

What we can do in that regard is to amend the Canada Health Act to guarantee access to every Canadian woman who may find herself seeking an abortion in Canada.

I note that there have been no abortions performed in Prince Edward Island since 1982. This is not because there were no women in Prince Edward Island seeking abortions. Far from it. It is because the women of Prince Edward Island were denied access in their province. That is a condition which must be rectified. It is a condition utterly unaddressed in this bill but it is a condition which must be rectified in the interests of Canadian women.

In summary, I would call on the House, in the name of Canadian women, to defeat this bill. Take positive measures to curtail the need for abortion and then the day may yet come when we can achieve that beautiful vision which animates the pro-choice movement in this country: Every mother a willing mother, every child a wanted child.

**Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to take part in today's second reading debate on Bill C-43, an act respecting abortion.

I have been a member of this House since 1984 and I have addressed my colleagues on several occasions on the subject of abortion. I personally consider the fact that 65,000 abortions performed each year in Canada is a national tragedy. I have expressed that opinion here and at home in my Manitoba constituency of Dauphin—Swan River.

I consider myself, and I am sure my constituents know that I am as well, a pro-life member of Parliament, or, rather, an anti-abortion member of Parliament. I use the term anti-abortion rather than pro-life because I believe that labels have become a major contributor to the rancour in this most emotional of national debates. Pro-lifers are not anti-choice and as well, pro-choicers are not anti-life. So I am personally an anti-abortionist and my record in this House confirms that fact.

For example, on June 2 of 1987, I voted in favour of Private Members' Motion M-37 in the name of the member for Grey—Simcoe. The motion asked the government to consider amending the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Section 7 to include unborn persons. That motion was lost by a vote of 89 to 62.

### *Government Orders*

Once again in July of 1988, I had the opportunity to vote on several motions ranging from outright abortion on demand to calling for legal protection of unborn children from the moment of conception. I voted for the latter which reflected my belief that life begins at conception and that society must begin to recognize that fact.

It has often been said that every society is judged by the way it treats its weakest members. That particular amendment, once again in the name of the member for Grey—Simcoe, was defeated 118 to 105. That is an indication of strength of the anti-abortion feelings at that time in this House.

In a perfect world, there would be no need for abortions. Every pregnancy would be a wanted pregnancy and a happy pregnancy. Every child would be a wanted child and a happy child. But sadly, as we all know, we live in a very imperfect world. Society wants and needs laws to protect its citizens and as well, society requires laws that are a reflection of that society. I believe that Canada needs a law on abortion.

Since January of 1988 when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Section 251 of the Criminal Code, we have had no law to govern abortion. The reality of contemporary society is that certain women will seek abortion services.

Another important reality in Canada is the existence of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. So in its 1988 ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Section 251 of the Criminal Code, which dealt with abortion through therapeutic abortion committees at accredited hospitals, was in violation of Section 7 of the charter. That is, it violated the woman's right to security of the person.

As well, and this is very important, the Supreme Court also clearly indicated that Parliament should take into consideration society's interest in the foetus, the unborn child. So we now have before us Bill C-43. It comes under the Criminal Code because it is only through the Criminal Code that the Parliament of Canada can legislate on abortion.

Having no law, I believe, would potentially cause serious problems in Canada. The provision of health services is primarily a provincial responsibility; that is, the delivery and the operation of those services.