

Criminal Code

be here doing nothing, like the member for Laurier (Mr. Leblanc)—to improve the legislation so that it may meet the needs of the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, I think this was the first speech made by that member since he came to the house, and he had to launch his political career with such an irrelevant speech.

Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate your leniency. The hon. member for Beauce moved an amendment to delete the expression "or health", an expression which can also be found in the bill, in the clause concerning abortion, a clause which was recommended by the very member for Matane, who used to be the secretary to the Prime Minister when he was Minister of Justice.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Let him stand up and tell us what his motives were. He does not have the courage of his beliefs, all he can do is rail against the others.

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, if it is to raise a point of order as foolish as the others, I have a right to my 20 minutes and I intend to use them.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has asked me to get up and answer a statement he just made—

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, he is wasting my time. I have much more serious things to say.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member can only rise on a point of order, not on the invitation of the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin). Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. De Bané: It was on his invitation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I point out to the hon. member that simply because the hon. member for Lotbinière invites him to make remarks, that does not give him the right to make those remarks.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How can the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De [Mr. Fortin.]

Bané), know the standing orders when he has never read them and is never here.

So the hon. member for Beauce—I will be able to make my speech if they stop interrupting—proposes to delete the words "or health" from the clause on abortion.

Mr. Speaker, I shall start all over again and I hope that will not be counted on my time. So the hon. member for Beauce wants to delete the words "or health". The bill before us says:

—would or would be likely to endanger her life or health—

We should then ask ourselves sincerely, and not with preconceived and narrow-minded ideas, as some hon. members opposite can show, but ask ourselves sincerely and seriously—if the hon. member for Matane could remain in his seat, Mr. Speaker, we might have a chance to complete his education—if the fact of being pregnant for a woman can endanger her health.

As for the first part, "would endanger her life", I am inclined to believe that in certain border-line cases, this can happen. This is why, when I made my first speech in this house on the omnibus bill—that was some time ago, and the members opposite still have not understood anything—I stated that I would perhaps be in favour of a therapeutic operation to terminate a pregnancy in certain border-line cases, provided it was a proven fact that the woman's life was seriously and directly in danger.

Now, in the same bill, even if I wanted to vote in favour of abortion in the case where the life of the mother would be in danger and support those provisions, I cannot do so for the very simple reason that, at the same time, the expression "would endanger her health" would be included.

What is meant by "health" and "would endanger her health"? The other day, the Minister of Justice gave his own definition of the word "health". He said: We do not know the exact meaning of "health". Besides, the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Godin) made that point very clear.

They cannot give a definition. That is why the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Justice, the hon. member for Louis-Hébert (Mr. Cantin) could not say more than a sentence in reply to the suggestion, because he does not know either what he is talking about.