

## 4.2 Security Assessments

### 4.2.1 Security Assessments for Government Employment

Under section 2 of the *CSIS Act*, “security assessment” means an appraisal of the loyalty to Canada and, so far as it relates thereto, the reliability of an individual.

Under the current Government Security Policy, individuals are denied a security clearance if there are reasonable grounds to believe that:

- a) they are engaged in, or may engage, in activities that constitute a threat to the security of Canada within the meaning of the *CSIS Act*; or
- b) because of personal beliefs, features of character, association with persons or groups considered a security threat, or family or other close ties to persons living in certain countries;
  - they may act or may be induced to act in a way that constitutes a “threat to the security of Canada”; or
  - they may disclose, may be induced to disclose or may cause to be disclosed in an unauthorized way, classified information.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee believes that the above provisions, especially paragraph (b), are overly vague and may lead to abusive activity by CSIS. “Personal beliefs” and “features of character”, for example, are not defined in the Government Security Policy or the *CSIS Act*. This policy mandate may give the Service free reign to delve into all aspects of an individual’s personal life, irrespective of whether such matters are strictly related to national security concerns.

For example, the Committee learned of at least one case involving a person who, while undergoing a security assessment for government employment, was suspected of being homosexual. During lengthy interviews conducted by CSIS officers, questions were repeatedly asked about the individual’s sexual orientation. Because the individual refused to answer these questions, the CSIS officers appear to have concluded that the person was dishonest and unco-operative.

Such inquiries by CSIS may indeed be contrary to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In addition, the Committee believes that they have little, if anything, to do with national security concerns as contemplated by the Government Security Policy.<sup>3</sup>

The Committee also learned of cases where persons have been denied security clearances because they occasionally used soft drugs. SIRC has concluded, in a number