

Abortion

question is only a part of a larger issue that is now just beginning to be examined as a result of technological and scientific advances. These advances, if indeed they can be called that, raise for the first time questions concerning genetic manipulation, research into recombinant DNA, fertility drugs, *in vitro* fertilization, multiple births and the accompanying issue of pregnancy reduction, transplants, implants, surrogate motherhood, and the experimental use of foetal tissue. I need not elaborate or speculate as to some of the bizarre possibilities inherent in some of these procedures. Suffice it to say that we must have some rules, some prohibitions and some sanctions.

● (0140)

I should now like to recognize my colleague, the Hon. Member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore (Mr. Boyer) who as a private Member's initiative proposed a human life Act in an attempt to deal with these issues as well as those of euthanasia, suicide and all issues of intentional intervention in the human life cycle. The common theme linking these matters is the sanctity of human life and, as such, abortion is only one dimension which begs for resolution on moral, legal and ethical grounds.

The Government of West Germany has announced plans to ban research on human embryos, to outlaw surrogate motherhood, to curb artificial insemination, to prohibit production of foetal tissue for experimentation and to forbid choice of the child's sex in artificial insemination. It may be that a Royal commission should be struck in this country to receive evidence and to hear witnesses, to listen to experts and to examine in detail all aspects of these human life issues. I believe also, Mr. Speaker, that efforts have to be made educationally toward heightened individual responsibility and that further efforts have to be made to assist and improve adoption procedures. In passing, I cannot help but note how ironic it is that here in Canada, a vast nation in physical terms but short of population, we hear people supporting termination of life while at the same time complaining about what they see as rising immigration and lax refugee determination procedures. In fact, we should be encouraging a high birth rate in Canada in order to increase our population and our domestic consumption.

The recent Morgentaler Supreme Court decision and the comments of Madam Justice Wilson suggest a gestational approach wherein the relative value of the unborn presumably increases as the pregnancy advances. Under this approach the value of the foetus would eventually outweigh the freedom of the woman to decide as to her person. With the greatest respect, I say that the gestational approach is nothing more than abortion on demand. Whether the cut-off is 16 weeks or 20 weeks, whether you decide that life exists at 21 weeks and not at 20 or, conversely, whether you decide at 21 weeks the rights of the mother are extinguished in favour of the foetus seems illogical. A hard decision has to be made. It cannot be papered over. It will not go away. Either you have life or you do not, you have life at 20 weeks, at 18 weeks, or 16 weeks, or at eight weeks. It seems to me that eventually you get back to the moment of conception and that life springs from that moment. I repeat that the compromise motion, the gestational

approach is in my mind abortion on demand. This approach does nothing whatsoever for security of the person. It represents abortion on demand and would legalize fully 95 per cent of all abortions. With the greatest respect I say that you cannot say you oppose opening wide the door to abortion and then in the same breath say that up to 20 or 24 weeks it is a matter of choice. That, surely, is a direct contradiction.

It is now 1.45 a.m. Mr. Speaker. I have listened with interest and with the greatest respect to the views that have been put forward by a number of Members in this House yesterday afternoon and evening and early this morning. Finally, I want to say that as a Christian and as one whose personal philosophy is first and foremost the basic work of the individual, the sanctity of human life and the primacy of the family in our society, I have to take a decision and I choose life. In so far as possible, every human life from conception should be given a chance. If I am in error, I have to err on the side of the unborn human being.

Feeling as I do, and with the reassurance that I am supported in this by the clear majority of my constituents, I certainly cannot support the main motion. I will support proposals that best protect the unborn human. I will support the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Grey—Simcoe (Mr. Mitges) which I believe would restrict abortion to those situations wherein the life of the mother is endangered. Should that motion fail, I would support the motion placed by another of my colleagues, the Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer) to the effect that abortion be permitted only where the mother's life or physical health is endangered. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to contribute to the discussion and the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce) to be followed by the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman).

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to participate in this evening's work, which has become this morning's work since it is now 1:46 a.m. It isn't Tuesday anymore, it's Wednesday. And on behalf of my constituents in Duvernay, I felt I had a duty to speak this morning. Even though almost all of those constituents must be asleep now because they have to go to work in the morning, they can sleep in peace because I have a duty to perform and it is a pleasure to rise in their name and debate an issue that over that past three or four days has become quite an important matter in Duvernay. A number of people have been doing nothing but tell us what they want, what they would like us to do for them; the churches have taken a hand, the parish priests, all parishioners were expected to sign postcards. In the space of those few days I have once again received 3,000 postcards. I have here 2,910 of them, received in three days, and that, Mr. Speaker, shows the level of interest in the riding of Duvernay and perhaps the whole City of Laval.