

Criminal Code

the Church, reviewed by Vatican II, which condemns any direct attempt on the life of the foetus and makes it a serious duty to watch over life with extreme care as soon as conception has occurred.

Then, our bishops see the bill tabled in the House of Commons as clearly authorizing direct and voluntary abortion in some definite cases. The letter says: "Not only does that amendment to the law allows a direct and voluntary attack on the life of an innocent, but it invites the widest interpretations". The conclusion is clear and forces itself on us: the amendment is unacceptable, not only from the point of view of the Christian faith, but in view of the requirements of moral standards worthy of man and of public interest.

This article was published in the *Quebec Action* of February 8, 1968, under the name of Roger Bruneau. It went on:

The letter of our bishops is remarkably clear, concise and realistic. To those who think that life does not exist in the foetus in the sense of a protectable value, our bishops reply that the scientists hold, generally that life in the fertilized ovum has individual characteristics and that, in case of doubt, we are not allowed to destroy a human life.

The extreme cases provided for in the proposed amendment are obviously those which have the greater emotional impact on the population. The Canadian bishops recognize the tragic character of situations when a pregnancy threatens the mother's life or health, but even in those cases, to believe that voluntary abortion is permitted "is to ignore the sacred right of the foetus to live". When it is a matter of allowing abortion in order to protect the mother's health, "then it is the sacrifice of a superior value to a less precious good".

Since it causes the death of an innocent, abortion does not remove the tragic character of these situations.

To be in favour of progress does not permit all licenses. "Must we be inclined to consider as an automatic step forward every measure proposed, sometimes rather strangely, as a liberalization or a broadening of the law?" This question is asked by the bishops who do not fail to make clear that "progress of civilization lies in the ever clearer recognition, both in theory, and practice, of the dignity of man, of its sacred character and inviolability".

This is a fine lesson for the followers of modernism, this theory already condemned by Pope Pius X. Modernists in the doctrinal sense are those who hold that we must, as we please, always redefine the traditional attitudes of the Church on moral and doctrinal matters to adapt to new theories and that the Church then must revise, transform, even abandon the traditional teachings.

This is the difference between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

Our bishops are not cowed by those who hold that the amendment to the act would result in fewer illicit abortions. The facts registered in other countries, they suggest, would substantiate the contrary. Therefore, the argument does not seem valid, unless reliable statistics are produced. At present they are unavailable.

Legislation has an educational value, for the best or for the worst, and the legislator should not underestimate its power. These days, people stress

[Mr. Dumont.]

more and more the need for a distinction between religion and law, but it remains that men readily consider as morally right what the law itself allows.

The document issued by our bishops does more than recall Church doctrine on abortion or confute arguments in favour of a change in our faith. It offers real solutions to this serious problem and, from that angle, our bishops' statement is eminently constructive: the promotion of respect for human life by all possible means; a study on illicit abortions and on measures to eliminate them; some assistance to medical research; the enjoyment by mothers of all the facilities of medicine and psychiatry; a more understanding attitude towards unwed mothers and their children and a better response to their needs; additional help to mental diseases; ways and means of truly implementing a more adequate policy regarding society and family.

Any real emancipation depends on these solutions, which are not the easiest, but the most logical.

Every Catholic, every Christian and every Canadian citizen should make a point of reading and meditating carefully the Episcopate's statement on this matter of abortion. Let us hope that the government will take it into consideration and withdraw this amendment to the abortion act; if not, let us hope that at least the members of parliament will have the courage to vote against it.

Therefore if such articles are published and if they are so logical, I ask the Minister of Justice to seriously consider the few remarks I made on behalf of the Ralliement *Créditiste*, as a Christian and in addition as a practising Catholic.

I say again that we want a free vote so that each hon. member can vote according to his conscience and can come to his own decision as a free man.

Thus the Minister of Justice should at cabinet meetings seriously consider our remarks, because we are convinced that they are based on logic itself.

[English]

Mr. Gordon Sullivan (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, this bill contains many good and long overdue amendments. However, it has some objectionable provisions with which I cannot agree and cannot support. I specifically refer to the clauses of the bill relating to abortion.

I believe that life itself is a fundamental, basic human right from which all other rights spring. I believe there is no logical point between conception and death to which this right does not apply. I believe that a foetus is logically and biologically life from the moment of conception. I believe that no person can judge the comparative worth of one human being against another.