

Abortion

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is the moderate position, allowing a woman to interrupt her pregnancy in the early stages if she so decides, and also allowing abortion in the later stages of the pregnancy when two doctors agree and the mother's health is in danger.

Taking that as our basis, Mr. Speaker, we would have to be careful to define very clearly in our legislation the concept of health, which in my opinion should include both physical and mental health. This would be in accordance with the United Nations definition.

We would also have to legislate on the question of what exactly are the early stages of pregnancy and what are the later stages.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that in Canada only 0.03 abortions are performed in the last trimester of pregnancy, because of serious problems for the mother of foetal abnormality.

The state should make certain services available to pregnant women, which in the case of certain women could influence their decision to terminate the pregnancy or not. The federal and provincial Governments should also provide a basic educational system so that young people and our society generally would be better informed about contraception.

The decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Morgentaler case, as expressed by Chief Justice Brian Dickson, and I quote, "Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement of security of the person."

In the Morgentaler case Mr. Justice Wilson said, and I quote, "The right to 'liberty' contained in s.7 guarantees to every individual a degree of personal autonomy over important

decisions intimately affecting his or her private life. Liberty in a free and democratic society does not require the state to approve such decisions, but it does require the state to respect them."

"The decision whether or not to terminate a pregnancy is essentially a moral decision, and in a free and democratic society the conscience of the individual must be paramount to that of the state."

Mr. Speaker, the state must be sensitive to the rights of the pregnant woman. The state must also achieve a balance: the Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives every individual, which includes all Canadian women, the right to see to their own protection, both physical and mental, which for a woman necessarily involves the right to make decisions about her personal life, her capabilities, her psychological and physical fitness for bringing a child into the world.

Think, Mr. Speaker, of the woman whose pregnancy endangers her physical or mental health. Think of the woman who becomes pregnant as the result of rape or incest. In such cases, does the state have the right to make criminals of these women when they get abortions?

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of my position as a woman and a Member of Parliament, the middle-of-the-road position seems to me to be the most reasonable. It is the position of the majority of the voters I represent. The decision to terminate a pregnancy during its early stages is a personal decision that lies with the woman.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Since it is now 2:35 a.m., pursuant to the Order passed earlier, the debate and the House will adjourn until 2:00 p.m. today, pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

The House adjourned at 2:35 a.m.