

*Abortion*

It is no longer a matter of age, but rather a humane approach in my view that a the majority of Quebecers, a majority of Canadian women and Montreal women today share. I believe a majority of the Canadian people support a middle position rather than either of the two extremes.

It is not a strict matter of principles, namely that a woman's body is involved and the decision is hers. Because it will be a man's body and the decision will be his—if one decides to take one's own life, one will take one's own life. And it is not strictly a matter of pro-life.

Therefore, at the other extreme, independent from the moral implications for families, those who maintain, and I base my reasoning . . . if we now look at the trend toward child-parent reunion, what we see on television or in newspapers, reunion associations, mothers who 20 or 30 years ago, for various reasons, were forced to abandon their child . . . and as we remember, what 30 years ago being an unwed mother was like . . . but today, this is accepted and there is a very generous realization, nobody turns away anymore, but 30 years ago matters were different.

If we look at all those persons who are interviewed, they did not decide alone. It was not the mother's decision, it was a choice forced upon her by her parents, thinking . . . my intention is not to hark back in order to blame anyone, I am simply recalling those facts in order to show people who believe that today the free choice is strictly that of the woman, she would decide—I believe that this could happen today and that in the absence of specialist advice we would see today what we saw 25 or 30 years ago. Abortions would be forced upon young girls against their will by their parents, or a husband or spouse, having decided not to have an unwanted child, would force his wife or spouse into abortion where she would have decided otherwise.

● (2320)

Therefore I prefer to check—and I understand how couples in a difficult situation could turn to abortion first.

But I go back to the importance of having clinics that are not exclusively abortion clinics but rather family counselling and planning clinics where health professionals would soon discover that an abortion was not the first choice nor the decision of a wife, a spouse, a pregnant woman who had yielded to pressures from her husband or her companion and had come to the clinic, but when she got there, those professionals could perhaps give her advice and suggest ways to convince her companion that the pregnancy would be a happy experience and that the birth of the child might bring much more joy than anticipated.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again raise these questions and I would hope that the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice will answer tomorrow. I have two minutes left. Why did the Government wait six months after the Supreme Court judgement to react? After it tried to present three motions and most Members refused to take a stand on them, saying that they wanted a clear and precise Bill, why did the Government again present us with just a motion, one that is imprecise and that no Member of Parliament can accept? Why does the

Government bring such an important subject up for discussion on July 26 or 27? Why did the Government not wait for the session to resume in September, if it did not want to call an election immediately? Why have this sham discussion, which is what I think it is? Perhaps on Thursday morning, if one listens to the speeches and follows what people are saying . . . I have not heard most Members who have spoken say that they would vote for the Government's motion.

So it is possible that we will wake up on Thursday to find that the Government's motion has been beaten, that the amendments from the various groups have been defeated, and that we are right back where we started. And the Government knew very well that this was a possibility, because among those who have spoken against the motion and condemned the Government's behaviour are Liberals, New Democrats and Conservatives.

So, Mr. Speaker, I conclude, my time is up. But tomorrow, I would like either the Prime Minister, who I think has lacked courage, or the Minister of Justice to answer the questions that I asked them.

[English]

**Mr. Elliott Hardey (Kent):** Mr. Speaker, before entering debate on this issue, which I think is the most important issue facing Canadians today, I want the House to hear the observations of Mother Teresa, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. She said that the nations with legalized abortions are the poorest of nations. She said that it took centuries for our civilizations to recognize a legal personhood of blacks, with the right to equal protection of the law. She said that it took a decision of the Privy Council in 1929 to determine that a woman was a legal person and therefore eligible for appointment to the Senate. She said that surely the time had come for Canadians and Canadian leaders, with a large revision of human rights, to recognize the unborn, the weakest, the most helpless of mankind, who have no less a claim to freedom and equality and logically the right to live.

This debate must not be treated lightly. The argument presented today and in the following days will be seriously considered when a law to replace that which was struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada is brought forward later this year. It is my intention in the time allotted to me to present arguments based on facts and common sense and in harmony with our Constitution and the Charter of Rights.

I find that I cannot support the motion in front of this House without amendment. My position is that abortion should only be permitted when two independent and qualified medical practitioners have, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, stated that in their opinion the continuation of the pregnancy would likely endanger the life of the pregnant woman, or seriously and substantially endanger her health. Grounds for such opinion would not include (a) the effective stress or anxiety which may accompany an unexpected or unwanted pregnancy and (b) social economic considerations. I will support the motion as amended in this matter, and I appreciate the opportunity to participate in a free vote on the question.