

Criminal Code

In order to make more clear the views of certain physicians, I would also like to quote Dr. Whyte:

I am not aware of the World Health Organization's definition. That is a very hard word to define, I agree; you can define it as meaning happiness if you like. But I would certainly say that in my opinion the words "physical and/or mental health" would cover what normally we have in mind.

It is therefore commonly recognized that the word "health" as used in the bill concerned will have the necessary extension to encompass physical and psychic health and the socio-economic grounds which certain persons of means could include under the term "psychiatric indication".

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on the remarks made by the hon. member for Louis-Hébert (Mr. Cantin) because quite frankly I had decided, not to speak on this amendment. But in view of the comments of the hon. member for Louis-Hébert, I feel compelled to challenge his statement.

Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Louis-Hébert says we do not know what we are talking about, I simply want to tell him that, on the contrary, we have understood the bill full well for having read it line by line, and it is because we have understood it that we move amendments like this one.

The hon. member for Louis-Hébert says that the government wants to leave it up to doctors to settle abortion matters. This is all very well and so do we, but what kind of doctors, that is a different story, and what kind of problems is another one too.

We ask for a better definition of those very aspects in amendments such as No. 13, for instance, which seeks to remove any mention of the health of the mother, because we are in favour of a full protection of the life of the mother, but—I repeat as I did yesterday—we reject a measure that allows abortion in cases when pregnancy "would be likely to endanger her health".

We are also opposed to such expressions in the statutes. Considering that in the medical profession as in any other there are profiteers, it is easy to imagine that it will always be possible to find two doctors to say that the life of the mother or the unmarried girl "would likely be" endangered.

For those particular reasons, we want to remove this question of "health" from the bill, because while the government insists on being vague regarding the life of the mother, we wanted to replace "likely" by "indirectly"

in danger. Nobody can blame us for requesting the clarification of a text so obscure and so permissive on the matter of abortion.

Instead of debating the subject in direct relation with abortion, it would have been more profitable to pass a law against abortion in order to protect the health of the mother, because I think a pregnant woman enjoys the best of health, and the fact that she is pregnant is sufficient proof. I think it is a natural state for her; it would be abnormal to reject maternity. A pregnant woman is one that is living a full life.

I do not see why we should be trying to pass legislation today in order to make abortion easier, when we should be legislating abortion out of existence, as far as reasons of health are concerned. It appears as if we were striving for the past few months, and especially since the coming to power of the new government, to adopt laws against nature. We shall soon have to change direction, in order to pass legislative measures aimed at protecting not only pregnant women but society as a whole, and to stop legalizing this or that and permitting everything in the end.

Mr. Speaker, my only purpose in rising was to warn the house that I shall vote in favour of this amendment, which is very sensible, because it states exactly what is expected of the bill, and that is full protection for the life of the mother. By protecting the life of the mother, we oppose life to life.

But, we have no right to sacrifice a life on grounds of "probable health". It is useless to discuss the question of saving two lives; one must choose the lesser of two evils. Two lives are threatened at a given moment, that of the mother and that of the child. Which one should be saved? We say that of the mother. That is our intention. But if the choice is between the health and happiness of one person and the life of the other, we do not have the right to sacrifice life for some small happiness or some uncertain health.

And when we are told that we did not understand anything, I think that there are some in this house who do not want to understand, who do not want to be logical, not only on a legislative point of view but on a rational point of view. I think that everybody will admit it.

It was even said in this house that if such a woman—and examples were given—had not been aborted, she would not be dead. This is perhaps true. But, as for me, I know by experience that if a certain woman, a close