	100.0
	n=12	n=13
	tau c = -.17	
	eta = .15	

emphasized that this division applies only in Nova Scotia. None of the parties in Ontario can be readily distinguished from the others in terms of its members' priorities, nor is the division between government and opposition members at all revealing.¹⁸

Controlling for Constituency Factors

To this point the analysis has been confined to two independent variables--political ambition and legislative position (government/opposition status) in the House. The first variable has some predictive strength in Ontario, but none in Nova Scotia; the latter variable has strength in Nova Scotia, but none in Ontario. This applies to variations in both constituency and legislative work. As pointed out in chapter one, it is possible that the establishment of priorities, as well as other aspects of legislative participation, is a function of differences in members' relations with their constituencies.¹⁹ In particular, members who have had the opportunity, or the need, to establish close contacts with constituents are likely

¹⁸That this pattern does not apply in the Ontario legislature is indicated by the relatively low values of tau c: -.13 in the case of constituency time and .08 in the case of legislative time.

¹⁹There are other possibilities as well, of course. Clarke et al. suggest that representational roles may also be a factor in the setting of priorities, although they are forced to conclude that on the basis of their findings, role orientation "cannot provide a fully adequate explanation of legislative behaviour and ... other factors should be considered". See Clarke, Price and Krause, "Constituency Service Among Canadian Provincial Legislators", p. 533.

to spend more time than others on constituency problem-solving. This point of view was frequently articulated by respondents themselves, many of whom drew the distinction in terms of urban and rural ridings, without necessarily agreeing on which type of riding produced the most contact. It was also tested by Clarke *et al.* who constructed a local-cosmopolitan index designed to measure how socially and psychologically "integrated" members were into their constituencies.²⁰

In examining the impact of constituency ties on members' priorities, several relationships were hypothesized. The view expressed by members--that rural and urban ridings would differ--found little support in the data,²¹ but three other hypotheses seemed sufficiently promising to be examined. First the level of inter-party competition, it has often been suggested, will affect legislative behaviour and particularly devotion to constituency duties.²² The more competitive the constituency the more inclined members will be toward servicing constituency needs.²³ This is

²⁰Ibid., p. 529.

²¹This was measured by asking the respondent to classify his or her own constituency.

²²See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the measure of inter-party competition employed here.

²³Clarke, Price and Krause, "Constituency Service among Canadian Provincial Legislators", p. 524. For an assessment of the general importance of interparty competition in the Canadian political system see J.A.A. Lovink, "Is Canadian Politics Too Competitive?", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 6, no. 3 (September 1973), pp.

more likely to be the case if members perceive a connection between constituency work and reelection, a precondition satisfied in both provinces.²⁴ Second, it seems reasonable to believe that the more years a member has served in the legislature, the more time he will devote to his constituency. Not only do the years in office provide members with opportunities to become acquainted with constituents' needs, but the longer members spend in the legislature without achieving a cabinet position, the more inclined they will be to concentrate their energies on those who have the power to re-elect them. Finally, the longer members have lived in their constituencies, the more likely they are to have developed strong ties with their constituents.²⁵ Under these circumstances, members would be inclined to devote more time to the constituency and to place less value on tasks that take them beyond their constituency work.

In addition to being an alternative means of accounting for the manner in which members set their priorities, the strength

341-379. Academic writers are by no means the only ones to have recognized the potential significance of party competition. A veteran Queen's Park journalist has observed that "the first principle of any elective system is not: achieve. It is: survive. And if reelection depends on making the Santa Claus parade in Bobcaygeon, then you can bet your life that that is where the MPP will be and the amendments to the Warble Fly Act can go hang". See Norman Webster, "Home-folk Syndrome a Problem", Globe and Mail, October 3, 1975, p. 7.

²⁴ In both provinces over 75% of those interviewed said that constituency work was "very important" to reelection and only one member from either legislature claimed it was less than "quite important".

²⁵ LeDuc and White, op. cit., p. 92.

of constituency ties may also account for members' ambitions. Those who represent competitive ridings will not only devote more time to constituency work, but will also adjust their ambitions to take into account the costs of constituency service in terms of advancement and the likelihood of political longevity. Similarly, those who have spent several years in the legislature may have abandoned any hope of a cabinet post while those who are long-time residents of their ridings may never have wanted more out of public office than to serve the needs of their neighbours. In short, one or more of these variables may "explain" the relationship between ambition and the time devoted to constituency and legislative work since they can account for the variation in both.²⁶ Under these circumstances the partial-order relationship between ambition and the time devoted to various aspects of the job would be negligible or zero.

The first step in testing these hypotheses is to examine the zero-order correlations between these variables and the time devoted to constituency and legislative work. We begin in Ontario where members' priorities seem to depend on their ambitions. In the Ontario legislature neither the level of inter-party competition nor the length of legislative service is related to the time members spend on constituency and legislative tasks. The length of residence

²⁶Patricia Kendall and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Problems of Survey Analysis", in Robert K. Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld (eds.), Continuities in Social Research (New York: Free Press, 1950), pp. 135-167.

in the constituency, however, shows a moderately strong positive association with constituency time ($\tau c = .25$) but only a low negative association with legislative time ($\tau c = -.09$).²⁷ This discrepancy underlines the fact that members do not feel compelled to strike a perfect balance between constituency and legislative time, although they acknowledge the job's major components. Consequently, different variables may structure responses. To the extent that constituency ties are important in Ontario their influence is predominately in the area of constituency service. The longer members have lived in the communities they represent, the more time they devote to constituency work. How much of their remaining time members devote to legislative work depends more on ambition rather than constituency factors.

The second step in this testing procedure is to examine all three variables: the length of residence in the constituency, political ambition, and the time spent on constituency work. In the case of Ontario members, can the strength of constituency ties, as measured by the length of residence in the constituency, explain the relationship between ambition and the time devoted to constituency work? A useful means of testing the effects of controls on an

²⁷ The values of τc reported here and elsewhere were obtained by collapsing the continuous variables into three roughly equal categories.

original bivariate relationship is provided by Multiple Classification Analysis.²⁸ Its principal advantage is that it provides statistical controls, thus helping to avoid the perennial problem of vanishing cases in the analysis of nominal or attribute data. The impact of independent variables is expressed by the statistic *eta* which measures the deviation of each category mean from the grand mean of the dependent variable. The effect of controls is suggested by their subsequent impact on the deviation.²⁹

In the case of the relationship between ambition and constituency time in Ontario, the value of the original *eta* was .29. As expected, Table 4.9 shows that the variables of legislative experience and electoral competition had virtually no effect on the original relationship. However, the number of years spent in the constituency had a relatively major impact. Although the relationship

²⁸F. Andrews, J. Morgan, and J. Sondquist, Multiple Classification Analysis (Ann Arbor: SRC, University of Michigan, 1969). Multiple Classification Analysis assumes a dependent variable measured at the interval level. The results of the Multiple Classification Analyses reported in Tables 4.9 and 4.10, and subsequent MCA Tables were checked by an examination of controlled contingency tables. None of the results differed perceptibly.

²⁹When the means are identical in each category, *eta* is zero, but it increases to a maximum value of 1.0 as the means become increasingly dissimilar and the variance within the categories of the independent variable decreases. Norman Nie, et al., SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (2nd. ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), p. 230.

between constituency time and ambition, as measured by *eta*, was not particularly strong in the first place, the presence of this variable reduces it considerably.

This finding is important, not only because it clarifies the importance of ambition in Ontario, but also because it confirms the suggestions and findings of other research, namely that constituency factors are important in decisions about priorities. Ambition, it seems, is important to Ontario backbenchers primarily in deciding how much time to devote to legislative work. Those with progressive ambitions generally devote more. Constituency factors are of negligible importance to this decision. In the case of constituency service, ambition is also a factor, but one that is seriously overshadowed by the strength of constituency ties. For Ontario members, both ambition and time spent on constituency work depend on how long members have lived in their constituencies. Once this latter variable is controlled, the original relationship disappears. We are forced to conclude that while constituency ties influence the time members devote to constituency work, ambition is not a crucial factor in this decision.

The relative importance of constituency factors to the proportion of time spent on constituency work in Ontario suggests that they may also be important in Nova Scotia. This speculation is borne out by the zero-order correlations. While the number of years spent as a resident in the constituency is of minor consequence, both electoral competition and legislative experience is related to

Table 4.9

The Impact of Independent Variables on the Relationship Between Ambition
and Constituency Time in Ontario: Coefficients from a
Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Ambition</u>	<u>Time Spent on Constituency Work</u>	
	eta/beta	R ²
<u>Zero-Order Correlation</u>	.29	.08
<u>Controlling for:</u> <u>Legislative Experience</u> <u>and Electoral Competition</u>	.28	.08
<u>Controlling for:</u> <u>Years of Constituency</u> <u>Residence</u>	.08	.09

Table 4.10

The Impact of Independent Variables on the Relationship Between Legislative
Position and Constituency Time in Nova Scotia: Coefficients from a
Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Legislative Position</u> <u>(Gov/Opp)</u>	<u>Time Spent on Constituency Work</u>	
	eta/beta	R ²
<u>Zero-Order Correlation</u>	.41	.17
<u>Controlling for:</u> <u>Legislative Experience</u> <u>and Electoral Competition</u>	.21	.38

time spent in the constituency. As expected, the more competitive a member's constituency, the more time he spends on constituency work. Unexpectedly, however, the less legislative experience members had, the more likely they were to devote a large proportion of their time to constituency work. Members in Nova Scotia, it appears, prefer to ease themselves into legislative work after having established their credentials as ombudsmen for constituents, or, perhaps, after learning what constituency service entails.³⁰

These relationships, of course, raise doubts about the original finding, namely that Nova Scotia members are inclined toward constituency or legislative work largely as a function of their legislative position, i.e. their membership in either the government or the opposition. The results of a Multiple Classification Analysis, summarized in Table 4.10, confirm these suspicions. When the level of electoral competition and the extent of legislative experience is controlled, the relationship between legislative position and time devoted to constituency work does diminish. This means that government members, in addition to spending more time than opposition members on constituency work, also tend to have less legislative experience and represent more competitive constituencies than their

³⁰This outcome was anticipated by Jack S. Cramer, "Parliamentary Experience and Legislative Behaviour", in Pammett and Whittington (eds.), op. cit., p. 204. Cramer argued that new members would perceive a greater responsibility for constituency affairs than veterans, although his own research yielded little evidence in support of his hypothesis.

opposition counterparts. However, as Table 4.10 shows, even in the presence of these controls government members are still more inclined toward constituency work than opposition members. The original conclusion, namely that government members perceive a division of labour between themselves and cabinet ministers on the question of constituency work, remains valid. It must be amended, however, to acknowledge that constituency factors also exert an influence on how members set their priorities. In combination these variables account for 38% of the total variance.

As the findings in both provinces show, successful predictors of the time members devote to their constituencies are much easier to find (at least among the variables that have been canvassed) than are successful predictors of the time devoted to legislative work. Among Ontario backbenchers ambition remains the most important factor in predicting the time spent on legislative work. Neither legislative position nor any of the constituency variables considered are reliable guides. In Nova Scotia, opposition members are likely to devote more time to the legislature than government members, but, as pointed out earlier, this is only a weak tendency. A more promising possibility is the level of constituency competition, which is a good predictor of constituency time. Those whose constituencies are less competitive generally spend more of their time on legislative tasks ($\tau c = .28$). Although this is usually interpreted as a response to a relatively low level of electoral threat, it is possible that hard work in the legislature enhances electoral strength in the constituency.

Finally, the fact that ambition plays a relatively minor role, and constituency factors a relatively major role, in the setting of priorities in both provinces, serves to remind us that even those with progressive ambitions must get reelected. Moreover, most members, including those who aspire to the cabinet, feel an obligation to serve their constituents, an obligation which may grow with personal attachment to the constituency. This attention to what Clarke et al. call "career maintenance" is most apparent, as one would expect, in decisions about the time to be allotted to constituency work. In deciding on how much attention the legislature merits, ambition is an important factor, but only in Ontario where there are sufficient reasons to believe that participation in legislative affairs is rewarded.

Conclusions

Much of the previous writing and research on provincial legislators has stressed their tendency to devote a considerable amount of time to constituency service. The findings presented here confirm this tendency among backbenchers both in Ontario and Nova Scotia. They show, moreover, that in both legislatures members are strongly inclined to cite constituency problem-solving as the most satisfying or rewarding aspect of legislative office. Most members, however, also reserved their major complaints for constituency work, reinforcing the view that this aspect of the job is prominent, not

only in terms of the time involved, but also in terms of attitudes toward legislative life. In both legislatures members are more inclined toward constituency work than legislative tasks, but in Nova Scotia this is made more prominent by the relatively low priority members give to legislative work, a tendency anticipated by differences in legislative environment outlined in chapter three.

Although political ambition was hypothesized to be the main factor determining how members arrange their priorities, in the case of constituency work it either proved to be of little value--the case in Nova Scotia--or the original relationship was explained by an antecedent constituency factor--the case in Ontario. In Ontario the strength of constituency ties proved to be more important than other factors in determining members' devotion to constituency duties; in Nova Scotia constituency ties plus legislative position (government/opposition status) succeeded in accounting for a considerable proportion of the total variance.

The time devoted to legislative work proved more difficult to explain. Ontario backbenchers are clearly influenced in this regard by their ambitions, but this is not the case in Nova Scotia. Like the distribution of time devoted to legislative work, this difference between Ontario and Nova Scotia backbenchers was not entirely unexpected given the differences in opportunities outlined in chapter three. In the case of Nova Scotia, members seem to be influenced somewhat by their position in the legislature and, to a greater degree, by the level of competition in their constituencies.

The following chapter discusses the quantitative aspects of legislative participation in more depth. Employing different measures of participation and examining a variety of legislative activities should provide more scope for determining the factors members weigh in decisions about legislative participation.

CHAPTER V

THE PATTERN OF LEGISLATIVE PARTICIPATION

The decision to devote more or less time to the legislature is only the beginning of decisions that members must make about legislative participation. This chapter is concerned, primarily, with how frequently members take advantage of the formal and informal opportunities for participation available within the legislatures of Ontario and Nova Scotia. It begins by examining informal participation, particularly the communications backbenchers have with ministers and public servants. These informal channels have rarely been examined in parliamentary systems, although it is usually conceded that behind the formalities of legislative organization, norms of behaviour, or rules of the game, guide members in their efforts to influence policy.¹ Attention is then focussed on the formal avenues of participation, particularly debates and questions on the floor of each legislature. Again, the primary concern is with

¹See, for example, Allan Kornberg, "Rules of the Game in the Canadian House of Commons," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 26, no. 2 (May 1964), pp. 358-380, and, more recently, Richard G. Price, Harold Clarke, and Robert Krause, "The Socialization of Freshman Legislators: The Case of Canadian MPs," in Jon H. Pammett and Michael S. Whittington (eds.) *Foundations of Political Culture* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), pp. 211-238.

the frequency of participation. The pattern that emerges in each of these areas should answer two major questions. First, how equal or unequal is the distribution of participation among members? Do all members actively employ the opportunities available? Second, to the extent that members differ in their rates of participation, what factors seem to be primarily responsible?

In chapter four the participation of members in the affairs of the legislature was estimated very generally by examining the time members devote to legislative work. In this chapter participation is measured more precisely and defined more narrowly. By listening to debates or attending committee meetings members participate only in an oblique way, despite the fact that a great deal of time may be consumed. The participation examined in this chapter is based on exchange and communication. Members are considered to participate to the extent that they communicate ideas and preferences to one another and to those who ostensibly have authority within the legislature. Naturally, there will be individual differences, in participation and differences between legislatures in the degree to which participation is concentrated. The latter is of particular importance since it suggests what proportion of the membership consider active participation worthwhile. Jean Blondel goes as far as to argue that if the proportion of active participants in a legislative body is small, "either the assembly is essentially run by the government or by a few supporters of the government, or there is an inner

elite which is probably involved in most of the decision-making."²

Provincial legislatures may not be dominated by a clique of activists, but there is little evidence that the majority of members are thoroughly integrated into the policy process. Fred Schindeler, for example, has described the Ontario legislature as a "powerless" body and an ineffective appendage to the policy process.³ The Camp Commission expressed essentially the same view by identifying a dominant myth in Ontario that prescribes for the legislature the role of occasionally approving the actions of ministers and departments in administering the affairs of the province. As the Commission put it: "There isn't much place in this myth for the parliamentary and democratic ideals of participation, confrontation, examination, and discussion of policy and policy alternatives in the legislature."⁴

There is some reason to expect less concentration in Nova Scotia. As chapter three pointed out, few Nova Scotia members have specialized responsibilities and there are therefore relatively few informal obstacles to active participation. Members can be

²Jean Blondel, Comparative Legislatures (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 71.

³Fred Schindeler, Responsible Government in Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), chapter 8, *passim*.

⁴Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, Fourth Report (September 1975), p. 3.

expected to address a wide variety of issues. On the other hand, Blondel has found that "chambers meeting relatively infrequently seem to have a slight tendency to have a larger proportion of passive members".⁵ Compared with Ontario, the Nova Scotia legislature certainly meets "relatively infrequently".

The pattern of participation, and particularly the degree of concentration, suggests the manner and extent to which legislators are involved in policy matters. However, there is little reason to expect all members to participate equally in every forum available. To some extent, participation will be concentrated. In whom it is concentrated, and under what circumstances, reveals as much about the legislature's policy role as the pattern of participation itself.

Two hypotheses are offered regarding the concentration of participation. First, government members will differ considerably from their opposition counterparts in their pattern of participation. Specifically, government members will rely primarily on informal communication and will have a higher level of informal contact with ministers and bureaucrats than opposition members. This does not mean that the content of their communications will always, or even usually, involve policy matters. Government supporters have the opportunity to raise policy matters in caucus and informal communication may be reserved for more personal, constituency-related

⁵Blondel, op. cit., p. 72.

requests. Nevertheless, the participation of private members in informal discussions with ministers and public servants will be concentrated among government supporters. Formal participation, on the other hand, will be dominated by members of the opposition. They will engage in more speechmaking and ask more questions than their government colleagues.

The reasons for these differences lie in the organization of parliamentary activities according to the principles of cabinet government. In all provincial legislatures, as in the House of Commons, the participation of members in legislative policy-making occurs in a context defined by the cabinet. The major conflicts in the public forum of the legislature are between the opposition parties and the government leadership, namely the cabinet. Government backbenchers may be willing to participate, but, as Kornberg and Mishler put it, "their oratorical aspirations are dampened by party leaders."⁶ Instead, it is recognized that it is the opposition that has the most legitimate claim to parliamentary time.⁷ Government members are encouraged to participate through the caucus, or use their partisan advantage to urge policy alternatives on ministers and public servants in informal settings.⁸

⁶Allan Kornberg and William Mishler, Influence in Parliament: Canada (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1976), p. 132.

⁷Ibid.

⁸This does not mean that their influence is marginal. The threat of open revolt, even to the extent of withholding votes, has a

Members are encouraged to use particular modes of participation according to their position within the legislature, but the opportunities for individual participation are not the only factors that influence the activities of members. Members must also have some reasons or motivations for participation. In fact, Kornberg and Mishler argue that, "with respect to parliament, the motivation to participate is probably more important than, and certainly antecedent to, the opportunity to participate."⁹ While these authors employ twenty-two "motivational indicators", the analysis offered in this chapter concentrates on the, by now, familiar area of political ambitions. The second hypothesis on concentration examined in this chapter suggests that private members with progressive ambitions will differ from those without progressive ambitions in their pattern of participation. Exactly how and why this should occur requires some elaboration.

Ambition will probably be a more successful predictor of formal participation than of informal contact. There are two reasons for this. First, it is likely that constituency problems and requests

profound effect on the cabinet. See Anthony King, "Modes of Executive-Legislative Relations," Legislative Studies Quarterly Vol. 1, no. 1 (February 1976), pp. 15-17 and Robert J. Jackson, Rebels and Whips: An Analysis of Dissension Discipline and Cohesion in British Political Parties (London: Macmillan, 1968).

⁹Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., pp. 222-223.

for personal ministerial or departmental intervention will be the major subject of informal communications with both ministers and public servants.¹⁰ To the extent that these informal channels are dominated by personal requests, members will routinely pass on complaints or solicitations. If this is the case, the frequency of these contacts will depend primarily on the number of constituency requests. Any reluctance to communicate with ministers and public servants is probably the result of a lack of goodwill or responsiveness on their part. It is unlikely to depend on members' ambitions.

Some members, however, will choose to discuss departmental policy or government legislation with ministers and public servants. This type of discussion is a normal part of ministerial life and a common feature of relations between ministers and bureaucrats. It is likely, therefore, that those who aspire to ministerial positions will be the ones to include at least some policy-related discussions in their informal communications with ministers and public servants. Not only are ambitious members emulating the behaviour of ministers in anticipation of ministerial office, but they may also be calculating that to establish contacts and become acquainted with government.

¹⁰This view is based on previous research at both the provincial and federal levels; Lawrence Leduc Jr. and Walter L. White, "The Role of the Opposition In a One-Party Dominant System: The Case of Ontario" Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VII, no. 1 (March 1974), p. 91; and Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 187.

policy is useful in achieving the office they seek and discharging its responsibilities.

A second reason for expecting ambition to be a better guide to formal than informal participation is also related to the question of achieving political office. Members with progressive ambitions require public forums both to acquire experience and demonstrate political skills.¹¹ To behave in a fashion comparable to ministers it is necessary to participate actively in the legislature and to demonstrate a capacity to comprehend departmental policy. If media representatives and party leaders seem to be sympathetic, it is reasonable for private members to infer that their prospects for cabinet office improve as their participation increases.¹²

As before, the major problem with this reasoning seems to lie in the connection members make between promotion and performance. In Ontario, the opportunities and incentives provided for legislative participation are probably sufficient to encourage those with progressive ambitions to promote their own career through their legislative behaviour. In particular, the value that the leadership in the Conservative party has apparently accorded to legislative

¹¹This observation is not uncommon in parliamentary systems. In Canada see William Matheson, The Prime Minister and the Cabinet (Toronto: Methuen, 1976), p. 184; in Britain, John P. Mackintosh, "Reform of the House of Commons: the Case for Specialization" in Gerhard Lowenberg (ed.) Modern Parliaments: Change or Decline? (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 39; and in Germany Wilhelm Hennis, "Reform of the Bundestag: The Case for General Debate" in ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹²Naturally the quality of debate may be as important as the quantity. The discussion of how members approach policy matters is taken up in chapters VI and VII.

experience suggests that, to some extent at least, the legislature is regarded as a proving ground for prospective ministers. In Nova Scotia, opportunities and incentives are fewer. Given the existing recruitment pattern, members may be justifiably sceptical about the importance of legislative participation for the achievement of ministerial office and may choose to base their participation on other considerations.

The Frequency of Informal Participation

Private members have many opportunities to contact ministers. Government members have the unique opportunity to confront ministers in caucus, but all members can approach ministers on a personal basis. Use of these personal, and usually private, avenues is referred to here as informal contact. The term "informal" can be misleading. For many members this type of contact is genuinely informal in the sense that they seek a short conversation with ministers in the House or the government lobby. In Ontario, for example, almost two-thirds of the membership prefer to approach ministers in this way. Other types of contact, however, can also be considered informal, although members may choose these avenues for the explicit purpose of putting their relationship with ministers or public servants on a more formal footing. Nova Scotia members, for example, are much more inclined than their Ontario counterparts to write to ministers or to make appointments to visit ministers in their offices. In both provinces

members' contact with public servants is usually made over the telephone or in writing. In each case, however, the contact is personal and private and usually initiated by backbenchers. It is in this sense that the term "informal participation" is used.

The frequency of participation reveals the extensiveness of the informal communication network that exists in any legislative body. In Ontario and Nova Scotia the proportion of members who claim to contact members "frequently" is almost identical. In Ontario 59% of respondents to this question said that they contact ministers frequently in an average month; 58% of Nova Scotia members place themselves in the same category. Informal contact with deputy ministers and senior public servants is lower in both provinces: 39% of Nova Scotia members contact public servants frequently compared with 31% of members in Ontario.

Informal contact with ministers and public servants depends, to some degree, on whether a member belongs to the government or the opposition. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 indicate, as expected, that government members are more inclined to establish frequent informal contacts, although this tendency is more pronounced in the case of ministerial communications.¹³ Presumably government backbenchers feel more comfortable in pressing their opinions on ministers since they share

¹³ Similar results in the House of Commons are reported by Kornberg and Mishler, *op. cit.*, Table 5.5, p. 182.

Table 5.1

Frequency of Informal Contact with Ministers
by Legislative Position (percentages)

	<u>Ontario</u>		<u>Nova Scotia</u>	
	<u>Government</u>	<u>Opposition</u>	<u>Government</u>	<u>Opposition</u>
Frequently	67.6	50.0	75.0	42.9
Occasionally	23.5	25.0	16.7	28.6
Seldom/Never	8.8	25.0	8.3	28.6
	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.1
	n=34	n=36	n=12	n=14
	tau c = .21		tau c = .34	

Table 5.2

Frequency of Informal Contact with Deputy Ministers and
Senior Public Servants by Legislative Position (percentages)

	<u>Ontario</u>		<u>Nova Scotia</u>	
	<u>Government</u>	<u>Opposition</u>	<u>Government</u>	<u>Opposition</u>
Frequently	35.3	26.5	41.7	35.7
Occasionally	38.2	41.2	50.0	28.6
Seldom/Never	26.5	32.4	8.3	35.7
	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0
	n=34	n=34	n=12	n=14
	tau c = .10		tau c = .21	

the same party loyalty. For the same reason government supporters may be accorded more opportunities. Several government backbenchers in both provinces noted with pride their ability to arrange meetings with ministers on short notice:

I see ministers very often. That's one of the good things, at least with me. I can call any minister, any time and get in to see him. If a minister was in town I could hop in my car right now and go down and see him. (NS 9)

I see ministers a lot. I just came back from calling one from his lunch to have a consultation over a very important item. (O 45)

At the other extreme, some opposition members expressed considerable reluctance to establish frequent communications with ministers:

Apart from seeing them in the House, I hardly ever talk to ministers. Some of our members have a close liaison with the cabinet, but I don't like Tories particularly and the things I want to do are generally too far out of court for them. (O 19)

I don't talk to ministers very much. When you're in the opposition, you can catch them in the House, during question period or something, but if you phone for an appointment, they'll put you off on some assistant. Usually the minister doesn't know that much anyway. ((0,77)

Despite the pessimism (and cynicism) reflected in these opinions, it is clear from the distribution of responses, that a considerable proportion of opposition as well as government members are in close contact with ministers. What the tables do not reveal, however, are some significant inter-party differences, particularly in Ontario. Unlike their Liberal counterparts, most Ontario NDP members do not communicate frequently with ministers. While almost 70% of Liberal members are in frequent contact with ministers, less

than 30% of New Democrats place themselves in the same category.

Approximately the same proportion in each party, 30%, contact ministers either seldom or never.¹⁴ A similar tendency also exists in Nova Scotia, except that it is the Conservatives who claim to communicate less frequently with ministers, while the three NDP members are in fairly close contact. In neither province is the network of informal communication with ministers limited to government members. Inter-party differences indicate, moreover, that the members of some opposition parties choose not to make use of the opportunities that are available.

Opposition status apparently does make a difference to the frequency of ministerial contact, but it is by no means an unscalable barrier. In the case of communications with deputies and senior public servants, it is virtually no barrier at all. Table 5.2 indicates that opposition members in Ontario are slightly less inclined than government members to communicate frequently with bureaucrats, while in Nova Scotia the same tendency is more pronounced.¹⁵ Neither of these differences, however, is comparable to the differences in

¹⁴This is further support for the conclusion, offered by LeDuc and White, that New Democrats prefer a competitive style of opposition, Liberals a cooperative style. Op. Cit., pp. 90-91.

¹⁵In their study of the House of Commons Kornberg and Mishler found that government members were actually less likely than opposition members to report frequent contacts with public servants. Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 182.

ministerial contact for each province, nor are there comparable inter-party differences. The fact that opposition members are only slightly more reluctant than government supporters to approach public servants on a frequent basis is consistent with Anglo-American assumptions about the political neutrality of the public service.¹⁶

Public servants seem to be quite open to requests that originate with opposition spokesmen.¹⁷ The only scepticism in this regard was expressed by some Nova Scotia Conservatives who felt that on traditional patronage questions normally cooperative public servants had to heed their political masters:

I deal with the highways department regularly. I find it very frustrating though. They can't spend any money in my constituency, my being a Conservative you see. (NS 10)

All I want is a fair shake for my area ... I don't want them to say, 'That guy is a Tory down there in _____ and we're not going to give him anything!' I just want my fair share. (NS 8)

¹⁶ These assumptions are not always well-founded. In France government supporters, it has been argued, are given preferential treatment by public servants. See Ezra Suleiman, Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite (Princeton: University Press, 1974), chapter 8, esp. pp. 361-366.

¹⁷ At the federal level one deputy minister has described contacts with opposition members as "unavoidable" but another has acknowledged that deputies have a responsibility to help members of parliament, including those in the opposition. See the comments by R.M. Burns and A.W. Johnson cited in David Hoffman, "Liaison Officers and Ombudsmen: Canadian MPs and Their Relations with the Federal Bureaucracy and Executive", in T. Hockin (ed.) Apex of Power (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 151.

When members are asked about the frequency of contact, a common question in elite studies,¹⁸ their estimations are necessarily subjective. It is difficult to establish the validity of each estimate without actually measuring contact itself. It is possible, however, to obtain a similar estimate of contact from ministers or public servants and in this manner check the pattern of communication. The ministers interviewed for this study were chosen, in part, on the basis of how frequently members claimed to have contact with them. An effort was made to interview some ministers who were mentioned consistently by members, plus some who were mentioned occasionally or not at all.¹⁹

In both provinces ministers generally confirmed the pattern suggested by members' responses. Those mentioned frequently by members, for example, acknowledged that contact with private members was considerable. More important, perhaps, over half of the eighteen ministers interviewed confirmed that their contacts with opposition members were fewer than with the members of their own caucus, a finding which reflects the pattern established in the interviews with members. Most of the ministers in this group claimed to have little idea about the apparent reticence of opposition members.

¹⁸ See, for example, Robert Presthus, Elites in the Policy Process (London: Macmillan, 1974).

¹⁹ See the discussion in Chapter II.

I get very few requests from opposition members. But we never refuse to see anyone, the door is always open. I just thought, you know, that there would be a path beaten to your door. (Nova Scotia minister)

On the other hand, some ministers seem to be rather cool to solicitations.

The only time I see opposition members is when they ask for an appointment. I am pleased to meet with them in my office with their delegations, or in a boardroom, or wherever they wish. Outside of that, the only places I would see opposition members would be in the legislature or in one of the committees. (Ontario minister)

Perhaps more significant than the differences in the communications of government and opposition members is the fact that most members, regardless of party affiliation, approach ministers more frequently than their deputies or senior officials. In their study of the twenty-eighth Parliament Kornberg and Mishler found a similar tendency among federal MPs.²⁰ They argue that the frequency of communication is probably based on members' calculations about the relative influence of ministers and their deputies. MPs, they suggest, "tend to communicate most often with those in the best positions to help them realize their requests",²¹ viz. cabinet ministers. However, members may also be moved by questions of propriety: "the feeling exists that most civil servants are likely to be more forthcoming--particularly with opposition members--if MPs first direct their requests to the responsible minister."²²

²⁰Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 183. This tendency is also noted by Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

²¹Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 183.

²²Ibid.

In both provinces questions of propriety, or the proper way of doing things, are at least as important as estimations of influence. As Kornberg and Mishler suggest, and as Table 5.3 shows, many members do prefer to contact ministers first. They usually expect ministers to resolve problems personally or to pass them on, with appropriate instructions, to concerned bureaucrats. This strategy is frequently adopted to avoid annoying ministers by appearing to circumvent them:

I know some of the deputy ministers and I can contact them sometimes without bothering the minister. But one thing you must do is make sure the minister doesn't think you're going around him. They like to talk to members directly for the most part. (0 12)

Others adopt this strategy, as Kornberg and Mishler suggest, to avoid putting public servants in compromising positions:

All of my dealings are pretty well directly with the minister... Then, if I criticize him, he has the authority and he can get up in the legislature and defend himself. A civil servant can't do that. (NS 19)

Table 5.3

The General Strategy Employed in Contacting Ministers and Senior Public Servants (percentages)

	<u>Ontario</u>	<u>Nova Scotia</u>
Focus on Ministers	45	31
Focus on Bureaucrats	30	38
Either or Both Strategies	25	31
Total	100	100
	n=67	n=26

In neither province are all members persuaded by this logic. A second strategy, particularly popular among Nova Scotia members, is to concentrate attention on public servants. Members generally adopt this strategy because they feel that the workload of ministers is large enough without burdening them further with personal requests or advice. This does not mean that these members will never approach ministers. If they are not satisfied with the response of public servants, most will take their requests to the minister:

What I do, and mind you there are some senior civil servants who don't like me very much, but I'll go to someone that I happen to know. If I'm not happy with his explanation, or if I get a negative answer, I'll go to the deputy minister. If I don't get the answer there, I'll go to the minister. After a while those guys know that if there's any possible way, they had better move. (NS 6)

For these members many of the requests or questions concern individual constituents and, as the preceding excerpt suggests, most can be attended to without involving ministers or even their deputies.

Those members who employ both strategies, on the other hand, usually distinguish between policy matters and individual, constituent problems. The former are normally taken up with ministers, the latter with public servants. It was not unusual to find, among these members, a certain frustration at those who fail to adhere to this type of rule:

Ordinarily, I talk to ministers about general policy questions. I don't like to bother them with constituency problems, when a farmer hasn't got a capital

grant for instance ... Some members go through the minister, and I think that's really unfair. The minister has enough to do without filtering that sort of stuff down through the system. (0 79)

The comments of members suggest that most of them follow a particular set of norms in their informal communications with ministers and public servants. In both provinces members establish personal rules of conduct and claim to adhere to them. The grounds or basis on which members adopt these norms remains largely an unanswered question. Opposition members, and especially members of the NDP in Ontario, tend to be less active in informal participation, but this is not an overwhelming tendency, and applies more to communications with ministers than with public servants. Moreover, neither opposition nor government members show a particular preference for one strategy or another in their informal communications. Ambition, as expected, has little influence on the level of informal contact or the strategies adopted. Constituency and social background variables are, by and large, equally unreliable guides to these decisions. The only exception in this regard lies in the area of education. Members without university degrees generally claim to have more frequent contact with ministers and public servants. Education, however, is not a consistently strong predictor and is of no use whatsoever in predicting the particular strategy toward which members are attracted.

A more complete picture of the informal communication network in these provinces is available only by examining the content of

communications. Members approach ministers and public servants for particular reasons. Not only is the nature of those reasons important in explaining the frequency of communication, but the concentration of informal communication acquires significance only when the substance is known.

The Substance of Informal Contact

A distinction was made in chapter four between legislative work and constituency service. This distinction does not reflect the variety of topics that concern members in their relations with ministers and officials, but it does capture one of the most salient of differences among members. Some members confine their communications almost entirely to constituency matters; others discuss general government policy regardless of its immediate importance for their constituents. This qualitative distinction is essential in evaluating informal contact.

In both provinces the constituency and the problems of constituents are the primary topics of concern. Almost 60% of respondents in Ontario discuss nothing but constituency matters with ministers while an even higher proportion, 71%, discuss only constituency questions with public servants. Nova Scotia MLAs follow a similar pattern in their communications with public servants: 71% discuss only constituency matters. In conversations and communications with ministers, however, a majority of Nova Scotia

members--some 60%--claimed to discuss policy matters at least as frequently as constituency problems.²³

Those ministries most frequently contacted by members are responsible for areas of traditional concern among constituency-oriented backbenchers. Since many constituent problems involve individuals who are in a dependent relationship with the government, it is not surprising to find the ministries of Social Services and Family and Social Services contacted frequently by about half the members in each legislature. Other ministries contacted frequently include Highways, Health and those ministries, such as Tourism and Industry which are responsible for economic development in particular constituencies.

The tendency for informal communications to reflect constituency and not policy concerns confirms previous research in both the House of Commons and in Ontario.²⁴ It is interesting to note, in this regard, that a constituency orientation is apparently no more common among provincial legislators than it is among federal MPs, despite the concern for the constituency that supposedly dominates provincial legislatures.

²³A very few members in both provinces claimed to discuss only policy matters. For purposes of analysis these cases have been combined with those who discuss both policy and constituency questions.

²⁴Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 183; Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 150-151; and LeDuc and White, op. cit., p. 91.

One of the reasons for this pattern seems to be the availability of other forums for the discussion of government policy. Government members and ministers both made frequent references to caucus as an arena for the mobilization of support for, or resistance to, policy initiatives. For opposition members lengthy personal discussions with ministers over government policy may appear somewhat unseemly and even compromising to the party's position. All participants, however, have some stake in the personal problems of constituents, and requests for intervention are a legitimate and necessary aspect of representation.

In both legislatures, but particularly in Nova Scotia, those members who discuss policy matters at all are more inclined to do so with ministers than public servants. Kornberg and Mishler, who found a similar tendency in the House of Commons, attribute this pattern to the division of labour between ministers and their deputies. Ministers are responsible for the formulation of policy, deputies for its implementation. It is natural then, that senior public servants "would be concerned with the problems of individual constituents who had been affected by the ways specific policies were being implemented."²⁵ This distinction between policy and administration is not universally accepted, however. For legal and constitutional purposes the public servant may still be considered

²⁵Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 186.

a neutral instrument of policy administration, but it is now most common to find senior public servants portrayed as the intimate advisors of ministers.²⁶

The tendency to aim constituency-related requests at deputies and senior public servants is probably a reflection of the opinion, discussed earlier, that "trivial" matters should not be taken up with ministers. It may also be related to ambition. Government backbenchers are likely to calculate that policy discussions with ministers will advance their political fortunes more readily than similar discussions with public servants. As for opposition members, contact with ministers over policy is made more inviting by the opportunity to participate as an equal. For ambitious opposition members these chances to play the role of the minister are probably difficult to resist.

As Table 5.4 shows, a moderately strong relationship does exist between political ambition and the content of ministerial discussion in Ontario. Members with progressive ambitions are more inclined toward some discussion of policy matters in their communications with ministers than are those without progressive ambitions. In Nova Scotia, however, this relationship does not appear. An examination of Table 5.4 shows that the source of this discrepancy

²⁶See, for example, Richard J. Van Loon and Michael S. Whittington, The Canadian Political System (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1976), example; also, pp. 381, 392-393.

Table 5.4

The Substance of Informal Contact with
Ministers and Political Ambition (percentages)

<u>Substance of Contact</u>	<u>Ontario</u>		<u>Nova Scotia</u>	
	<u>Political Ambition</u>		<u>Political Ambition</u>	
	Progressive	Not Progressive	Progressive	Not Progressive
Mostly Constituency	43.3	71.8	38.5	41.7
Constituency and Policy	56.6	28.2	61.5	58.3
	99.9 n=30	100.0 n=39	100.0 n=13	100.0 n=12

$$Q = -.54$$

$$\phi = .28$$

$$Q = .07$$

$$\phi = .03$$

Table 5.5

The Substance of Informal Contact with
Bureaucrats and Political Ambition (percentages)

<u>Substance of Contact</u>	<u>Ontario</u>		<u>Nova Scotia</u>	
	<u>Political Ambition</u>		<u>Political Ambition</u>	
	Progressive	Not Progressive	Progressive	Not Progressive
Mostly Constituency	56.0	84.8	53.8	100.0
Constituency and Policy	44.0	15.2	46.2	0
	100.0 n=25	100.0 n=33	100.0 n=13	100.0 n=8

$$Q = -.57$$

$$\phi = .29$$

$$Q = -1.0$$

$$\phi = .50$$

3

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lies not in the behaviour of the ambitious, but with their unambitious colleagues. A similar proportion of ambitious members in both provinces discuss policy with ministers, but whereas very few unambitious members do so in Ontario, in Nova Scotia the majority of those without progressive ambitions also claim to have policy-related discussions with ministers. Why should Nova Scotia members who, according to the ambition hypothesis, have no particular incentive to demonstrate policy interests, wish to discuss policy with ministers?

The answer may lie in the other opportunities that are available. As chapter three has shown, the legislative environment in Nova Scotia does not provide many opportunities for members to offer personal views and preferences on government policies. Legislative sessions are short and when members are drawn together they must rely very much on their own resources. Research facilities are rudimentary and the committee system does not have sufficient autonomy to act as a vehicle for private members. As a result members may have greater need to employ informal channels to register their opinions on policy matters, whether they are ambitious for higher office or not.

Does the fact that fewer members in both legislatures discuss policy questions with bureaucrats mean that ambition is a poor guide to this aspect of informal contact? Apparently not. As Table 5.5 shows, in both legislatures members with progressive ambitions are more likely to include policy matters in their discussions with public servants than those who are not inclined toward a cabinet post.

In Nova Scotia, *only* those with progressive ambitions discuss policy with bureaucrats. This finding is quite congruent with the view, expressed earlier, that members with progressive ambitions are concerned to familiarize themselves with the content of government policy and the procedures of the public servants. For members on either side of the House this knowledge is useful in demonstrating an expertise in a policy area and legitimizing a claim on a cabinet position. It is also an opportunity to establish a relationship with public servants that approximates the one established by ministers. In this sense at least it can be considered an emulation of ministerial behaviour.

In summary, ministers are the primary focus of informal communications in both provinces and discussions with ministers are more likely to include policy matters than are discussions with public servants. Opposition members in both provinces are somewhat more reluctant than their government counterparts to participate in this informal communication network although this is not a strong tendency in either legislature. As expected, the nature of a member's political ambition has little effect on the frequency of his contact with ministers and public servants, but those with progressive ambitions are more inclined to discuss policy matters. The only exception in this regard is the contact Nova Scotia members establish with cabinet ministers. The nature of this contact appears to be unaffected by political ambition, a finding which reflects the characteristics of the Nova Scotia legislature and the relative

absence of opportunities to participate in other forums.

The Concentration of Formal Participation

Debates on the floor of the legislature and oral question period represent important opportunities for backbenchers to participate in the formal aspects of legislative policy-making. It has been argued, in fact, that debates and questions are "the two principal vehicles for influencing the content of public policy".²⁷ These modes of participation are formal because they are governed by rules of procedure including the provision that all members, within limits, be permitted to speak and that a record of proceedings normally be kept. If they have acquired the status of influential vehicles it is probably because ministers cannot ignore the fact that arguments have been made--although they can ignore the arguments--nor can they perpetually avoid the confrontation of oral questions. And in some cases the executive is obliged to act, at least to the point of investigation.²⁸

The advantages that attend formality should not obscure the fact that legislatures in Canada, like most legislatures, do not make laws in the strict sense of initiating, amending and accepting legislation. The function of law-making, once attributed to

²⁷ Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 147.

²⁸ Blondel, op. cit., p. 98.

parliaments, has been widely reinterpreted to mean the opportunity to publicly address the government's legislative proposals. In a similar fashion the function of scrutiny or surveillance acquires its importance because the opposition not only criticizes but also publicizes the government's shortcomings. In a description of parliamentary control in the British Parliament, that applies equally well to Canada, Bernard Crick has argued that realistically control means,

[N]ot the threat of overthrowing the government in the House, but the process of informing the electorate; of influencing the government by inquiry, debate and scrutinizing the administration; and the indirect--but powerful--effect all this has on the electorate.²⁹

In these formal settings members on both sides of the House are constantly offering advice to the government, to one another and to the electorate.³⁰ It is the opportunity to participate in the giving of advice that gives debates and questions their importance.

The concentration of formal participation in a handful of members may discourage others from developing policy interests or abandoning an emphasis on constituency service. It has a profound effect, in short, on the whole conduct of parliamentary business.

²⁹Bernard Crick, "Parliament in the British Political System", in Allan Kornberg and Lloyd Musolf (eds.) Legislatures in Developmental Perspective (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1970), p. 41.

³⁰For an extended discussion of parliament as an advisory body see A.H. Hanson, Planning and the Politicians (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 23.

The domination of a small oligarchy in the Bundestag has led Hennis to comment that,

The life of parliament is endangered by an exclusivity of participation in debates ... An MP who does not have the slightest chance of being recognized to speak and who has heard what is being said on the floor in preparatory party caucuses can only be moved to attend the sessions of the House by pure reverence for his leaders.³¹

Cabinet members will naturally participate heavily in debates and question period. They represent one half of the dialogue. The question is; who represents the other half?

The analysis presented here focuses on speeches and debates, but it is important to emphasize that these are not the only formal avenues for participation. Members also ask written questions (usually seeking detailed information), introduce private members' bills, and, in Nova Scotia, introduce notices of motion. Debates and questions are particularly important, however, because debates consume the majority of parliamentary time and oral questions are widely considered the most effective instrument the legislature possesses in its scrutiny of the executive.

Very little is known about the concentration of participation in legislatures. Some concentration, of course, is inevitable. Blondel points out that even in legislatures where participation is

³¹Hennis, op. cit., p. 78.

highest, about a quarter of the members do not participate at all.³² The level of concentration, however, can differ dramatically, as the evidence from Ontario and Nova Scotia will indicate.

Although Blondel has suggested that smaller legislatures usually have more passive members than larger ones, only one Nova Scotia backbencher was entirely silent during debates, compared with 21% of Ontario members, despite the fact that the Nova Scotia legislature sat for half as many days in the sessions that were compared.³³ More important, the speechmaking of private members, which is measured by the number of lines attributed by Hansard,³⁴ is distributed more equally in Nova Scotia. The Gini coefficient for speechmaking is .530 in Nova Scotia, compared with .661 in Ontario.³⁵ These

³²Blondel, op. cit., p. 71.

³³Data for the Nova Scotia members were based on the second session of the 52nd legislature; for Ontario members, the fifth session of the 30th legislature. These sessions coincided with the interviews.

³⁴The number of speeches made, as opposed to their length, represents an alternative means of measuring participation in debate. Unfortunately, it raises the rather thorny question of what constitutes a "speech". The sometimes wide-open character of debate (particularly in the Ontario legislature) plus the frequent use of Committee of the Whole in both provinces dictated that the length of speeches, rather than the number, be used as an indicator of participation.

³⁵The Gini coefficient or index is a measure of inequality in the distribution of a particular value within a group. The larger the coefficient, the greater the inequality. Hayward Alker, Mathematics and Politics (New York: Macmillan, 1965), chapter 3.

coefficients, and the differences in concentration can best be appreciated by examining participation on a disaggregated basis, beginning with a comparison of the government and the opposition.

As expected, opposition members dominated legislative debates in both provinces. In Ontario the average government backbencher spoke about one-tenth as long as the average opposition member while in Nova Scotia his participation, on average, was approximately one-fifth of that established by his opposition colleagues. These findings are in keeping with those of Kornberg and Mishler who comment that the House of Commons "belongs" to the opposition since debate "provides the opportunity for institutionalized overt opposition to the government of the day."³⁶ These authors go on to suggest that the rate of participation in legislative debates can also be accounted for by the size of the parliamentary party. Their data indicate that in the House of Commons members of the smaller parties, the NDP and Creditistes, speak longer than Conservatives and Liberals. Moreover, the smaller parties maintain a more equal distribution of participation than the larger parties.³⁷ In terms of volume, at least, this generalization is sustained in both provinces, as Tables 5.6 and 5.7 indicate.³⁸ However, in Ontario, where it is

³⁶ Kornberg and Mishler, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Table 4:2, pp. 134-135.

³⁸ It is worth noting, however, that except for the Creditistes in the House of Commons, the NDP is the smallest party in each legislature. An adequate test of this generalization will require a wider sample of legislatures.

Table 5.6

The Concentration of Speechmaking* in Ontario

	<u>X Length</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Gini</u>	<u>N</u>
All Private Members	2257	1026	3325	.661	86
All Opposition	4099	2810	3829	.455	43
Conservatives	415	90	785	.736	43
Liberals	2959	2565	2167	.392	23
NDP	5410	2895	4892	.448	20

*Speechmaking is measured by length of speeches.

Table 5.7

The Concentration of Speechmaking* in Nova Scotia

	<u>X Length</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Gini</u>	<u>N</u>
All Private Members	1416	1028	1593	.530	28
All Opposition	2228	1485	1789	.391	15
Liberals	479	255	442	.483	13
Conservatives	2004	1440	1702	.372	12
NDP	3127	2305	-	-	3

*Speechmaking is measured by length of speeches.

possible to compare the concentration of participation in the two smaller parties, the Liberals maintain a more equal distribution of speechmaking despite having a slightly larger contingent.

More striking than the differences among opposition parties are the differences in the rate and distribution of participation between government members in each of the provinces. Government backbenchers are not active participants in either province, but in Ontario their lack of participation borders on complete passivity. Not only do government members in Ontario speak infrequently, but there is more inequality in their participation compared with that of government supporters in Nova Scotia. In Ontario a few government members carry most of the burden, as a comparison of Gini coefficients shows. This difference in the participation of government members is undoubtedly a major factor in the overall difference between the two provinces.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, government supporters are expected to be relatively quiescent in public. Caucus provides an opportunity for the expression of opinions, and those members who wish to be considered for cabinet positions are likely to curb their oratory in the legislature.³⁹ This logic is probably more persuasive in Ontario, however, where there is more reason to associate legislative performance with advancement. In Nova Scotia

³⁹Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 132; also, Hoffman, op. cit., p. 157.

this connection is tenuous. Nova Scotia members can therefore be expected to participate more energetically in legislative debates since there are fewer incentives for restraint. In addition, members in Nova Scotia must take advantage of those opportunities that are available for public debate. The legislature meets infrequently and most committees are moribund. This means that speechmaking in the Assembly becomes an important part of legislative life.

The pattern of participation in oral question period follows that of debates except, as might be expected, the difference in the participation rates of government and opposition members is even more pronounced. Opposition members averaged almost forty questions each in both provinces, while government backbenchers in Ontario asked, on average, less than one question apiece and in Nova Scotia an average of fewer than three questions each. Overall, however, the Nova Scotia legislature once again displays a more equal distribution of backbench participation--a Gini coefficient of .583 compared with .752 in Ontario.

The greater equality of participation in the Nova Scotia question period is reflected on both government and opposition sides of the House. Only one third of the government's supporters in Nova Scotia asked no oral questions compared with 72% in Ontario, a pattern reflected in the Gini coefficients. On the advisability of government members questioning ministers Kornberg and Mishler observe that "when politically embarrassing questions are asked by

Table 5.8

The Concentration of Oral Questions in Ontario

	<u>X Questions</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Gini</u>	<u>N</u>
All Private Members	19.93	2.50	39.33	.752	86
All Opposition	39.16	24.75	48.70	.526	43
Conservatives	.70	.19	1.44	.814	43
Liberals	37.13	29.00	39.81	.494	23
NDP	41.50	24.40	58.27	.553	20

Table 5.9

The Concentration of Oral Questions in Nova Scotia

	<u>X Questions</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Gini</u>	<u>N</u>
All Private Members	20.86	12.50	24.55	.583	28
All Opposition	36.73	29.00	23.90	.313	15
Liberals	2.54	1.25	3.33	.639	13
Conservatives	30.15	26.00	17.15	.321	12
NDP	62.00	56.00	-	-	3

governing party members, they are likely to come from backbenchers who are willing to risk being passed over for promotion to party leadership positions."⁴⁰ To the extent that this is an accurate assessment of the calculations made, it appears that Nova Scotia MLAs are less intimidated by the prospect of embarrassing ministers or wasting their time. It seems reasonable to argue that their relative enthusiasm for question period stems from the same reasons as their relative enthusiasm for legislative debates.

The pattern of opposition participation in question period is also responsible for the lower overall Gini coefficient in Nova Scotia. The Conservatives alone and the combined opposition in Nova Scotia display a relatively low level of concentration. Participation among the Liberals and New Democrats in Ontario, on the other hand, is more concentrated as the standard deviations and Gini coefficients indicate. The tendency for a relatively small group of party leaders in Ontario to dominate question period was noted by the Camp Commission.

The reality is that not much time is left on most days for Backbenchers after the leaders have had their run. This domination by the leaders probably reflects the lack of specialization and specific expertise by other members of the caucuses, and the accepted view in Ontario politics that the party leader bestrides all the activities of the party and the caucus.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 140.

⁴¹ Ontario, Commission on the Legislature, Fourth Report, pp. 9-10.

The fact that opposition members in Nova Scotia manage to participate on a more equal basis despite considerably less specialization and expertise seems to belie at least part of the Camp Commission's explanation of concentration in Ontario. More important, perhaps is the fact that in a small legislature, with a small opposition contingent, there is a greater onus on individuals to assume their share of the burden. Moreover, when the legislature meets infrequently, the opposition leader does not have the opportunity to establish himself as the party's spokesman on every subject. This diffusion of responsibility is further encouraged among Nova Scotia Conservatives by the practice of assigning responsibility for particular ministries to several members. In a very important sense, the lack of specialization, or at least specialized responsibilities, seems to encourage members to question ministers and voice their opinions on a wide variety of subjects.

The Impact of Ambition on Formal Participation

In the introduction to this chapter it was argued that since formal participation in the legislature is an open, public affair, the floor of the House would be a most attractive forum for those with political ambitions. Here, aspiring private members can demonstrate political skills to the party leadership and to the various media representatives. In this regard debates and oral questions are of particular importance. Most of the legislature's time is consumed

by debates, and oral question period not only attracts media attention but is the most celebrated, and perhaps the most effective, means by which the opposition confronts the cabinet. The expectation, therefore, is that members with progressive ambitions will be more inclined to participate in speechmaking and in oral question period.

At first glance this expectation would appear to be confirmed. As Table 5.10 indicates, ambition explains a portion of the variance in the utilization of formal avenues of participation in both provinces. However, as chapter four has shown, the influence of ambition on legislative participation may be mitigated by constituency factors. To test for this possibility, several constituency variables were also examined for their effect on formal participation. The results are included in Table 5.10.

In Ontario, the length of constituency residence emerged as the most important constituency influence over both speechmaking and oral questions. The longer members had resided in their constituencies, the less inclined they were to take advantage of formal opportunities to participate. In Nova Scotia, among the constituency variables, electoral competition proved to be most important.

Unexpectedly, however, the impact of this variable on speechmaking was opposite to its impact on oral questions. Members who represented competitive ridings tended to ask more questions, but make fewer speeches. Members in these ridings may be more concerned to provide voters with tangible evidence that they can satisfy personal and collective needs. Speechmaking in this context is not

Table 5.10

Formal Participation in Ontario and Nova Scotia:
Bivariate Relationships

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Length of Speeches</u>	<u>Number of Questions</u>
Ambition*	Ontario	.44	.42
	Nova Scotia	.35	.37
Legislative Position (Gov/ Opp)*	Ontario	.56	.65
	Nova Scotia	.53	.83
Years of Con. Residence**	Ontario	-.48	-.46
	Nova Scotia	.02	.03
Electoral Competition**	Ontario	.24	.11
	Nova Scotia	-.27	.28

* The coefficient reported is *eta*.

** The coefficient reported is *Pearson's r*.

particularly tangible and members may prefer to spend time and energy on the important task of trying to maintain one's seat.

Although these constituency influences must be taken into account in examining the role of political ambition, the data presented in the preceeding section suggest that in interpreting all of these results care must be taken to acknowledge at the outset that a large proportion of the variation in formal participation is a function of the nature of parliamentary government. As Table 5.10 indicates, the effect of legislative position is dramatic in both provinces. It seems fair to say that whatever the effects of other variables, their influence can only be appreciated when allowance is made for the fact that in both Ontario and Nova Scotia the opposition parties dominate debates and oral questions.

The most effective means of making allowance for the importance of legislative position is to examine the influence of ambition and constituency variables within subsets of government and opposition members. This allows for the possibility that ambitious government members may participate more frequently than other government supporters and yet fall far short of the participation rates of opposition members. The hypothesis can be stated as follows: within both the government and opposition parties, a large portion of the variation in formal participation can be explained by political ambition. Even when constituency factors are controlled, ambition remains an important explanatory variable.

By and large this expectation is confirmed among opposition members in both provinces. As the Multiple Classification Analysis summarized in Table 5.11 shows, opposition members in Ontario who have progressive political ambitions ask more oral questions and indulge in more speechmaking than their colleagues. Moreover, the years a member has spent as a resident of his constituency has a negligible effect on this relationship. A similar pattern is evident among opposition members in Nova Scotia. In this case the influence of ambition is stronger than in Ontario and, as far as oral questions are concerned, the effect of electoral competition is negligible (Table 5.12). Electoral competition does have a greater impact on speechmaking, however. Apparently opposition members in Nova Scotia who have progressive ambitions also tend to represent competitive ridings. The role of ambition in terms of speechmaking is therefore mitigated, although not eliminated, by electoral competition. Thus the findings of Kornberg and Mishler, that "the ambition to become a cabinet minister is the single most important determinant of participation in debate",⁴² are corroborated within these provincial opposition parties.

⁴²Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., p. 238. These authors also show that in the House of Commons other aspects of legislative work, especially participation in committees, do not depend on ambition. Ibid., pp. 251-255 and chapter 7, passim. The absence of complete records of committee proceedings in both provinces makes it impossible to test these differences in Nova Scotia and Ontario.

Table 5.11

Formal Participation and Political Ambition
Among Opposition Members in Ontario:
Coefficients from a Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Ambition</u>	<u>Number of Questions</u> eta/beta R^2		<u>Length of Speeches</u> eta/beta R^2	
<u>Zero-Order Correlation</u>	.38	.14	.39	.15
<u>Controlling for:</u> Years of Constituency Residence	.32	.17	.31	.20

Table 5.12

Formal Participation and Political Ambition
Among Opposition Members in Nova Scotia:
Coefficients from a Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Ambition</u>	<u>Number of Questions</u> eta/beta R^2		<u>Length of Speeches</u> eta/beta R^2	
<u>Zero-Order Correlation</u>	.59	.35	.42	.18
<u>Controlling for:</u> Electoral Competition	.60	.35	.25	.66

The same cannot be said of government members. In both provinces, but particularly in Nova Scotia, government members who aspire to the cabinet were slightly *less* inclined than others to ask oral questions, although Tables 5.13 and 5.14 do not indicate the direction of the relationships.⁴³ Apparently oral questions can be interpreted as a challenge to cabinet ministers and ambitious backbenchers have no desire to convey the impression that they are capable of mutiny. In Nova Scotia this applies to speechmaking as well. Ambitious members not only do not distinguish themselves, but they are marginally less interested than their unambitious colleagues in contributing to debates.⁴⁴

In Ontario, however, ambitious members on the government's backbench exhibit the opposite tendency: they participate in legislative debates more frequently than their colleagues. Since ambitious government members also tend to have resided in their

⁴³The reason for this is that the value of *eta* ranges between 0.0 and 1.0. To put this finding in perspective, ambitious government members in Ontario asked an average of .30 questions apiece while their unambitious colleagues asked 1.0 questions on average. In Nova Scotia ambitious government backbenchers asked an average of 1.8 questions each while unambitious members asked an average of almost 3.5 questions.

⁴⁴The relationship is a very weak one as Table 5.14 shows, but on the average ambitious members of the government backbench accounted for approximately 450 lines of speechmaking in Hansard while unambitious members accounted for an average of more than 560 lines.

Table 5.13

Formal Participation and Political Ambition
Among Government Members in Ontario:
Coefficients from a Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Ambition</u>	<u>Number of Questions</u>		<u>Length of Speeches</u>	
	eta/beta	R ²	eta/beta	R ²
<u>Zero-Order Correlation</u>	.18	.03	.31	.10
<u>Controlling for:</u> Years of Constituency Residence	.15	.04	.23	.13

Table 5.14

Formal Participation and Political Ambition
Among Government Members in Nova Scotia:
Coefficients from a Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Ambition</u>	<u>Number of Questions</u>		<u>Length of Speeches</u>	
	eta/beta	R ²	eta/beta	R ²
<u>Zero-Order Correlation</u>	.25	.06	.13	.02
<u>Controlling for:</u> Electoral Competition	.21	.13	.15	.02

constituencies for relatively few years, it is not surprising that when the length of constituency residence is controlled the impact of ambition is reduced (Table 3.13). Once again, however, ambition retains independent predictive power.

The fact that among government members interviewed only those in Ontario are influenced at all by political ambition in their formal participation, was anticipated in both chapter three and the introduction to this chapter. The Ontario legislature is a relatively active body with growing resources. Although the level of participation is low among government backbenchers, no aspiring minister can afford to appear unable to assume his share of the responsibilities cabinet has toward the legislature. He or she may be reticent in questioning the ministry, but ambitious members cannot afford to be entirely passive during debates. In Nova Scotia the legislature meets infrequently and has very few resources with which to challenge a rather large executive. There are fewer opportunities, therefore, to acquire parliamentary skills, and less pressure to demonstrate them. The fact that parliamentary experience does not seem to be a particularly important asset for ministerial rank only serves to confirm this judgment.

This analysis helps to place the role of political ambition in perspective, but it leaves unanswered the question of why; in both provinces, ambition is a better guide to the behaviour of opposition than government members. The logic of the ambition

hypothesis would suggest that the need for a strong performance in the House is greatest among ambitious opposition members. Government supporters who covet cabinet posts have the opportunity to demonstrate their good judgment and oratorical abilities behind closed doors in caucus. They are expected to be restrained in their questioning of the ministry and only in Ontario is there a place for more active participation in debates. For ambitious opposition members good judgment in private is not enough. The leadership is more likely to value combativeness and the ability to score political points in the one forum the government cannot avoid: the floor of the legislature. The onus is on these members to demonstrate assertiveness and the ability to think on their feet. The constant spectacle of party clashes in the legislature depends on them.

Conclusions

This chapter has addressed two issues central to the study of legislative participation: the concentration of participation among private members and the factors responsible for differences in individual participation rates. In both Ontario and Nova Scotia informal means of participation are widely used. Most members discuss matters of personal concern with ministers and public servants at least on an occasional basis. Communications with public servants are less frequent than ministerial contacts, but only a minority

report having no contacts at all. In neither province are opposition members as active as government members in this informal communication network. This is a moderate tendency, however, and there is no evidence that opposition members are actually discouraged from establishing informal communications with ministers and public servants.

The frequency of informal contact does not depend on the nature of ambition. Ambition does make a difference, however, to the content of communications. Those members who aspire to a cabinet post are more likely than others to include some policy discussions in their communications with ministers and public servants. Only Nova Scotia members, for reasons outlined earlier, fail to conform to this pattern in their contact with ministers. Thus, while informal contact is a common feature of parliamentary life in both legislatures, the discussion of policy matters is usually concentrated among those with progressive ambitions.

The pattern of participation in debates and question period reveals a greater degree of dissimilarity between the provinces. Participation in Nova Scotia is spread more equally among the legislature's membership than it is in Ontario. Although government members are not particularly active in either province, in Ontario the participation of government supporters is concentrated in a small coterie of members. The oppositions in each legislature differ from one another in a similar way: in the Ontario opposition participation

in both debates and question period is more concentrated than it is among opposition members in Nova Scotia. These findings were anticipated in chapter three. The growth of specialized roles in the Ontario legislature results in the concentration of formal participation among those who have responsibility for particular policy areas. In Nova Scotia, where no such assignments exist, members speak freely on a variety of issues and, within the normal constraints imposed by party government, feel free to question the ministry.

These differences are a matter of degree, however. In both provinces formal participation is concentrated. It was argued at the outset of this chapter that the members who dominate these formal avenues would be those with progressive ambitions. The evidence suggests that this is only partly correct. In both legislatures those opposition members with progressive political ambitions assume a significantly greater burden of formal participation than their unambitious colleagues. This includes both speechmaking and the posing of oral questions. Ambitious government members, on the other hand, do not distinguish themselves in their questioning of the ministry and only in Ontario are they more active participants in legislative debates.

In chapter four it was shown that political ambition influenced the setting of priorities only for Ontario backbenchers and only on the issue of the time to be devoted to legislative

work. In the area of active participation the influence of ambition is also limited. Ambitious members are more inclined to discuss policy matters informally with ministers and bureaucrats and, if they are in the opposition, are more inclined to participate in debates and oral questions. The influence of ambition is felt, however, within a climate imposed by cabinet government. All backbenchers, ambitious or not, must seek out ministers and bureaucrats on behalf of suppliants in the constituency; all government members, ambitious or not, must be somewhat reticent about active participation. The role of ambition is best understood when allowance is made at the outset for these imperatives of parliamentary democracy.

CHAPTER VI

POLICY INTERESTS

The involvement of the legislature in public policy depends as much on the substance and style of members' contributions as it does on their frequency. In the preceeding chapters the substance of participation was characterized only in terms of whether it involved constituency or legislative matters. Little effort has been made so far to determine the actual content of legislative activities, policy discussions and formal participation, or to investigate the manner in which members approach questions of policy. This chapter is devoted to an examination of both issues: the first part of the chapter discusses the range and substance of members' policy interests, while the second part discusses the manner in which these interests are defined.

As part of the interview schedule respondents were asked to discuss their major policy interests and the reasons they had for becoming involved in these areas.¹ There are two principal advantages

¹Each member was asked: (a) In which areas of policy have you acquired some interest or expertise during the last few years?
(b) In which area do you feel you have been most involved personally?
(c) Why did you become involved in this area?
(d) What have been your general objectives in this field? What did you want to achieve?

associated with the interview technique in the context of policy interests. First, it permits an acknowledgement of interests not expressed in a formal setting. A content analysis of members' speeches would also provide an indication of interests but in the legislature most members speak to issues that are introduced by the government and these may, or may not, reflect the range of their personal interests. Second, the personal interview permits members to discuss their interests in their own terms. The members provide the frame of reference and an assessment can be made of their approach to policy issues as well as their substantive policy interests. Elite interviews which employ open-ended questions suffer from the traditional problems of interpretation that give rise to measurement error. In this context, however, where a major consideration is the member's conceptual framework, the interview technique is perhaps the most appropriate basis on which to make judgments.

The range of policy interests expressed by members provides an overview of the areas in which the legislature both has and lacks expertise. The expertise of private members can seldom rival that of public servants, of course, but the absence of any interest in major policy areas and the concentration of interest in others reveals some of the constraints encountered by the legislature in its attempt to scrutinize the executive. Of some importance in this regard is the source of members' policy interests. Do these interests reflect long-standing personal concerns, or are they areas in which members feel compelled to become involved through representative or party

pressures? In addition to the personal sources of policy interests the general pattern which emerges in each legislature should be influenced by other factors, including trends in provincial policy-making, the province's economic and social condition and particular issues pending before the legislature.

Politicians not only have different interests, but they also differ in the way they approach and analysis policy issues. Of particular concern in this chapter is the definition of policy interests, i.e. the frame of reference used in pursuing policy objectives. For some members this frame of reference includes only the details of implementation and administration. Little or no concern is expressed for the advisability of the general policy. These members approach policy questions on a case by case basis with little continuity of interest beyond, perhaps, an overriding concern for the welfare of constituents. Other members use broad, general categories in defining their interests. Their frame of reference is more inclusive and usually more coherent. Robert Putnam refers to differences in the way politicians approach policy as differences in political style: "Not what men think about politics and policy, but how they do so--this is the essence of political style."²

²Robert Putnam, The Beliefs of Politicians: Ideology, Conflict and Democracy in Britain and Italy (New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 35.

X In the following chapter another element of political style is introduced, but in this chapter the main issue is that of interest definition.

The interest definition of members has a potential significance for the performance of the legislature as a scrutinizer of, or contributor to, government policy. Legislatures whose members define their interests narrowly, or with a concentration on the character of their own constituencies impose limits on the type of contribution they can make to policy discussions. Under these circumstances ministers are more likely to concentrate on avoiding errors of implementation and administration and to respond to members on the basis of constituency considerations. Their relationship with the legislature may be quite different, however, if they are challenged by members who are appreciative of a range of government actions in a broad policy area and who have a long term commitment.

Why do members differ at all in their interest definitions? The ambition hypothesis which has guided the analysis to this point seems particularly useful in answering this question. The logic of the ambition hypothesis, as pointed out in previous chapters, rests on the assumption that aspirants for political office will emulate the behaviour of current office holders and conduct themselves in a manner that will aid in their eventual assumption of that office. In anticipating promotion ambitious politicians can be expected to make the definition of their policy interests congruent with the responsibilities inherent in the desired office. As argued in

chapter one, it is particularly important for the applicability of the hypothesis that the attitudes or behaviour to be emulated be unambiguous. If there is a difference of opinion on the type of behaviour commonly associated with the office to which members aspire, then ambition cannot be expected to influence all members in the same direction.³

Although there are bound to be differences of opinion among ministers and members about the most appropriate manner for ministers to discharge their policy responsibilities, the issue of interest definition, or the frame of reference ministers should employ in their approach to policy, is less likely to be a bone of contention. To a certain extent all ministers who head government departments are obliged to become subject specialists,⁴ but this rarely means that ministers must have specialized knowledge prior to their appointment.⁵

³ Ambition is also a more tenuous predictor when it is not clear exactly which offices members desire. This problem is pointed out in John Soule, "Future Political Ambitions and the Behaviour of Incumbent State Legislators", Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 13, no. 3 (August 1969), p. 454.

⁴ In this regard see the comments of R.M. Punnett, Front-Bench Opposition: The Role of the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Cabinet and Shadow Government in British Politics (London: Heinemann 1973), p. 315.

⁵ There has been disagreement, particularly in Britain, about the advisability of having "experts", as opposed to talented laymen, assume cabinet posts. In most countries the latter approach prevails. See B.W. Heady, "The Role Skills of Cabinet Ministers: A Cross-National Review", Political Studies, Vol. 22, no. 1 (1974), pp. 66-85.

It does mean, however, that ministers have to assume responsibility for the actions of public servants and the government in a broad policy area. At any moment a minister may be defending a particular program, expenditure or action, but he or she can ill-afford to lose sight of the entire range of departmental responsibility or the relation particular programs bear to general departmental policy.

If the ambition hypothesis holds, those who aspire to cabinet positions can be expected to define their policy interests in similar terms.⁶

Specifically, they will refer to a broad policy area which usually coincides with the responsibilities of at least one government department. Furthermore, since ministers normally have province-wide responsibilities, those with progressive ambitions can also be expected to omit, or deemphasize, their own constituencies in defining their interests.

Policy Areas and the Distribution of Interest

Several efforts have been made to categorize public policies. Policies have been classified according to the type of satisfaction

⁶This hypothesis has been stated and tested by Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin, "Political Ambitions and the Behaviour of Incumbent Politicians", Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 22 (June 1969), p. 299. As this chapter will show, their conclusions are paralleled by findings in this study.

they provide,⁷ for example, and the scope of their impact.⁸ One of the most influential of typologies has been offered by Theodore Lowi and is based on functional categories: distributive, re-distributive, regulatory and constituent policies.⁹ All of these typologies are abstract. Their authors are usually seeking to establish and test propositions that relate their policy types to a variety of other phenomena.

The objective in this chapter is more modest: to provide a summary description of politicians' policy interests in categories that closely approximate the ones they themselves employ. For the most part these categories are substantive ones, for example highways, education, and health care delivery. Normally, substantive categories are more reliable than other, more abstract typologies. The categories are usually less ambiguous and the level of measurement is nominal. Researchers generally agree, therefore, on the category in which particular policies or programs belong.¹⁰

⁷Murray Edelman, "Symbols and Political Quiescence", American Political Science Review, Vol. 54, no. 3 (September 1960), pp. 695-704.

⁸Lewis A. Froman, "An Analysis of Public Policies in Cities", Journal of Politics, Vol. 29, no. 1 (February 1967), pp. 94-108.

⁹Theodore Lowi, "Four Systems of Policy, Politics and Choice", Public Administration Review Vol. 32 (July/August 1972), pp. 298-310.

¹⁰For a good discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of categorizing policy contents see Lewis A. Froman, "The Categorization of policy Contents", in Austin Ranney (ed.), Political Science and Public Policy (Chicago: Markham, 1968), pp. 41-52. See also Robert H. Salisbury, "The Analysis of Public Policy: A Search for Theories and Roles", in ibid., pp. 151-178.

There are two main problems in applying this rather straightforward method to the study of provincial politicians. The first is the wide range and variety of their interests. Not all members oblige the investigator by describing their interests in a few broad categories. The substantive policy areas that appear in Table 6.1 represent an effort to impose some order on this range of interests while retaining the same basis for categorization used by respondents, namely one based on substantive interests. A related problem is the fact that some members refer to principles that should be observed in the making of all policy. Members in both legislatures expressed concern about such issues as the proliferation of government regulations, the erosion of due process, and the invasion of privacy. Often these interests are connected with particular substantive concerns. A member interested in the area of personal privacy, for example, may be concentrating his attention on the use of credit information, but his interest is likely to extend to other issues should they involve the issue of privacy. The emphasis on principles as a point of reference is the least common method of identifying interests. Nevertheless, several members in both legislatures defined their interests in this manner and we return to the question later in considering the breadth of policy interests.

The pattern of interests revealed in each legislature is likely to be affected by three factors. First, the policy interests of members should reflect, to some degree, the actions of provincial

governments in recent years. William and Marsha Chandler have charted policy trends in the provinces by examining changes in the composition of provincial government in recent years according to substantive policy categories. They show that in terms of expenditure, "the fields of health and education constitute the areas of most significant policy change: and that these categories "now represent the two largest components of provincial jurisdiction."¹¹ Social welfare, however, has not been expanding as an issue area, while transportation and natural resources are now less prominent parts of provincial policy-making.¹² If the interests of provincial members reflect these broad trends in recent policy, they should also reflect the cultural and economic differences that exist between the two provinces. Substantial differences in the levels of industrialization and urbanization are particularly important as potential sources of differences in the policy interests of members.¹³ Finally, the interests of members may also reflect political issues that were before the legislature at the time of the interviews, although none of the

¹¹William Chandler and Marsha A. Chandler, "Policy Trends" in David J. Bellamy, Jon H. Pammett, Donald C. Rowat (eds.) The Provincial Political Systems (Toronto: Methuen, 1976), p. 254.

¹²Ibid., pp. 251-254.

¹³A discussion of regional disparities with particular emphasis on manufacturing employment can be found in T.N. Brewis, "Regional Economic Disparities and Problems" in L.H. Officer and L.B. Smith (eds.), Canadian Economic Problems and Policies (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1970), pp. 335-351.

questions in this area were intended to elicit comment on strictly contemporary matters.

Table 6.1 confirms that there are some striking similarities and differences in the policy interests of members in each of the provinces. The area of social services stands out as one in which a large and almost identical proportion of members in each province expressed some interest. This area includes the departmental responsibilities of Education, Health, Family and Social Services, and Colleges and Universities (in Ontario) and several members in both provinces mentioned these ministries specifically. Members also mentioned more specific areas, however, including dental services, community clinics and the services available to senior citizens. The common level of interest expressed in this general area underlines the impact that broad trends in government activity have for individual legislators.

A roughly equal, and fairly high, level of interest was shown in the area of economic development. This interest almost always took the form of a concern for regional economic development or the future of a particular producing segment of the economy. Cape Bretoners and members from Northern and Eastern parts of Ontario were the most likely to mention economic development as an area of interest, but other members mentioned independent commodity producers, particularly fishermen and farmers. Though the provinces have different economies and different levels of industrialization, these differences have done little to erode a common concern for the fate

Table 6.1

The Policy Interests of Private Members in
Ontario and Nova Scotia

<u>Policy Areas</u>	<u>Percentage of Members Mentioning*</u>	
	<u>Ontario</u>	<u>Nova Scotia</u>
Economic Development/ Stimulation	35 (26)	42 (11)
Social Services	37 (28)	39 (10)
Intergovernmental Relations and Gov. Operations	11 (8)	35 (9)
Environmental Protection/Resource Management	32 (24)	12 (3)
Labour and Industrial Relations	8 (6)	23 (6)
Government Regulation/ Consumer Affairs	21 (16)	4 (1)
Justice and Social Control	12 (9)	8 (2)
Finance Management/ Administration	3 (2)	8 (2)
Miscellaneous	7 (5)	4 (1)

* The figure in brackets indicates the number of members who mentioned a policy area. Figures total more than 100% because of multiple mentions.

of particular economic units.

Other areas which evoked a roughly similar level of interest in the two provinces were the areas of justice and social control (which includes police forces and correctional institutions) and that of finance. These areas attracted considerably less interest, however, than social services and economic development. Only two members in each province, for example, claimed to have a general interest in government finance. It is a moot point whether these legislatures need more financial critics, but with so few members responsible for the overall pattern of government spending, it seems certain that the legislatures' capacity to hold the executive responsible for expenditure is affected. In both legislatures this deficiency is aggravated by the absence of estimates committees and a reliance on the Committee of the Whole for the review of spending proposals.

Apart from these four areas, the pattern of interests differs considerably between the two provinces. Ontario members on both sides of the legislature showed more concern than their Nova Scotia counterparts for issues related to government regulation and consumer affairs. This interest was by no means limited to the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Affairs itself. Members expressed specific concerns in a variety of areas including the regulation of snowmobiles, seat belts, consumer warranties, and landlord-tenant relations. The interest expressed by Ontario MPPs suggests the importance of

regulation as a governing instrument in the province and the growing legitimacy of consumer demands.¹⁴ In Nova Scotia, on the other hand, regulatory and consumer issues were virtually ignored by members.

A similar difference emerged in the area of environmental protection and resource management. At the time of the interviews the Ontario legislature was often the scene of confrontation between the government and the opposition parties (particularly the NDP) over mining conditions in northern communities and the issues of occupational health and mercury pollution. In the course of the interviews interested opposition members concentrated their attention on the effects of industrial pollution, while government members expressed their environmental concerns in the form of an interest in the proper management of water and forest resources, recreational lands, and ecological sanctuaries. Once again, relatively few Nova Scotia members displayed a similar level of interest.

In the two areas discussed above, economic factors offer the most plausible explanation for differences between the provinces. It seems reasonable to assume that a higher level of industrialization and a larger, more urbanized population in Ontario has forced a greater number and wider variety of demands on the political system.

¹⁴ In establishing this category of policy interests it is recognized that consumer and regulatory issues are not necessarily the same thing. Most of the references to consumer issues involved some form of regulation, however, and this is the reason for the title given to this category. The problem of the consumer interest in regulatory proceedings is stressed by M.J. Treblicock, "Winners and Losers in the Modern Regulatory State: Must the Consumer Always Lose?" Osgoode Hall Journal, Vol. 13, no. 3 (December 1975), pp. 619-647.

than in Nova Scotia.¹⁵ In 1972 Ontario created a Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Affairs and in recent years has concentrated considerable attention on coping with the by-products of industrialization and urbanization. The province has a complex and heterogeneous social system to which both the government and private members have been forced to respond.

Although Nova Scotia members displayed less interest in regulatory and environmental matters than their Ontario counterparts, they expressed more interest in the areas of labour and industrial relations. Labour issues in Ontario were raised infrequently and almost always in the context of the working environment; in Nova Scotia members were concerned primarily with industrial relations and the strike mechanism. Some members in Nova Scotia were clearly prompted by what they considered to be a rather fragile relationship between labour and management that threatened to create a poor climate for investment in the province. Nova Scotia members also expressed more interest in the institutions of government, particularly

¹⁵For a similar interpretation of the effects of urbanization and industrialization on the pattern of government policy-making see Dale H. Poel, "The Diffusion of Legislation Among the Canadian Provinces: A Statistical Analysis" Canadian Political Science Review, Vol. IX, no. 4 (December 1976), p. 620. Differences in the pattern of interests in American state legislatures have also been attributed to socio-economic factors. See John C. Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan and Le Roy C. Ferguson, The Legislative System (New York: John Wiley, 1962), pp. 196, 199.

relations between the province and its municipalities. The greater concern for this issue in Nova Scotia was probably due in some measure to the fact that during the interviews a set of government bills designed to vastly modify the powers of the municipalities was before the legislature.

This overview of the substance of members' policy interests clearly indicates that personal interests are conditioned by the political and economic environment. Common trends in government policy-making, economic differences between the provinces, and the particular issues before the legislature all seem to be important in establishing the parameters of policy interests.

Of course, members have personal reasons for becoming interested in particular policy areas. Table 6.2 summarizes the reasons given by members for their interests. Once again, inter-provincial differences are particularly noteworthy. Over 60% of members in Ontario were influenced in their choice of policy interests by their responsibilities either to their constituents (representative pressures) or their party (request of leader).¹⁶ In Ontario there seems to be less scope for interests based on personal or even occupational experiences. The legislature is organized to respond to a range of policy matters wider than the purely personal interests

¹⁶Conservatives were the most inclined to cite representative pressures, Liberals the most inclined to mention party or leadership pressures.

Table 6.2

The Sources of Members' Policy Interests:
Ontario and Nova Scotia
(percentages)

	<u>Source of Interest</u>			
	Professional/ Occupational	Representative Pressures	Request of Leader	Personal Experience
Ontario	21.7	36.2	26.1	15.9
Nova Scotia	38.5	19.2	11.5	30.8
				Total
				99.9 n=69
				100.0 n=26

of its membership. This pattern can be attributed, in part at least, to the legislature's workload, which demands a division of labour, and the availability of research units capable of helping members become acquainted with areas in which they have been obliged to acquire some form of expertise.¹⁷ Moreover, the frequent use of select committees in the Ontario legislature has probably facilitated the development of interests in policy areas like aging and corporate law with which few members have had any prior connection.

In Nova Scotia the pressure to develop new interests unconnected to personal experiences is considerably less. Almost 70% of private members trace the development of their policy interests to personal or occupational sources. A lighter workload may be responsible for the absence of a systematic delegation of responsibilities. As discussed in chapter three, little effort is made in the opposition to assign responsibility for particular policy areas to spokesmen,¹⁸ and among government supporters there is no formal specialization to compare with Ontario's system of parliamentary assistants. Consequently, only three opposition members, and no government supporters report being asked to develop an interest or expertise in a particular policy area.

¹⁷ This, of course, applies to the opposition parties much more than the Conservatives, as chapter three pointed out.

¹⁸ The term is used by the British parliamentary parties to describe those members of the opposition assigned particular subjects. Punnett, *op. cit.*, p. 109 and *passim*.

The Definition of Policy Interests

To this point the policy interests of members have been differentiated only on the basis of their substance. As mentioned earlier, however, members treat their policy interests in different ways. A major difference among members is the manner in which policy interests are defined. Interest definition refers to the frame of reference politicians employ to organize and articulate their interests. Two aspects of interest definition are of particular importance in this chapter: the scope or breadth of the interests involved, and the importance of the constituency as an element to which members refer in giving structure to their interests.

The main criterion applied in assessing the breadth of members' interests is one of generality. This involves an estimation of what the respondent's interests encompasses as he describes it. Some members have a narrow focus to their interests, choosing particular programs that affect a narrow range of people or problems whose solution is demanded within a limited time frame.¹⁹ Others define their interests in broad, sweeping terms that sometimes embrace all the actions taken or contemplated by one or more government departments. Occasionally, members combine generalities and specifics in their discussions, moving from broad policy areas, such as education, to

¹⁹ Blondel has argued that legislatures are particularly effective in solving problems of this type. Jean Blondel, Comparative Legislatures (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 102.

a discussion of specific problems such as the most appropriate method for financing post-secondary institutions:

Although the level of generality is probably the most important means of assessing the breadth of interests, it is also necessary to consider the extent to which policy interests are coherent and comprehensive. This is especially important where members claim a multiplicity of interests or define their interests with both generalities and specifics. Some members, for example, use broad categories to define interests, but then confine their discussions to particular questions and demonstrate little concern with how they are affected by, or affect, general policy. Others discuss a variety of issues of personal interest but no connection among them is intended. An evaluation of the breadth of policy interest requires, therefore, some concern for comprehensiveness--the extent to which the discussion of policy is inclusive--and coherence--the presence of a framework which relates different interests to one another.

To ascertain the frame of reference members employ in discussing their interests, respondents were asked what they hoped to achieve in the area of their greatest involvement (note 1). Responses to this question, and questions designed to probe the nature and source of policy interests, were employed to assign members to three categories according to the breadth of their

interest definition.²⁰

- (1) interest in one or more broad policy areas,
- (2) interest in one or more specific policy areas, and
- (3) interest in particular issues or decisions unrelated to a general policy area.

Those with broad policy interests often defined them by referring to the responsibilities of one or more government departments. Although particular programs or issues were sometimes discussed these respondents left the impression that virtually anything that arose concerning the ministry would merit attention.

I am very interested in what happens in the departments of Finance and Development and, of course, in the department of Municipal Affairs. I have a very general interest in all of them, but if I were to specify, those are the three main areas of interest to me. Do you have any particular objectives in these areas? Yes, very much so. This whole business of municipal affairs in Nova Scotia needs a shakeup ... As far as shaping policies for municipal affairs, I do have some fixed ideas, and I want to make a contribution. (NS 20)

As mentioned earlier, some members established their interest in a broad policy area by referring to general principles of policy-making.

²⁰In most cases members were content to identify a single policy area in which most of their interest had been concentrated. When more than one area was identified they were almost invariably at the same level of generality. Any uncertainty was resolved by the coders agreeing on the major area of interest to the respondent. The initial, independent codes were used to generate a tau-beta inter-coder reliability coefficient of .86. None of the respondents was placed at opposite ends of this three point measure.

In addition to, or instead of, substantive interests, these members indicated concern for *any* legislation or government decisions that might bear on the principle they had chosen to defend. Frequently this amounted to a concern for procedural safeguards and individual rights, as the response of this Nova Scotia lawyer suggests.

L In terms of legislation, individual rights legislation concerns me. I suppose that is number one. Secondly, I am concerned with laws that have discretionary features in them. For instance, the motor vehicle code. I find that the motor vehicle code is in conflict with certain provisions of the criminal code ... The third area that bothers me is the unbridled power given in many statutes to the Governor-in-Council to make regulations. I introduced a resolution here last spring requesting that legislation be adopted to make every resolution subject to the scrutiny of the legislature and debatable. (NS 1)

In both of these cases the definition of interests goes well beyond specific policies. Moreover, the changes desired by the respondents are usually quite comprehensive. Far from being technical questions they involve broad policy initiatives.

In the second category are members with specific policy interests. These were usually defined by referring to particular government programs or pieces of legislation. Characteristically, respondents had developed these interests after having become members of the legislature. Participation on select committees, advisory councils and regulatory agencies often acted as the primary stimulus. Perhaps because their interest was often recently acquired, it was not uncommon for these members to stress their status as amateurs in their chosen area. Discussion often revealed, however,

that a considerable amount of technical and detailed knowledge had been absorbed.

I don't think I've developed any expertise or anything, but I have developed an interest. That has been through the select committees on conservation and then on drainage which are related. I knew nothing about nature ... but the two or three years I have spent on these committees have certainly focused my attention in that direction. Did you have any particular objectives in these areas?

In relation to drainage, an updating of the Act. It has been on the books for a long time. The engineer was almost God Almighty when it came to drainage matters in a township or area. We were hoping to streamline the process so that the average person would have all avenues open to him without excessive costs ... In relation to the select committee on conservation authorities, my only hope was that all of southern Ontario would be covered. (O 35)

In the case of this opposition member the scope of his interest was relatively narrow but, as he pointed out, the drainage and conservation areas are related. Not all members with specific policy interests recognized, or seemed concerned about, establishing some coherence to their interests.

For a new member, I feel great about the input I have had in changes we are making to the Workman's Compensation Act ... Some of the changes in the tax act for people with mobile homes I fought for ... I've been on more select committees I think than any elected member. Superannuation, for example, although that legislation has not been introduced yet. It will be introduced, we hope, in the spring sitting. Oh yes, and I'm also on the select committee on the Liquor Act. (NS 14)

Without denying the possibility that all of these areas are related, it seems that this member was more concerned to communicate his diligence and his feelings of efficacy than to provide a framework which gives some coherence to his interests. He is not a dilettante,

however. Although this extract from the interview does not reveal it, this respondent was conversant with issues in each of the policy areas mentioned, and as his comment on the superannuation act suggests, his interests were not ephemeral.

Specific policy interests conform roughly to what Jean Blondel calls "policies of intermediate importance". These, he writes, "are sufficiently broad to involve more than a few legislators while being sufficiently technical or non-ideological as to avoid leading executives and legislatures into head-long clashes".²¹

Most of the policies mentioned by members in this category had these characteristics. For the most part members responded to them without any ideological presuppositions and usually without a set of principles to be routinely applied. And despite the fact that they were accompanied by a rather narrow frame of reference, there was clear evidence in each case of a continuity of interest.

The last category contains members who lay claim to no policy area at all. They are primarily concerned with the redress of grievances and the securing of benefits and advantages for particular constituencies. For this reason most of their policy interests were confined to the particular decisions that either precipitated, or were capable of repairing, specific problems. There was no pattern to the interests of these members and most considered themselves

²¹Blondel, op. cit., p. 109.

capable of coping with a wide variety of problems. Few of these problems originated as policy matters, but when members pursued them they eventually raised questions of government policy. A government supporter in Ontario made clear the basis on which he becomes interested in policy matters:

I'm not interested in any particular policy. I'm pretty well general, you know. You can call me a jack of all trades and a master of none. You can't sit down like the opposition critics. They appoint one man to be a critic for education, so he reads up on education. You are not interested in acquiring that kind of knowledge? Basically, no. It's time consuming for one thing, but more important than that, my first concern is my constituents. That's what it's all about. The people in my area elect me on my performance. If I perform and do a good job, the chances of my election are good. If I don't, tough luck Charlie. (0 15)

Not all members choose to avoid broader interests out of a concern for constituents. After reciting several particular problems in which he has taken an interest this Ontario New Democrat finally made it clear where his real interest lay:

I've never concentrated in one area specifically because I'm used to keeping up with everything. My main interest has been the party rather than policy. I wanted to make the organization grow and to educate people in the constituencies ... Besides, I didn't have the educational background to get into some of these areas. (0 38)

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of interest definition among such members is the absence of continuity in their interests. Particular issues come and go but for these members the question of whether or not they merit attention is based on considerations other than a standing interest in the issue area.

The three categories of interest definition discussed above are intended to capture important distinctions in the definition of members' policy interests. It may appear, however, that some members, particularly those in the final category, have virtually no policy interests whatsoever. Allan Kornberg, in a study of the 25th federal Parliament, argued that certain members are "area-oriented" and able to articulate their goals without reference to legislative policies.²² This distinction is a common one, as Blondel points out: "In Western countries the contrast is usually drawn between 'constituency' members and members concerned with broad policy matters"²³ Unfortunately, some members define their policy interests largely in terms of their constituency, whether this be a particular area or segment of society. It was not uncommon for members to see policy and constituency matters as intertwined.

Well, occasionally constituency matters have to do with policy. You can't really divide the two. The question may be the application of the policy, or the definition of the policy, or maybe even a change in the policy ... When an interpretation affects an individual, that's a constituency matter, but sometimes you're not going to get the answer you want unless you go to the minister and get him to change the policy. (0 11)

²²Allan Kornberg, Canadian Legislative Behaviour (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pp. 80-81, and fn. 21, p. 82. A similar point of view is also expressed in David Hoffman and Norman Ward, Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the Canadian House of Commons (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1970), p. 149.

²³Blondel, op. cit., p. 101.

These members may be considered "area-oriented", but only in the sense that their policy interests are based primarily on an evaluation of the social and economic needs of their constituents.

Like the breadth of policy interests, the tendency to define policy in terms of constituency needs is a matter of degree. For some members the nature of the constituency is the central criterion on the basis of which policy interests are defined. Constant reference is made to the social and economic characteristics of the constituency or to the particular problems of constituents. Others are able to discuss their policy interests with no reference at all to their constituency.²⁴ Not surprisingly, there is a relationship between the breadth of policy interests and the importance of the constituency to interest definition. The broader a member's policy interest, the less important is the constituency.²⁵

In the absence of previous research it is difficult to forecast how the policy definitions of members from each legislature are likely to compare. One might expect, however, that the lack of professionalization, the absence of specialized research units and a quiescent committee system in Nova Scotia would hinder the development of broad policy interests among members from that province. And since Nova Scotia members are often preoccupied with constituency problems,

²⁴The tau-beta reliability coefficient was .81 for this four point measure. Less than 4% of respondents were coded more than a single point apart.

²⁵In Ontario, $\tau c = -.45$; in Nova Scotia, $\tau c = -.26$.

as outlined in chapter four, the intrusion of constituency considerations into interest definition seems more likely than in Ontario.

In fact, differences between the two provinces are relatively minor. Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show, moreover, that the differences which do appear are not in the direction expected. Nova Scotia members are slightly more inclined than those in Ontario to define their policy interests in broad terms. A roughly equal proportion of members in both provinces are in the third category, so the main differences, as Table 6.3 indicates, lie in the fact that fewer Nova Scotia members are interested in specific policy areas. Since specific policy interests are often generated by participation on select committees and the like, the inactivity of Nova Scotia's committee system may be partly responsible for this pattern.

An almost identical proportion of members in the two provinces do not discuss their constituency at all in the context of their policy interests. The main difference is in the importance accorded the constituency if it is mentioned. Table 6.4 shows that those Ontario members who make reference to their constituencies are more inclined to make it a central or important element in interest definition.

Overall, however, the findings suggest that the character of the legislature does little to determine the pattern of policy definition. It is reasonable, therefore, to lay greater stress on

Table 6.3

The Scope of Policy Definition in
Ontario and Nova Scotia
(percentages)

	<u>Broad Policy Area(s)</u>	<u>Specific Policy Area(s)</u>	<u>Particular Decision(s)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ontario	36.0	40.0	24.0	100.0 n=75
Nova Scotia	46.2	30.8	23.1	100.1 n=26

Table 6.4

The Significance of Constituency to Policy
Definition in Ontario and Nova Scotia
(percentages)

	<u>Central</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Mentioned</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ontario	16.0	24.0	12.0	48.0	100.0 n=75
Nova Scotia	11.5	11.5	26.9	50.0	99.9 n=26

individual differences and within-systems relationships. The final section of this chapter examines ambition and other correlates to ascertain which variables structure interest definition and whether the same factors are responsible in both provinces.

Ambition and Interest Definition

According to the ambition hypothesis those who aspire to a higher political office will adopt attitudes toward policy matters that are congruent with incumbency in that office.²⁶ In the case of cabinet positions this implies among other things, a broad outlook on policy matters and a lack of concern for the constituency in choosing and defining policy interests. Although some exceptions undoubtedly exist, interviews with ministers in both provinces overwhelmingly confirmed this conventional wisdom.

I believe that the most important role for me is in determining priorities: where the money is going to be spent and on what. That's our job. We provide the basic framework. (Ontario minister)

You have to look at the broad, overall picture for the province ... It's extremely important that a minister develop ideas, formulate programs and policies that enable his department to operate effectively. (Nova Scotia minister)

²⁶Prewitt and Nowlin, op. cit., p. 303.

If the ambition hypothesis applies with regard to interest definition, a similar tendency toward a broad definition of policy interests should be evident among ambitious members in both provinces. Table 6.5 indicates that this is indeed the case. In both provinces those with progressive ambitions tend to define their policy interests in broad terms; those without progressive ambitions tend to be distributed fairly evenly over the remaining two categories. Ambition discriminates most effectively between those with broad policy interests and all others.²⁷ This is to be expected since the ambition hypothesis is aimed primarily at those with broad policy interests. It does point out, however, that differences between those with specific policy interests and those without a particular policy area are still to be explained.

The significance of the constituency as an element in the definition of interests is also related to ambition as Table 6.6 shows. As expected, members with progressive ambitions are less likely to refer to the character of their constituencies, or relations with constituents, in discussing policy interests. Compared with the previous relationship (between ambition and the breadth of interest) this one is less pronounced in both provinces. In Nova Scotia there is little difference between those with and

²⁷ Using a four point, ordinal measure of ambition does little to alter this conclusion. There is very little difference between those with discrete and those with static ambitions.

Table 6.5

Political Ambition and the Breadth of Policy Interests:
Ontario and Nova Scotia (percentages)

<u>Breadth of Policy Defn.</u>	<u>Ontario</u>		<u>Nova Scotia</u>	
	<u>Prog.</u>	<u>Not Prog.</u>	<u>Prog.</u>	<u>Not Prog.</u>
Broad Policy Area	68.8	11.9	64.3	25.0
Specific Policy Area	21.9	52.4	28.6	33.3
Particular Decisions	9.4	35.7	7.1	41.7
Total	100.1 n=32	100.0 n=42	100.0 n=14	100.0 n=12
	tau c = .59 eta = .54		tau c = .49 eta = .46	

Table 6.6

Political Ambition and the Significance of the
Constituency to Policy Definition: Ontario
and Nova Scotia (percentages)

<u>Significance of Constituency</u>	<u>Ontario</u>		<u>Nova Scotia</u>	
	<u>Prog.</u>	<u>Not Prog.</u>	<u>Prog.</u>	<u>Not Prog.</u>
Central	0.0	28.6	7.1	16.7
Important	18.8	28.6	7.1	16.7
Mentioned	15.6	9.5	28.6	25.0
Absent	65.6	33.3	57.1	41.7
Total	100.0 n=32	100.0 n=42	99.9 n=14	100.1 n=12
	tau c = -.42 eta = .42		tau c = -.21 eta = .21	

those without progressive ambitions. In part, the distribution of cases on this variable accounts for the weakness of the relationship, since very few members in Nova Scotia are prepared to give the constituency a place of prominence in the definition of policy interests.

The impact of ambition on various aspects of legislative participation is seldom straightforward. In the case of interest definition the pervasive influence of parliamentary organization, in particular the division between the government and the opposition, holds some potential for complicating the original relationship. For government backbenchers with progressive ambitions it is important to be able to communicate with ministers on their own terms and thereby demonstrate to party leaders that the transition from backbencher to cabinet minister can be accomplished with relative ease. Opposition members face an additional challenge. Not only must they demonstrate competence to the party leader, but as members of the parliamentary party each must demonstrate to the electorate a capacity to assume the reins of government. Unlike government backbenchers, who represent a source of new recruits, opposition members are an alternative government. Thus the pressure to become involved in broad policy areas that roughly coincide with government departments appears to fall most heavily on the opposition.

The statistics reported in Table 6.7 confirm this pattern but show it to be considerably stronger in Ontario than Nova Scotia in terms of the breadth of policy interests. The fact that opposition

Table 6.7

Coefficients (tau c)* for the Breadth of
Policy Interest and the Significance of Constituency

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Breadth of Interest</u>	<u>Significance of Constituency</u>
Government/ Opposition	Ontario	.48	.27
	Nova Scotia	.12	.30
Age	Ontario	-.29	.08
	Nova Scotia	-.24	-.34
Electoral Competition	Ontario	.24	-.09
	Nova Scotia	.26	-.28
Constituency Residence	Ontario	-.42	.35
	Nova Scotia	-.24	-.22

* Coefficients were obtained after collapsing continuous variables into three, roughly equal categories.

members in Nova Scotia are not assigned to "shadow" particular ministries, may be the reason for this discrepancy.

The role of variables other than political ambition does not end here. The possibility that age and the strength of constituency ties would affect interest definition was also examined. As Table 6.7 shows, in both provinces moderately strong relationships appear between these variables and the breadth of interest definition. Older members and those who have resided for some time in their constituencies, tended to have relatively narrow policy interests. Electoral competition had the opposite effect: the more competitive a member's riding, the broader the interest definition. Apparently provincial politicians do not feel compelled to cultivate narrow or local interests out of a fear of electoral retribution. Other, less coercive, social processes are more important in narrowing interests.

The significance of the constituency to interest definition was affected unevenly by these variables. Constituency residence had an impact in both provinces, but in opposite directions. In Ontario, the longer a member had resided in his constituency, the more important the constituency was to the characterization of policy interests. The opposite was the case in Nova Scotia, although the correlation is considerably weaker. A much stronger correlation appears for the age variable in Nova Scotia. Older members placed less emphasis on the constituency than younger ones. While

this relationship is difficult to explain, it should be pointed out that even in the youngest group of members--those under 35--only two of nine considered the constituency a central or important element in defining policy interests.

This analysis of bivariate relationships suggests that while ambition is a strong predictor of interest definition, other variables may affect this relationship. Specifically, each of the variables considered has the potential to reduce the role of ambition by predicting both ambition and the two aspects of interest definition that we have been examining. It is necessary, therefore, to control for the effects of other independent variables before drawing firm conclusions about the influence of ambition.

The results of several Multiple Classification Analyses, which provide these controls, are presented in Tables 6.8 and 6.9. An inspection of the *betas* shows that the original correlations are normally reduced upon the introduction of other variables. This suggests that most of the variables considered are having an indirect effect on interest definition through their influence on ambition. A portion of the explained variance originally assigned to ambition is actually attributable to the influence of these factors. None, however, succeed in "explaining" the original relationship by eliminating the impact of ambition.

There are three situations in which the opposite occurs: the introduction of other variables improves the original correlation.

Table 6.8

The Impact of Independent Variables on the Relationship Between
Ambition and Interest Definition in Ontario:
Coefficients from a Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Ambition</u>	<u>Breadth of Policy Interest</u>		<u>Significance of Constituency</u>	
	eta/beta R^2		eta/beta R^2	
<u>Zero-Order Coefficient</u>	.54	.30	.42	.18
<u>Controlling for:</u> <u>Government/Opposition</u>	.40	.42	.34	.20
<u>Controlling for:</u> <u>Years of Constituency</u> <u>Residence</u>	.39	.38	.26	.25
<u>Controlling for:</u> <u>Government/Opposition</u> <u>and Years of Con-</u> <u>stituency Residence</u>	.33	.46	.25	.25

Table 6.9.

The Impact of Independent Variables on the Relationship
Between Ambition and Interest Definition in Nova Scotia:
Coefficients from a Multiple Classification Analysis

<u>Ambition</u>	<u>Breadth of Policy Interest</u>		<u>Significance of Constituency</u>	
	eta/beta	R ²	eta/beta	R ²
<u>Zero-Order Correlation</u>	.46	.21	.21	.04
<u>Controlling for Electoral Competition</u>	.53	.32	.21	.11
<u>Controlling for Years of Constituency Residence</u>	.35	.22	.24	.10
<u>Controlling for Age</u>	.37	.23	.33	.21
<u>Controlling for Age and Years of Constituency Residence</u>	.32	.20	.31	.21

The most important of these is the impact of age on the relationship between ambition and the significance of the constituency to interest definition in Nova Scotia. When age is controlled the original, relatively low, correlation is increased considerably. This suggests that regardless of the age of a Nova Scotia member, ambition is a good predictor of the significance of the constituency, but the fact that older members tend to be less ambitious has an artificial dampening effect on this relationship. Age, in this case, acts as a suppressor: when it is controlled, ambition becomes a more important predictor.

The definition of policy interests is a complex process involving a multitude of influences. When other factors are controlled, the role of ambition is understandably reduced in most cases. However, *beta* values remain high and in some cases the inclusion of other variables helps compensate for unusually low correlations. Ambition emerges as a strong and consistent guide to interest definition in both provinces.

Conclusions

The first objective of this chapter was to provide a substantive categorization of the policy interests of private members in Ontario and Nova Scotia and to compare the provinces in terms of the pattern of these interests. Some similarities and some differences emerged. In both provinces a significant proportion of members

expressed an interest in issues related to social services and economic development, but Ontario members expressed much more interest in consumer issues and problems related to environmental protection and resource management. Nova Scotia members, on the other hand, were more concerned with labour-related problems and the future of relations between the province and municipalities. In the context of this study it is impossible to establish with precision the reasons for these dissimilarities, but certainly differences in provincial economies rank among the most appealing of possible explanations.

Differences also emerged between the provinces in the reasons cited by members to account for their interests. Ontario members were less inclined than their Nova Scotia counterparts to cite reasons connected with personal interests. Constituency and party pressures played a larger role. In this case a more complex legislative organization, including the assignment of portfolio responsibilities to opposition policy critics, and a heavier constituency workload in Ontario seem to be the major reasons for the difference.

The second objective of this chapter was to outline and attempt to explain differences between members in their approach to policy matters, or their political style. Specifically, attention was focused on the manner in which policy interests are defined. Here inter-provincial differences were rather modest, but members in

each legislature revealed unmistakable personal differences in the breadth of their policy interests and the importance of their constituency as a point of reference. For the most part political ambition successfully accounted for these. Even in the presence of controls ambition emerged as an essential guide to interest definition.

It was asserted at the outset of this chapter that the policy interests of members--both their substance and their definition--were potentially important means of judging the legislature's capacity to scrutinize and contribute to government policy. It is possible to offer a tentative judgment on this score. First, in neither legislature are all members narrow or parochial in their approach to policy matters, despite the fact the provincial legislative responsibilities are limited in scope. This does not mean that backbenchers exert inordinate influence, or that they always act on their interests. It does suggest, however, that a large proportion of members in both provinces reject the proposition that they should be concerned exclusively with the task of catering to the needs of constituents. A majority of members in each province were able to articulate their policy interests with little or no reference to their constituencies. Second, each of these legislatures contains a large component of members who seek to portray themselves as the equals of cabinet ministers and in doing so adopt an approach to policy that approximates that of ministers. Although other factors are important, and further research is required, these findings

suggest that it is ambitious members who will be most capable of challenging ministers on their own terms and exacting executive accountability in provincial legislatures.

CHAPTER VII

POLICY ROLES

The establishment and definition of policy interests is one dimension of members' approach to policy issues. A second, and equally important dimension, is the manner in which members pursue objectives in their chosen fields. This chapter will attempt to demonstrate that there are significant differences in the style members adopt in their role as policy-makers. Despite the fact that in parliamentary systems this role is circumscribed by the constraints of party discipline and cabinet government, private members do have occasion to attempt to influence the course of policy-making. As the last chapter showed, influence may be exerted over detailed decisions or members may address broad areas of public policy. In either event, they can be expected to adopt particular styles in their attempts to influence policy in the intended direction. This chapter is an examination of these styles.

Probably the most satisfying way of studying policy-related behaviour is simply by observation.¹ Unfortunately, much of what occurs in the realm of legislative policy-making occurs "behind-the-

¹ Some of the limitations of direct observation in legislative research are outlined in John C. Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan and LeRoy C. Ferguson, The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behaviour (New York: John Wiley, 1962), pp. 239-240.

scenes" and in private. Moreover, the public aspects of parliamentary decision-making are often ritualistic, usually involving the application of the party whip at divisions. Legislative researchers have devised two general ways of combatting this problem. The first strategy involves devising indirect measures, or indicators, of selected aspects of legislative behaviour. This strategy is well-illustrated in the work of Robert Jackson who employed a variety of indicators, including cross-votes, public abstentions and critical Early Day Motions, to measure the extent of rebellious behaviour among backbenchers in the British House of Commons.² In a similar fashion, several other scholars have attempted to infer backbench opinions on a variety of topics from an examination of Early Day Motions.³ This type of procedure is particularly well-suited to the examination of a specific type of legislative behaviour or a specific set of opinions.

In attempting to characterize the orientations of members to a broad range of activities a second strategy--role analysis--has usually been employed. Roles refer to "the pattern of expectations

²Robert J. Jackson, Rebels and Whips: An Analysis of Dissent, Discipline and Cohesion in British Political Parties (London: Macmillan, 1968), Appendix I.

³Samuel E. Finer, Hugh B. Berrington and D.J. Bartholomew, Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons: 1955-1959 (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1961); Hugh Berrington, Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons: 1945-1955 (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1973); and recently Mark Franklin and Michael Tappin, "Early Day Motions as Unobtrusive Measures of Backbench Opinion in Britain", British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 7, no. 1 (January 1977), pp. 49-69.

or norms of behaviour that are associated with a position in a social structure".⁴ The normative content of a role is defined by the occupant and by those in adjacent roles who come to expect certain types of behaviour and attitudes. Legislators, who find themselves interacting with a variety of individuals in a multiplicity of settings, have several roles to perform. The role of representative is perhaps the most thoroughly studied,⁵ but students of legislative roles have suggested others including "purposive" roles which are intended to summarize and clarify how individuals approach their entire job as legislators.⁶

The idea of legislative roles presumes some degree of consensus among participants in the legislature on the content of the role. For several reasons, however, legislators differ in their interpretation of what is expected. This can occur when there

⁴Malcolm Jewell, "Attitudinal Determinants of Legislative Behaviour: The Utility of Role Analysis", in Allan Kornberg and Lloyd Musolf (eds.) Legislatures in Comparative Perspective (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1970), p. 462.

⁵Ibid., pp. 472-500. Jewell has provided a useful summary of findings on this role including American and cross-national research.

⁶Not all who use this term are agreed on this meaning. Those who do define purposive roles in the fashion suggested here include Roger Davidson, The Role of the Congressman (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 69 and, in Canada, Allan Kornberg, Canadian Legislative Behaviour (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 79; David Hoffman and Norman Ward, Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the Canadian House of Commons (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), pp. 83-86.

is a lack of clarity in expectations or when a multiplicity of roles leads to inconsistent demands.⁷ These differences in interpretation are referred to as "role orientations". Wahlke and his colleagues have defined them as "systematic differences in legislators' conceptions of a particular component of the role of legislator".⁸ It is the description and explanation of role orientations that has typified the study of legislative roles.

Perhaps the most appealing feature of role analysis is that roles are intended to be a theoretical bridge between the individual and the social structure of which he is a part. Since roles are defined by individuals in interaction, role analysis "pinpoints those aspects of legislators' behaviour which make the legislature an institution".⁹ One of the main objectives of this thesis is to provide a comparison of policy-making in two legislative institutions at the level of the individual members. A role analysis is in keeping with this objective.

This chapter begins by discussing three role orientations associated with the role of legislative policy-makers: the "initiator" orientation, the "critic" orientation and the "facilitator"

⁷Theodore Sarbin and Vernon L. Allen, "Role Theory" in Gardiner Lindzey and E. Aronson (eds.), The Handbook of Social Psychology (Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley, 1967), pp. 501-503.

⁸Wahlke et. al., op. cit., p. 16.

⁹Ibid., pp. 8-9. See also Sarbin and Allen op. cit., pp. 497-500.

orientation. Members' own views of their policy responsibilities are outlined in the context of these orientations and the provinces compared on the basis of the strength of each orientation. Since members, by adopting role orientations, tacitly endorse certain norms of behaviour in relation to policy matters, it is important to establish the consequences of role orientations. One of the principal shortcomings of role analysis has been the inability or unwillingness of those who employ this approach to connect role orientations with subsequent behaviour.¹⁰ In a modest attempt to do so, this chapter examines the tactics employed by members who have adopted particular role orientations and the impact these orientations have on members' sense of efficacy.

Lastly, this chapter attempts to ascertain the source of role orientations.¹¹ It has been argued throughout that legislative behaviour, in the sense of policy-related activities, can be explained largely by the nature of individual political ambitions. In the case

¹⁰ This criticism is made forcefully by Jewell in a review of legislative role studies. *Op. cit.*, pp. 484-494. An equally forceful criticism is made in Gerhard Lowenberg, "Comparative Legislative Research", in Samuel C. Patterson and John C. Wahlke (eds.), *Comparative Legislative Behaviour: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley, 1972), pp. 8-10.

¹¹ The importance of this problem is stated succinctly by Jewell: "Unless we can explain why legislators differ in their role concepts, role analysis may strengthen our predictive powers without increasing our ability to explain the legislative process". *Op. cit.*, p. 461.

of orientations toward legislative policy-making the ambition hypothesis faces its most difficult test. For ambition to be associated, positively or negatively, with one or more orientations, a clear relationship between those orientations and ministerial roles must be perceived. As before, the research proceeds without systematic knowledge of ministerial behaviour or perceptions of ministerial norms. In the preceeding chapters, however, either a modal ministerial type was suggested and the behaviour of ambitious members hypothesized to correspond to this example, or it was argued that a particular type of behaviour would facilitate recognition and promotion. In the case of policy role orientations these presumptions are made more difficult by three factors. First, whatever role orientations ministers adopt, it is difficult for private members to approximate them. Backbenchers simply do not have responsibilities sufficiently comparable to justify the adoption of ministerial norms. Second, there is little reason to believe that ministers agree on the most appropriate manner in which to discharge their responsibilities as policy-makers. In a study of ministerial roles in Britain, Bruce Heady identified three ministerial policy roles: policy initiator, policy selector, and policy legitimator.¹² Ministers, to a greater or lesser extent, identified with each of these orientations. Lastly,

¹²Bruce Heady, British Cabinet Ministers: The Roles of Politicians in Executive Office (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1974), pp. 39-46.

while there may be some personal tactics to be employed in achieving a cabinet post (such as cultivating the friendship of the Prime Minister) none seems to correspond precisely to any of the policy orientations discussed below. In short, no single backbench policy role seems to correspond with being or becoming a minister. Ambition is therefore less likely to be a reliable guide to the adoption of a role orientation.

This does not mean, of course, that members will not attempt to govern their behaviour in such a manner as to arrive at a consensus on the appropriate orientation for an ambitious politician. Similarly, members may purposely avoid particular orientations that they feel are not associated with being a minister. A judgment on these possibilities awaits an elaboration of the roles themselves.

Policy Roles and Legislative Tactics

There are several means of establishing role orientations. In cases where particular orientations are widely accepted--as in the case of the representational role--it is possible to provide members with a standard list of orientations and ask them to rank these in terms of personal attachment. It is also possible to classify members on the basis of answers to standard, closed-ended questions. The policy role of private members is a less cultivated subject, however. In Canada, particularly, backbenchers are seldom asked about their own experiences with policy and the discussion of particular

orientations is rather limited. Part of the object of this chapter, in fact, is to establish a categorization of policy role orientations. To determine differences in the approach of members to policy, they were asked two open-ended questions after they had identified their policy interests:

What have been your general objectives in this field (these fields)? What did you want to achieve?

How would you describe your role in shaping policy in this area (these areas)?

In answering these questions each respondent provided his own version of how he goes about the task of influencing decision-making. Almost invariably the answers contained a defense, sometimes elaborate, of personal behaviour based on expectations and biases.¹³ On the basis of these responses three predominant role orientations were identified: the policy initiator, the policy critic, and the policy facilitator. It proved impossible, however, to stereotype all respondents to the extent that they could be classified exclusively in one or another of these categories. Some members cited only one orientation, but most combined orientations and entered caveats based on situations which they believe require different behavioural norms. For this reason members were classified according to whether the particular orientation was central to their conception of a member's policy responsibilities; important, but not central; or,

¹³Similar responses are reported in ibid., pp. 59-60.

absent from the discussion.¹⁴ As in the previous chapter, final decisions about the rank of members on each orientation were made upon consultation between two coders. The original, separate codes provide an inter-coder reliability coefficient for each orientation.¹⁵

Regardless of which orientation they adopt members must still make use of a limited number of tactics in insuring that their voice is heard. In parliamentary systems it is common to divide these tactics into two categories: public and private.¹⁶ Private tactics include personal representations to ministers or public servants and the use of customary party channels, particularly caucus; public tactics include parliamentary debates and perhaps media campaigns. Jackson points out that in areas of disagreement between backbenchers and the party leadership, members traditionally exhaust private

¹⁴Since the idea of a role orientation presumes the existence of conflict over appropriate norms, it can be argued that one means of reconciling conflict is to endorse one orientation more than another. Among those who agree with a ranking or combination of role orientations see Wahlke et. al., *op. cit.*, p. 247; Heady *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66; and Wayne Francis, "The Role Concept in Legislatures: A Probability Model and a Note on Cognitive Structure", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 27, no. 3 (August 1965), pp. 569-570.

¹⁵The tau-beta reliability coefficients for each orientation are as follows: initiator, .52; critic, .76; facilitator, .57. In the case of the initiator orientation, 9% of respondents were coded at opposite ends of the three point scale; for critics 3%; for facilitators, 6%.

¹⁶James L. Lynskey, "Backbench Tactics and Parliamentary Party Structure", *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 27, no. 1 (Winter 1973-74), pp. 28-37. For a more elaborate classification of tactics see Hoffman and Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

tactics before they embark on open public revolts.¹⁷ In this study to determine which tactics members *usually* employ, all respondents were asked:

What do you usually do to make your views known?

Three categories were established on the basis of the answers: the category of private communications and two categories of public tactics, those which involve legislative forums and those which involve extra-parliamentary forums. For most members legislative tactics are confined to speechmaking on the floor of the House and in committees, although some members mentioned the introduction of motions and private members' bills. Extra-parliamentary tactics include attempts to conscript media representatives and the encouragement of interest groups.

Like role orientations, no one of these tactics necessarily precludes the others. Some members mentioned using a variety of tactics and each tactic mentioned was coded. This means, however, that those who merely refer to a particular set of tactics are coded identically with those whose tactics are based entirely in one area. This drawback seemed preferable to the inevitable arbitrariness involved in attempting to classify members in mutually exclusive categories.

Table 7.1 summarizes the role orientations of members in

¹⁷Jackson, op. cit., Chapter 11.

Table 7.1

The Level of Attachment to Policy Role Orientations
in Ontario and Nova Scotia (percentages)

<u>Importance of Orientation</u>	<u>Initiator</u>	<u>Critic</u>	<u>Facilitator</u>
Ontario:			
Central	42.3	25.0	33.8
Important	22.5	19.4	26.8
Absent/Unimp.	35.2	55.6	39.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	n=72	n=72	n=72
Nova Scotia:			
Central	38.5	42.3	15.4
Important	34.6	26.9	30.8
Absent/Unimp.	26.9	30.8	53.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
	n=26	n=26	n=26

each legislature and the strength of personal attachments.¹⁸ Those who adopt the initiator orientation are concerned to actively promote personal ideas and selected causes, and in both provinces this is a popular orientation. Eulau has suggested that "in a party-disciplined legislature the individual legislator is unlikely to find much room for independence or inventiveness",¹⁹ but these findings seem to belie that conclusion. The critic orientation stresses the role of opposition and review in the legislature, but despite its association with the principles of parliamentary government, it has a relatively weak appeal to Ontario backbenchers. The facilitator orientation, on the other hand, is much stronger in Ontario than in Nova Scotia. This orientation emphasizes the communication of government proposals and citizen reactions and its relative weakness in Nova Scotia suggests, once again, the importance of the legislative environment. An appreciation of the reasons for these patterns begins, however, with an examination of the content of each orientation.²⁰

¹⁸For two of the Nova Scotia respondents it was impossible to determine which orientation was central. For that reason the top row in that part of the table contains only 24 cases.

¹⁹Wahlke et al., op. cit., p. 246.

²⁰Although members are ranked on each orientation, individual types are abstracted for purposes of discussion. This accounts for the use of the masculine gender.

a) Policy Initiators

The policy initiator conforms closely to the nineteenth century private member in his approach to policy matters. He tries, as much as possible, to be independent in his judgments. His policy interests are usually personal in origin, and he prides himself on being someone of intelligence and personal ability. He can be identified primarily by the stress he places on personal ideas. Frequently, these concern fairly specific projects that have been brought to his attention by constituents or personal friends. Policy initiators usually adopt these ideas or causes as their own. Often initiators characterize their activities as the waging of personal campaigns to make officials and ministers "see the light". The following passage from an interview with a government backbencher captures some of these elements in the initiator orientation.

One of the very first things I did was in February of 1972, when the session was just getting ready. I called up Leo Bernier who had just been made minister of Natural Resources and told him I had a bill in preparation--I had the outline on my desk--to introduce as a private member that would recall the bounties on wolves. Since I was longing to do this, and since this was going to be one of my first, I wanted to let him know. There was stunned silence at the other end of the line. "Gee", he said, "I was going to do that myself this spring". He said it was a very difficult problem. So I said, "Fine, I can get this debated in the House. You can even let me have approval on Second Reading". But he insisted he wanted to bring it in himself. And I said, "Are you kidding me or are you really going to do it?" No, he was really going to do it, he said. I asked because I didn't know who to trust at that time and I wasn't going to let myself get caught by a minister. (0 84)

The self-confidence of this member is striking. The only problem he foresees is a streak of ignorance he might encounter or a "devious move" on the part of the minister.

Many members endorse the initiator orientation by juxtaposing it with other, less appealing, orientations:

When I come to the conclusion that something should be done in a particular field, I would always like to see it implemented immediately. I don't take any great satisfaction in having the government turn down my suggestions for reforms or improvements. There is a school of thought which says that if the government turns you down, you can lash them with it and win new support. That's true to an extent, but I'd much sooner have the programs implemented in the first place... My goal is not to be the conscience of the government or to be some sort of ombudsman. My job is to get into power. Then I can implement the policies I want to. (NS 11)

This respondent, a member of the opposition, recognizes the appeal of the critic orientation, but rejects it, and that of the "ombudsman", because of a deeper commitment to enacting policy. He achieves "no great satisfaction" in being a noble opponent.

Some members find other orientations acceptable only if they coincide with that of an initiator. Several opposition members endorsed the initiator orientation despite obvious pressures to be policy critics:

If I criticize the government's activities, I like to have at my fingertips an alternative that is workable, or at least have some vague idea of what I would do if I were charged with the responsibility myself. I don't think you can just criticize. You don't accomplish anything by doing that ... When I criticize their housing policies, I criticize, sure, but I offer alternatives, suggestions about what I would consider to be a better housing policy. You are not here just to stand up and be critical, you are here to try and change things. (O 69)

This member endorses the initiator orientation, but finds it necessary to account for what he considers his rather critical posture in debates. The definition of his policy interests is probably responsible, in part, for this. When policy interests are defined broadly, the pursuit of policy objectives usually involves a challenge to government action.²¹ On more specific problems, where initiators frequently focus, criticism is less important because the government has not invited it, except by failing to act sooner on the issue.

Do initiators use a particular set of tactics to influence policy-making? Table 7.2 is a summary of coefficients (τ_c) for the relationship between each set of tactics and each role orientation. As this table shows, attachment to the initiator orientation does not seem to predispose members to the use of any particular set of tactics in Ontario. Nor do initiators eschew any set of tactics. This appears to be a case where the issue at hand dictates the action. In Nova Scotia those attached to the initiator orientation are somewhat more inclined toward the legislature as a forum for seeking policy approval and disinclined toward extra-parliamentary tactics. Initiators, it must be remembered, are concerned to accomplish things. In Nova Scotia the legislature seems to be a legitimate means of publicizing concerns, but extra-

²¹Jean Blondel, Comparative Legislatures (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), Chapter 10.

Table 7.2

Coefficients (tau c) for Legislative Tactics
and Role Orientations in Ontario
and Nova Scotia

<u>Tactics</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Policy Role Orientation</u>		
		Initiator	Critic	Facilitator
Private	Ontario	-.03	-.02	.22
	Nova Scotia	.03	-.27	.32
Parliamentary	Ontario	.03	.38	-.26
	Nova Scotia	.22	-.07	-.28
Extra-Parliamentary	Ontario	.03	.03	.21
	Nova Scotia	-.43	.39	.15

parliamentary tactics may be considered damaging to the cause.

b) Policy Critics

The policy critic concentrates primarily on reacting to government initiatives. He points out deficiencies and may be prepared to make suggestions provided his critical posture is not compromised. When suggestions are made they usually reflect established party policy and less frequently personal insights or opinions. Policy critics often justify this orientation by explicit reference to the role of the opposition or the legislature in a parliamentary system. On both sides of the House policy critics are united by the view that since the cabinet has the authority necessary to govern, it must be made to assume responsibility. The legislature does not exist to help cabinet ministers, or to do their job for them. The dangers of not adhering to this principle are outlined well by a member of the New Democratic Party:

I think one of the great dangers is being taken into their confidence and to think that you are part of the government and that your job is to help them along. ... If you're not very careful you may begin to say to yourself, "There is no alternative", when there is an alternative way of doing things. ... It's a pretty exclusive club down there and the pressures are to join the club. But our job is not to pretend that we are the government, because we're the opposition and our job is to point out what the alternatives are and to avoid the trap that there are no alternatives and that all studies lead to this or that decision. (0 68)

The "alternatives" that this member stresses are not alternatives he expects the government to accept. His view of the opposition's function comes close to Bernard Crick's idea of "a permanent election campaign".²² As a policy critic he does not intend to contribute to government policy, but constantly to maintain and define the difference between the governing party and the opposition.

On occasion government members will also state a strong critic orientation. Those who do also see a difference between themselves and the ministry. Unlike opposition members there are no broad alternatives to be stated. Policy critics in the government backbenches must stop the cabinet from making costly mistakes and alienating voters. Like the Ontario opposition member cited above, this Nova Scotia government supporter has no intention of formulating government policy. This responsibility rests with the cabinet.

So I told him, 'You know the more I think about this proposal, and the more I hear about it, the worse it seems to me'. He said, 'All right tell us something that's better, give us some alternatives'. I said 'No, that's your job; you pick the best alternative and bring that in as legislation'. That's not our job. No way. It seemed a bit odd to me, his putting it that way. They're in the driver's seat you know. (NS, 26)

Most policy critics temper their endorsement of this orientation. For many members the prospect of continually making negative statements without offering suggestions does not hold much

²² Bernard Crick, The Reform of Parliament (New York: Anchor Books, 1965), p. 201.

appeal. Although the critic orientation is central for this member, he is careful to point out where effective criticism can lead.

I see my role as a critic of the minister first of all. I have a responsibility to point out to him in my view and in my party's view what is bad policy or lack of policy at all. . . . I also see myself in the role of putting forth better or alternative policies or programs. . . . People identify such and such a program with the minister even though I or one of my colleagues have maybe been talking about that for years, or maybe refining the program as it moves along. That's all right, that's the name of the game and that's our contribution. (0-79)

The alternatives that this member advances are clearly intended to be acceptable to the minister. Members who combine the critic orientation with that of the policy initiator often report being consulted by ministers. They can be accommodated because their suggestions are usually cast within the broad policy framework on which the ministry operates. The fact that these members seldom get credit for their suggestions can be rationalized as "the name of the game", but the role conflict which gave birth to these differing orientations remains.

It was common in both provinces for policy critics to attribute whatever influence they might have to the esteem in which ministers hold them. Several members felt they had earned the personal respect of ministers. Much of this respect probably has its origins in the fear many ministers have of open confrontation. Table 7.2 indicates that in both provinces policy critics prefer public forums. Policy critics in Ontario have a marked preference

for parliamentary tactics--speechmaking, private members' bills and committee activity. In Nova Scotia, a critic orientation is associated with extra-parliamentary activity. The nature of the legislative system seems to be at least partially responsible for this pattern. Ontario critics have ready access to legislative means of publicizing their disagreements. The legislature and the committees meet frequently enough for critics to become proficient in the use of parliamentary tactics. Nova Scotia critics also prefer public forums, but since the legislature meets infrequently, and there is little scope for effective criticism in the committees, members are forced to engage the help of the media and interest groups to make their criticisms felt.

c) Policy Facilitators

Policy facilitators are middlemen in the policy process. Their activity is concentrated in two areas. First, they act as idea and interest brokers. They rarely espouse their personal ideas, but concentrate, instead, on helping those who do have opinions to communicate them to decision-makers. They act as liaison officers, bringing parties together and screening complainants. In this respect the facilitator orientation closely resembles that of "Broker" outlined by Eulau in the context of American state politics.²³

²³ Wahlke et al., op. cit., p. 248.

This orientation, he asserts, had its origin in the rise of interest groups and is a response to the pressures they exert on state legislators.²⁴ The reconstruction provided by this government member illustrates this aspect of policy facilitation and suggests the importance of organized interests for the policy facilitator.

I went so far as to have a group of doctors prepare a brief when the cabinet was here last fall, and I had them present it to cabinet. I waltzed Davis in and put him down at the front and got him to listen. I also got the Minister of Health to go to the doctors' association or club or whatever it is . . . You have to get the local initiative of the city first to get something going. Then you get the province in to say okay, we'll give you "x" number of dollars. You have to get the cooperation of the two. (O 36)

Facilitators are anxious to have interests and positions represented or expressed but are not necessarily interested in assuming the task of spokesman. They seek to promote understanding and are often suspicious of those who seem to lack an appreciation of the needs and aspirations of both organized and unorganized groups. Many policy facilitators put considerable effort into determining just what those needs and aspirations are. An Ontario opposition member expressed some impatience with those who do not:

I get the distinct impression that many of the people responsible for designing a program don't know the people. They sit down here in Toronto and try to design a program that they think meets needs, then they go out and try to find people to fit the program. What they should be doing, and what I'm doing, is getting

²⁴ Ibid.

out and finding out what the problems are. Once you know that you can ask how to solve the problems . . . As a result of doing it this way I get a good response from people in the ministry. (Q 30)

By acting as a bridge between groups and the government, policy facilitators usually establish a degree of personal involvement in the outcome without actually taking the decision or formulating the policy.

The second aspect of policy facilitation concerns the application or implementation of policy. Once again, facilitators do not actively participate in decision-making, but concentrate on communicating government decisions to interested or potentially interested groups.

The policy facilitator assumes, probably correctly, that most of what governments do escapes attention. Government grants and subsidies, for example, often have to be explained to potential recipients.

A government supporter in Ontario points out the importance of communicating policy outputs:

I think one of the great weaknesses of government is the lack of communication with the public. . . In my own area, in addition to a regular newspaper report to the constituents, I use the radio and any chance I get to communicate through the area TV. And then with letters and direct mail pamphlets I attempt to explain programs to people. I also meet with my municipal councillors at least once a quarter to talk about any new programs they might not be aware of. (O 83)

Given their particular concerns it is not surprising that members who are inclined toward the facilitator orientation are also more inclined to employ private and extra-parliamentary tactics. Much of their activity involves communications between groups and ministers. These relationships are not particularly strong as

Table 7.2 shows, but they are consistent between the two provinces. Also consistent is the tendency of facilitators in both provinces not to mention parliamentary tactics as means of securing objectives. Theirs is the classic "behind-the-scenes" role in legislative affairs. Their policy interests become legislative affairs when announcements are made regarding new agreements or programs that facilitators have had a part in creating.

Policy Roles and the Evaluation of Influence

A major question addressed by students of legislators is the extent to which individual members, and particularly backbenchers, feel frustrated in their attempts to influence the course of policy-making. Research shows that frustration is not uncommon, but that these feelings do not apply to all members. In a study of the British House of Commons, Keith Ovendon found that members who had limited legislative experience felt more efficacious than veterans.²⁵ A university education, moreover, was associated with low levels of efficacy, but Ovendon found no appreciable party differences or differences based on leadership/follower status in the House.

The question addressed here is the extent to which the policy orientations outlined above affect feelings of efficacy.

²⁵Keith Ovendon, "Policy and Self-Perception: Some Aspects of Parliamentary Behaviour", in Dick Leonard and Valentine Herman (eds.), The Backbenchers and Parliament (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 179.

Do some orientations provide a greater sense of influence than others? Wahlke et al. in their study of state legislators found that role orientations do, indeed, make a difference to estimates of efficacy. The "Broker" orientation, mentioned above, was associated particularly strongly with legislative efficacy.²⁶ Since the authors considered this orientation to be both "viable" and "functional" in contemporary state legislatures, their findings reinforced that view.²⁷

To estimate feelings of backbench efficacy in Ontario and Nova Scotia, members were asked to respond to three Likert-type questions. The first raised the issue of influence in the context of legislative initiative. In both provinces a majority of members agreed that backbenchers play a minor role in the framing of legislation: 64% of Nova Scotia members compared with 59% of members in Ontario. This is a somewhat lower proportion than Hoffman and Ward found upon asking the same question of members of the House of Commons.²⁸ It reveals, nonetheless, that most members recognize cabinet's constituted authority in the area of legislative initiative. To determine if the same feelings applied to other aspects of policy, members were asked if they felt that most frontbench policy was decided before

²⁶ Wahlke et al., op. cit., pp. 263-266.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 264-265.

²⁸ Hoffman and Ward, op. cit., p. 139.

they had a chance to exert influence. An even higher proportion of members agreed with this statement: 76% of Nova Scotia members, 61% of members in Ontario.²⁹

Finally, since the first two questions had been worded negatively, a third question was included which asked members to respond to the assertion that ordinary members could always have "a major say" in policy if they worked hard and were persistent. Only 28% of Ontario members and 17% of Nova Scotia members *disagreed* with this position. Private members, it seems, are acquainted with the formal restraints involved in being effective and influential, but most are unwilling to agree that this means they can have little or no influence over policy.³⁰ As we have seen, some policy orientations, such as that of facilitator, do not require direct participation in the actual framing of proposals or the taking of decisions.

Although these efficacy measures generally correlate, they are sufficiently distinctive in terms of the scope of influence addressed that no effort has been made to create a scale. Table 7.3 summarizes the coefficients produced by a cross-tabulation of these

²⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 158. In the Hoffman and Ward study 56% of respondents agreed with this statement.

³⁰ A similar discrepancy was noted by Hoffman and Ward. Most members agreed that policy was largely out of their hands, but Liberals seemed to suggest that caucus could be a forum for influencing policy. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

measures and policy roles. In Ontario, the most striking difference appears between the critic and facilitator orientations. The more inclined members are to the critic orientation, the less enthusiastic they are about the abilities of members to influence policy and legislation. Conversely, the more members endorse the facilitator orientation, the more they feel that private members can exercise influence. Despite the fact that the initiator orientation may seem somewhat out of place in a parliamentary system, initiators were generally divided on these measures. The only exception is that they, like critics, are slightly inclined to agree with the statement that front bench policy is usually decided before backbenchers have a chance to exert influence.

The fact that facilitators in Ontario generally feel efficacious is in keeping with the view that this orientation is an appropriate one in parliamentary systems. Facilitators are not called upon to make decisions, but the feeling of being able to participate in a supportive role in decision-making is quite evident. Critics have no such consolation. In Nova Scotia, however, this relationship breaks down entirely. In fact, Nova Scotia facilitators are slightly inclined to doubt the influence of private members, particularly their ability to aid in the framing of legislation. Initiators, on the other hand, are generally positive about members' abilities to transcend constitutional restraints, while critics are somewhat sceptical, but are by and large divided. While the position

Table 7.3

Coefficients (τ_c) for Policy Role Orientations and
Backbench Influence Measures in
Ontario and Nova Scotia

	<u>Role Orientation</u>	<u>Influence*</u>	<u>Influence**</u>	<u>Influence***</u>
Ontario	Initiator	-.003	-.15	-.03
	Critic	-.27	-.11	-.29
	Facilitator	.28	.30	.34
Nova Scotia	Initiator	.40	.20	-.07
	Critic	-.07	-.03	-.20
	Facilitator	-.17	-.11	.03

* In our parliamentary system, backbenchers play a minor role in the framing of legislation. (reverse coding)

** Most of the time front bench policy is decided before a backbencher gets a chance to exert influence. (reverse coding)

*** Any MLA (MPP), even if he is not a cabinet minister, can always have a major say in shaping any policy if he is persistent and works hard at understanding the facts.

of facilitators on these questions is unexpected, that of initiators is perhaps the most peculiar in a legislature where the government is firmly in control of the legislative program.

While these legislatures are clearly marked by different patterns in the relationship between orientations and efficacy, a common feature can be discerned. In both cases the policy orientation associated with the lowest sense of backbench efficacy--that of critic in Ontario and facilitator in Nova Scotia--is also the least popular orientation in each legislature. A majority of members in both provinces avoided these orientations entirely, as Table 7.1 has shown. Members are apparently less interested in orientations which they believe can provide neither a sense of accomplishment nor an opportunity to be involved and influential in the policy process.

This, of course, does not explain the different relationships in each legislature. In particular, why should the facilitator orientation be the only one associated with positive attitudes toward backbench influence in Ontario, while the initiator orientation is the only one in Nova Scotia? The answer is probably to be found in the legislative settings, and the opportunities and expectations associated with the office of provincial legislator. In Ontario, the facilitator orientation is appropriate for full time members who wish to have a limited, and not particularly salient, policy role. It provides an opportunity to participate in policy-making without much concern for the constraints of a crowded legislative timetable that is virtually monopolized by the government. In short, Ontario

facilitators avoid the frustrations of the legislature and yet have a policy orientation in which they can reconcile the pressures to be an interest representative and a policy-maker.

In Nova Scotia, initiators, who prefer the legislative arena, are the most optimistic about their ability to influence policy. It will be recalled that chapter five revealed a considerable difference between the provinces in the concentration of formal participation. In contrast to Ontario members, most Nova Scotia MLAs participate actively in debates. Moreover, Nova Scotia still provides two days per week for private members' business.³¹ Apparently, many members consider it possible to offer suggestions and influence policy-making from their seats on the legislative floor. This atmosphere seems to encourage initiators to believe that they can influence even those aspects of legislative policy-making which are in the hands of the cabinet. Even policy critics are not as sceptical about their influence as they are in Ontario. Facilitators, however, whose work is often in private, informal circumstances, seem to be discouraged. This helps account for the fact that few Nova Scotia members are attracted to this orientation.

The foregoing discussion has stressed the importance of the

³¹ It is important not to make too much of this, however, since ministers often move to take up government business on these days. See Michael Ryle, The Procedures and Practices of The House of Assembly, Mimeo., March 26, 1976.

legislative environment in conditioning the choice of policy orientations and the attitudes associated with each orientation. It is also necessary however, to evaluate those individual factors which influence attachment to policy orientations and it is to this question that we now turn.

The Sources of Policy Roles

At the outset of this chapter the possibility that political ambition might structure policy role orientations was briefly assessed. It was pointed out that the main reason for doubting the importance of ambition was the fact that no modal ministerial policy role exists. Hence, members who seek to become ministers have no clear behavioural or attitudinal pattern to emulate. Moreover, there is little likelihood of a consensus among ambitious members on what role orientation results in promotion.³²

It could be argued that ministers are primarily policy initiators-men with their own personal ideas and aspirations who assume the responsibilities of a ministry and immediately begin to pursue their own policy objectives. No research has been done explicitly on the policy roles of ministers in the Canadian provinces, but Bruce Heady assures us that only about one-fifth of the British

³²A similar problem seems to exist for ambitious members in the choice of representative role orientations. See Jewell, op. cit., p. 475.

ministers he interviewed expressed more than a ritualistic interest in this orientation.³³ Many preferred to be policy selectors, choosing among competing proposals pressed upon them by public servants, while a few were merely policy legitimators whose interest in policy extended only to representing ministry policy initiatives in cabinet. Ministers interviewed in the course of this study revealed a similar variety of interests. No effort was made to classify them according to this scheme, but ministers evinced elements of each orientation in discussing their own roles as policy-makers. According to the ambition hypothesis there is little reason to expect those with progressive ambitions to follow any particular role orientation.

Coefficients produced by the cross-tabulation of ambition and policy orientations are reported in Table 7.4. In Ontario, only the critic orientation is related to ambition. Those with progressive ambitions tend to be more attracted to this orientation. In Nova Scotia ambition has a similar effect on attachment to the initiator orientation. Neither orientation, however, has a particularly strong appeal for ministerial aspirants.

If ambitious members have difficulty in discerning or agreeing on the type of policy orientation expected of them, they are likely to look elsewhere for cues about appropriate behaviour. In one's

³³Heady, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

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Table 7.4

Coefficients (τ c) for the Sources
of Policy Roles in Ontario
and Nova Scotia

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Policy Role Orientation</u>		
		Initiator	Critic	Facilitator
Ambition	Ontario	.03	.23	-.05
	Nova Scotia	.25	.12	-.14
Legislative Position	Ontario	.02	-.65	.53
	Nova Scotia	.16	-.32	.20
Education	Ontario	.27	.19	-.52
	Nova Scotia	.41	-.17	-.12
Electoral Competition	Ontario	-.07	.14	.07
	Nova Scotia	.10	.14	.29

general approach to policy the expectations of the party are likely to weigh heavily. In particular, the party's role in the government or the opposition (legislative position) will probably influence members in considering their policy responsibilities. Specifically, members of the opposition can be expected to endorse the critic orientation, while government members are more likely to be facilitators. The critic orientation is highly compatible with opposition status, while the facilitator role is more attractive to those who wish to sustain the government and help it stay in touch with the grass-roots.

In Ontario these expectations are confirmed. Policy critics are found overwhelmingly in the opposition camp while policy facilitators are concentrated in the government backbenches. Table 7.4 reports only coefficients, but over 80% of government members excluded any reference to the critic orientation while all but 17% expressed an interest in policy facilitation. Ontario Liberals were somewhat more committed to the critic orientation than the NDP. More than half the Liberals interviewed were considered to have the critic orientation central to their approach to policy compared with just over one-third of the New Democrats. Few members of either party were attracted to the facilitator orientation, but only one New Democrat, compared with four Liberals was considered to have this orientation central to his approach to policy.

A similar division between government and opposition members is evident in Nova Scotia, but it is quite mild compared with the Ontario findings. The main reason is not the reluctance of opposition members to be critics: only two eschew this orientation entirely. The main reason lies in the critical orientation adopted by government members. Over half feel that, to some extent at least, they should criticize government policy initiatives. Thus, the Nova Scotia legislature has an abundance of would-be critics. The opposite is the case with facilitators. Government members are only marginally more interested in this orientation than opposition members and, as pointed out earlier, less than half of the members in the legislature express any interest at all in this orientation.

In light of the impact that legislative position has on role orientations, it is appropriate to reassess the importance of ambition. In Ontario, it will be recalled, ambitious members are slightly inclined to be policy critics. It seems, however, that policy orientations are highly constrained by membership in either the government or the opposition. In fact, if the latter variable is held constant, we are likely to find that almost all the ambitious policy critics are in the opposition. Although the results are not reported in the tables, this is indeed the case. The relationship between ambition and the critic orientation in the Ontario opposition is only .07 (tau c) while in the government it is -.07 (tau c). The explained variance originally assigned to ambition is actually

attributable to legislative position which is the main source of the critic orientation in Ontario.

In Nova Scotia, the initiator orientation is related to progressive ambition and also, very weakly, to membership in the government. In this case, the latter variable may be masking a stronger relationship between ambition and the initiator orientation. It seems likely that ambitious members in the government will be more inclined to be initiators than ambitious members in the opposition. By being initiators ambitious government backbenchers can demonstrate to the party leadership a capacity for independent judgment, but ambitious opposition members are less likely to be interested in such a supportive role.

Controlling for legislative position in Nova Scotia provides the expected results. In the opposition there is no relationship between ambition and the initiator orientation, but in the government the relationship is very strong ($\tau c = .63$). Controlling in this manner reduces the cases in each table in a situation in which there are very few cases to begin with, but the results more than justify the exercise.

The preceeding discussion helps account for the tendency to assume certain policy orientations, but two important gaps remain in the analysis. First, neither ambition nor legislative position seem to account for the initiator orientation in Ontario. Since this orientation is congruent with a certain degree of self-esteem

and independence, it is reasonable to expect it to be associated with a relatively high level of formal education. For our limited purposes the possession of a university degree is a reasonable indication of academic accomplishment.³⁴

Table 7.4 shows that in both provinces those with university degrees, as expected, are inclined toward the initiator orientation. In Ontario almost three-quarters of those who hold university degrees express some attachment to this orientation, while in Nova Scotia only one of the fourteen members with a university degree reveals no interest in being a policy initiator. Equally as important is the tendency of policy facilitators in Ontario not to have university degrees. Being a policy facilitator in Ontario apparently requires few of the skills associated with a university education. Interpersonal skills, and not academic credentials, are probably more appropriate.

The second gap in the analysis is the facilitator orientation in Nova Scotia. In a province where this is the least popular orientation it is unlikely that many of the members who endorse it are seeking an outlet for their policy interests. Most members, it has been pointed out, seem to wish to concentrate their policy work in the legislature. Since facilitation involves a certain degree

³⁴This indicator has provided the sharpest contrast in representational role orientations. Jewell, *op. cit.*, p. 473. Kornberg found that in the House of Commons those with a university degree were somewhat more "policy-oriented". See Kornberg, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

of liaison with constituents, it seems reasonable to suggest that in Nova Scotia facilitators are moved by constituency pressures. Among the most urgent are electoral pressures, and Table 7.4 shows that, while electoral competition generally has a negligible effect on other policy orientations, it has a relatively strong impact on policy facilitators in Nova Scotia. The higher the level of constituency competition the more interested members are in this orientation.

This brief assessment of only four possible sources illustrates clearly that no single variable can adequately account for the range of role orientations. Moreover, the nature of the legislature seems to have a marked influence on the assumption of role orientations. The normative content of these orientations remains constant, but the reasons for endorsing them change between the legislatures. This complexity, it has been argued, actually enhances the value of role analysis, since orientations cannot be considered mere surrogates for other variables. As Jewell puts it, "Role provides a shortcut, a way of summarizing the total effect that these various forces have on legislators".³⁵

³⁵Jewell, op. cit., p. 483.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued that a useful way to describe the policy-making activities of provincial legislators is by means of a role analysis. Three policy-making role orientations have been outlined--initiator, critic and facilitator--and the provinces compared on the degree to which legislators find these orientations attractive. Role orientations are not only an element of the style which members employ in their approach to policy matters, but are also a means of appreciating the atmosphere of legislative policy-making.

The initiator orientation, with its stress on independent judgment and personal ideas may seem out of place in the context of party government, but in both provinces well over half of the members expressed an attachment to this orientation. In Nova Scotia, moreover, this orientation is associated with positive assessments of backbench influence. Most members, it seems, are unwilling to abandon the idea that personal initiative is an appropriate quality for provincial legislators and an appropriate manner in which to approach their policy responsibilities.

The critic orientation is more popular in Nova Scotia than in Ontario. In both cases this orientation involves the use of public channels to make arguments felt, but less than half of Ontario members feel any attachment to the critic orientation and those that do are sceptical about the influence of backbench members of the

legislature. Nova Scotia critics do not feel particularly efficacious, but they are by no means as pessimistic about the abilities of backbenchers to influence the course of policy-making.

The policy facilitator plays a supportive role in the legislative system, one that usually involves the use of private tactics. In Ontario this is a popular orientation, particularly among government members. And those who do endorse the facilitator orientation are quite optimistic about the opportunities available to influence policy. Nova Scotia facilitators are not only less numerous but also considerably more pessimistic about backbench influence. Nova Scotia members generally seem less interested in a passive legislative role and more interested in being critics and initiators. This applies to both government and opposition members.

These differences between the provinces in both the popularity of the three policy orientations and the relationships between orientations, tactics and feelings of efficacy underline the importance of the legislative setting in the conditioning of legislative behaviour. Some of the differences that were noted seem to be directly attributable to factors discussed in chapter three. The length of the legislative session, for example, probably contributes to the tendency of critics in Ontario to employ parliamentary tactics while Nova Scotia critics rely more heavily on the media and interest groups. Other interprovincial differences, however, are not as readily explained. The presence of gaps in the analysis offered

here suggests the existence of other differences in legislative settings that might also contribute to the explanation of backbench participation.

Given the different pattern of role orientations, it is not particularly surprising that the sources of role orientations should be inconsistent across the two provinces. In most cases, ambition is a weak and uncertain guide to role orientation. The only exception is in Nova Scotia where government members with progressive ambitions are strongly inclined to be initiators. Here a consensus has apparently developed on what is expected of would-be ministers, but no where else is there any evidence of ambitious members choosing a particular political style. Education, electoral competition, and party cues all seem to be of some importance in the assumption of particular role orientations. The importance of party cues underlines a familiar point, namely that the realization of personal ambitions sometimes entails an adherence to party norms and requirements. Ambitious members may consider this a safer strategy than trying to divine a distinctive policy role.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to characterize and investigate backbench participation in legislative policy-making in two provincial legislatures. The thesis began with three main objectives: first, to describe the range and variety of participation; second, to examine the influence of the legislative environment on participation; and third, to evaluate the potential of the ambition hypothesis for explaining differences in the participation of individual backbenchers. This chapter summarizes the main findings in each of these areas, assesses their contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of parliamentary government, and suggests other, related, research strategies which may be employed to extend our knowledge of the backbencher's role in legislative policy-making.

Backbenchers and Policy-making

Most analyses of the role of backbenchers in Canadian legislative institutions stress the numerous obstacles to their influence over public policy. Implicit in much of this work has been the belief that it is necessary to remove some of these obstacles and thereby strengthen the ability of individual members, and the legislature as a whole, to participate in policy-making. For

the most part, however, reformers acknowledge the importance of executive accountability to the successful operation of parliamentary government.¹ Parliaments, in Canada, seldom take decisions on policy matters that have not been ratified by the executive. Instead, members of parliament discuss, debate and communicate ideas and preferences to one another and to members of the cabinet. Their influence is diffuse and unsystematic and it is often exercised at the indulgence of the executive.² That does not mean it is inconsequential. The "rule of anticipated reactions" undoubtedly applies to the relationship between executives and legislatures in Canada and elsewhere.³ Legislators may not always exercise influence directly, but executives cannot afford to ignore the possible reaction of the legislature to cabinet proposals.

The upshot of this relationship is that the frequency,

¹J.A.A. Lovink, "Parliamentary Reform and Governmental Effectiveness in Canada", Canadian Public Administration, Vol. XVI, no. 1 (Spring 1973), pp. 38-39.

²Paul Thomas, "The Influence of Standing Committees of the Canadian House of Commons on Government Legislation", a paper presented to a Conference on Legislative Studies in Canada, York University, Toronto, October, 1977.

³Carl Friedrich, Man and His Government (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), chapter 11; and, Robert Jackson, Rebels and Whips: An Analysis of Dissension, Discipline and Cohesion in British Political Parties (New York: St. Martins Press, 1968), p. 8.

substance, and style of members' participation is probably linked to the ultimate influence of the legislature over the creation and administration of public policy. It can be argued with some assurance that the pattern of participation maintained by private members on both sides of the House conditions the manner in which the executive approaches the legislature. This thesis has concentrated on an elaboration of members' legislative participation, but others have begun the task of linking participation and influence at least at the level of individual participants.⁴

Since parties are the main actors on the parliamentary stage, the contributions of individuals are sometimes lost in the din of the party battle. Moreover, individual participation is often orchestrated by the team of party leaders, and individuals are frequently unable to exercise much independence. Perhaps the main effect of this principle of parliamentary organization is the impact, sometimes overwhelming, of one's position in the legislature on legislative participation. Several chapters in this thesis have presented further evidence for the dictum that where one stands depends on where one sits.⁵ Differences between opposition and

⁴Allan Kornberg and William Mishler, Influence in Parliament: Canada. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1976), esp. chapter 9.

⁵Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 176.

government backbenchers, in particular, serve as constant reminders that legislative behaviour occurs in an environment dictated by the principles of parliamentary government.

A second effect of party cohesion is the tendency of many members on both sides of the legislature to eschew legislative participation and to concentrate their energies on their constituencies. The opportunity to participate only as a team player is seized upon by many backbenchers who give priority to their constituency work, not only, or even primarily, out of frustration with the realities of party government, but because constituency work provides a greater sense of personal fulfillment. As chapters four and five have shown, a majority of members in both provinces spend more than half of their working time servicing the needs of constituents and most of the conversations members conduct with ministers and public servants concern constituency matters. Almost all members believe that their efforts on behalf of constituents are instrumental in securing their reelection. Finally, most members find constituency work rewarding. They enjoy the small victories associated with solving individual problems although they also point out that the weight of constituency demands often constitutes the most onerous part of the job. In short, this thesis presents considerable evidence to support the view that many parliamentarians, and in this case provincial politicians, devote a great deal of time and emotional energy to constituency service.

The importance of party loyalties and the widespread acceptance and enjoyment of constituency service may create the impression that members are unable to display any individuality in their legislative participation and are unwilling to contribute to policy matters that have no direct bearing on their own constituencies. An examination of the substance of members' policy interests and the style of their participation helps to forestall that conclusion. Members are not universally parochial in their policy interests, nor do they ritually adopt a passive style in their participation.

When private members are asked about their personal policy interests a rich variety of concerns emerges. Although the political, social and economic environments undoubtedly establish the parameters of most policy interests (e.g., no one cited external affairs as an area of personal concern), members' interests cover a wide range of governmental activities undertaken at the provincial level. Equally important is the fact that in both provinces, but particularly in Ontario, some opposition members claim to be pursuing particular policy interests at the behest of the party leadership. This suggests that to some degree at least the opposition parties are aware of the need to establish some expertise in a wide range of policy areas. Although members sometimes admit that their portfolio responsibilities do not always coincide with their personal interests, most made it plain that they take their assigned responsibilities seriously.

On the government side of the House in Ontario the system of parliamentary assistants also forces some members to cultivate and perhaps extend their policy interests. One of the results is a government backbench which contains several members who have had some exposure to cabinet decision-making and to the complexities of policy-making in particular policy areas.

The implication that members are parochial in their policy interests is further undermined by an examination of the definition of their policy interests. In both provinces a large proportion of members have broad policy interests which either coincide with or supercede departmental jurisdictions. Moreover, despite the absence in Nova Scotia of institutionalized pressures to develop broad policy interests, a slightly larger proportion of backbenchers in that province defined their interests in that way. Furthermore, the fact that most members made little or no mention of their constituencies in discussing policy interests suggests that constituency considerations are not of paramount importance to the selection of interest areas. Finally, the conventional distinction between policy-oriented and constituency or area-oriented members deserves further refinement. In discussing their policy interests some members were unprepared to make a clear distinction between policy and constituency responsibilities and no effort was made to force them into one or another of these categories. It seems advisable to begin treating these differences as matters of degree.

Just as not all members are parochial in their policy interests, neither are they all interested in broad policy areas. Considerable diversity exists. Similarly, members also differ in the pursuit of their interests. Chapter five showed, for example, that active participation on the floor of the legislature is by no means a common tactic. Although these differences in behaviour owed a great deal to legislative position, chapter seven showed that members also adopt particular role orientations to different degrees and that this is not simply a function of party affiliation. One of the most interesting findings in this regard was the strength of the initiator orientation in both provinces. Although conventional interpretations of party government minimize the role of backbenchers in initiating much policy change, a large minority of members described their own approach to policy by emphasizing personal initiatives. Many of the contributions of initiators were on narrow and specific issues, and initiators did not have a particularly high sense of political efficacy. The point, however, is that regardless of the limited outlets for this type of orientation, or the frustrations that might accompany it, many members in both provinces favoured the strategy of promoting their own personal projects as the best way of contributing to policy. The impact of this style on ministers and public servants may be underestimated.

The two other orientations examined, that of facilitator and critic, appear to be more congruent with expectations of backbench behaviour in parliamentary systems. Not unexpectedly, the tendency

to endorse these orientations depends to some extent on one's membership in either the government or the opposition. More important, perhaps, is simply the fact that backbenchers approach their role as policy-makers in different ways, that these are discernible in interview situations and that they bear some relation to the tactics members employ and to their feelings of efficacy.

This thesis began with the identification of three dimensions of backbench participation in policy-making--frequency, substance, and style--and reported research findings on each dimension. The objective was to clarify the meaning of participation as it applies to backbenchers in parliamentary systems and to determine whether variation on any or all of these dimensions could be attributed to political ambition. It would be useful if future research were to concentrate some attention on the relationships among these dimensions. In particular, an effort should be made to link attitudes with behaviour in the parliamentary setting. Although behavioural data are often difficult to collect and interpret, a vast store of information exists in Hansards and Journals.⁶ It may also be possible to suggest composite types of participants by

⁶Kornberg and Mishler, *op. cit.*, p. 128. For a discussion of the importance of indirect measures see, Samuel C. Patterson and John C. Wahlke, "Trends and Prospects in Legislative Behaviour Research" in S.C. Patterson and J.C. Wahlke (eds.), Comparative Legislative Behaviour: Frontiers of Research (New York: John Wiley, 1972), pp. 299-303.

drawing on the dimensions suggested in this thesis. Although typologies do not always faithfully reflect complexities in attitudes and behaviour, they often provide economy in conceptualization.⁷

There are, of course, other dimensions of backbench participation that can be examined. The degree of specialization in particular policy areas would provide some indication of how members are deploying their limited resources of time and energy. It would also suggest how successful efforts have been to create cadres of policy specialists such as those who hold positions in a shadow cabinet.⁸ The inclusion of additional aspects of participation will add to the measurement problems that already exist. More attention will have to be paid to the problem of verifying reported participation rates and the addition of more legislatures to the research design will make the problem of establishing equivalence all the more pressing in cases where indirect measures are employed. The researcher may take some solace in the fact that none of these problems is unique to the study of legislative behaviour.

⁷James D. Barber, The Lawmakers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Oliver Woshinsky, The French Deputy: Incentives and Behaviour in the National Assembly (Lexington: Heath, 1973); and, in Canada, Kornberg and Mishler, op. cit., pp. 310-311.

⁸For example, Malcolm Punnett, Front-Bench Opposition: The Role of the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Cabinet and Shadow Government in British Politics (London: Heinemann, 1973).

The Impact of the Legislative Environment

In the final pages of his study of British and Italian politicians Robert Putnam admitted the overwhelming importance of cross-national differences to his conclusions: "Throughout our investigation the most persistent predictor of these politicians' basic attitudes has been country."⁹ In this study differences in the behaviour and attitudes of private members have not been attributed to "Ontario" and "Nova Scotia". Instead, emphasis has been placed on differences in the institutional environment and, in particular, on the structure of opportunities and incentives for backbench participation. There are doubtless alternative interpretations to one based on institutional factors. However, if legislative behaviour can be considered the product of a pushing attitude and a pulling environment,¹⁰ one of the most important environments is surely the legislature through which members must work.

Chapter three pointed out four areas of legislative organization in which the provinces differ and which might be expected to influence backbench participation: legislative professionalization, internal leadership recruitment, organizational complexity and

⁹Robert Putnam, The Beliefs of Politicians (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 239.

¹⁰Fred Greenstein, "Personality and Politics," in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby, (eds.), Handbook of Political Science: Volume Two (Toronto: Addison-Wesley, 1975), pp. 1-92.

specialization, and committee autonomy. No effort was made to link these factors directly with the various dimensions of participation, but it was anticipated that they would condition backbench attitudes and behaviour. Specifically, the institutional environment in Ontario seemed more conducive to backbench participation and it was expected that backbenchers in that province would be more enthusiastic about participation in legislative policy-making.

The frequency, substance and style of participation all show the effects of the institutional environment. Nova Scotia members spend more time than their Ontario counterparts on constituency work, and less on legislative activities. The pattern of informal participation is roughly similar in the two provinces, but participation in debates and question periods is much more concentrated in Ontario: a relatively small group dominates the action. As chapters three and five pointed out, the greater equality of participation in Nova Scotia is probably due in part to the fact that MLAs in that province are formally equal. No system of opposition critics exists, and in the government backbench there is no system of parliamentary assistants comparable to that found in Ontario.

Differences in the pattern of role orientations in the two provinces seem to be related primarily to legislative professionalization. Perhaps the most obvious difference lies in the appeal of the facilitator orientation. For most backbenchers in Nova Scotia the prospect of acting as a middleman, interpreting demands

and communicating responses, holds little appeal. Their work as an MLA is crowded into the periods in the spring and fall when the legislature is in session. There are, of course, problems which arise throughout the year, and the growing pressure of constituency demands seems to be forcing more members into full time political careers. Most members, however, are still able to pursue other occupations and confine their active participation to meetings of the Assembly. Consequently, the critic and initiator orientations have more appeal since both presume the adoption of a public stance for which the legislature provides a forum. Being a policy facilitator is more congruent with a full time devotion to duties and fewer opportunities for open and active participation. It is not surprising, then, that government backbenchers in Ontario are attracted to this orientation.

Finally, chapter six noted differences between the two legislatures in the substance of policy interests. In this case the institutional environment seems less important than the social and economic environment. Policy interests appear to be influenced by policy trends in the provinces and by the social and economic circumstances which distinguish Ontario and Nova Scotia. However, institutional factors do seem to affect the origins of policy interests. In Ontario more members report being asked to become involved in particular policy areas. The practice of assigning to individual members of the opposition responsibility for the

criticism of particular portfolios probably accounts for this tendency as does the existence of an active system of select committees. Members of the Nova Scotia legislature have no comparable incentives to choose particular policy areas and relatively few report being influenced by constituency pressures. Consequently, a large majority of Nova Scotia MLAs cite personal reasons, or reasons associated with occupational concerns, as the main source of policy interests.

On each of the dimensions of legislative participation studied, some of the variation can be attributed to the legislative environment. One of the most perplexing aspects of a comparative study limited to two legislatures is the difficulties involved in interpreting the magnitude of the differences that emerge. Are these dramatically different patterns of participation or minor variations? A precise answer to this question awaits a research design which encompasses all ten provinces. It does seem safe to conclude, however, that students of legislative behaviour would be well-advised to undertake comparative research wherever possible. Although the limited scope of this study makes it difficult to estimate with precision the role of the legislative environment, the research presented here strongly suggests that procedures, traditions, and facilities all make a difference to individual participants.

These findings might be interpreted as a vindication of the efforts of parliamentary reformers. They indicate that changes to the structure of opportunities in the legislature will be repaid

by attitudinal and behavioural changes on the part of backbenchers.

There are limits, however, to this type of interpretation. First,

in some of the aspects of backbench participation considered here

the provinces are remarkably similar. The reform of parliamentary

institutions in the hope of changing members' definitions of their

policy interests, for example, might be approached with some

scepticism. Second, some of the most salient of differences in

incentives and opportunities in the two provinces are difficult to

erase through legislative reforms. As chapter three pointed out, the

electoral system has permitted the development of a system of internal

leadership recruitment in Ontario and the volume of business conducted

in that province has had considerable influence in increasing salaries

and improving facilities. Reformers may be instrumental in insuring

that some of these changes occur, but they are also constrained by

factors beyond their control.

Can it be safely concluded, from a consideration of these

behavioural and attitudinal indicators, that the legislative en-

vironment in Ontario is more conducive to backbench participation

as anticipated in chapter three? Probably not. The most that

can be said is that Ontario members do devote more time to legis-

lative work than their counterparts in Nova Scotia and that all

four of the factors outlined in chapter three probably have some

bearing on this pattern. There are other indications, however,

that Ontario members are more inclined to choose passive avenues

of participation. A large proportion of Ontario members are silent during debates and question period and many prefer the role of facilitator in approaching policy questions. These tendencies are particularly evident among government supporters in Ontario. The party expects its members to maintain a rather low profile despite the presence of incentives and opportunities in the form of lengthy sessions, research assistants and select committees. The legislative environment is not inconsequential, but its importance may be mitigated by party expectations which make clear what use is to be made of opportunities and how members should interpret incentives.

As chapter three emphasized, and subsequent chapters demonstrated, the legislative environment may affect more than the distribution of behaviour and attitudes. Of particular interest was the possibility that political ambition would be a more reliable guide to backbench participation in Ontario than in Nova Scotia because the incentive and opportunity structure in the former province was more likely to encourage ambitious members to adopt distinctive strategies in their participation. It is to this issue and the general role of political ambition that we turn in closing.

The Role of Political Ambition

Both legislatures contain a large group of private members who have some ambition for cabinet office. This thesis has tested the hypothesis that these individuals will be frequent participants

in policy-making activities and will adopt distinctive attitudes toward participation in the affairs of the legislature. The hypothesis has withstood the test for some aspects of participation, but not for others.

Ambitious members are a distinctive group. They tend to define their policy interests in terms broad enough to encompass the responsibilities of one or more government departments and seldom mention their own constituencies in establishing the parameters of their interests. In discussions with ministers and public servants these members are more inclined than their unambitious colleagues to raise questions of government policy. If they are in the opposition, they are also much more likely to make use of debates and oral question period. In Ontario ambitious members devote more time than others to legislative activities and in the government backbenches ambitious members are more active participants in legislative debates. In Nova Scotia ambitious government members overwhelmingly prefer the initiator role orientation. In short, ambitious members do make a distinctive contribution to backbench participation in both provinces.

This thesis has argued that this distinctive contribution has its source in the desire on the part of these members to attract attention to themselves as competent and attractive prospects for cabinet positions, and to anticipate promotion by adhering to the norms of behaviour established by ministers. Where this hypothesis has failed to find confirmation, it is either because other factors

simply prove more important than political ambition, or because ambitious members find it difficult to discern the most appropriate behaviour or attitude to display.

Ambition seems to have relatively little influence over the priority given to constituency work. In this case it appears that ambition is relatively unimportant. Although cabinet ministers give legislative activities priority, ambitious members are disinclined to do the same. Instead, most members set their priorities on the basis of the strength of constituency ties. In Ontario members' responsiveness is influenced by non-coercive conditions, viz. the years of constituency residence. The longer members have lived in the constituencies they represent, the more they tend to devote themselves to answering constituent requests and intervening on behalf of constituents when they experience difficulties in their relationships with government. In Nova Scotia, on the other hand, members spend more time on constituency work if their own constituency is electorally competitive. In both provinces constituency pressures are of sufficient importance to most members that they cannot afford to ignore them because of their ambitions. The pursuit of office ambitions, after all, depends heavily on being able to hold one's seat in the legislature. Since almost all members subscribe to the view that constituency-service and reelection are directly related, even ambitious members forsake strategies designed to improve the prospects of their promotion in order to discharge the constituency part of their job adequately.

It was anticipated in chapter three that political ambitions would be a better guide to legislative participation in Ontario than in Nova Scotia. Ambitious members in Nova Scotia appear to have fewer incentives to act on the basis of their ambitions and, consequently, it was expected that other variables would be more reliable predictors of participation. To some degree this expectation has been borne out. In Ontario, backbenchers with progressive ambitions are more inclined than others to spend time on legislative activities and to discuss policy matters with ministers. Moreover, ambitious government members are more active participants in legislative debates in Ontario. There are no corresponding relationships in Nova Scotia.

The importance of the legislative environment must not be overstated, however. Ambition does enjoy some success as a predictor in Nova Scotia and in one case--the endorsement of the initiator role orientation--it is a better predictor in that province than in Ontario. What can be said is that most of the discrepancies between the two provinces are in the expected direction. A wider sample of provinces and other measures of participation will be needed to say more.

These are some of the more important circumstances in which the ambition hypothesis has failed despite the apparent existence of cues and models for ambitious members to follow. In the case of policy role orientations the failure of the ambition hypothesis

appears to be related to the absence of recognized norms of behaviour associated with either being or becoming a cabinet minister.

It is not at all clear which role orientation is most likely to facilitate the promotion of aspiring backbenchers or which role orientation ministers might adopt. This implies, of course, that ambitious backbenchers would act in concert if there was agreement among them that a particular orientation would improve the chances of recognition and promotion. It is also possible that the lack of agreement implies that members simply believe that there is more than one route to the cabinet and that the adoption of a particular role orientation is likely to damage or improve one's chances only marginally. It will be difficult to assess the veracity of these arguments until more is known about what ministers and members expect of one another.

Ambition, as Joseph Schlesinger has pointed out, is not always considered an endearing quality for politicians.¹¹ It suggests, among other things, a willingness to forgo loyalties and obligations in the interests of personal advancement. The findings presented here suggest, however, that ambition is circumscribed by both party and constituency loyalties. Ambitious members assert themselves, but because the realization of their ambition depends

¹¹ Joseph Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), pp. 1-3.

on electoral support in the constituency and political support in the party, they are disinclined to shirk their constituency and party responsibilities. Previous chapters have revealed several instances in which either party loyalties or constituency factors have overshadowed political ambition. Moreover, although ambitious members are distinctive in their legislative participation, this distinctiveness is the product of conformity to the expectations and norms established by ministers and party leaders. Considerable continuity is achieved as a result and in that respect at least the institution is strengthened from within.

On the other hand, in legislatures in which members are encouraged to act on the basis of their ambitions, there will always be a contingent of members who endeavor to portray themselves as the equals of ministers. Under these circumstances ministers cannot expect to dominate proceedings because backbenchers are passive spectators concerned exclusively with their own reelection. The opposition will contain members anxious to become cabinet ministers and willing to adapt their legislative participation to that end. The government backbench will also be a source of ministerial material and ambitious government supporters will be concerned to demonstrate their suitability for cabinet rank. Ambitious members may not always be willing or able to adapt their attitudes and behaviour to this end, but within the legislature it is these politicians who represent the greatest potential challenge to the policy initiatives of cabinet.

APPENDIX

CODEBOOK

The Codebook is a guide to data employed in this thesis. It follows the general sequence of the interview, but some questions have been moved to assemble those that bear on a single topic. All questions from the interview are identified with the letter "Q"; all written questions are identified with the letter "W". The Codebook is also a guide to information collected from public records including provincial Hansards and the Parliamentary Guide.

First Deck

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
PROV1	<u>Province</u>
	1. Ontario
	2. Nova Scotia
RESP1	<u>Respondent Number</u>
CARD1	<u>Card Number (1)</u>
	<u>Expectations about the Job</u>
	Q.1 "Just before you took office, did you have any ideas about what the job of being an MPP/MLA entailed?"
Q1A	1. Knew what to expect.
	2. Had some idea about what to expect.
	3. Had no idea about what to expect.
	0. NA
	"How did you learn about the job?"
	1. Personal investigation.
	2. Informed by party members, participation in the party.
	3. Informed by Provincial members.
Q1B	4. Municipal experience.
	5. Other.
	0. NA; Inap.
	<u>Reasons for Political Activity</u>
Q2	Q.2 "What reasons did you have for becoming active in politics initially?" (Most important reason or first mentioned)

1. Ontario
2. Nova Scotia

1. Knew what to expect.
2. Had some idea about what to expect.
3. Had no idea about what to expect.
0. NA

1. Personal investigation.
2. Informed by party members, participation in the party.
3. Informed by Provincial members.
4. Municipal experience.
5. Other.
0. NA; Inap.

Reasons for Political Activity

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
Q2A	1. Response to encouragement from friends, family or acquaintances. 1. Yes. 2. No. 0. NA.
Q2B	2. Concern for social political or economic problems.
Q2C	3. General interest in government and politics; Career contribution.
Q2D	4. Contribution to community affairs.
Q2E	5. Other (Note).

Circumstances of Recruitment

- Q.3 "Were you encouraged to seek your party's nomination, or were you making this decision primarily on your own?"
- Q3
1. Personal decision; no form of encouragement mentioned.
 2. Encouraged by party members, party leadership.
 3. Encouraged by community leaders, friends.
 4. Personal decision after encouragement or suggestion.
 5. Other (Note).
 0. NA.

Overall Career Orientations

- Q.2-3 Does the respondent reveal an explicit interest in being an MPP/MLA prior to contesting his/her election?
- LC23
1. An explicit interest in obtaining provincial political office.
 2. A mild interest but one balanced by family, business or other considerations.
 3. A disinterest in or a lack of consideration of a provincial political career.
 0. NA; Inap.

Rewards and Gratification from the Job

- Q.4 "What do you find most gratifying about the job of MPP/MLA?" (Code up to 3, most important or first mentioned, Q4A).
1. Solving concrete problems; serving constituents, "ombudsman".
 2. Legislative debate, partisan clash.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
Q4A	3. Exercising influence/power; having "input".
Q4B	4. Pursuing ideological goals, programs; defending, re-
Q4C	presenting views and interests.
	5. Sense of public service, sacrifice to province (no issue content).
	6. Prestige/respect: contact with people; honour; access to influentials.
	7. Gaining personal experience; being educated.
	8. Everything.
	9. Other (Note).
	0. NA.

Burdensome Aspects of the Job

Q5. "What aspects of the job do you find the most onerous or burdensome?" (Code up to 3, most important or first mentioned, Q5A)

Q5A
Q5B
Q5C	1. Working conditions: time constraints; lack of facilities; financial problems; boredom. 2. Personal costs: lack of privacy; no time for family, reading, culture. 3. Impotence with regard to policy or other political actors. 4. Poor leaders, institutions. 5. Public pressures: constituent demands; "social side of it"; elections and electioneering. 6. Absence of commitment to problem-solving; excessive partisanship; abstract discussion; red-tape. 7. Other (note). 8. No burdensome aspects. 0. NA; no other mentions.

What Would Be Missed Most?

Q6. "If you were forced to leave politics next week, what would you miss most?" (Code up to 3, most important or first mentioned, Q6A. Last question on schedule.)

1. Personal friendships: colleagues; parliamentary atmosphere.
2. Prestige/respect: contact with people; honour; access to influentials.
3. Power/influence: being at the centre, "in the know".

Variable	Code
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Q6A
Q6B
Q6C

4. Solving concrete problems; serving constituents; "ombudsman".
5. Pursuing ideological goals, programs; defending, representing views and interests.
6. Sense of public service, sacrifice to province (no issue content).
7. Very little, nothing would be missed (Code only if explicit).
8. Everything; the whole job (low priority).
9. Other (note).
0. NA; no other mentions.

Overall Attractiveness

Q2-6. What is the respondent's overall assessment about the attractiveness of being involved in politics?

LC26

1. Politics is very attractive. No important dissatisfactions.
2. On balance he/she likes it. Some dissatisfactions but satisfactions more important.
3. Pro-con. Satisfactions and dissatisfactions balance one another.
4. On balance he/she dislikes it. Some attractions but dissatisfactions more important.
5. Politics is very unattractive. No important satisfactions.
0. NA; Inap.

Type of Motivation

Q2-6. To what extent is the respondent a *status* participant, concerned with the stature of the office and career possibilities?

LCSTAT

1. This is central to his/her motivation.
2. This motive is present, but not central.
3. This motive is absent.
0. NA.

LCPRO

Q2-6. To what extent is this respondent a *program* participant, concerned with devising and implementing public policy? (same code as LCSTAT).

Variable	Code
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LCOB	Q2-6. To what extent is this respondent an <i>obligation</i> participant, behaving according to conscience and the welfare of others? (same code as LCSTAT)
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Interaction With Ministers

Q7. "How often do you contact cabinet ministers in an average month?"

Q7	1. Very often.
	2. Occasionally (when I have to).
	3. Seldom or never.
	0. NA.

Q8. "How do you usually contact a minister? (code up to 5, most important or first mentioned, Q8A).

Q8A	1. Write him.
Q8B	2. Phone him.
Q8C	3. Visit his office.
Q8D	4. Social functions.
Q8E	5. In the House or Lobby.
	6. In caucus.
	7. Through an intermediary.
	8. Other (note).
	0. NA; no other mention.

Q9. "Which ministers do you contact most often? (code up to 7, most frequent contact or first mentioned, Q9A).

Q9A	01. Environment.
Q9B	02. Attorney-General.
Q9C	03. Education.
Q9D	04. Treasurer; Minister of Finance.
Q9E	05. Culture and Recreation; Recreation.
Q9F	06. Chairman of Management Board; Treasury Board.
Q9G	07. Agriculture and Food; Agriculture and Marketing.
	08. Colleges and Universities.
	09. Transportation and Communication; Highways.
	10. Public Works.
	11. Revenue; Government Services.
	12. Consumer and Commercial Relations; Consumer Services.
	13. Housing.
	14. Energy.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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	15. Health.
	16. Family and Social Services; Social Services.
	17. Labour.
	18. Natural Resources: Lands and Forests.
	19. Industry and Tourism.
	20. Fisheries.
	21. Liquor Control Act.
	22. Development.
	23. Provincial Secretary.
	24. Social Development Policy Minister.
	25. Justice Policy Minister.
	26. The Premier.
	27. Corrections.
	28. Municipal Affairs.
	90. Many different ministers.
	00. NA.

Q10. "Is the occasion for such contacts usually constituency matters or in regard to departmental policies?"

Q10	1. Mostly constituency matters.
	2. Mostly policy matters.
	3. Both (or policy and constituency inseparable).
	0. NA.

Interaction with Deputy Ministers & Civil Servants

Q11. "How often do you contact deputy ministers or higher ranking public servants in an average month?"

Q11	1. Very often.
	2. Occasionally; when I have to.
	3. Seldom or Never.
	0. NA.

Q12A- Q12E	Q12. "How do you usually contact them?" (code up to 5, same code as Q8A).
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Q13A- Q13G	Q13. "Which deputies or civil servants do you contact most often?" (code up to 5, same code as Q9A).
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<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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Q14. "Is the occasion for such contact usually constituency matters or in regard to departmental policies?"

Q14	1. Mostly constituency matters. 2. Mostly policy matters. 3. Both (or policy and constituency inseparable). 0. NA; Inap.

Success with Ministers and Deputies

Q15. "How successful would you say you have been in getting what you have asked for from ministers or civil servants?"

Q15	1. Very successful; no reservations mentioned. 2. Generally successful; some reservations mentioned. 3. Pro-con: win some, lose some. 4. Generally unsuccessful, but occasional success mentioned. 5. Very unsuccessful, no successes mentioned. 0. NA.

General Strategy

Q7-15. Does the respondent attempt to obtain action from the bureaucracy first, from ministers first, or from either depending on the problem?

LC715	1. The dominant strategy is to focus on the responsible minister (or his staff or the P.A.). 2. The dominant strategy is to focus on public servants. 3. Either strategy is employed depending on the problem. 0. NA; Inap.

Second DeckVariable CodePROV2 Province

1. Ontario
2. Nova Scotia

RESP2 Respondent NumberCARD2 Card Number (2)Areas of Policy Interest

- Q1617A "In which areas of policy have you acquired some
 Q1617B interest or expertise during your career as an
 Q1617C MPP/MLA?"
 Q1617D "In which area do you feel you have been most
 Q1617E involved personally?" (code up to 5 areas
 mentioned, the area of most involvement, Q1617A)

Government Regulation; Consumer Affairs/Protection

001. Consumer and Commercial Affairs (departmental responsibilities).
002. Child safety.
003. Hazardous products.
004. Housing and other consumer warranties.
005. Small business regulation.
006. Landlord-tenant relations.
007. Personal privacy.
008. Licencing.
009. Seat belts.
010. Snowmobiles.
011. Design of automobiles; traffic safety.
012. Organ donations.
013. Liquor control.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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Environmental Protection & Resource Management

100.	Natural Resources/Lands and Forests (departmental responsibilities).
101.	Environment (departmental responsibilities).
102.	Energy (departmental responsibilities).
103.	Water Resources.
104.	Forestry.
105.	Recreational Lands.
106.	Conservation.
107.	Land drainage.
108.	Ecological sanctuaries; wolf bounties.
109.	Pollution.
110.	Silicosis.
111.	Mining taxation.

Social Services

200.	Education (departmental responsibilities).
201.	Health (departmental responsibilities).
202.	Social Services (departmental responsibilities).
203.	Housing (departmental responsibilities).
204.	Mentally retarded.
205.	Hospitals; community clinics.
207.	Dental services.
208.	Aging; senior citizens homes, drugs.
209.	Health services delivery.
210.	Colleges and Universities (departmental responsibilities); post-secondary education.
212.	Children's aid.
213.	Culture and recreation (departmental responsibilities).
214.	Welfare policies.
215.	Guaranteed annual income.
216.	Unemployment Insurance.

Economic Development/Stimulation

300.	Industry and Tourism (departmental responsibilities).
301.	Development (departmental responsibilities).
302.	Transportation and Communication (departmental responsibilities).
303.	Tourism.
304.	Industrial Development (in a particular locale).
305.	Regional economic development.
306.	Fishing industry (inland or coastal); 100 mile limit.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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307.	Small business loans.
308.	Provincial planning.
309.	Sales tax reform.
310.	Agriculture (departmental responsibilities).
311.	Transportation; rural roads.
312.	Utility takeover.
313.	Mass transit.
314.	Urban affairs.

Labour and Industrial Relations

400.	Labour (departmental responsibilities)
401.	Labour-management relations.
402.	Workman's compensation.
403.	Teacher's strikes.
404.	Strike mechanism and alternatives.
405.	Mining conditions.

Justice and Social Control

500.	Justice/Attorney-General (departmental responsibilities).
501.	Corrections (departmental responsibilities).
502.	Individual and human rights.
503.	Womens' rights.
504.	Police forces.

Intergovernmental Relations and Government Operations

600.	Municipal Affairs (departmental responsibilities).
601.	Relations among levels of government.
602.	Decentralization/centralization of government.
603.	Municipal reform.
604.	Parliamentary supervision of regulation.
605.	Parliamentary reform.
606.	Municipal assessment.
607.	Public servants' superannuation.
608.	Bilingual policy in government.
609.	Regional government.

Finance

700.	Treasury and Finance (departmental responsibilities).

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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	Miscellaneous
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	800. Distributive policies (public works locations, patronage etc.).
	801. Aid to separate schools.
	900. NA; no specific areas.

	<u>Definition of Policy Interest</u>
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	Q16-17. How does the respondent identify his policy interests? (code as many as necessary). (1=reference; 0=no reference).
--	---

LC1617A	
LC1617B	
LC1617C	

	1. Reference to responsibilities of a government department.
	2. Reference to a concrete area(s) of policy, regardless of how specific, where concrete action has been undertaken or is contemplated: (do not code an example cited to illuminate 1).
	3. Reference to aspects of policy or style of policy-making; questions involving the substance or implementation of some or all policies (e.g. the use of discretionary powers; effect on riding).
	0. NA: Inap.

	<u>Breadth of Policy Interest</u>
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	Q18. "What have been your general objectives in this field? What did you want to achieve?" As the respondent describes his major interest, does it involve a broad policy area, equivalent to or spanning departmental responsibilities (e.g. agriculture, industrial development): a specific policy area or program (e.g. sales tax reform, improvement of land drainage systems); or a specific issue or decision unrelated to any policy area with little contiguous interest required or implied (e.g. location of a hydroelectric site)?
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LC1618	
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	1. A broad policy area.
	2. A specific policy area.
	3. Specific issue(s) or decision(s).
	0. NA.

Variable	Code
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Source of Policy Interest

Q19. "Why did you become involved in this particular area of policy?"

Q19

1. An extension of occupational interest.
2. The pressure of representative responsibilities (not necessarily constituent).
3. Requested to by party leadership.
4. Personal experience; personal interest (origin unspecified).
5. Other (note).
0. NA.

Importance of Constituency

Q16-19. How important is the respondent's constituency (i.e. its social and economic characteristics) to his definition and choice of policy interests?" (code as a continuum).

LC1619

1. It is central and defines his interest.
2. It is important, but he also considers his interest in broader, provincial or regional, terms.
3. It is mentioned, but is of marginal importance.
4. It is completely absent in his discussion.
0. NA.

Policy Strategies

Q20,21. "How would you describe your role in shaping policy in this area (these areas)?" "What do you usually do to make your views known?" What means, if any, does the respondent use to secure a hearing? (Code up to 4, most important or first mentioned, Q2021A).

Q2021A

Q2021B

Q2021C

Q2021D

01. Personal approach to minister.
02. Personal approach to civil servants.
03. Raise issue in caucus.
04. Standing committee reports/deliberations.
05. Select committee reports/deliberations.
06. Discuss matter on floor of legislature.
07. Encourage and facilitate interest groups (defined broadly).

Variable Code

- 08. Inform the press; the public.
- 09. Introduce motions, notices of motion, or private members bills.
- 10. Discuss problem with other members.
- 11. No particular approach mentioned.
- 12. Other.
- 00. NA.

Policy Roles

Q18,20. How important is the policy *initiator* role with its emphasis on personal ideas and suggestions? (code as a continuum).

- LCINITOR
- 1. It is central to his policy activities.
 - 2. It is important, but not central.
 - 3. It is unimportant or absent.
 - 0. NA.

LCCRITIC Q18,20. How important is the policy *critic* role with its emphasis on citing the problems of government policy? (code as above).

LCFACIL Q18,20. How important is the policy *facilitator* role with its emphasis on communicating or channeling policy ideas and policy application? (code as above).

Policy Information

Q22. "Where do you get your most reliable information on policy and legislative matters?" (code up to 4 mentions, most important or first mentioned, Q22A).

- Q22A 01. Caucus.
- Q22B 02. Newspapers, editorials.
- Q22C 03. Personal research, general reading materials, books, magazines.
- Q22D 04. Government departments; ministers.
- 05. Constituents.
- 06. Interest groups or organizations; informed individuals.
- 07. Caucus researchers.
- 08. Parliamentary library.
- 09. The party.

Variable Code

- 10. Depends on the issue (nothing else volunteered).
- 11. Other (note).
- 00. NA.

Influence Over the Course of Public Policy

Q23. "In general, who has the most influence over the outcome of policy and legislation that is discussed in the Legislature?"

Q23

- 1. The premier.
- 2. The premier and the cabinet.
- 3. The government, including the caucus.
- 4. The civil service; bureaucracy; executive assistants.
- 5. Economic interests: business, unions, monopolies.
- 6. Interest groups; pressure groups; party officials.
- 7. Parliament; the legislature.
- 8. Other (note).
- 0. NA.

Influence of the Senior Bureaucracy

Q24. "How influential are deputy ministers and senior public servants?" This question would not have been asked if answer volunteered in Q23. (code as a continuum).

Q24

- 1. Extremely important.
- 2. Quite important.
- 3. Some importance; Pro-con.
- 4. Unimportant.
- 5. Very unimportant, no real power.
- 6. Don't know.
- 0. NA; Inap.

Influence of Interest Groups

Q25

Q25. "How influential are private groups and interests?" (same instructions, same codes as Q24).

Variable	Code
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Influence of the Legislature

Q26	Q26. "How influential is the legislature?" (same instructions, same codes as Q24).
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Definition of the Pattern of Influence

Q23-26. To what extent does the respondent's discussion of influence stress the complexities and subtleties or power and its exercise. (code as a continuum).

LC2326	1. This is crucial to his discussion of influence. 2. Some stress on complexity. 3. Little or no stress on complexity; generalizes readily. 0. NA.
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Change in Policymaking

Q27. "What changes would you propose in the way policies are made in the province?" (code as many as mentioned, most important or first mentioned, Q27A).

Parliament

Q27A	01. Better legislative planning; better organization of legislative time.
Q27B	02. Generally, a stronger standing committee system.
Q27C	03. Improvement in image of legislature.
Q27D	04. More bills sent to standing committee.
	05. Longer sessions.
	06. More legislative control over subordinate legislation.
	07. Time limits on speeches.
	08. Restrictions on question period.
	09. Expert help for select/standing committees.
	10. Appointment of a strong speaker.
	11. Augmentation of auditor-general staff.
	12. More legislative control over finance.
	13. Bills drafted in committee.
	14. More use of select committees.
	15. Generally, a stronger legislative role in policy.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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Private Members

20. More free votes; more independence for members.
21. More consultation with private members.
22. Votes on private members' bills on second reading.
23. More money/better working conditions for members.
24. Fairer distribution of work among members.
25. Improve member's ability to represent constituents.

Executive

30. Simplify and speed up policy process at cabinet level.
31. Revoke policy secretariats.
32. Give ministers more time to themselves.
33. Improve quality of ministers.
34. Reduce number in cabinet.
35. More attention to and awareness of the legislature.

Public Involvement and Decentralization

40. More attention to grass roots feelings.
41. More "lead time" for public participation; task forces etc.
42. More opportunities for public participation in affairs of legislature.
43. Decentralize decisionmaking.
44. Information to the public.

Interest Groups

50. Curb the influence of pressure groups.
51. Create tribunals to police the private sector.
52. Make greater use of organized groups.

Parties

60. Greater involvement of the rank and file.
61. Less partisanship on legislation.

Bureaucracy

70. Curb the influence of bureaucrats.
71. More responsibility for policy shouldered by public servants.
72. A more efficient, responsive bureaucracy.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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	Miscellaneous
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	80. Change in power-holders.
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	90. No changes desired.
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	99. Don't know.
--	-----------------

	00. NA.
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	<u>Magnitude of Proposals</u>
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	Q.27. What impact would proposed changes have on the existing policy process? (Code as a continuum)
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LC27A	
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	1. An important shift in power relations.
--	---

	2. A marginal shift in power relations.
--	---

	3. A technical reorganization to increase efficiency; no changes in power relations.
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	4. No changes desired.
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	0. NA.
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	<u>Role of Politician</u>
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	Q.27. To what extent are proposed changes designed to improve the capacity of private members to participate in and influence the course of policy-making? (Code as a continuum)
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LC27B	
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	1. This is central to proposed changes.
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	2. This is a consideration, but it is not central.
--	--

	3. This is not mentioned or considered unimportant.
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	0. NA; Inap.
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	<u>Party Images</u>
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	Q.28. "What are the most important differences among the parties?" In what terms are party differences described? (code up to 3)
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LC28A	
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	1. Ideological: refers explicitly to doctrines, philosophies like socialism, liberalism.
--	--

	2. Programmatic: refers to socio-political stance (left-right, eg.).
--	--

	3. Policies: refers to differences on particular issues.
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VariableCode

LC28B

4. Representative: refers to classes or groups represented.

LC28C

5. Capability: refers to qualities of leaders, members, or organization.

6. Other differences.

7. No differences; few differences, "ins" and "outs".

0. NA.

Q.29. "What are the essentials of a democracy?" (Code up to 5 mentions; most important or first mention, Q29A).

Government by the People; Popular Sovereignty

Q29A

10. Government by the people; rule of the people; popular power.

Q29B

11. Popular interest in and awareness of politics.

Q29C

12. Government responsibility, accountability; government, based on consent through elections.

Q29D

13. Government by discussion, consultation.

Q29E

14. Decentralized government; government close to the people.

15. Popular participation: opportunities for people to organize and influence decisions, be heard.

16. Openness in government: no secrecy; public debate, an informed public.

17. Other aspects of government by the people (note).

Equality and Social Democracy

20. Political equality; one man one vote.

21. Equality of opportunity; equal chance to develop.

22. Decent social, living conditions; freedom from want.

23. Social ownership/control of economy; redistribution of wealth.

24. Other aspects of equality and social democracy (note).

Liberty

30. Political liberties generally.

31. Freedom of speech, expression.

32. Limited government: checks and balances.

33. Laissez-faire; free enterprise; absence of government interference in social and economic affairs.

34. Other aspects of liberty (note).

Variable	Code
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Government Institutions; Procedures

- 40. Elections; the vote (but not "one man one vote").
- 41. Majority rule.
- 42. Representative or parliamentary government in general.
- 44. Effective representation by independent members.
- 45. Constitutionalism; the monarchy.
- 46. Rule of law; legal rights.
- 47. Other aspects of institutions, procedures.

Political Competition and Choice

- 50. Opportunity to change the government.
- 51. Strong, critical opposition.
- 52. Party government.
- 53. Party competition; more than one party; electoral choice.
- 54. Other aspects of competition and choice.

Miscellaneous

- 60. Strong leadership.
- 61. Performance by citizens of duties and responsibilities.
- 62. Honest politicians.
- 00. NA; no further mentions.

Models of Democracy

Q.29. How prominent is the *Schumpeterian* model of democracy with its emphasis on competition between several teams of leaders? (code as a continuum)

LC29A

- 1. This is central to his discussion.
- 2. This model appears but is not central.
- 3. Does not appear.

LC29B

Q.29. How prominent is the *classical* model of democracy with its emphasis on direct popular participation and control? (same code as column LC29A)

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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LC29C	Q.29. How prominent is the <i>liberal</i> model of democracy with its emphasis on parliament, political liberties, and the rule of law. (same code as col. LC29A).
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LC26D	Q.29. How prominent is the <i>social</i> model of democracy with its emphasis on social or economic equality or security. (same code as col. LC29A).
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	<u>Instrumental/Normative Dimension of Definition</u>
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	Q.29. What is the general focus of his conception of democracy? (code as a continuum)
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LCDEFINE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wholly instrumental. An exclusive emphasis on democratic methods and institutions. 2. Generally instrumental. General emphasis on methods and institutions, but some mention of values and ideals. 3. Mixed. Normative and instrumental elements equally important. 4. Generally normative. General emphasis on values and ideals, but some mention of methods and institutions. 5. Wholly normative. An exclusive emphasis on democratic ideals and values.
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	Q. NA.
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Third DeckVariable CodePROV3 Province

1. Ontario
2. Nova Scotia

RESP3 Respondent NumberCARD3 Card Number (3)Influentials

Q30A Q 30. "Who, in your opinion are the most influential
 Q30B private members in this legislature -- regardless
 Q30C of party? (Code using respondent numbers and 90
 Q30D if refused, 99 if "everyone is equal", and 00 if NA.)
 Q30E
 Q30F
 Q30G
 Q30H
 Q30I
 Q30J

Influence Nominations

INFLNCE Q 30. How many influence nominations does this
 respondent receive? (enter exact number)

Ambition

Q 31. "Are there any other public offices, elected or
 appointed that you would like to hold in the
 future?" "Which offices are these?"

AMB

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Uncertain.
0. NA.

Variable	Code
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Q 31. If the answer is "yes", which offices are mentioned?

AMBOFF	1. Federal MP.
	2. Provincial cabinet minister.
	3. Mayor or other local office.
	4. Senator.
	5. Member of a provincial board or commission.
	6. Other.
	0. NA; Inap.

Q31. What type of ambition does the respondent reveal?

AMBTYP	1. Very progressive: unconditional interest in an office with greater responsibilities.
	2. Mildly progressive: conditional interest.
	3. Static: content with present office.
	4. Discrete: interested in retiring or assuming a less burdensome office.
	0. NA.

Electoral Competition

COMP1	Ratio of Plurality to Votes Cast.
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Formal Participation

SPEECH1	Total lines attributed in Hansard. (Ontario-5th session, 29th legislature: Nova Scotia-2nd session, 52nd legislature)
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SPEECH2	Total lines attributed minus Throne Speech participation. (same sessions)
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QUEST	Total oral questions asked. (same sessions)
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Party Affiliation

PARTY	1. Liberal.
	2. Progressive Conservative.
	3. New Democratic.

Electoral Competition

COMP2	Rae-Taylor competition score.
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<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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	<u>Parliamentary Assistant</u>
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PARLA	
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	1. Yes.
	2. No.
	0. Inap.

Fourth Deck

Variable Code

PROV4 Province

1. Ontario
2. Nova Scotia

RESP4 Respondent Number

CARD4 Card Number (4)

Elected Office Experience

W1. "Had you ever been elected to a public office before becoming a candidate for the legislature?"

- W1
1. Yes.
 2. No.
 0. NA.

W2. If "yes": "Which offices were these?"

W2A	1. Local Councillor.
W2B	2. Alderman.
W2C	3. Reeve.
W2D	4. Mayor.
W2E	5. School Trustee.
W2F	6. Regional Councillor; Warden.
	7. Commissioner (utilities etc.)
	8. Federal MP.
	0. NA; Inap.

OFFICES Number of Prior Elected Offices

Party Experience

W3. "Before becoming a candidate for the legislature would you describe yourself as an active and committed party worker?"

- ACTIVE
1. Yes.
 2. No.
 0. NA.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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W4. "Have you ever held a party office either at the riding, the provincial or the national level?"

W4A Riding Level

- 1. Yes.
- 2. No.
- 0. NA.

W4B Provincial Level (same code as W4A)

W4C National Level (same code as W4A)

Time Allocation

W5. "Approximately how much of your time as an MPP/MLA is spent on *constituency problems*?"

- CONTIME
- 1. 76-100%.
 - 2. 51-75%.
 - 3. 25-50%.
 - 4. less than 25%.
 - 0. NA.

W6. "Approximately how much of your time as an MPP/MLA is spent on *policy and legislative work*?"

- LEGTIME
- 1. 76-100%.
 - 2. 51-75%.
 - 3. 25-50%.
 - 4. less than 25%.
 - 0. NA.

Constituency Work and Reelection

W7. "How important do you think constituency work is in determining whether or not you will be re-elected?"

- W7
- 1. Very important.
 - 2. Quite important.
 - 3. Not very important.
 - 4. Not important at all.
 - 0. NA.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
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Constituency Competitiveness

W8. "Regarding the relative strength of the parties in your constituency, how would you describe your constituency?"

COMP3

1. Very competitive.
2. Moderately competitive.
3. Not very competitive.
0. NA.

Party/Constituency Conflict

W9. "If you considered that a majority of your constituents were opposed to your party's stand on an issue, how would you vote on that issue?"

W9

1. With my party.
2. With my constituents.
3. I would abstain.
4. I would plan to be absent for the vote.
5. According to my conscience.
6. Depends on the issue.
0. NA

Legislative Attendance

W10. "Approximately what percentage of legislative proceedings and debates are you able to attend during an average session?"

LEGATT

1. 76-100%.
2. 51-75%.
3. 25-50%.
4. less than 25%.
0. NA.

W11. "Approximately what percentage of standing committee meetings are you able to attend during an average session?"

COMATT

1. 76-100%.
2. 51-75%.
3. 25-50%.
4. less than 25%.
0. NA.

Variable Code

Party Differences

W12. "How much difference do you think there is among the parties in the legislature?"

PARTYDIF

1. A great deal of difference.
2. Some difference.
3. Not much difference.
0. NA.

W13. "Are the differences that exist increasing or decreasing?"

W13

1. Increasing.
2. Decreasing.
3. Neither increasing nor decreasing.
0. NA.

Caucus

W14. "Approximately what percentage of caucus meeting are you able to attend?"

CAUCATT

1. 76-100%.
2. 51-75%.
3. 25-50%.
4. less than 25%.
0. NA.

Policy Forums

W15. "How would you rank each of these means of expressing policy views in order of their effectiveness?"

W15A

Debate in the legislature. (code # indicated, if blank, leave blank).

W15B

Debate in standing committee. (same instructions as W15A).

W15C

Debate in caucus. (same instructions as W15A).

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
ITEM1	To compromise with our political opponents is dangerous because it usually leads to the betrayal of our own side. 1. Strongly agree. 2. Agree. 3. Disagree. 4. Strongly disagree. 0. NA.
ITEM2	The legislature today is neither actively involved in the policy process, nor does it effectively oversee the bureaucracy, although these are supposed to be its two principal functions. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM3	Any government that wants to help the poor will have to take something away from the rich in order to do it. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM4	Any MLA(MPP), even if he's not a cabinet minister, can always have a major say in shaping any policy if he is persistent and he works hard at understanding the facts. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM5	In a situation of controversy where one side is clearly right and the other side clearly wrong, it is better to stick to your guns than to bother with a compromise, even if it is acceptable to most of those concerned. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM6	The legislature needs to develop its own source of technical information in order to compete with interest groups and government departments. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM7	If necessary, I would be prepared to accept a significant reduction in pay and benefits to retain my position as an MPP(MLA). (code as ITEM1).
ITEM8	Those who get ahead usually get ahead at the expense of others. (code as ITEM1).

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
ITEM9	Before a man is given a cabinet post it is essential that he have experience as a backbencher. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM10	Most of the time front bench policy is decided before a backbencher gets a chance to exert influence.(code as ITEM1)..
ITEM11	An MPP(MLA) cannot do his job properly unless he has a strong sense of civic duty. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM12	Politics is the "art of the possible" and political leaders should not worry too much about grand plans and distant ideals. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM13	In our parliamentary system backbenchers play a minor role in the framing of legislation. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM14	The legislature should devise its own rules for handling problems like conflict of interest. It is best to handle these types of questions without appealing to the courts. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM15	The amount of influence an average MLA can exert on a policy depends heavily on the issues involved. On some issues ordinary MPPs(MLAs) can exert a great deal of influence. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM16	When an individual or a group gains, it usually means that another individual or group loses. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM17	If I were defeated in a provincial election I would not consider running again to regain my seat. (code as ITEM1).
ITEM18	The issues that confront the legislature are often so technical and the time for studying them is so short, that ultimately the government and the opposition vote on them without a really adequate knowledge of what they entail. (code as ITEM1).

Variable Code

Occupation

W16. "Do you consider your position as MPP/MLA your principal occupation?"

W16

- 1. Yes.
- 2. No.
- 0. NA.

W17. If "no": What do you regard as your principal occupation?"

OCCUP1

- 01. Lawyer.
- 02. Civil servant; executive assistant.
- 03. Supervisory; maintenance superintendant.
- 04. Merchant; retail business.
- 05. Businessman; executive; manager.
- 06. Veterinarian.
- 07. Skilled Labourer.
- 08. Farmer.
- 09. Medical doctor; dentist; psychiatrist.
- 10. Teacher; principal.
- 11. Engineer.
- 12. Unskilled Labourer.
- 13. Pharmacist.
- 14. Sea Captain.
- 15. Clergyman.
- 16. Optometrist.
- 17. Auditor.
- 18. Party Worker.
- 19. Journalist.
- 20. Professor.
- 21. Clerk.
- 22. Union Representative.
- 23. Artist.
- 90. None.
- 00. NA; Inap.

OCCUP2

W18. "What was your occupation when you entered public life?" (same code as OCCUP1).

OCCUP3

W19. "What was your father's usual occupation when you were growing up?" (same code as OCCUP1).

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Code</u>
	<u>Kahan-Butler-Stokes Occupational Category</u>
OCCUP4	1. Higher Managerial or Professional. 2. Lower Managerial or Administrative. 3. Skilled or Supervisory Non-manual. 4. Lower Non-manual. 5. Skilled Manual. 6. Unskilled Manual. 0. NA.
GRADE	<u>Last Grade Completed</u>
	<u>University Attendance</u>
	W27. "Have you ever attended university?"
UNIV	1. Yes. 2. No. 0. NA.
	W28. "Do you have a degree from a university?"
DEGREE	1. Yes. 2. No. 0. NA; Inap.
	W29. "Have you ever attended a graduate or professional school?"
GRAD	1. Yes. 2. No. 0. NA; Inap.
	<u>Legislative Experience</u>
LEGEXP	Years of legislative experience up to and including 1975.
	<u>Residence</u>
	W30. "Do you live in the constituency you represent?"
RES	1. Yes. 2. No. 0. NA.
	W31. "How many years have you lived in the constituency?" (code exact number; if NA code 99).
YEARS	

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