

*Government Orders*

Canadians and lives of mothers are nurtured or lost according to the decisions of this House.

From the outset I want to state clearly that I will be voting against this bill. I will express my reasons why, but first I would like to say that in my conscience I feel confident and totally at ease with my decision concerning this bill.

In fact, I will have to say that it was not a decision that I anguished over for I have addressed this issue and debated it for many years. That long period of discussion and reflection, which was entered into with close friends who fell on both sides of the issue, helped me to clarify and consolidate my views on abortion. I am grateful to my friends, whatever their point of view, for they cared enough about me to discuss this highly sensitive and personal issue with me. I count them all among my friends as I appreciate that each of them holds his or her own position sincerely and thoughtfully from a unique life experience as do I.

Among this group of friends, none like abortion, none are anti-life, none regard this to be a trivial issue whether they fall on one side of the issue or the other.

I mention the ease with which I come to my decision on this bill and some of my background because I have noticed considerable anguish and distress among anti-abortion colleagues on the government side who hold positions similar to mine but who feel compelled to vote in favour of this most unsatisfactory abortion legislation.

I am pleased that in this House, where each member is supposed to vote according to his or her own best judgment on this bill, I indeed can do so and am not coerced into doing otherwise. I must also say that no amount of party coercion on this issue or lobbying from the extremes of the Campaign Life Coalition or CARAL would convince me to subvert my principles in this matter.

• (2110)

I wish to speak to the substance of this bill, or rather the lack thereof, which causes me to express my opposition.

I believe that currently we are living in this country without any legislation in an environment of non-legal abortion on demand. This bill, if passed, would alter the situation only slightly creating an environment of legal

abortion on demand with the proviso that a medical doctor would be available to perform the abortion procedure and would agree that a woman's physical, mental or psychological health was threatened.

The legislation has advantages for those supporting a pro-choice point of view. The definition of health in this legislation is so vague that I believe prosecution against a specific case would be next to impossible unless there was a gross negligence on the part of the presiding doctor. However, it also encourages women to lie to their doctor in order to easily fit the health definition and thus procure an abortion.

The legislation does not require abortion to be performed in a hospital which would ease the responsibility of provinces of having to provide pro-life taxpayers' dollars to support abortion facilities and procedures. It is not inconceivable that under this legislation abortion clinics would spring up in communities across the country where same day service from health assessment to completed abortion could be performed.

To the disadvantage of the pro-choice advocates it does not entirely leave choice in the hands of a pregnant woman but is dependent upon a medical practitioner's discretion which would be subject to the same variety of moral principles which we hear expressed in this House.

I would like to address more particularly why I will not support this legislation, which has more to do with what is left out than what is in the legislation. First, I believe that human life begins before a foetus is born alive and that every foetus has rights, especially the basic right to life.

Given the recent Supreme Court decision in the Chantal Daigle case, I believe it is incumbent upon this House now to express foetal rights in our Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is beyond my intellectual capacity to discern at what point in time foetal life becomes more important, more sacred. Is it conception, four weeks after conception, four months after, or five minutes before live birth?

I am a fortunate, happy mother of three of my own healthy children. As a nurse I have personally witnessed the miracle of life and the loss of that life at most stages of pregnancy. I have watched the anguish of parents when spontaneous abortion has occurred at many stages. You will not convince an anguished parent who has lost a