

*Criminal Code*

fooled that it is not life if we cannot see it. Dr. De Veber, Assistant Professor, Departments of Paediatrics and Pathological Chemistry at the University of Western Ontario and Dr. Walters, Professor of Obstetrics at the University of Western Ontario, testified and showed slides to the committee that the foetus was in fact a human being and alive.

Heartbeats have been detected and recorded as early as the 18th day after conception. Blood transfusions have been given to babies in the womb 26 weeks after conception. It has been proven that babies before birth react to pain. In some cases where it has been necessary to give a blood transfusion to a baby before he is born it has been observed that the baby will move away after the needle has been inserted. So far as medical science is able to determine there is some form of life at conception and it continues until death. Death may come to that unborn child before he or she emerges from the womb or it may come, as it will come to us, after we have exercised our right to live.

We must then consider what right we have to kill that unborn child. First of all, the child has a basic fundamental right to life. Second, by declaration in November, 1959, by the General Assembly of the United Nations and by statute enacting the Bill of Rights of Canada, both the United Nations and the parliament of Canada have recognized and declared the right of the child to life, liberty, security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof both before birth and after birth.

It is an indisputable fact that law recognizes the rights of the unborn. Legal authorities in Canada, England and the United States make this abundantly evident. I shall not take up the time of this house to review these authorities. Let it suffice to say that money and property can be left by will to unborn children; a child injured in the womb in an accident can bring action against the wrongdoer. There are many other examples that I need not recite because this matter is indisputable. How then are we asked in the house to pass this legislation? In essence we are being asked to give some people the right under certain circumstances to take life.

Only a year or so ago hon. members of this house were given a free vote on the question of abolition of capital punishment. This was the taking of a life by the state for the killing of another. It was the taking of the life of an adult who had been found by his peers to have deliberately taken the life of a fellow human being. On a free vote in this house

[Mr. Sullivan.]

hon. members, and I would agree with their vote, voted against the taking of life.

• (12:40 p.m.)

Let us examine the one prime reason that has been advanced for the alteration of the abortion laws. The proposed amendments ask that the members of this house approve of the taking of life—and I shall quote the section—“if the continuation of the pregnancy of such female person would or would be likely to endanger her life or health”. I strongly object to widening the grounds to include the word “health”. It is all well and good to set up committees in hospitals to define the word “health” but I do not believe on moral grounds that we can sacrifice one life to preserve the health of another person. Health is defined by the World Health Organization as follows:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental, emotional and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and physical well-being.

Surely it must be obvious to all that any doctor could legally adopt this definition of health and we would then be faced under the present amendment with abortion almost upon request. I suppose on this wide definition of health an abortion committee could well find that a mother's mental health could be affected by worrying whether her baby would be deformed and grant her application for an abortion. Dr. John McKelvis, professor of obstetrics at the University of Minnesota, poses this very ironic question:

Do we kill nine babies to save one parent's emotional embarrassment at the production of an abnormal baby, where abnormalities may be reversible? Common sense would say, wait until they are born. Find the ones who are deformed, find the ones who are blind and then kill them. Isn't this much more sensible than destroying normal babies?

Perhaps there are those who believe that a permissive society should indeed condone abortion on request. I cannot accept such an approach as being responsible, and as we watch our society develop I find more and more people concluding that this trend toward permissiveness is just not the answer.

Many socio-economic arguments were advanced for killing the unborn child. It must be the decision and the conscience of every member of this house when he or she is considering voting for this amendment to decide whether or not he or she has the right for an economic reason to kill. It makes it easier to kill something we have not seen, but if we think about it, it is still killing.