

Criminal Code

the maturity of the foetus. However, can we define a being as human according to a more or less obvious degree of maturity especially when that maturity requires years for achievement?

On the other hand, the fact that the foetus is totally dependent upon its mother—

And here we get closer to the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, when he spoke of the mother's life which could be endangered. I go on:

On the other hand, does the fact that the foetus is totally dependent upon its mother give her or those who look after her health the right of life or death over it? The dependency of a living being on its surroundings is a general biological phenomenon. The child developed to term is as dependent as the foetus, but in a different way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the child is a foetus, it needs its mother to live.

But furthermore, when the child has become, according to the Criminal Code, a human being, that is after its exit from the uterus, it is still dependent upon its mother's care. Outside the uterus or inside, the foetus depends upon its mother's care, and that is why we cannot impair its life either outside or inside of it.

I go on.

In fact, it is only a difference of surroundings and birth is but the passage from one to the other, without any appreciable modification in the degree of dependency. Would it be the respiratory assistance and the special type of nutrition needed which would render the foetus unfit to become a human being?

The human being's dependency decreases in time—

We know that a six-month old infant is more independent than one of three months. We know that a three-month old infant is more independent than one of three months. And, we also know that a foetus needs its mother to survive. I shall go on:

The dependence of the human being diminishes with time and is in inverse ratio to the degree of maturity.

We cannot accept, considering all the medical and scientific information we have been given, the killing of the foetus, when the latter would "endanger the life of the mother or seriously and directly impair her health".

As my hon. colleagues and as some government members have admitted this afternoon, we cannot accept such health grounds to justify abortion.

On the other hand, this amendment states that abortion is acceptable if the pregnancy endangers the life of the mother and, for that reason, I could not vote either in favour or

against it. The reason is that subsequent amendments will enable us to prove once again that we are against abortion not only on moral grounds but also on scientific grounds.

I proceed with the quotation:

Legally, the foetus is considered as a human being as its rights to inherit are recognized.

As the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce said this afternoon.

And I go on:

An abortion for the purpose of improving the health or the welfare of the mother or of preventing the birth of a deformed infant is euthanasia. If it is permitted to kill a deformed infant while it is in the mother's womb, why should it not be permitted to do so after its birth?

Among the various forms of murder, abortion appears to be the one against which the State should intervene most strongly. The role of the State is to protect the rights of every citizen, all the more so when the aggrieved citizen is less able to defend himself and to see that his rights are respected. If the law is written for the protection of the weak, the child still in the mother's womb is entitled to the protection of the State, which should be in proportion to its weakness.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is wondering who is the author of those words. It is the medical board of Laval Hospital, which the minister does not want to hear, nor to listen to, giving scientific arguments.

An hon. Member: An established hospital?

Mr. Rondeau: Yes, an established hospital which can certainly treat the sick. There would be a large number of patients to be found across from me.

I continue:

• (9:50 p.m.)

If abortion is performed when the life of the mother is endangered by pregnancy, it can then be considered not as euthanasia but as a case of self-defence. To warrant self-defence, however, the act of defence and the act of aggression, should be comparable and the defensive act must be the only possible method of protecting oneself. But cases when, in order to save the mother's life, it is obviously necessary to kill the foetus—

And here we think of the amendment under consideration.

—are extremely rare according to experts.

But not according to the minister. And not according to Liberal experts, but to medical experts.

Dr. René Simard, Director of the Obstetrical Department at Laval University, stated he has never