

*Abortion*

For example, a Bill could have made it possible to meet women's needs in more than one way. Certainly, it would have had to deal with the question of abortion as such, that is whether abortion should be allowed or not, under what conditions an abortion could be performed, and at what stage of pregnancy. This would have to be clear and explicit in the Bill. Such a Bill would have made it possible to provide alternatives to abortion, like special counselling programs, for example, with professionals who, by giving a pregnant woman psychological support, would make it possible to avoid abortion in some cases, because the woman would at least have other alternatives available to her.

For example, a program could be set up to provide clinics where competent people could give not only women but also families and couples social, cultural or financial support to help them through the difficulties facing them. There is nothing like that now throughout the country. It does exist in some centres, but not everywhere in the country. Such programs might well be successful in some cases and provide less drastic solutions than abortion.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult for us to pass judgement on who should authorize an abortion or who should be entitled to have one. It is not an easy decision to make.

If the Government had assumed its responsibilities, it would have presented a Bill, as I said, that would provide a recourse and support from the community, from health professionals, by providing an appropriate, fair, understanding response to the serious needs of women in difficulty; I am sure that worthwhile alternatives could be found.

This problem is not insoluble. It is not necessarily a legal issue or strictly a health issue. It may be a moral, ethical or social issue for some. In Canada, it may also be a matter of whether one lives in a remote region that does not provide access to the same quality of health care as other regions. It is not an insoluble problem, Mr. Speaker; it is just a matter of showing leadership. You must think about it and act.

In 1988, we should think of the whole question of human reproduction; every day, we hear reports of troubling experiments on human life. And abortion is only part of this problem. It is a big issue, I admit, but it must be dealt with and solved quickly in the best interest of all Canadians.

But it is not the only part. We must deal quickly with the matter of *in vitro* fertilization. Yesterday evening, again, there was a program on the national CBC network about *in vitro* fertilization. Fertility clinics and genetic manipulation will certainly upset Canadians, men and women. The problem of surrogate mothers must also be considered. Modern technology and medicine now pose a major moral problem for us and we, legislators, must for once take a pro-active role in this.

We cannot afford to wait for the Supreme Court or other courts to throw the ball back to the politicians, to us here in the House of Commons. We must study these issues now and react immediately.

There is more and more talk about foetal tissue cultures for transplantation. This poses a serious moral problem. Will foetuses be cultivated only for their use as raw material? Can we in all conscience allow this? Will we have foetus farms, laboratories to grow human tissues and foetuses so that organs like the liver, heart or eyes can be taken from them? That may seem like science fiction, Mr. Speaker, but it is on its way. It has already arrived. We recently saw foetal cells transplanted into the brain of some people suffering from Parkinson's disease, for example. This procedure has already been developed and demonstrated.

The door has also been opened to possible large-scale organ transplants. And, Mr. Speaker, we must ask whether this is a legal question, a medical question or just a social and ethical question. I think that it is most important to discuss it.

I know that this debate does not deal directly with the abortion issue, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the motion before us will solve nothing, because the problem is much bigger. In this debate we must state whether we are for or against the motion, and I have said clearly where I stand: I am against the motion because it falls far short of my moral or social standards, as I see it, nor does it embody the essential elements of a legislative position.

Mr. Speaker, another reason which calls for legislation rather than a simple motion is that a statute would make it possible to offer a much wider array of options than does a simple motion of principle.

I am one of those who believe that, on ethical and moral grounds, unrestricted abortion, abortion on demand is unacceptable. As I said earlier, there are circumstances where such an option can be justified. This is why I favour abortion when medical evidence indicates that pregnancy may endanger the woman's life. In such cases—and I am not qualified to make the decision—we have to rely on the opinion of the physician or the qualified medical team. Should these health professionals conclude that the mother's life is seriously threatened and recommend an abortion, then I sincerely believe we should allow the procedure.

Finally, there is a last category which I think ought to be accepted, and I referred to this earlier in my remarks. I am talking about cases where pregnancy is the result of criminal or violent behaviour. I am thinking particularly of incidents of rape and incest. From a psychological standpoint, Mr. Speaker, such situations are difficult enough to live through for both the victim and her parents, and I think this psychological trauma justifies ending the pregnancy. A woman who is the victim of such an act of violence should have the right to seek an abortion during the first weeks of pregnancy if that is her decision and, of course, if that option is recommended by health professionals.

In simple terms, Mr. Speaker, that is my position. I am not a lawyer. I did not want to debate Criminal Code Section 251 nor say that it is a legal issue because I do not believe it is a legal issue. It is a matter of ethics with far-reaching socio-