

*Criminal Code*

become worried. Two legislations were passed, one in 19 B.C. and the other in 9 A.D., in an attempt to limit the damage, to fight adultery and to encourage births. Abortion and exhibition of children are not crimes and are common practice". (Jésus en son temps", p. 172)

One would think this is a description of a segment of our society. Does that not leave us a little perplexed? Would we want legislation that would lead us to the same fate as ancient Rome?

On page 107 of the *Relations* magazine, which is published by a group of Jesuits widely known for their competence, one can read about the attitude of Catholics and non-Catholics with regard to abortion, in a well-researched article written by Father Marcel Marcotte. This article, from beginning to end, reflects so much understanding and wisdom that I feel compelled to apologize to the author for extracting some excerpts. The whole is a masterpiece reflecting with impartiality Christian thinking on the very serious problem now under discussion, after having set forth the problem conscientiously and having clearly explained that the Catholics are not trying to impose on the non-Catholics their religious and moral views on abortion, but to express democratically their particular opinions on what the common good entails.

Father Marcotte writes, and I quote:

One must insist on this point, because certain reactions in the public and even in the parliamentary committee and the government seem to indicate that the intentions of the Episcopate have not been understood and occasionally have even been grossly misrepresented.

• (2:30 p.m.)

Further on, in the text, we find the following, and I quote:

Should a biologist, a medical doctor, a jurist, a Catholic moralist uphold the views of his Church on the problem of legal abortion, he is immediately accused of wanting to transpose in the legislation irrational prejudices related to his religious belief.

We can read also, in the same article, the following:

The same objection crops up again in discussions and lingers in the press under all kinds of forms; the members of the parliamentary committee are sick of hearing it. In short, it could be summarized this way: Since the legislation does not oblige Catholics to practise abortion, why would Catholics want to force non-Catholics not to practise it? We have just shown the lack of foundation for such serious charges, in the case of the official Canadian Church. Catholicism has, of course, maintained more strongly than most of the other religious groups, the traditional assertion which, up to recently was practically unquestioned, whereby the foetus from the first moment of pregnancy has a human character; it has therefore brought in sharper focus the immoral character of abortion. But it would be wrong to think that non-Catholics—mainly those with Christian roots—are on the

subject as tolerant as they are believed to be. It is not the Canadian bishops but the Anglican Conference of Lambeth which stated in 1958:—In the strongest terms, Christians reject the practise of induced abortion or infanticide which implies the murder of a life already conceived (as a violation of the mother's personality) except in case of precise and unquestionable medical necessity. The condition of families or even governments which are desperately confronted with poverty and population explosion, can help us understand why, in their opinion, abortion is not as cruel as the slow starvation to which they are doomed. However, in the eyes of the Christian people, the sacred value of life is an absolute notion which admits of no violation.

And it is not a Catholic theologian but two of the most eminent theologians of the modern Protestant doctrine who wrote in turn:

The unborn child is, from the outset, a child. It is in a developing state and does not possess an independent life. But it is a human being and not a thing, not just a part of the mother's body. Whoever destroys a life in its germ, kills a human being—

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics.

The destruction of the embryo in a mother's womb is a violation of the right to live granted by God to this new life. To ask if, in such a case, one is dealing with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue. The obvious fact is that God surely intended to create a human being and that this embryo of a human being has been deliberately dispossessed of his life. It is nothing else but murder.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics.

Closer to us, Professor Paul Ramsey, from Princeton University, expressed equally definite opinions in a recent article in the *Dublin Review* and in a paper read at the International Conference on abortion held in Washington in 1967, under the auspices of the Kennedy Foundation. Foeticide, he said, does not differ in any way from infanticide; an argument that can justify abortion could equally be of value to justify infanticide; as such an argument does not exist, one must conclude that abortion can never be justified.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I regret to have to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief in my remarks. I think it is becoming obvious that the abortion section of this bill is very controversial and is causing a great deal of distress among some members of the house as well as many people in Canada. I do not think I need elaborate on the fact that the government has a responsibility to govern this country. I do not think there is any denying the fact that the country is facing many serious problems at this time. I am sure government members are of the opinion that the Creditistes are carrying out a filibuster. I would point out that I do not necessarily agree with them. A filibuster