

*Government Orders*

Just a few years ago we were constrained to ban extra billing as a national government. I know that if the present Minister of National Health and Welfare saw extra billing developing across this country, fragmenting the plan, tending toward two systems of health care, one for the rich and one for the poor—

**Mr. Lewis:** We voted for it.

**Mr. Kaplan:** They say they voted for it. I will grant them that they voted for it, but I ask them this. Would they have introduced it? Would the government opposite that talks today about how abortion access legislation invades provincial jurisdiction have invaded it as we did to ban extra billing through a perfectly legitimate means, the use of a real federal power? I am suggesting to the members opposite that the abortion policy, whatever it is, should not be left totally to the provinces so that if, in a particular province, a determination is made that women who want abortions should have to go to Halifax, then that is fine with them.

The minister told an anecdote or two about his own riding. I heard of a case last week of a woman flying on an Air Canada flight from Ottawa to Charlottetown who passed out on the airplane. One of the stewardesses is a friend of mine and told me that when the crew revived her, she said that she had come to Ottawa to have an abortion, she could not afford to stay overnight in a hotel here in Ottawa the way the doctor told her to do, so she headed back and she passed out on the airplane. That is fine for the Minister of Justice, I gather.

**Mr. Lewis:** I object to that.

**Mr. Kaplan:** He says that if the Government of Prince Edward Island—

**Mr. Lewis:** Jeez, you're sleazy. That's a sleazy way to put it.

**Mr. Kaplan:** This is exactly what the minister said. If the Government of Prince Edward Island decides that the women of Prince Edward Island should go to Halifax for an abortion, that is up to them. That is not the way we look at national health care in this country and we urge the government, we insist that the government find a method, and we can suggest many, of assuring not only that there is a framework about when abortions are legal, how to balance, as we argue they should, the rights of a woman and the emerging interests of the foetus, but also to establish equal access across this country, something

that must be done. Even from the point of view that I mentioned earlier, the Supreme Court of Canada would enhance the constitutionality of this measure if it could be assured that not only the framework would be presented as the government has proposed, but that there would be equal access under it. The Morgentaler case discredited and condemned the earlier legislation partly because it did not provide equal access, even though the question of access under the Constitution, as I concede, is primarily a provincial matter.

I want to deal quickly with a few other points. This announcement by the government and this presentation of legislation is also deficient in failing to provide a family policy. Very often, the choice of an abortion for a woman from her personal point of view is no choice at all because of the pressures of economic necessity, the social conditions in our society, the absence of comprehensive day care and the absence of adequate support for single women with children.

It is not good enough for the government to talk about provincial responsibility in this matter. The Conservatives did not talk about provincial responsibility when they promised the day care program to the people of Canada. That is done within provincial jurisdiction under the spending program, but the Conservatives did not hesitate to announce that they would have comprehensive day care, that they would create hundreds of thousands of day care spaces across the country. Right after the election, it was not the Constitution that stopped them from doing it. They changed their minds and did not do it.

The introduction of a program on limitations on abortion has to recognize this fundamental fact. If as the Minister of Justice said in his remarks, the decision for an abortion does not belong to a woman alone because a woman's rights and interests are balanced with the state's interests in the protection of the foetus, if the state has an interest in protecting the foetus, it cannot put the whole burden of bearing the child and looking after the child on the woman or on the provincial governments to decide what level of programs they want to have. There is a larger national responsibility there.

If it is fair to have restrictions on the right of abortion—and I am not arguing against that—it is also necessary to offer programs and real support for women who decide to carry the child and make the decision to proceed with the birth and raising the child. Much more