

*Criminal Code*

Mr. Richard Crossman, the British Minister of Social Services on Monday afternoon in the House of Commons.

That is to say, in Great Britain.

That legislation passed by parliament in October 1967 and which came into force in April 1968, authorized the termination of pregnancy when it involves a risk or endangers the physical or moral health of the mother, the unborn child, or the other children the mother already has.

Mr. Crossman stated that he was particularly displeased by the way the act was interpreted and applied in the private sector. Since June 1968, 22,000 abortions have been performed, more than a third in private clinics. The others were performed in government hospitals under the social security scheme.

• (2:20 p.m.)

Such matters should be considered before passing too readily an abortion bill.

These facts, Mr. Speaker, should bring our friends who support the legislation under consideration to pause over the consequences of the decision they are getting ready to make.

This is happening in Great Britain where the government reacts favourably to the socializing ideas of our N.D.P. friends.

**An hon. Member:** That is right.

**Mr. Dionne:** In the March 1968 issue of *Relations* I found an article which I will quote to support my argument. It deals with the Vatican II council.

God, master of life, has entrusted to man the noble ministry of life, and man must fulfil such a task in a manner worthy of him. Life must therefore be protected with extreme care as soon as there is conception. Abortion and infanticide are horrible crimes.

The right to live involves the duty to maintain it. The right to decent living involves the duty to behave with dignity in a civilized world. The right to search for truth involves also the duty to get to the core of such search within the limits of legality.

Men being what they are, it is natural that morals and politics seem sometimes to disagree, but it is also natural that we tend to reach an agreement in that field.

With a certain astonishment, I have observed the rather loose wording of the various clauses of that famous bill which has to date given rise to so much comments and which has shown that such legislation cannot be passed lightly. After all, it is a rather complicated document of more than 125 pages.

The amendment under consideration affects a clause which has considerable scope. However, we think that we are justified. Nobody

[Mr. Dionne.]

can accuse us of delaying the discussion of the clauses of the bill, especially on this one.

In the first place, we did not ask for it and to judge by the considerable number of protests which we receive, it does not seem that the people want it either. To please the advocates of a new morality, should we allow, without discussion, the passage of a bill which include peculiar provisions inconsistent with the natural order?

We do not believe that we hold the monopoly of virtue, but we are not ready either to assume the responsibility of having contributed to destroy the authority of law. This authority is visibly challenged at every stage of this debate.

Is not law itself undermined by the increase of criminal abortion cases?

I think it is in order to re-establish its rights that many people, in various ways, favour more liberal legislation. We know the facts give the lie to that.

The extension of legal abortion does not reduce the incidence of illegal abortions. The purpose of the amendment is precisely to prevent decisions being made without thorough consideration.

I have here an article from the newspaper *La Liberté et le Patriote*, of St. Boniface, Manitoba, and I shall quote some excerpts referring to abortion:

It is quite obvious that the Criminal Code, as all other human legislation, must be revised from time to time. The complexity of modern social life can no longer be regulated according to rules established at a time when conditions and mentality were entirely different.

That does not mean we should proceed in a simplistic or absolute way, without allowing for a trial period in the administration of the law and without considering the deeper values that are involved.

It is particularly the case regarding the new provisions on abortion. The murder of a child in the womb of its mother or the provoked expulsion of a foetus not yet viable have always been considered, in any civilized society, as an abominable crime, as were the murders of children already born.

The real moral principles of mankind must be deeply buried if a society, our middle-class society, has become unable to see the murderous aggression against a viable foetus as the result of a criminal mentality, as in the case of any homicide.

Is the expansion of abortion laws a sign of greater civilization? Let us read what a famous historian, Daniel-Rops, indicates among the causes of the decline of the Roman Empire.

"The other threat the Roman society is faced with has always had something to do with over-indulgence in lucre and luxury. It has become so easy to get a divorce that public authorities have