

## 1.4 How the Committee Conducted the Comprehensive Review

Because of the unique challenges facing the Committee and the subject matter it was mandated to review, the Committee developed and applied a number of strategies and investigative techniques to supplement and complement its public hearings. While hearing from Canadians was essential to this comprehensive review, the complexity and sensitivity of the issues under consideration dictated the need for other methods of investigation and information gathering as well. The Committee's consideration of the matters dealt with in this Report brought many difficult issues to the attention of Canadians.

The Committee inaugurated its work by a first phase of *in camera* briefings given by its staff and by the various participants in the system established by the *CSIS Act* and the *Security Offences Act*. The purpose of these briefings was to give the Committee an understanding of how the various parts of the security and intelligence community fit together and the role of each in the system.

Concurrently, Committee staff conducted two dozen research interviews with people in public and private life who could give the Committee guidance and advice on how to carry out the comprehensive review and what should be examined. Using the *in camera* briefings and the research interviews, Committee staff developed a Key Issues Document, which set out a proposed structure for the comprehensive review and outlined the inter-related issues it had to address. This enabled the Committee to determine what questions it had to ask, what documents it needed to examine, what research it had to carry out, and what further briefings it had to seek. The Key Issues Document also provided, to a large degree, the model upon which the structure of this Report is based.

The Committee began the second phase of its work — public hearings — by having the main participants in the system established under the *CSIS Act* and the *Security Offences Act* appear before it. Their public presentations to the Committee were helpful, but because of time limitations and the initial reticence of some of these witnesses, not all of the Committee's questions were answered fully. Early in its deliberations, the Committee was advised by those who had experience with the security and intelligence community that it should pose its questions with precision and determination, and that it should scrutinize the answers it obtained carefully and follow them up if necessary. Faced with some of the shortcomings of public hearings involving participants in the system established under the *CSIS Act* and the *Security Offences Act* and cognizant of the sage advice it had received, the Committee submitted detailed written questions to these witnesses and requested that their answers be provided in as complete and as timely a way as possible.

Written answers to the Committee's detailed questions were received; some of them were more helpful and more forthcoming than others. The responses the Committee