

Criminal Code

all the testimonials and protests I have received.

The first brief on the first bill we dealt with was sent to us by the Quebec Association Hospital Medical Boards. All the members received it and I am sure all of them have read it. That brief gives the point of view of the doctors. It enumerates the reasons which forbid them to accept the principle of abortion, or the bill, as it is from the human and medical points of view.

We have also been made aware of the grievances of the religious authorities through the declaration of the Canadian Catholic Bishops on abortion. Catholics know where they stand.

We also received from the Alliance for Life a release on the reasons for which they oppose the bill.

At the start, as in the case of homosexuality, we tried to pull out from the omnibus bill those two articles so that they could be voted on separately. We failed all down the line. Again tonight my words fall upon deaf ears. My words run off like water on the backs of ducks. The public will know that I speak on deaf ears, because members have been given strict orders, and when the leader has spoken, they must comply. I want to move, Mr.—

Mr. Marceau: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

I point out to my hon. friend that we are not of the Ralliement Cr ditiste party to comply solely with what our leader has said. We have not received instructions from the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice; the hon. member is presuming a lot. This is the second time it happens and I object to that type of accusations.

• (9:00 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether this exchange will advance the cause of the debate. The hon. member did not raise a point of order, but rather stated a grievance. I suggest that we might hear the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier). I might also mention to the hon. member for Roberval that, as the Speaker has mentioned previously, he should try to keep his remarks within the framework of the amendment that is now before the house.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, my remarks were in order. I was urging government

[Mr. Gauthier.]

members to support the amendment. I urge them to express their views. If they claim they were not given any guide-lines, let them speak. We only want to know their views in order to make them known to their constituents. They may be accused of having no opinion, because they remain silent.

I want to congratulate the member for Gatineau on having moved his amendment with a view to deleting at least the words "or would be likely to". And that is the purpose of my intervention.

If a few members of the party in power wanted to be sincere and at least help one of their colleagues to have the words "and would be likely to" deleted, I think many consciences would feel relieved, especially within the medical profession.

On January 19 and 22, I received a letter that all hon. members probably received also. I would like to quote part of it.

Dear Sir,

You will find herewith the opinion of the Quebec Association of Hospital Medical Boards on the problem of abortion.

That report represents the opinion of the majority of doctors—

That brief was not submitted by lawyers but by doctors practising in the hospitals of the province of Quebec.

I continue:

We hope that this will enlighten you so that you may take a fair and just stand towards every citizen of our country.

The letter is signed by Mr. Robert Lavigne, Chairman.

The protest reads as follows and I quote:

Concerning Bill C-195 on abortion, the Quebec Association of Hospital Medical Boards is in agreement on the following:

—that an amendment be made to the present text of the Criminal Code.

—that the procedure of case studies by therapeutic abortion committees in each hospital be agreed to.

—that the medical practitioners who have decided, after a serious study within their hospital committee, to authorize a therapeutic abortion should no longer be considered as guilty under the Criminal Code.

We believe:

—that only scientific medical research will furnish the true solution to the problem under discussion and we are in favour of any study group.

—that abortion, in the present state of medical science, remains a murder perpetrated on a human being.

These statements are not mine, but those of physicians and surgeons.