

*Criminal Code*

In the old days the world needed all the people it could get in order to carry out the work of the world, which often had to be done by brute force and ignorance because they did not have all the mechanical aids that we have today. In those days there was a great deal of disease and maternal and infant mortality. There had to be many more children if there was to be any hope that enough of them would survive in order to carry out the work of the world and continue the human race. However, Mr. Speaker, I say with all the force at my command that today the world needs an increasing population in exactly the same way that we need the nuclear bomb.

Responsible legislators who are grappling with today's problems and Canada's share of world problems would not make the kind of irresponsible statements that we have heard in the last few days, namely, that we should continue indefinitely increasing the population even of this country which is not yet overcrowded. These are irresponsible statements in a world where the population explosion is menacing certain areas now. We also shall have to take the consequences of the population explosion in those areas.

One feature of this debate which has alarmed, saddened and, I may say, made me feel very indignant, is the attitude toward women which has been displayed by some hon. members. It is quite an unconscious attitude; I am not saying it is deliberate. It is an inborn, inbred, uneducated attitude, an unconscious attitude on the part of many people in this country toward women. I could read letters to the house too. The leader of the Creditistes read a letter last night. I have received letters from the same type of people, although not the same type of letter.

The letters I have received are from people in despair, social workers and pregnant women. These are not young girls who go out for an evening and get into trouble; they are women who have had three or four pregnancies, are in poor health and financial circumstances, often with an ill husband at home, and who do not know how they will raise their existing children physically, emotionally and financially. They do not want to be forced to have indefinite numbers of children. They do not want this situation to continue with nothing being done about it and no recourse at all available to them. These are women who have tried birth control methods conscientiously and honestly, and those methods have failed. These are not frivolous, light-hearted women who want an abortion so

[Mrs. MacInnis.]

they can get into a size 10 dress when at the moment they are wearing a size 16.

I think some hon. members who have taken this attitude have done so because they do not know any better. This is the kind of attitude I have been listening to for many days. They have treated women purely as baby machines, without minds, feelings or rights of their own. They have suggested that it is the duty of women to have any number of children without complaint. They have suggested that therapeutic abortion boards should include a psychiatrist for the purpose of telling women that maternity under any circumstances is good for them. They have suggested that spiritual advisers be appointed to therapeutic abortion boards for the same purpose.

As George Bain said in his column in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* the other day, the boards they suggest might include just about everybody but the T.V. repair man, and it might be a good idea to put him on the board because he might show more compassion than the people who have been suggested as members. Members of this house have argued that pregnancy reduces even an intelligent woman to a state of mindlessness where she needs a man to tell her what is good for her, and that, of course, is always that she must continue her pregnancy regardless of the effect upon her or the child or society.

● (12:20 p.m.)

The great majority of people believe that this attitude is completely wrong. No one denies the right to anyone to hold such beliefs or express such opinions as the ones to which we have been listening for the last two weeks, and we have proven this by sitting quietly while they expressed them. But I will not permit the impression to be left by them that this legislation will in any way force abortions on people who do not want abortions and who do not believe that they are right. This legislation will apply only to those who want and who believe in the necessity of abortions.

In spite of much that has been said and implied, no one will force an abortion on any woman who does not want one. No one is going to force a doctor to perform an abortion if he does not want to perform it. Let me assure hon. gentlemen that no one has the slightest intention of aborting them, even if such a procedure were desirable—and who is not tempted at times? I am afraid that no therapeutic abortion board would be willing to do the job even if it included psychiatrists, spiritual advisers and TV repair men.