

*Criminal Code*

they will then be able to vote according to their own beliefs and conscience much more than according to their commitment towards a party. In fact, I would scarcely understand or not understand at all the present government's attitude if they obliged members to vote according to a principle, to a party's policy.

Now Mr. Speaker, the purpose of those few comments is not to take some of the other members' time. They surely have different opinions to express, and personally I remain deeply convinced that we have the right to require and to recommend freedom to vote according to our own conscience as well as the splitting of this bill. Thus, every member, the government members as well as those from the opposition, will be able by expressing their opinion and adopting a definite position, to serve society better.

[*English*]

**Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East):** For many years, Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing about the studies that were being undertaken in the Department of Justice to review the Criminal Code with the intention of introducing an omnibus amending act. Therefore, I can say that I welcome the opportunity this evening of making a few comments on Bill C-150. There is undoubtedly a great deal which we can support in the numerous amendments contained in the amending bill. My only regret is that in introducing the amendments the Department of Justice has seen fit to give us half measures on occasion rather than full measures, to move forward half a step instead of a full step.

It is also regrettable that in the introduction of such an omnibus bill, covering as it does 126 pages, they omitted a number of important matters which the house has been waiting to discuss. It is obvious from the correspondence all members have received, and from the speeches made in this house on this bill, that there is a great deal of interest and concern in the section which deals with abortion.

The first speaker this evening stated hon. members should have the opportunity to vote according to their religion and conscience. I wish those who have said there should be the opportunity to vote according to their religion and conscience had added the words, and knowledge and understanding.

Before I was elected to this house in 1953 I had the privilege of spending a number of years in the British Columbia legislature. During those years as an M.L.A. it was my policy each year to visit all provincial institu-

tions, homes for the elderly, jails, reformatories, tuberculosis hospitals and mental asylums. I would like to mention one institution which I visited. I will call it the children's home provincial institution. I wish all hon. members had the opportunity to visit these asylums and provincial institutions for children. Possibly then they would understand what I mean when I say, members should vote according to their knowledge. I am not referring to what is commonly called backward or retarded children, but to those who although they have the breath of life are vegetables. Hundreds of times over the years while visiting these institutions as a member of parliament I have seen children born of a moronic father and moronic daughter. I have seen the result of a moronic boy committing incest with a moronic sister.

In going through an institution in New Westminster I have looked down into a baby's crib and have seen what I considered to be a six or seven year old child who was nothing but skin and bone, and later discovered this child was 14 years of age. I would say this child was breathing but certainly not living. I have no hesitation in saying that not only must we consider the right to be born but we must also consider the right not to be born a vegetable that medical science can keep alive until you and I are probably long dead.

• (8:30 p.m.)

I wish that all hon. members could have met, seen and tried to talk to school girls who had been raped, and who could not take the shock. I am speaking of those who did not recover and who are spending the rest of their days in the insane asylum. Having spoken to doctors, I was told that had they had the legal right to be aborted after rape they would never have gone into mental institutions.

I seriously ask hon. members to consider these matters and honestly try to provide answers. Even this bill is not going to resolve the problem. It is a step forward but I would prophesy that there will be just as many illegal abortions when this bill becomes law as there are at present, with the same risk to the life of the woman resulting from an illegal abortion.

As I say, we should think of the right not to be born as a vegetable. We should think of protecting the life and health of a woman if, for good and sufficient reasons, she does not want to bear a child once impregnated. Surely, we will eventually come to the understanding that the question of abortion is

[Mr. La Salle.]