

*Penitentiaries*

mentations. These matters were discussed in detail with the members of the standing committee during in-camera hearings held in December. As I have said, it is my intention to pursue my efforts in this area and to table another interim report containing an appreciation of each recommendation when the committee begins consideration of the main estimates.

Mr. Speaker, in the ministry of the Solicitor General, there is a senior co-ordination group under a new deputy commissioner for implementation. Working under him, there are co-ordinators for implementation in each region and representatives in each institution. Every month, the responsible co-ordination units submit implementation progress reports to the headquarters and to this main co-ordination group in order to ensure that rapid progress is achieved in the implementation. The deputy commissioner has just come back from a trip across the country during which he has met with the senior officers in each region to find out how we could accelerate this process.

[*English*]

On the basis of this information, I will be receiving a detailed monthly update. Again this morning I held a briefing to apprise me of the current status of implementation, and I intend that this should happen on a regular basis. That is a brief description of the mechanism by which implementation is carried out and monitored.

Now I should like to turn to the substance of the implementation itself. Of the 65 recommendations in the subcommittee report, 37 have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented as of the end of January. For example, independent chairmen are now hearing disciplinary cases in all maximum security institutions, in accordance with subcommittee recommendation 30. The selection of an inspector general is now under way, and the final choice will be made in the near future, in accordance with recommendation 28. Citizens advisory committees have now been established in almost all institutions, in accordance with recommendation 49. A pilot grievance project is under way at the Saskatchewan penitentiary, in accordance with recommendation 36. Again, a detailed and specific progress report is being prepared in readiness for the standing committee's review of main estimates.

In addition to these 37 recommendations, a further eight recommendations will soon be in the process of implementation. Another 14 recommendations are of a longer term nature and require federal-provincial agreements. Hon. members would agree that is an essential part of our function. Others entail extensive research, others involve the construction of new institutions and facilities.

In reply to the hon. member for New Westminster and in relation to our building program, I would not want him to leave the impression that the amounts being invested are somehow to be additional to those presently in place. The hon. member strongly encouraged a different attitude, a radical change in terms of the occupation of the prisoners. He recognized that the committee made a strong recommendation to have smaller institutions arranged in clusters, and that those institutions ought to be accommodated in order to provide

[*Mr. Blais.*]

additional facilities for industrial work, educational processes, and technological training. The hon. member is aware that we must invest in that area, but surely that is an area to which we are addressing ourselves. I am sure he will want to monitor it very closely indeed, and I invite him to do so. There are other changes that will require legislation, which is a relatively long process. That is not to say we will delay recommendations as a result of having to implement legislation. We will attempt to hasten legislation through the House as soon as possible.

With respect to that latter question, I should like to refer to several legislative initiatives which derive from the subcommittee report or are relevant to it. Legislative measures widening the availability of alternatives to incarceration, the diversion process of the Law Reform Commission, such as community service orders—are now being drafted in the context of an omnibus bill which is shortly to be introduced in the House by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford). This legislation bears on subcommittee recommendation 2, as does the proposed young offenders bill, which is also in the drafting process at the present time. A provision of the miscellaneous statutes amendment bill, which also will be introduced by my colleague, amends the section of the Parole Act dealing with sentence calculation, thus responding to subcommittee recommendation 35.

The subcommittee considered six recommendations to be at the "inmost core" of the report, to cite the chairman's words again. As hon. members are aware, my predecessor referred those recommendations to an interdepartmental working group consisting of senior representatives from the ministry, Treasury Board, the Privy Council Office and the Public Service Commission. Because the impact of those recommendations on the structure of government as a whole was so far reaching, it was clearly beyond the jurisdiction of the Solicitor General to give definitive responses on his own authority.

[*Translation*]

I have been informed of the progress which has been made since I have taken this portfolio, and it seems clear to me that it is really—and I repeat "really"—in agreement with the substance of the recommendations made by the subcommittee, namely the need to turn the Canadian Penitentiary Service into a service which is energetically administered, well disciplined and open to professionals while giving it the authority, and consequently, the responsibility needed to fulfil efficiently its difficult mandate. Because of the implications of the legislative, statutory and administrative measures which are suggested, it also seems clear to me that I should make a detailed and in-depth study of the final position which I shall recommend to my cabinet colleagues.

As I stated in the first eight—I repeat, eight—days I have been in this position, I could only familiarize myself with the main themes and not necessarily with all their ramifications. However, I hope I shall be able to make public the proposals relating to recommendations Nos. 26, 24, 27, 5, 11 and 18 of the subcommittee when the standing committee studies the main estimates. Mr. Speaker, some of these recommendations relate to areas in which I was interested when I had another