

I apologize to my colleagues, as well as to the chair, vice-chair and members of the committee, for not stating that opinion during the review of the report. I was not there during the last week. I had intended to raise this issue. However, since I was absent, I missed the opportunity to do so. I want first and foremost to be able to live in peace with my conscience. This is why I make this statement today.

The recommendations made by the majority in the report are mine in every respect, except as regards the issue to which I just referred.

I have no intention of repeating everything that was said in the report. The report is very well written in both official languages. It was a hard task, since it was pioneer work. We had to agree on definitions. We had to focus on each term. That was not easy.

All in all, the majority's decision is also mine. It is my point of view. To reporters who ask me what I think of the report and what is my position, I could answer that they need only read the report, from the beginning to the end, including the appendices, and conclude that wherever there is some mention of the majority's point of view, it is also mine. I do not have anything to add.

I noted that the Prime Minister was quoted in *La Presse*, maybe through someone else, as saying that if the government were to decide to propose such a committee of the House of Commons, that committee should consider some areas our committee did not examine because it lacked the time or the resources.

There is one area, in particular, about which I am not satisfied. I do not believe that, at this point in time, serious and detailed studies have been done on the nature of physical and moral suffering. This is an issue that has bothered me throughout our work.

As I said to the committee, it seems that, at times, nature is generous enough not to make death such a painful experience for everyone. We were told that for 5 per cent of all dying patients, the pain cannot be controlled because there is no medication, no remedy and no solution available.

Sometimes, I think mental pain is worse than physical pain. Some people die as they lived and do not accept death. For them, death is the ultimate defeat. In a moment of despair, they suffer horribly, I am sure. No one here has gone through that. Very often, it is not the dying patient but the people who support him or her who suffer the most.

This is why I think we should undertake more comprehensive studies and research on the phenomena of physical and mental pain. Supportive care to dying patients, which is part, of course,

of any good palliative care program, is also significant and must be taken into account. Evidence has shown that dying patients given support towards the end of their lives accept death more easily. This area deserves further examination.

We did not travel outside the country, and I think it would have been useful for the committee, if it had been authorized to do so, to go to the Netherlands. The committee should have met with the researchers who carried out the study on euthanasia in the State of New York. I think it would have been useful for the committee to meet with the British Lords who examined this issue. We should also have invited or met other foreign personalities and politicians not only to compare our studies but also to share our personal experiences. Finally, these are all matters a House of Commons committee could consider and examine thoroughly.

Having said that, I think the public debate Senator Neiman wished for has now been initiated, and very well indeed. The report has been very well received by most commentators, even if it has been sharply criticized by some. That comes as no surprise to me, because those people are really not open-minded. They have but one thing in mind, their own objectives. They refuse to try to understand other people's views. However, that is part of our political experience. We can never please everybody.

I take this opportunity to tell Senator Neiman and Senator Thérèse Lavoie-Roux once again that I greatly appreciated their leadership, even if they held opposite views. Out of the clash of ideas came, if not light, at least very useful information. I think that by undertaking this work we did a great service to this country. I wish the best of luck to those who, in the future, will have to deal with this fundamental issue.

On motion of Senator Neiman, debate adjourned.

[English]

• (1600)

STATE OF CANADIAN FINANCIAL SYSTEM

REPORT OF BANKING, TRADE AND
COMMERCE COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the eighteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce with respect to its study of the state of the financial system in Canada, presented in the Senate on June 15, 1995.

Hon. John Sylvain: Honourable senators, I move that the report be adopted.

Motion agreed to and report adopted.