

proposition he had ever heard of. Well, he was the author of that proposition. That is just as unsatisfactory as the spectacle of last week to which I have referred of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) sneering at people who used the very words that he used four years ago. We cannot accept a trade deal based on this kind of misrepresentation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

● (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS--BILLS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby) moved that Bill C-208, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (abortion), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it was some 12 years ago that Parliament took the last steps in an attempt to examine the operation of the abortion provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada. In 1975, the Badgley Commission was appointed to study the operation of the abortion provisions of the Criminal Code. Since that time, no government, be it Liberal or Conservative, has recognized the fundamental inequities existing under the present provisions of the Criminal Code. No Government, be it Liberal or Conservative, has displayed the courage to move forward with the only appropriate response to these inequities, which is the repeal of Section 251 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Mr. Parry: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My name was cited as being the seconder of this motion, whereas I believe it should be my colleague, the Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap) who is the seconder.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Spadina will be the seconder of the motion.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the Badgley commission which conducted investigations in most hospitals throughout Canada concluded that the law was not working and the provisions of the Criminal Code which, in theory, provided access to safe therapeutic abortions for women were in fact not working.

The Badgley commission stressed that women did not in fact have equal access to therapeutic abortions for various reasons. One was that the numerous provincial directives or regulations governing the establishment of a therapeutic abortion committee in hospitals, and the attitude of hospital boards of directors and members of the medical profession often lead to limited interpretation of the provisions of the Criminal Code.

Abortion

The second is the reality that it is only a very few hospitals in Canada which have indeed established therapeutic abortion committees. I believe the most recent figures indicate that fewer than 15 per cent of all hospitals in Canada have therapeutic abortion committees. Indeed, many of those hospitals with committees do not perform abortions at all.

There has been a deterioration in Canada in the number of hospitals providing safe therapeutic abortions.

[Translation]

The deterioration of abortion services in Canada is such that several provinces are faced with a real crisis. In 1984, for instance, out of the 244 hospital clinics which existed in Canada, 18 per cent performed no abortion and 42 per cent performed only a limited number, from 1 to 100 for the whole year. That is why Mrs. Sylvia Gold, President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, has urged the Federal Government to take action and to reiterate its position on the abortion issue. The Council's recommendations in this regard are as follows: recognition of abortion as a medical process which need not be carried out in a hospital; approval by the Federal Minister and the Provincial health services of subsidies to birth control clinics, independent from the hospital network, and finally the removal from the Canadian Criminal Code of the section dealing with abortion.

That is the purpose of my Bill today, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

That is precisely the purpose of my Private Members' Bill which is before the House today. It would implement the principle of child birth by choice.

Child birth by choice means freedom of choice in the planning of one's family. It means that a woman should not be pressured to bear a child against her will and similarly, it means that a woman should not be pressured to have an abortion against her will. Pro choice simply means that women should have the freedom to choose for themselves whether or not to continue an unplanned, undesired pregnancy.

This position is very much in line with that which is taken by the International Conference on Population and Development at Mexico City in August, 1984, which said that: "Major efforts must be made now to ensure that all couples and individuals can exercise their basic human rights to decide freely, responsibly and without coercion the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so".

I and my colleagues in the New Democratic Party were very pleased when earlier this year a motion that would have entrenched in the Constitution of Canada a denial of this fundamental freedom of choice was brought before the House and defeated resoundingly.

The policy of the New Democratic Party is clear. As a Government, we would remove Sections 251 and 252 from the Criminal Code. We would pardon all qualified medical