

*Government Orders*

increasing the funding this year by a measly \$7,000, bringing it back up to \$147,000.

Income-support programs that are meaningful must be put in place for all women in Canada. Yet we have an erosion of UIC. Income-assistance rates in this country are deplorable. Every study shows that they are significantly below the poverty line. Most mothers on welfare can only afford to feed their children between two and three weeks of a month. Minimum wages for women are only 66 per cent of those for men. In the banks we find that they are only 56 per cent of those for men.

• (1650)

This government has got to do something meaningful about the real wage rates for women. We have heard about day care. The fact that there is no universal, adequate, accessible, affordable day care scheme in this country puts women under a tremendous amount of pressure if they are the sole breadwinner, or even one of the main breadwinners within a family and they have to make a decision whether they wish to continue with their pregnancy. We have reduced the benefits for adoptive parents. The whole area of poverty is a major reason why women seek abortions. Yet in Canada we do nothing about the 1.2 million children who now live in poverty.

I want to close by saying a couple of things. There were two things that I had hoped would happen when this bill was brought forward. First, I hoped that it would ensure access to all medical services, including medical services to terminate an abortion. It has not done so. Second, it has restricted and recriminalized abortion.

I am convinced that the women of Canada are quite competent on their own, in consultation with their doctor—not a doctor who is under threat of criminal sanction—to make that decision. I think that this House should also express its confidence in Canadian women.

**Mr Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to the member's speech. He said at one point that under this legislation the decision would not be made by a woman, but by a doctor. I wonder if the member could tell me in what medical circumstances that would not be the case.

**Mr. Karpoff:** Mr. Speaker, I could tell you all sorts of circumstances. In this particular one that we are facing, a

woman may decide that she wishes to have an abortion. She may feel that her psychological health is in jeopardy. That is totally irrelevant in this legislation. It is the doctor who is going to make that decision. But he is going to do it based on a restrictive definition of health and under threat of criminal sanction.

There are all sorts of things that are within the medical field that a person must decide if they wish to have it done. The doctor then makes the decision with respect to is it medically competent, is there any medical problem that is going to occur if that procedure is done? Then they will go ahead and do it. That is not the circumstances here. The doctor is not free to say: "Listen, I can medically perform this abortion, with no medical consequences for the woman, no threat to her health. In fact, it may even be better for her health", but he is not going to be allowed to. Maybe it is simply because the woman says: "I am 15 years old. I do not wish to be a 15 year old mother." He is not allowed to perform an abortion in that circumstance.

**Mr. Harvard:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question as well. First of all I want to say that I appreciate the remarks made by the hon. member for Surrey North. I, too, believe in the competence of women. I, too, believe in the integrity of women. I have felt for a long, long time that something as delicate and complex and personal as abortion, an issue as difficult as that, can be better decided, if I can put it that way, upon by the woman than by the state. I have always felt that women are people of integrity, that they do not take this issue lightly. There are those people who are on the so-called pro-choice side who are called pro-abortion. I have known and worked with many women who describe themselves as pro-choice, and I do not think they are pro-abortion. I do not think that any woman in this country, at least the women that I know, like to have an abortion. It is an enormously difficult decision to make.

There is this difficult area in the proposed legislation leaving it to the woman and the doctor. The hon. member for Surrey North believes that it is wrong to give a doctor a choice in the matter, that that is something that should be left up to the woman. My question really relates to whether he believes that this bill, if passed, is going to lead to a lot of dishonesty.