

Private Members' Business

have to search their own consciences to decide on that matter.

This is a debate that's time has come. We must deal with this issue as a country. I am very pleased because I anticipate that we are going to deal with it in a fair minded, high-level debate in this House of Commons.

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, who will choose for you? Who will choose for me?

When I was conceived it was a choice by my father and mother, or perhaps an accident, but it certainly was not my choice. When I was a child I was cared for by my parents. I was protected by my parents. I was protected by the state. I was given the support of teachers, doctors, pastors and a full range of community services because I grew up in this great and wonderful country. My community nurtured me so well and added to my family values. My country has protected me ever since.

• (2020)

As a man I began to make my own choices and then learned to live by the consequence of those choices. Surely the ultimate freedom in a free and democratic society is when an educated rational man or woman has become self-actualized in creating, making and living with the results of their own free choice. Is that not what we are trying to create by law here? The capacity to make free and rational choices and the stage that we can make these free and rational choices and then we become mature. When we are mature should we not have the right of free choice to make our own decisions in what might well be our own end times?

Why should our right to free choice as rational men and women be stolen from us just because we have become terminally ill? That does not mean we lose our capacity to think, to feel, to suffer. I resent that this right is not my right before the laws of Canada. Why should the doctors of Canada, the medical profession and medical technology make the decision for me?

An hon. member: They do not. They refuse to.

Mr. Wenman: But they do. Well you should have joined us through the whole of those committee hearings.

An hon. member: I was there. It is a legal fact. I was there.

Mr. Wenman: Why should the state, if not the medical profession or the government, decide for me? That is even more threatening. I want to protect myself through law from the medical profession. I want to protect myself through law from well-meaning state and government laws.

Most of us in this room and everyone listening will become terminally ill because as technology improves the occurrence of terminal illnesses as opposed to sudden illnesses becomes more and more probable.

For those who do not understand I will try again. Terminal illness is when you are diagnosed with a disease there is no cure for. There are more and more curable diseases. More often now, more and more people are dying of terminal illnesses.

I want to preserve my right that should I become terminally ill I might at one point in the suffering process of my death say that enough is enough. Let me go. Leave the final decision between me and my God. Make me comfortable and let me go.

I must shout right now in this House because of the great fear I have of lying powerless and helpless in an extended terminal care bed somewhere and not being able to shout. Instead the decision would be made for me by well-meaning doctors, by the state, or even a well-meaning family.

That is why I brought in Bill C-203. I wanted that right of protection from the state against the state and against the medical profession and against the technology so that I could make a decision between myself and my God.

Even at some point in the life and death process it seems science and technology and the state are fighting against death but prolonging suffering. I do not think that was the intention of God when He gave us medical science. He gave it to save our lives, yes, and He gave it to give our lives comfort and He gave it to give us comfort as we pass from death to life again.

We, the political representatives in this House of Commons, or at least too many of us, are filled and paralyzed with fear, fear for our own, our family's and our friends' deaths, fear of change, fearful even of discussion. Those of us who are here tonight will discuss death, but I can tell you that this is one of those great unmentionables. The only time we talk about death is when we have to face it. We face it in the hospital corridors and in the quiet whisperings in the funeral