

*The Constitution*

field, an innovator in the field of brain surgery; Hans Selye and his studies of stress; Gordon Murray, Bill Bigelow and Bill Mustard, pathfinders in heart surgery; and Fred Banting and Charles Best who continued the refinement of the application of insulin in diabetes.

To date, the tradition of accomplishment continues into the future as advances in the field of health and health care will be made hand in hand with knowledgeable health care workers and doctors and an informed, caring, effective, national government which is ever mindful of the needs of the public.

This brings me to a personal note. I readily accept the recently proposed amendment by the Liberals, and I am satisfied with the wording of the proposed preamble in the Constitution which states: "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law".

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hudecki:** In the 1978 version of the constitutional package proposed by this government, the preamble included the following statement: "The people of Canada proudly claim that we are and shall be with the help of God a free and self-governing people".

In the new version of our national anthem, "Oh Canada", we have added the sentence "God keep our land glorious and free". We Liberals have always acknowledged the existence of God and have shown respect for the dignity and worth of the human person.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hudecki:** We have a deep awareness of the spiritual and moral values, and we identify with the important role of family life in the fabric of our nation. It is right and just that God's help be invoked in light of the ominous advance into our society of inhuman technology.

Before concluding, I must add my voice of anguish and sorrow to that of many members on both sides of the House on the subject of the flagrant abuse of our abortion laws. There is no question that the abuse is continuing and escalating so that nearly 65,000 innocent lives each year are destroyed, for the most part, for the sake of convenience. I do not accept the legal dictum that the act of birth is a dividing line between being a human and not being one. Life is a continuing process, and a new individual's existence begins at conception when it acquires a distinctive genetic pattern, making it a unique human being. It requires only time and nutrition to attain full human development.

The constitutional debate is not the forum to probe, examine or review existing abortion laws. This is a matter for Parliament, and should be and must be further debated in Parliament. I have sought and received assurance from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien), as recorded in *Hansard*, that the right to debate this fundamentally important social issue of abortion will remain in Parliament and will not be locked in the Constitution. Parliament must retain the unqualified right

to amend existing provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada pertaining to abortion.

I close on a philosophical note. The debate of the constitutional proposals is approaching the last lap. It has evoked intense emotional responses from members of Parliament on both sides of the House. It has strained the goodwill and forbearance of many to a breaking point. Our legal fraternity has been drained of interpretations and opinions related to constitutional matters.

There is every expectation that the Constitution of Canada with a Canadian charter of rights and freedoms is about to emerge. It will define islands of discrimination, intolerance, injustice, real and perceived, and prejudices and biases in our society. This legal document cannot redress the wrongs of the past. It cannot undo the trials and frustrations of our ancestors, but it can, however, chart a course for a better future with better recognition of minority rights.

To have truly accomplished this lofty ideal, the Constitution will require an adjustment of our attitudes in our society. There must be a more receptive understanding of and empathy for the problems of the handicapped, the unborn, our native people, new Canadians, the poor, the aged and the underprivileged; and we must be prepared to meet and to react to the special needs of these human beings.

Therein will lie the success or failure of these magnificent debates, of the impressive manifestation of our parliamentary democracy in action, rather than in the eventual proclamation of these ideals in law.

I turn my thoughts now to the many contributors to this unbelievably complex constitutional package. These people gave generously of their skills and talents to prepare this document which will hopefully give us a more united and a more cohesive nation. I can think of no more apt quotation to describe their Herculean effort than the words of Hippocrates in his assessment of the art of medicine in his time which are as follows: "Life is short and the art long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious and judgment difficult." I myself feel that they faced this task with the spirit and the devotion of Louis Pasteur when he said, "Blessed is he who carried with him a God, an ideal of beauty, and who obeys it, for therein be the springs of great thought and great action; they all reflect light from the infinite."

● (2050)

**Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy for the opportunity to participate in this important debate this evening. If we cast our minds back over the past few weeks, we will remember that debates were closed off on a number of occasions which made it impossible for some hon. members to participate. Once again, we have come to the point where the debate is going to be shut off and a number of hon. members will not be able to participate.

I want to discuss a great many issues tonight but because of the shortage of time I will just have to make references to them in the main. The order in which I deal with them does not indicate any range of importance.