

Parliament to consider mandatory supervision amendments

Proposals for tighter restrictions on penitentiary inmates released under mandatory supervision will be considered by Parliament, announced Solicitor General Robert Kaplan recently.

Mandatory supervision was introduced in 1970 as a result of concerns expressed over the release of inmates after serving two-thirds of their sentences if they had earned the time off for good behaviour. Under the previous regime of "earned remission", an inmate was released "free and clear" into the community, and was not responsible to the National Parole Board for the final third of his or her warrant.

The introduction of mandatory supervision, as an alternative, provided for a more careful supervision of an inmate's activities by a parole officer, and thus provided greater security to the public.

The proposed change in law being made by the Solicitor General provides an even further degree of public protection and encourages the released inmate to be more responsible in his or her behaviour.

"Mandatory supervision is a controversial program," Mr. Kaplan said. "It is that final portion (up to one-third) of an inmate's sentence that is spent on the street as a result of remission earned for good behaviour during imprisonment. Mandatory supervision is different from

parole, which is granted by the National Parole Board only in selected cases. By contrast, release under mandatory supervision is provided for by law once an inmate has earned his remission."

Revolving-door syndrome

"During this period of mandatory supervision," Mr. Kaplan explained, "the inmate must report regularly to a parole officer who ensures that he respects certain conditions placed on his release: regular reporting to police, restrictions on travel and the incurring of debt, and reporting of any changes in his employment status." If he violates these or becomes involved in criminal activity, he can be returned to the penitentiary. "However," Mr. Kaplan explained, "these revocations often result in what we call 'the revolving-door syndrome'. Because of the automatic-release feature under the 1970 law, resulting from earned remission, the inmate who already has only a short period left to serve on his sentence is soon back out on the street again."

Mr. Kaplan proposes the elimination of the automatic-release feature following a violation of any sort during the mandatory release period. "Every inmate will still get to earn, by good behaviour, one chance on the street, but if he breaks the conditions of mandatory supervision or

becomes involved in criminal activity, he will be returned to prison and will not be released again automatically. Instead, he will have to convince the National Parole Board that he is worthy of release." This new measure will thus end "revolving door" cases and will increase the length of time spent in prison by offenders who have demonstrated that they are not prepared to adjust in a law-abiding fashion to life in the community. "In addition," Mr. Kaplan pointed out, "if he does commit a crime while on mandatory supervision, he or she will not be entitled to earn remission on that portion of the new sentence that overlaps the original sentence."

Brazil buys Canadian communications satellites

Under an agreement worth more than \$150 million, Canada's Spar Aerospace Ltd. will build two domestic communications satellites for Embratel, the telecommunications network of Brazil. The deal represents Canada's largest foreign contract undertaken directly by a Canadian satellite firm.

Spar will build the satellites in cooperation with Telesat Canada Ltd., SED Systems of Saskatoon and Hughes Aircraft Co. of California. About 60 per cent of the satellites' components will be Canadian-manufactured.

Spar's plant in Kanata, Ontario will build the electronic components for attitude control, digital electronics, earth sensors and amplifier systems. The same plant manufactured new power and signal interface units recently used during the launch of *Anik C-3* from the space shuttle *Columbia* in November.

The Brazil satellites, 6.6-metres-long and 2.1-metres-wide, will be similar in technology to Canada's *Anik D* satellite, launched in August. Capable of carrying 24 television channels, they are expected to last ten years in a 35 000-kilometre orbit above the equator.

The satellites, which represent Latin America's first domestic satellite system, will be capable of beaming signals to the entire country. They are scheduled for delivery to the Brazilian government in 1984 and 1985, and will be sent into orbit from the European launcher *Ariane* in February and July 1985.

Spar will also provide training for about 45 Embratel employees at the David Florida laboratories in Ottawa, and at its Satellite and Aerospace Systems Division in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec.

New Year's first stamp features Point Pelee National Park

A new stamp depicting Point Pelee National Park in southern Ontario will be issued on January 10. The \$5 stamp will be the fourth in a continuing series that has already included Fundy, Kluane and Waterton Lakes National Parks.

Point Pelee National Park is bounded on two sides by the moderating waters of Lake Erie. Because of its geographical location, it boasts one of the warmest climates in Canada with several diverse environments and numerous types of flora and fauna that appear nowhere else in Canada. Reptiles and amphibians thrive in the park and the area is renowned as a mecca for bird-watchers. About 90 species nest in the park and hundreds more migrate through it.

Canadian artist Wayne Terry, using an appropriate watercolour technique, has faithfully rendered the marshy terrain of Point Pelee on the new stamp. This is only the second \$5 stamp issued by Canada; the first was the 1897 issue on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

