

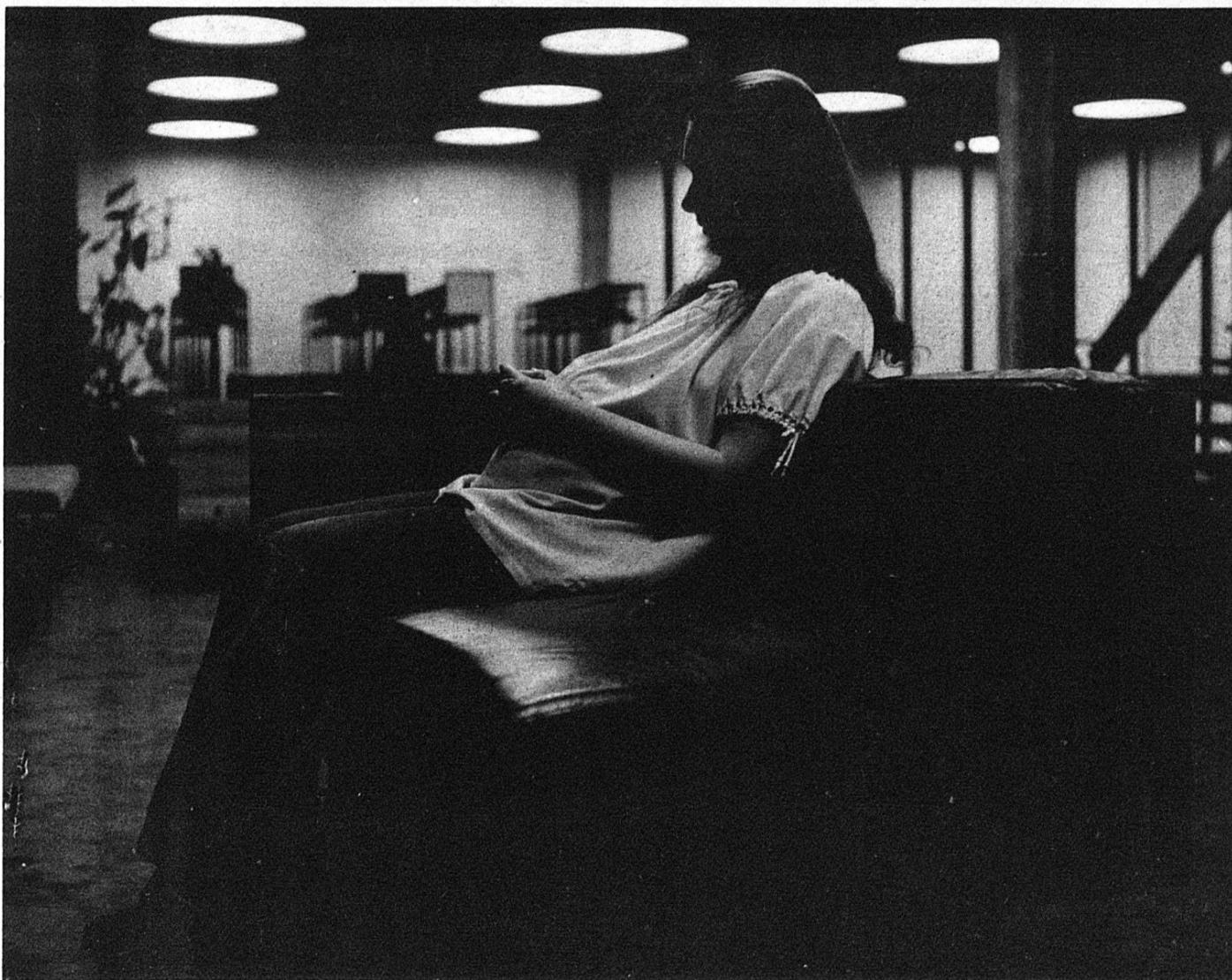
Bureaucracy and arbitrary interpretation of the so-called 'liberalized law' seems to indicate that, to a large number of women by the year 1971, it amounts to just that- cheap talk! (Anything 'liberal' usually does turn out to be conservative). Just what did liberalizing the law mean? It 'meant' to allow for more than just jeopardy to a woman's life to be considered as a valid reason for granting an abortion. Therefore, a woman who shows strong indications of possibly losing her sanity might be considered (with recommendations and proof of excessive anxiety) a valid candidate. What of rape, incest or German measles in the first three months of pregnancy you may ask? Well, according to the lawmakers they too apparently think- What of it? for there is no articulated acknowledgement of such considerations- unless of course, the woman may lose her mind.

To ninety percent of the women who applied for an abortion in Edmonton this year, the 'liberalized law' meant nothing except for the search of a backstreet abortionist or a jaunt to New York, Japan or London- if they could afford it. In legal terms it meant that this less fortunate ninety (and supposed less needy) percent were criminals according to Section 237, part 2 of the Criminal Code of Canada. For all the other women who were only left with motherhood, for lack of contacts and/or money it meant several months of humiliation and despair- and I do not exaggerate!

What kind of procedure is it then that can so effectively 'screen out' almost ninety percent of all applications? Now comes the bureaucracy. In July, 1971 in Edmonton, only 5 out of 63 applicants received a legal abortion. Many people are under the impression that today it is easy to get an abortion and anybody can get one. Not so, as these figures seem to indicate. For a woman's case to reach the hospital board for final (once it is final, there are no repeals) review, she must first be recommended by three doctors, one of whom must be either a gynecologist or a psychiatrist. If the case clears that hurdle, it then goes before a board of at least three doctors, without the woman being present. None of these three doctors must have ever administered an abortion before and they do not necessarily have to be either psychiatrists or gynecologists. That makes a total of at least five affirmations before the abortion is granted. Just how often do two people fully agree on something, let alone five? According to July's figures, five people agree about 6 percent of the time.

This process is time consuming and with a pregnancy no one has to be told that time is of the essence. No woman wants to wait till the fourth or even fifth month which then makes the otherwise simple operation much more complicated and depressing when a therapeutic abortion administered before three months would have taken only one day. The former procedure clearly seems to be begrudgingly punitive.

Of all the five hospitals in



THE PRICE OF LOVE

Edmonton, only two, the University and the Royal Alex, have boards for abortion review. The rest of the hospitals refuse owing to their Catholic administration. In 1964, the famous Catholic Cardinal Cushing of Boston said, in reference to the pending liberalization of the Abortion Laws: "Catholics do not need the support of civil law to be faithful to their religious convictions, and they do not seek to impose by law their moral views on other members of society." (Lawrence Lader's article, The Scandal of Abortion Laws). A good many Catholics may take a good lesson from this truly Christian man. Just who are these victims of circumstance? Studies prove conclusively from many different areas that the vast majority of these women are not - as one might suspect - young promiscuous singles but lawfully wedded baby-making machines. They are married women who have had at least four or more children in close proximity. It has also been shown that the majority of these women used some method of birth control that failed.

Well, then- what about birth-control? So far only the birth control pill claims almost perfect prevention -- for those who can take it. Every other method and device at best insures only seventy percent prevention. In truth, however, there is very little known about these various methods by the general public. That does not mean they are not known of but that they are fully understood

(let alone fully researched). It is estimated that some 35 percent of all women have family and case histories that make it dangerous for them to use the pill. Many women, over and above this 35 percent suffer various ill-effects from the pill such as excessive weight gain or loss, depression and recurring infections, to name only a few. They therefore must cease using it. Lately, a local hospital has found it necessary to launch an investigation on the oral contraceptive after many reported cases of young women finding tumors and lumps in their breasts and all of whom have used the pill. This phenomena has never been discovered to any such degree in women under 30 years of age. Heart and artery ailments, tumors in the uterus and many other health hazards have been linked to use of the pill as well. The fact of the matter is that oral contraceptives have not undergone as much research as is possible. Since research is not in the hands of government health researchers it may be considered that this inefficiency is due to the fact that private companies do the only research and manufacture. Sterilization has been the next recommendation. This alternative is rebuked by many women who have abortions on the grounds that their pregnancy may be difficult and untimely but they do not want to have motherhood permanently barred from their choice.

The point of the issue then stands that if contraception is not constantly and perfectly viable then that unwanted or

untimely pregnancy should not have to be dilemma for the illegal abortionist to solve. The matter best belongs to the woman and her doctor.

Many people feel it their duty to shove their morality down the throats of everyone else in society. It seems that their efforts might better be directed at creating a healthier and happier society where the many anxieties and hardships of bearing children would not exist--thus, no need for people to feel pressed to have abortions. As it stands the woman and only woman must face the bearing of a child which is difficult enough without there being other children to care for or that she is unmarried and must face the ordeal almost entirely on her own in a present society that is far less than understanding.

The reasons that women have to seek an abortion are many and varied but all of them are worthy of consideration. An unwanted pregnancy is an unwanted pregnancy and no amount of moralizing or judging changes society or the reality of that pregnancy.

For those of you who are fast to condemn, pass judgement and are overly concerned with the not-yet born, let me remind you that talk is cheap. For those adoptionists who fear a slack in the baby-market might I remind you that some human being must bear that child usually after dropping out of society for several months at the expense of her education and future let alone her mental well-being. The price you ask another to pay for your opportunity to be

magnanimous and charitable is very expensive indeed!

May I also remind you that this is supposed to be a 'free country' where there is supposed to be respect and tolerance for other people's beliefs. What of a woman's belief that motherhood is very vague in the first three months of pregnancy and belief in her right to decide her own future?

As to the rest of you readers- and since I've worked this campaign I know that there are more of you than the former people described- I want to invite you to come out on Nov. 20 and meet us of the Coalition to support our common cause together. What is that common cause again? To support the wretched when they are down and need help- to be friends, not judges- to care and not criticize- to respect the beliefs of others, and all together, work towards a world where people may never have to have abortions due to perfect prevention methods and the existence of a society that does not make pregnancy, under any circumstances unhappy.

Carol Brown
Campus Representative of the
Coalition for Abortion Repeal.

Interested women will meet Saturday, November 20, at 10:30 a.m. to send registered letters to Justice Minister Turner and Prime Minister Trudeau.

At 2:00 p.m. women will assemble at Sir Winston Churchill Square for a peaceful march to the legislative grounds. There a rally will be held and speakers will discuss the abortion laws in Canada.