

*Abortion*

It will be noted that Justice Wilson recognizes that there is a state interest in protecting the foetus. Her only question is: When does that obligation commence? That is her question. She does not indicate, either, by what means this protection can be granted and guaranteed. She leaves that to us. She leaves that to the Bill which will eventually have to follow the motion we are debating today. I return to my first point, that it is therefore essential that we debate this subject in Parliament.

There are some who say that we must find that middle ground on this serious social and moral issue of abortion. I think the middle ground that some people are talking about is mythical in nature. It is non-existent. I wonder, how can there be middle ground? There is life and there is death.

In 1975 Hon. Otto Lang, then Liberal Minister of Justice, said in an interview with Bruce Garvey for *The Toronto Star*, and I quote: "You cannot distinguish between the life of the unborn and the born, there's no biological cut-off date". I have had the privilege to listen to distinguished physicians who have confirmed and verified that point of view.

When this Parliament, once again in a free vote, made its decision on the question of capital punishment, I, for a third time as a Member of Parliament, voted for abolition. I did so because I am pro-life and anti-violence. I am not persuaded that when the state kills felons who are guilty of murder that it makes society a better or a safer or a happier place for others.

● (1650)

On the contrary, I took the view that state executions merely add to the sum total of violence in society and perhaps even, in a certain sense, condone violence as an acceptable means to achieve a satisfactory end. I say no. It does not work that way. The means is unacceptable and the end is unsatisfactory.

Recently I read Truman Capote's best seller of many years ago, *In Cold Blood*. The savage, brutal murder of an entire family in rural Kansas by two deeply disturbed young men was a story of unprovoked, irrational violence at its worse. Yet, as Capote went on to reveal the background and personalities of those two young men, by the end of the book one did not want to see them hanged. Treatment for them, yes. Full freedom, never. But death? No.

When I voted against capital punishment I knew that a majority of my constituents thought otherwise, but I did so on the grounds of being for life, even life which is stained and marred and warped by dreadful human experiences. At this moment, however, I am grateful that on this issue of abortion I am able to be more in tune and in step with what I know to be the prevailing view in my constituency.

In being for life on the abortion question I must say that I take this stand not without some difficulty. One of those difficulties has to do with the life and the health of the mother. Thank goodness, Sir, that modern gynaecology makes it less and less likely that pregnancy can cause death or seriously impair the health of the mother. To medical science we pay

tribute for that fact. Still, if there are those clear and indisputable cases where a choice has to be made between life or death for one or the other, the mother or the unborn child, it is in my view the mother without question who must live.

Of great concern to me also is the victim of rape or incest who becomes pregnant. That is among those extreme cases where an appeal from the woman in a just society would demand a sympathetic and most responsive hearing. To have children born as a result of rape or incest will do nothing to achieve quality family life and that really goes without saying.

However, an even harder case is the one involving a highly strung, harassed mother of four young children living in a remote mining town and married to a weak-willed, self-indulgent man. Her fifth pregnancy was more than she could bear and abortions at that time were illegal. Therefore, she went to a back street abortionist, got blood poisoning as a result, and subsequently died. She left behind a guilt burdened husband and four motherless children.

One of the arguments that the pro-abortionists use is that before legalization, before the Criminal Code was amended, there were thousands of such women dying every year as a result of botched up back alley abortions. I thought that, too, until Doctor T. A. Kasper, an Edmonton pathologist, noted in a letter to Members of Parliament quite recently that this argument for abortion is without any valid statistical foundation. He goes on in his letter to say, however:

Even with legal abortions performed under the strictest control, in the finest institutions, the statistics show that the risks to the life of the mother are greater than the risks to her carrying the infant to term.

Going back to the tragic case of the harassed mother of four, I would suggest to you and my colleagues in the House that the answer to that situation was not an abortion being used as a means to solve a serious social problem. Rather, the answer was to have a more responsible husband, to live in a more caring community, with facilities to help that person, with affordable and easily accessible child care facilities, a community that had adequate counselling services.

Are you aware that there are people who live in the more remote parts of this country who, when they have a difficult and real problem, really have no place to go? There is no one to whom they can turn. There is no one who will take the time to listen. There is no one who can listen in a way that can be helpful.

I sometimes suspect that the rationale for an abortion on demand policy is basically anti-child in nature. Richard Needham, a former columnist for *The Globe and Mail*, once wrote in his own inimical and cynical style:

The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents, the second half by our children.

Well, Sir, you know as do I that children place heavy demands on parents. Children create huge costs for society in education, child care, health and recreational facilities, yet we are not spending enough for our children. I say, Sir, that it is