

important, people are important, and life is the most valuable gift you are given.

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park):** Mr. Speaker, my personal concern about abortion, as a member of Parliament, dates back to May 29, 1980, when I raised in this House my concern about Dr. Morgentaler opening up an abortion clinic in Champlain, Montreal, and my disappointment as a politician that the federal government could not do anything to close the clinics. The Minister of Justice at the time said this was a provincial matter and it would be up to the police of Quebec to lay the charges. Well, we know what has happened since 1980.

My question is, will Bill C-43 respecting abortion stop the Morgentalers of this country. If it will not, then I say no to this bill.

Why was I so concerned about the Morgentaler abortions and others? Abortion kills a defenceless human being. The unborn child is a human being and as such is entitled to the full protection of the law of the land for all human beings.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops made an excellent statement on the sanctity of life in their response to the Law Reform Commission Working Paper on Crimes against the Foetus. They said that all human life must be valued, respected and protected, from conception until natural death. All human life, without exception, is sacred, irreplaceable and inherently worthy of protection and respect.

I would like to quote our own Prime Minister and his position on the sanctity of life. He said in this House:

It is wrong to take life. I can think of no circumstances except self-defence to justify it—we hold for the sanctity of life— But for all else who uphold one simple principle: the inherent dignity of a human being, the inherent worth of human life. I will resist with all my strength, all of my life, any action that would diminish that reality and would lessen value.

If you believe in a principle, that principle should hold whether we are participating in a debate on capital punishment or on abortion. I campaigned as a pro-life candidate in the last election, but I promised my constituents that regardless of my personal beliefs, I would try to reflect their views, their wishes in this Parliament.

### *Government Orders*

I did an extensive poll on the issue of abortion, whether we need a bill at all, and other related issues. I would like to place on the record in this House some of the findings that I received from my constituents of Parkdale—High Park.

To the basic question, do you feel there is a need for an abortion law in Canada, I did not get any clear direction even to that basic question, as 50.6 per cent said yes, 44.2 per cent said no, and 5.2 per cent had no opinion.

To the question, would you feel comfortable with an abortion law that would allow for abortions only under certain circumstances, here also there was no consensus; 50 per cent said yes; 47.4 per cent said no.

To the question, should any of the following circumstances be included in a law: rape or incest; women's health threatened by pregnancy; women's safety threatened by father; within 12 weeks of conception; child raised in dangerous environment; within 22 weeks of conception, the responses here ranged anywhere from 10 to 24 per cent. Again, there was no clear direction.

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In response to the question "Do you feel an abortion law should treat abortion as a criminal offence", I did get direction because 60.3 per cent said no to this question. In other words, 60.3 per cent feel that having an abortion should not be a criminal offence. So if I want to reflect the wishes of my constituents on this bill I would have to vote no. Some 36.4 per cent said yes.

To the question "Should the decision for an abortion be made by the woman and a doctor", which is what this bill says, 30.2 per cent responded in favour. Again, if I were to reflect their wishes in this Parliament, I would have to vote no to the bill. Some 47.6 per cent indicated that the decision for an abortion should be made by the woman acting alone. Only 12.5 per cent said that it should be made by the woman and father.

The comments that people gave me also covered the whole of the spectrum on this issue. A constituent wrote:

While I personally believe in rights for the foetus, I don't believe I have the right to inflict my views and beliefs on someone else. If a woman is going to get an abortion she is probably going to get it somehow or other, so why make it difficult or unsafe or illegal? Let each decide what is right for their conscience.