

Criminal Code

With regard to the possible consequences of the amendment now under study, I think that I have a right to ask the members from Quebec—but not you, since you are Deputy Chairman of committees and Deputy Speaker—to follow the dictates of their conscience on the matters of abortion and homosexuality.

Finally, we have not heard any Quebec member oppose this bill, and yet, I know that in their inner conscience, some of them wished they belonged to the opposition so that they could vote freely, as was proposed by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield).

Before this amendment comes up for a vote, I should like the Minister of Justice to explain clearly what the situation of the government is with regard to the request of the bishops that doctors and hospitals not be required to procure abortion or to set up abortion committees. I should like the Minister of Justice to give us specific information and commit himself with regard to this problem, so that the doctors who refuse to procure abortions for reasons of conscience and professional ethics can be protected against resulting legal proceedings.

The Minister of Justice cannot, to my mind, go against the designs of Providence. When one fights nature, nature fights back.

At times, pregnancies are difficult; but doctors have from time to time met the difficulty by performing an operation to relieve the mother.

In closing, I therefore ask the Minister of Justice to clarify the situation and give hon. members some information, so that when the time comes to vote they will know how best to protect natural laws.

I trust the Minister of Justice can give us some details within a few moments and also tell us whether he has replied to the doctors of the province of Quebec who have requested that the act on abortion be amended. I am convinced that the minister of Justice will set forth for us the position of the government, after which I shall be able to decide on how I must vote on the proposed amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I asked the Minister of Justice whether he could give us some further information on the question I put tonight and that was put by other members. I want to direct it again to the minister. Will the doctors who refuse to procure miscarriages, as provided

[Mr. Asselin.]

by the law, be liable to prosecution? Even if I alone in the house tonight, I am going to object to the debate being carried on before the minister answers my question.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I must say to the hon. member that I am not allowed to repeat my remarks of this afternoon, in which I sincerely answered all the questions he asked this evening. If he reads *Hansard*, he will find there the answers to all his questions. As for me, I am not permitted to repeat my remarks.

Mr. Asselin: Is the minister of the opinion that amendment No. 21 now before us answers the request of the doctors of Quebec and Canada that they not be liable to prosecution after refusing to procure an abortion?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I have already answered that question, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The question is on the motion Mr. Woolliams (for Mr. McCleave) No. 21 which reads:

That Bill C-150, to amend the Criminal Code, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and to make certain consequential amendments to the Combines Investigation Act, the Customs Tariff and the National Defence Act, be amended by inserting in clause 18 after sub-section 7 of Section 237 on page 44 the following sub-section:

"(8) Nothing in this section shall be construed as obliging any hospital to establish a therapeutic abortion committee or any qualified medical practitioner to procure the miscarriage of a female person."

And the amendment to the motion (Mr. Burton):

That the proposed subsection (8) be amended by adding thereto the following words:

"or any member of a hospital staff to assist in procuring such miscarriage."

All those in favour of the amendment to the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Call in the members.