

Criminal Code

ing and saving lives, it tells me that they cherish their own lives, the lives of their families and of their friends.

● (1830)

It is precisely the function of an institution such as Parliament to correct failures in our country's equation of social and political justice. A key part of this is recognizing and promoting rights of underprivileged or deprived minorities. The Government has committed itself to championing the causes of women, ethnic minorities and the handicapped, three groups fitting this description. I hope we will take up the challenge with equal enthusiasm of defending the interests of the most defenceless group of all—the unborn children of Canada.

There is a final point which I should like to make that always emphasizes the senselessness and tragedy of the frequency of abortion in our country. The futility of the situation we have today is emphasized by the currency of the term "unwanted pregnancy". No greater insensitivity is shown than by people who persist in using this term.

There is an unlimited number of families in Ontario alone who would treasure an "unwanted pregnancy" and welcome an adopted child into their home. In Ontario, in 1969, official agencies processed the adoption of 5,400 children. In 1979, this figure had fallen to 1,248. By 1984, last year, 862 children were adopted through provincial agencies in Ontario. People have not lost interest in adoption. As much as ever, some couples are incapable of producing children. Maybe the fact that abortions have increased over 600 per cent in the same time span has something to do with it. The term "unwanted pregnancy" loses some of its meaning when one finds out that there is a five-year waiting period for adoptions in Ontario.

Passing this legislation would legitimize the "unwanted pregnancy" as one that can be properly aborted. When this is used as a justification for abortion, it is a selfish and thoughtless treatment of not only the unborn child but of the thousands of people who would do anything to give that baby a home.

Before closing, I think it is important for the people of Canada to be totally aware of how abortions are carried out, the procedures involved. There is the D & C or the dilatation and curettage abortion. This method is most often used in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. A tiny hoe-like instrument, the curette, is inserted into the womb through the dilated cervix, its natural gateway. The abortionist then scrapes the wall of the uterus, cutting the baby's body to pieces. This is now used less frequently than suction.

The second procedure is suction abortion, the most commonly used method for early pregnancies. The principle is the same as in the D & C. In this technique, which was pioneered in Communist China, a powerful suction tube is inserted through the cervix into the womb. The body of the developing baby and placenta are torn to pieces and sucked into a jar.

The third is salt poisoning, or hyper-natremic abortion. This method is generally used after 13 weeks of pregnancy. A long needle is inserted through the mother's abdomen and a strong salt solution is injected directly into the amniotic fluid which

surrounds the child. The salt is swallowed and "breathed" and slowly poisons the baby, burning his or her skin as well. The mother goes into labour about a day later and expels a dead, grotesque, shriveled baby. Some babies have survived the "salting out" and were born alive.

These are just some of the forms of abortion which are carried out today. However, I should like to conclude by simply requesting that all Hon. Members seriously consider the implications of the abortion question. The time has come that the majority of Canadians who clearly oppose the senseless killing of infants receive their rightful voice in this matter, and silence once and for all the voice of the vocal minority of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. John Ostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Bill introduced by the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson). Abortion is an issue on which fundamentally differing and opposing views are strongly and genuinely held by many Canadians. I recognize the underlying reasons and feelings which have prompted my hon. colleague to introduce the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code. However, because there is a lack of consensus for major change in the abortion law, and because I believe that the existing law strikes a somewhat fair balance for Canadians who hold opposing views, it would be premature to bring forth such an amendment. In short, further study and consultation with church, medical and community groups are required. Nonetheless, I believe it would be useful to have a discussion on this very important issue, so that we can increase our knowledge of the many questions involved. In this regard, I propose to take the next few minutes of my time to place the Canadian situation in respect of abortion into an international context.

The debate over abortion rages in Canada as in many, if not most, countries of the world. Perhaps no other issue raises so many fundamental legal, medical, social, political, philosophical and religious questions as does the issue of who shall dictate the future of a human being about to be born—the state, the mother or the father. At one extreme, the state determines the status of a human being by criminalization of the abortion procedure and imposition of governmental sanctions, for example, imprisonment, fine or other penalty, upon those engaged either in performing the operation or having the operation performed upon them. At the other extreme, by permitting the potential mother or father to decide whether or not to have the child, the state removes itself completely from the decision-making process and places the choice entirely in the hands of future parents.

Most societies have opted for an intermediate position and allow abortions to be performed when certain legally formulated indications are present. As with other medical procedures, the state reserves the right to regulate the competence of those performing the operation. The intermediate position has been created by attenuating the criminal sanctions imposed upon violators of the penal code through legislative