

### 14.3 The Comprehensiveness of the Committee's Review

The Committee believes it is part of its statutory obligation to assess how comprehensive its review has been. The Committee undertook a number of research initiatives to supplement and complement its public hearings. Some of these initiatives were more successful than others. Research interviews provided useful background information concerning the role and function of members of Canada's security and intelligence community, as did many of the *in camera* briefing sessions provided by witnesses representing various government departments and agencies. The public hearings were useful in so far as they gave Committee members a sense of what was of current concern to Canadians. The Committee received numerous thoughtful and well-argued briefs from individual Canadians and from organizations. In this regard, the Committee was particularly well served by SIRC. The Committee believes it has been able to do the best job possible in conducting a comprehensive review of the provisions of the two Acts, given the various constraints it faced.

The Committee is less confident that it has been able to assess how the *CSIS Act* is operating. Important documents that would have allowed the Committee to reach some fairly firm conclusions were not made available to it. The Committee was unable to examine the Minister's written directions, the Director's annual reports, the Inspector General's certificates or any other reports produced by his office, or the special reports of SIRC, especially those concerning how the various branches of the Service function. With the exception of a special *in camera* briefing provided by the RCMP on its security-related responsibilities, the Committee's staff was prevented from attending briefings on secure premises. Consequently, the Committee believes it has been unable to review adequately the roles of key government participants in the security and intelligence process.

### 14.4 Future Needs

As a result of its experience and because it has been unable to fulfil its obligations to Parliament regarding this review of the operation of the *CSIS Act*, the Committee believes that steps should now be taken to ensure that Parliament has a greater continuing review and oversight capacity in this area. Parliament requires the wherewithal to understand and review the actions of the Service and to obtain such information from the review agencies as it believes is necessary to make the Service properly accountable.

Recommendations have already been made in this Report that, if acted upon, would make the Inspector General of CSIS somewhat more independent and give SIRC wider access to information and a broader review mandate. The Committee believes that it was Parliament's intention that SIRC's reports be fully intelligible to Parliament. Clearly, this is not the case at the moment; nor can SIRC report in a timely fashion under the current restrictions imposed on the Review Committee by the *CSIS Act*.

To rectify this situation, the Committee has already recommended that SIRC be able to submit special reports to Parliament when it deems it appropriate. But this is only part