

Committee of the Quebec Liberal Party, and the Canada West Foundation. In addition, a number of MPs have tabled bills on the subject. We also considered the discussion paper on Senate reform submitted on June 16, 1983 by the Minister of Justice.

The activities of the Committee were divided into three stages. From May 31 to June 29, hearings were held in Ottawa to obtain the views of parliamentarians — notably senators — and university professors. The hearings gave Committee members an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the issue and the proposed solutions. All federal parliamentarians had previously been invited to share their views on Senate reform with the Committee.

The Committee was empowered to travel within Canada. We decided to hold hearings across the country for two principal reasons. We felt it was important to learn how Canadians in general felt about an undertaking designed to produce a Senate in which all regions of the country would be truly represented. Second, the *Constitution Act, 1982* stipulates that certain changes to the Senate require not only the consent of both federal houses, but also that of the legislatures of seven provinces with at least 50 per cent of the country's population. We deemed it advisable to hear testimony from provincial political figures in their own provinces. At the outset of our inquiry, we wrote to all premiers and to the leaders of the elected executives in Yukon and the Northwest Territories, informing them of our mandate and inviting them to present their views either in public or in private. We also wrote to the leaders of opposition parties represented in the provincial and territorial legislatures.

During September and October, the second stage of our activities, public hearings were held in the capital cities of each province and territory as well as in Ottawa. The schedule of meetings held outside the national capital was flexible enough to give to the general public an opportunity to appear before the Committee and discuss the issue with parliamentarians. Private meetings were held with a number of provincial premiers and ministers. The Leader of the elected executive of the Northwest Territories appeared publicly as a witness.

During these two stages, we heard testimony from 119 witnesses, including 30 organizations (see Appendix B). Some 280 Canadians submitted written briefs or letters (see Appendix C). We were impressed with the high quality of the opinions presented and with the interesting proposals submitted, and we are grateful to all Canadians who took the time to share their views with us.

The third and final phase of our work took place *in camera*. During 14 such sessions the Committee reviewed the evidence and examined various options, weighing them against the objectives contained in our orders of reference. These deliberations led to the conclusions and recommendations in this report.