

*Government Orders*

I have been struck over the last three or four months, particularly after the events of last summer, by how many people in my own riding and across the country have spoken to me about this issue and have approached it in a way with some reason and dispassion, commitment, some with agony, some with clear questioning but in a certain spirit of trying to find a resolution to the problem. I think they were hoping that the Parliament of Canada through its members would find that avenue, that particular opening that would give them some sense that we are reaching a new plateau in public policy as it relates to this very crucial issue.

I would also say, after listening to the speeches made in this House over the last several days, that the feelings expressed by members also had within them the germs and ingredients of a kind of resolution. It has been quite fascinating to listen to the kind of personal commitments, real feelings of awareness and engagement that so many members have had in trying to again find a way of resolving what has been such an important and widespread debate in this country for such a long time.

The legislation before us falls far short of that mark. It is a serious and profound lack of leadership and direction. It is, as the minister who introduced it clearly called it, a compromise at a time when a compromise was not called for but something much broader, more comprehensive, more rational in dealing with an issue of such great significance.

This was not the time for the politically expedient answer. It was not the time to try to find the ways of patching together a temporary agreement among members of the cabinet to get legislation through to meet a statement that was made perhaps in haste by the Prime Minister last summer. In fact, the country was looking for a great deal more than that.

The legislation before us, the bill itself, as we know, is deeply flawed. Perhaps what bothers me most about it, is that it will create a whole new set of problems. I think the test of good legislation is whether it resolves a problem without creating a new generation of new problems. This legislation clearly does not meet that test.

This legislation opens up once again the possibility, the real potential of a number of new actions, of confusions, of court initiatives being taken by third parties against

doctors. It is not going to resolve any of the clear questions dealing with access that have been very much part of this debate, of a fair degree of equality and access for women across the country.

We are now going to be putting an onus, an intimidation on different medical practitioners in different parts of the country and basically putting them in the position that they may want to withdraw their services or not become engaged at all. The legislation is flawed.

We have seen since the Supreme Court decision the reaction of the legal fraternity which is to say that it creates once again a new legal problem for many Canadians. That is not good legislation which creates a whole new set of problems. It is not good legislation because once again we are using the Criminal Code as a way of providing punishment to those engaged in the very difficult choice, and it is a difficult choice. We are saying that the criminal system will punish those who disobey this legislation. That is a terrible, awful indictment of a society that uses the threat of prison or of a criminal judgment against such a personal deeply-felt act that involves so many questions of morality and nervousness.

I listened with interest to the speech made by the member from Edmonton East. He said that women have the right to make their choice, and I agree with him. But to say that they can make that choice in a calm atmosphere is not right. I have talked to people from the Pregnancy Crisis Centre in the city of Winnipeg. Often young women, unwed women in particular, are making choices full of anxiety, of a sense isolation, of being lonely. They are making a decision at a time in their lives when it is perhaps the most difficult time to make a decision because they are faced with a great world out there. All of a sudden, a pregnancy takes place and perhaps the boyfriend leaves, or there is no love in the relationship and they are left bereft of any support whatever. That is a very tough time to ask anyone to make a choice.

While I defend the right to make a choice, I also believe strongly that it cannot be a choice made in isolation. Choice does not mean licence. It does not mean to say a complete freedom to do as one wants. That is where again I think the approach taken by the government falls deeply short. There was such an opportunity to address some of the crucial problems faced by