

### *Abortion*

It was not that many years ago that people in Canada generally had a very high regard and a high respect for the unborn child and there were very few abortions. In the past abortions were provided for truly therapeutic reasons, and they were carried out to save the life of the mother.

Today we have abortion for reasons of convenience, and abortion is the solution that is given to women to solve their problems. Granted, it would take more effort on the part of society to meet the needs and the requirements of these women than it would to pay for an abortion.

I stress again that more support is needed to provide assistance to women who are pregnant and need and want support. When these women come forth for counselling and are offered the kind of love, the kind of compassion, and the kind of services that will meet their needs, they will very rarely opt for abortion. Time and time again they will go on; with assistance, with help that is being offered to them, they will go on and carry their children.

Whether or not the law on abortion is changed in the near future, our attitude to it can change. After all, smoking is not illegal in our society, but the attitude toward it and the formidable educational effort directed against it have led to a significant decline in smoking over the past 15 years. The same sort of result is possible with respect to abortion. All that we require is the resolve to act and the need to act.

In only 16 years from 1970 to 1986, some 907,351 unborn Canadian children were wilfully and painfully put to death by abortion. This is tragic, to say the least, and must be stopped. We must stop this carnage.

Thomas Jefferson once said: "The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government". He did not say the unwanted or those who do not measure up to certain standards are to be excluded from protection.

The public is being informed that because some lives are deemed to be inferior, they need not be afforded the privilege of life. An expression that is commonly heard today is "quality of life". While "quality of life" is certainly a good thing to which all aspire, the term, as currently used, has meaning beyond this universal desire, and it is the new meaning that makes it so foreboding. The elimination of the unborn who are unwanted, retarded, or handicapped is presently practised because of this new ethic.

Past history tells us that a society that does not respect all human life begins with the killing of the most helpless of victims and then proceeds to the handicapped and others who are considered to be below standard. The ultimate question is: "What is the value of human life and individual human beings?" For thousands of years our Judaeo-Christian tradition has upheld and valued life. Civilization has always been measured by a view of mankind that affirms the worth and dignity of each person. We were born to love, and it is our

expression of love that binds us together and elevates our level of humanism.

Canada's challenge today is making firm a future in which free men and women are enabled to live in a society which preserves and promotes the equality, worth, and dignity of every human being. The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government. It is the duty of all of us as legislators to protect those human beings, those unborn babies who cannot speak for themselves, who cannot defend themselves, and who cannot protect themselves.

The sanctity of human life is too precious for any arbitrariness and compromise in this very important question that we are dealing with today in this Parliament. It is imperative that we take positive action and whatever that action requires to protect the lives of all unborn children from the time of conception.

At this time I would like to file the following amendment to this motion. My amendment would delete all of the words following "Such legislation should prohibit the performance of an abortion, subject to the following exceptions". This amendment is seconded by the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm). The following will be substituted therefor: "When two or more independent qualified medical practitioners have in good faith and on reasonable grounds stated that in their opinion the continuation of the pregnancy would or would be likely to endanger the life of the pregnant woman."

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior):** Mr. Speaker, I take the view that it is essential for Parliament to have this debate. I believe that Canadians have a right to know what and how their legislators are thinking about this vital issue. It has been said that living itself is life's most complete treasure. We all know that there are many kinds of violence in our society, violence that robs life of that treasure of living. There is war, highway traffic accidents, dreaded diseases of many kinds, murders, and suicides, but it is chilling for me to realize that the most violent place in Canada today is not some dark side street in a decayed section of an inner city; it is, rather, the human womb.

Each year in Canada there are more than 60,000 abortions performed. I want to say that in no way can abortion be considered as merely an elective surgical procedure. It is, as former Prime Minister Trudeau once said, and I quote: "The very frightening moral decision of killing something which is living inside a person". Even Madam Justice Bertha Wilson admitted that abortion was not just a medical decision. She said that it was a profound social and ethical one as well. This was part of her recent decision that struck down the legislation on the statute books of Canada. She also said, and again I quote: "The precise point in the development of the foetus at which the state's interests in its protection becomes compelling I leave to the informed judgment of the legislature".