

*Government Orders*

We failed as members to reach a consensus in June 1988. If that exercise proved anything, it showed us that there is no more consensus in Parliament than there is throughout the country. Few if any of us will ever see the legislation we personally want survive this House and meet the test of the Charter. The Supreme Court can strike down any unconstitutional law. It has become apparent to me that my personal choice is unconstitutional.

I admit that Bill C-43, in my view at least, allows abortions in too wide a variety of circumstances. The latitude under the definition of "health", both mental and psychological, creates great difficulty for me. The determination of psychological health I am afraid will not be made, in many cases, by medical practitioners who are specialists in that field.

I have heard it said by some that no law is better than the bill that we have before us today. I cannot agree with that. No matter how minimal the protection, if pause for further consideration of the consequences by a woman and her doctor results, that alone is worth making an effort to achieve. Flawed, in my view, as this bill is, it will reinforce the principle that human life has a unique value. To have no law suggests that unborn life has no value at all.

Colleagues on the other side of this issue will not be persuaded to change their views because of my arguments, nor will I by theirs. I would hope, however, that they would fully consider supporting this bill at second reading. To defeat the bill at this stage would not give Canadians all of the opportunities available under the parliamentary process to attempt those changes and improvements that many of us feel could be implemented in this legislation. Regardless of their position, I think that there is little to be lost and perhaps much to be gained by giving a legislative committee the chance to consider amendments and conduct hearings. With this in mind I will support this bill at second reading.

Statistics are cold hard facts that are often filed away and forgotten. In 1988 between 73,000 and 74,000 therapeutic abortions took place in Canada. If the procedure that has become so commonplace today had been so readily available in the past, how much different might our country and our world have been. What if the mother of a Picasso, a Mozart or a Churchill had the

opportunity for easy access to terminate unwanted pregnancy?

If economic factors played a role, how many of us in this House who were born during the depths of the Depression might not be here today? How many members born during the 1940s were raised alone by their mother while their father was serving for his country? No doubt they were an inconvenience and created a hardship and economic difficulties for a single parent. How many of us sitting in this chamber today were at one point in our past an unwanted pregnancy? Can any of us smugly say that is not an option our mothers would have considered? Think about it.

I ask each member sitting in this House to reflect upon the circumstances their own mothers faced a few months before they were born. Ask yourself if, given the choice, might she have made the same decision 73,000 Canadian women made last year. Today you are a member of Parliament. You could have been a statistic.

**Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this very important debate. If I may be forgiven the expression, I think this is one debate and one issue on which we as Members of Parliament are certainly earning our keep, given the volume and the emotion of interventions by constituents and many others, and indeed the need to probe very deeply within our own convictions on where we actually stand on this particular piece of legislation.

• (1630)

I would also like to thank all other members for their very thoughtful speeches from which I have learned a lot. It is a debate that many of us will remember for a long time.

What we see here is a clash between two very profound, and in many ways, equally compelling values. The one set of values grows from the women's movement which, in my mind, has been the most progressive and powerful social movement of this century in Canada. Many of the people who have taken up the cause of women's rights are genuine inheritors of the legacy of people like Agnes MacPhail and Nellie McClung in seeking not only equality, but the liberation that goes beyond simple equality for women. It is not only the ideology of a movement that propels them, but a real