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needs to be offered to make this fair legislation on the side of a family policy which will really help women.

I heard it put very well a few weeks ago by someone who was noting the tremendous evolution of the rights of women. They are far from being equal, but a tremendous evolution has taken place over the last few years in which women have more and more opportunities for jobs and for employment outside the home. Then this person said, "Isn't it time that we tried to improve the working conditions of parenting?" It is time that we tried to improve the working conditions of parenting.

It is a fundamental responsibility of the government, when introducing abortion legislation, restrictions on abortion which in principle we support, to have family programs accompany them, measures to improve the working conditions of parenting, to put it in a phrase that I think is particularly apt.

In conclusion, I want to address the free vote aspect of this issue. This is a free vote, and a number of members characterized their approach to this as a vote on the basis of their conscience. I want to at least give those members who argue that their consciences are the sole determinant of what their vote is going to be something to think about.

• (1310)

In a pluralistic and multicultural society like Canada, there is a larger perspective on national issues than one's own conscience. One cannot vote against one's conscience but I submit that in a pluralistic society, one should seek to find a position which reflects not only his own conscience as a member of Parliament but the consciences of the people who support that member and have voted for him or voted against him, but from whose constituency he has come to Ottawa to vote.

I mentioned at the outset an ethical position opposed to abortion and an ethical position in favour of a free choice on abortion in the interests of family planning. Those are both moral and ethical positions. I think what needs to be done is to find a framework, to find legislation which reflects the morality of Canadian society as a whole.

Whether those who strenuously oppose abortion in all circumstances can control enough of the votes in the House of Commons to determine the legislation or not, they should not do so. They should vote in a way, in my submission, which reflects the cross-spectrum of ethical positions which are held on this very important question of life and of children.

It is not an easy balance to strike, but I suggest that this legislation does not even attempt to do it. This legislation, far from trying to reflect the morality of Canadian society, basically tries to bypass it, tries to find a way that by putting water in the wine of both sides, the two sides can live with the legislation. Is that really good enough? Is there not right in the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada the outline of a position which reflects the strong view that a woman's health and liberty requires that she have the decision-making power but at the same time recognizes the emerging interests of the foetus and invites the Parliament of Canada to come to grips with that, to define it and to give it legislative sanction? That is not done by this legislation. While, as I indicated at the outset—

[*Translation*]

on our side, we intend to consider the matter in caucus. Since our basic position is that this is a free vote, we will consider the matter, and the government will have our reply before the vote is taken.

[*English*]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find there is unanimous consent in the House to call it 1.21 p.m. in order to allow the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, who is the lead speaker for the New Democratic Party, to start her speech after question period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being 1.21 p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock.

At 1.14 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.