

*Abortion*

If one reads well the definition, apart from the imprecise nature of the phrase "earlier stages of pregnancy", the decision is linked to a doctor's decision. On the other hand, the same paragraph states the following:

... when the woman in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner decides to terminate her pregnancy; . . .

Then, there is a second attitude. Not only do we not know the duration, according to the Government, but in this case, contrary to the first option which requires that the physician should decide with the pregnant woman whether she should end her pregnancy for physical or mental health reasons, it is the opposite: it is the woman who, after seeing a physician, whatever his decision, may decide to have an abortion. Now, if we look at the English side, the interpretation is different: It is the pregnant woman who, with her physician's agreement, may decide to end her pregnancy.

There is a third option, still in the part which deals with the "early stages of pregnancy" of which we do not know the duration. Is it six months? In this option, the termination is performed by a qualified medical practitioner.

In the second paragraph:

When, during the subsequent stages of pregnancy:

Again, it is not clear. We do not know what the Government's intentions are. I do not think there is a single Member in this House who is serious about his responsibilities to his constituents who can support such a motion.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you right away that I will vote against the Government's motion.

When we look at the amendments moved by some Members who are extreme Pro-Life supporters who came to the House and said: Abortion should be permitted only when the physician decides that the very life of the mother is at stake. Or in the case of rape, incest, or other difficulties, perhaps for mental health reasons, following consultation with a physician and at the request of the pregnant woman, the termination of the pregnancy is necessary. Unfortunately, I find that those who support the extreme Pro-Life position lack compassion. Because the decision we have to make today, in addition to our religious belief—a while ago, someone was praying to the Lord who, I think, was always quite generous with women faced with such enormous difficulties, because God would have permitted the termination of the pregnancy for different reasons.

There is the other extreme represented by the Pro-Choice supporters who are promoting abortion. I do not care for this approach at all. I would have liked it better had the Government introduced a Bill stating: We are against free abortion on request. I honestly believe there are not that many Members or that many people in Quebec and in the rest of Canada who favour unrestricted abortion. But it could have been allowed with certain limits for various reasons, limits with respect to the time to make decisions, not partisan decisions but decisions made by people fully conversant with the legal and medical aspects, people who would be able to tell us which month or the number of weeks which would be acceptable.

I would also have liked it if the Government had tabled a Bill and announced a family assistance program, a program to

set up clinics, but not the kind of clinics where an individual or a young girl for instance realizes that she is pregnant and thinks that her parents will not want to see their unmarried pregnant daughter, so her companion says: We are too young, we have no money, so the first decision is to say that we have no choice—and this is quite human—we will have an abortion. So she goes to a clinic, something like the Morgentaler clinic, and the attendant for whom this is the only interest, the only way to earn a living, the only employment, says to her: So you came to have an abortion. Well, fill in this form and we will perform the abortion.

I would have preferred to see a Bill where the Government provides for financing clinics jointly with the provinces across Canada. As in the example I just gave you, a young girl or young couple would come to the clinic and explain their situation and ask for advice. However, the decision would still be up to them. And before opting for the most extreme solution, because there may be people who decide to have an abortion because they don't think they would be able to afford a child, perhaps the Government could make provision in the legislation for some kind of financial assistance during the initial years for what we used to call unmarried mothers, if that is still the term used today. The clinic would include social workers and health professionals who could offer a range of choices, and when the girl or the couple go home after two days, they may have decided, although when they first arrived at the clinic they were in favour of an abortion, they may have decided differently because they were initially unaware there was a program that could help them. And there would be a way to explain this to the parents and get them to accept it. And there would also be the question of adoption. There would be several options. And after that, the decision would be up to the woman.

I think it would have been better to have a debate around a Bill, which I think would have had very good results, and we could have proposed some solutions to the problem we are confronted with today, and certain sums of money would have been allocated, and we would not have had a series of good intentions that will be allowed to gather dust until after the election.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister of Canada did not have the courage of his convictions. Sad but true, it has been six months since the Conservative Government realized it had to face up to its responsibilities. And it is particularly unfortunate that the Government brought us into this debate near the end, just before an election, and the only reason we are discussing this subject today is as a face-saving measure, to avoid losing any votes.

Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney) cannot show courage, he does not deserve to lead the Government. Extremists often pretend that senior citizens are all pro-life. But in every constituency, including mine, we find some older people who are totally against abortion and others who understand, who, because they had children and for other reasons, had to get an abortion since it was the only option. People accept it today.