

• (5:00 p.m.)

Moreover, the Association is unreservedly against Bill C-150 on abortion as introduced by the government.

On page 4, among the reasons given, we find this one, and I quote:

Psychiatric symptoms

Psychiatric symptoms justifying abortion are rejected by the majority of medical practitioners and psychiatrists; however, some psychiatrists find some limited indications. The effects of abortion on a woman are often nefarious and may cause feelings of guilt and hostility. We should ask ourselves if by trying to solve one problem we are not creating another.

The conclusion of the submission says; and I quote:

Faced by these considerations the Quebec Association of Hospital Medical Boards still has the impression that the federal government wanted to solve this complex problem by quick legislation which seems to solve everything but which in fact aggravates the problem of illegal abortion.

The Q.A.H.M.B. considers that this problem must be studied from a medical point of view and finds it necessary to approach the abortion question only after careful scientific studies... and before any other government proposal is introduced.

In their view only a royal commission of inquiry could make an adequate study.

Dr. Robert Lavigne, 1010 Tassé Street, Ville St-Laurent.

Mr. Speaker, the medical profession of the province of Quebec has clearly taken a very careful stand in this regard. I hope that having heard the opinion submitted by the Association all hon. members will decide in favour of this amendment which I gladly approve without reservation.

Mr. Romuald Rodrigue (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment moved by the member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) as well as amendments Nos. 22, 23, 29, 31, 39, 40 and 41 on the same subject.

In an article published in *L'Action* on April 19, one could read the following:

Under the amendments proposed by Bill C-150 known as the omnibus bill, abortions will be allowed when the medical board of a State approved hospital feels that the physical or mental health of the mother is endangered unless the operation is performed.

The argument of pluralism is often put forward. Throughout those countries where abortion has recently been discussed, whether it be in England, in the United States, in France or in Canada, the arguments are much the same. Those who favour relaxing the law do so in the name of the pluralism of the given society and of social convenience.

Criminal Code

I am not against giving as much freedom as possible to everyone, against respecting all creeds, and the conscience of everyone, but it seems to me some consideration should be given to respecting the conscience of doctors, their religious and moral beliefs, for there are still doctors who work in hospitals who have professional conscience.

To my mind, the purpose of this section would be to protect the doctors, and other persons who work in hospitals and help the doctors perform their operations, who refuse to participate in abortions.

Because of professional ethics and the constant orientation of their profession, many doctors will refuse to perform that type of operation for several reasons. Many doctors are afraid to be exposed to legal proceedings for having refused to perform what they consider as murder and contrary to their professional ethics.

It should also be noted that the bill does not take into account the personal convictions of many doctors and hospitals. We believe all doctors always strive to protect the life of their patients. It is no secret that doctors constantly receive requests which, very often, are contrary to professional ethics and the constant orientation of their profession.

By legalizing therapeutic abortion in those cases where the pregnancy might endanger the health of the mother, the government gives the impression that one can procure an abortion for any personal reason.

In any case, applications will increase.

Psychiatric symptoms as a ground for abortion are vetoed by most doctors and psychiatrists. A few of the latter, however, have accepted them on a limited basis. The after-effects of abortion on a woman are very often harmful and arouse in her mind feelings of guilt and hostility. By alleviating one problem are we not simply giving birth to another one?

Such are the reasons for which a great number of doctors are against abortion.

There is also another aspect to consider: what will be the approach of the doctors toward the committees established in hospitals? Will they have to abide by the decisions of the committee to comply with cases where application should be made with a social purpose in mind?

I believe that doctors as well as all those whose duties are of a medical nature should be protected against any prosecution, for the sake of the society and for the advancement of medical science.