

*Criminal Code*

around 3 out of 10,000 pregnancies. I feel this is further reason to prompt the legislator to make the law more explicit.

Any abuse should be avoided unlike certain countries where, after abortions have been allowed for a while, people are wondering if it was not a mistake.

I agree with the hon. member for Gatineau who moved this amendment that it is necessary to clarify paragraph (c). I hope the Minister of Justice will be agreeable to this.

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, after listening to the speech made by the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont), I want to congratulate him for the courage he has shown in spite of his party's admonition.

I also hope that people will finally understand that what French Canadians or Canadians are expressing in their own terms is that one cannot legislate with any certainty when there is some doubt.

I do not intend to play on words, even if the debate is a very sophisticated one, as the minister might object. Nevertheless, there is a distinction to be made.

Mr. Speaker, paragraph (c) of clause 18 reads as follows:

(c) has by certificate in writing stated that in its opinion the continuation of the pregnancy of such female person would or would be likely to endanger her life or health—

Mr. Speaker, we are asked to adopt this provision on the ground that the Criminal Code is evasive, non-applicable and difficult to understand. We are asked to insert that paragraph which attempts to establish a link between the danger inherent to pregnancy and the danger to the life or health of the mother.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that that is not logical and that is why I give my wholehearted support to the motion submitted by the hon. member for Gatineau.

Mr. Speaker, the progress of medical science has been amazing, as the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard) said a moment ago. Less and less will pregnancy be likely to endanger the health of the mother, and still less will it be likely to endanger her life.

Medical experience has shown—the hon. member for Hull (Mr. Isabelle) could probably corroborate this—that German measles

[Mr. Rodrigue.]

can in some way endanger the life and the health of the mother and even of the child. However, last week, I had the pleasure and the honour of meeting a group of doctors from my riding and, in their opinion, such cases are extremely rare.

Mr. Speaker, this is a borderline case. But the minister would like to put together in the same clause not only such cases where the woman's health would likely be impaired, but all abortion cases without distinction.

If a woman pretends to be ill to justify an abortion, the medical practitioner will then abort her, thus killing a human being. No attempt was made to find out whether that woman was truly ill.

Mr. Speaker, doctors agree, as a rule, that a pregnant woman often claims to be sick whereas she is not really. On the contrary, a woman is ill when she cannot bring forth a child, not when she is bearing one. That is why this is completely illogical. It should be the other way around, Mr. Speaker.

A woman is considered ill—and I challenge the member for Hull to deny this—when she cannot have a child. Doctors are at a loss to find a way whereby that woman could satisfy her natural need to give birth to a child. Pregnancy is not an illness.

Having heard other members of parliament, I think it is a mistake to tell women that pregnancy is a form of illness. Not at all. Several women claim nevertheless to be sick when they are pregnant. Why? Because they feel they have lost something of their beauty, etc. They say they are sick for such reasons of a psychic nature.

To the woman who consults him, a doctor will say what is in the law. He will tell her that he can state, by way of a certificate, that in his opinion the continuation of pregnancy—for this woman who says she is sick, psychologically, even if she does not admit it frankly—would or would be likely to endanger her life.

The law leaves much latitude for its interpretation. I think we cannot afford not to clarify the situation.

In my opinion, the hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Laflamme) has clearly established the difference between the French and English versions. This is a poor French translation.