

Criminal Code

In the face of such a general outcry, I will not let anyone say that we are not defending something serious here. On the contrary. When we find something ridiculous in a bill, we ask that it be changed. We must decry such absurdity in the house in cooperation with these teams, with Catholic parents, with all those who now want us to go on with the battle we started, because what is taking place in parliament reminds me too much of the time when we had a Prime Minister just as uncompromising as the present one. He would force his members and his ministers to vote like him, without any other obligation than to dictate to parliament. I say that this reminds me of the time of Sir John Macdonald who said about Riel "A man to hang".

Today, we can say that there are lives to be protected. When in this ridiculous bill we see such absurd words which are repeated at every turn, such as "female person", thus giving the impression that there could be others than female persons who could procure miscarriage for themselves, I say for the last time to my Liberal friends—who accept such intransigency, who vote unanimously as they did yesterday on sensible amendments which we introduce but who reject them all because of the dictatorship existing in this parliament—please do not repeat those mistakes for which the Canadian people have suffered because right now we are forging the destiny of Canada and we are going back a hundred years.

For a better and just Canada, for more explicit laws, I therefore beg you, as a brother-christian of all Canadians, to accept the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Abitibi.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the house ready for the question? The question is on the motion by the hon. member for Abitibi amending clause 18 of Bill C-150. All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my view the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 75 (11), and a special order of the

house made last Wednesday, April 30, the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred until after consideration of motion No. 19.

We will now proceed to the consideration of motion No. 34 in the name of the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

Mr. Cafik (for Mr. Allmand) moved motion No. 34:

That Bill C-150, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and to make certain consequential amendments to the Combines Investigation Act, the Customs Tariff and the National Defence Act, be amended by deleting in clause 18 the words "or would be likely to endanger her life or health" on lines 4 and 5 on page 43 and by inserting the following words: "endanger her life or seriously and directly impair her health".

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the amendment of the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) to Bill C-150, and I would like to explain the reasons for my position. First of all, I wish to make it clear that I realize that many members of the House of Commons, many people in Canada and many people in my riding are divided on the position they take with regard to the legalization of abortion. I hope they will try as hard to understand the position I am taking as I have tried to understand theirs.

When considering abortion I believe that the main question is whether the foetus is in fact a human being and, if it is a human being, at what stage it becomes one. Obviously, if one were to conclude that the foetus is not human, there would be no reason for not granting abortions on either request or demand. If, however, it is concluded that the foetus is human, then people might be inclined to come to a different decision. I believe that this central question takes the problem of abortion out of the realm of religion and belief because I do not think it is solely a religious question but rather one on which legislators should decide on scientific grounds. In doing so we must ask ourselves the following question: If a foetus is a human being, do we as members of the House of Commons have any responsibility to protect its human life? This is a serious question which affects all people, regardless of their religious, political or other beliefs.

A great deal of evidence was put forward to the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare in the 27th parliament by a number of witnesses who indicated that there is no question about whether or not a foetus is