

Criminal Code

First of all, if the government really believe that abortion may be only a sin, why does it not delete any mention of it in the Criminal Code?

One can see how logical it is, since there is no reference to sin in the bill. In fact, at a given time, the debate was diverted on that subject and it was suggested that it did not rest with the government to determine whether an act was moral or not.

If the act was considered immoral—because it is deemed immoral by a number of people—it would not be enough to consider it a criminal act. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I agree on that point, but if the government considers it is only a matter of sin, then, it should stop dealing with sin and legislating on sin.

The Minister of Justice recognized it would have been a logical conclusion to reach. However, such was not the case, for he wrote subsequently:

—that the government would not do so under any circumstances.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister maintained “that the government in its amendments to the Criminal Code was not legalizing abortion.”

This is the argument brought forward. Abortion is not legalized but on the other hand it is said:

—the continuation of the pregnancy of such female person would or would be likely to endanger her life or health—

This, Mr. Speaker, constitutes an obvious contradiction brought about by the famous word “likely” and I also commend the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont) who, like us, had noticed this excessive freedom allowed by in saying: . . . “or likely”.

If all doctors were as honest as the hon. member for Hull, we could most certainly rely on their professional conscience and on their knowledge. There would not be any problems then. Besides, legislation would not even be necessary in any field if everybody was assuming his responsibilities.

When a law is enacted it is because some people are not behaving as they should and it is their case which is provided for in using the famous word “likely”.

One can imagine all the possibilities that such a word as “likely” represents. A great many unwed mothers will likely become insane temporarily in order to justify their abortion.

“Likely” a great many married women who in order not to have any more children and to avoid doing more work at home will always

succeed in finding a disease to justify abortion.

There will “likely” always be welfare recipients who will find themselves all kinds of diseases to justify their request for abortion.

What will the physician do in such circumstances? Will he be stubborn and say to the patient that she is not ill; she will reply that she is. And if she succeeds in discussing during 12 hours, the physician will probably decide that she is mentally ill and he will agree to procure an abortion.

Mr. Speaker, we have to think about the implication, of the words. A while ago, the Chair interrupted me on account of a comma, but words “would be likely to” are much longer and much more dangerous for the above-mentioned reasons.

Mr. Speaker, these words give complete freedom to those who wish to evade the law. Complete freedom is liable to bring about a decadence of morals, which should certainly not be promoted by the house.

Mr. Speaker, a great number of persons, due to their lack of education, will maintain that they approve that bill. Others, better educated, will state their views after mature consideration.

This last argument has been suggested to me by a so-called survey reposted in the press and which indicated that most people are in favour of abortion.

Even if such was the case, I do not think that we would be justified in promoting abortion.

If a pregnant woman who has marital troubles or others is asked if she is in favour of abortion and if she answers yes, can we rely on her judgment?

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for recognizing me; I would like you to call it six o'clock.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being six o'clock this sitting is suspended until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the house took recess.