

think, that the problem of health may be considered from many angles.

To say that we are simply repeating ourselves may not be entirely accurate, since what we are discussing now, that is health, is such a vague word that it may include many different things. And, judging by the exclamations heard from government members, we have seen that the health of the members themselves could be affected.

We have reached one of the most important aspects of clause 18 of the omnibus bill, for the simple reason that the matter gives rise to a flow of protests. And it is precisely because of this word "health" that the protests have arisen and continue to rise from all sides.

That is understandable, since everybody is almost ready to accept therapeutic abortion, that is an abortion that is necessary because, in the opinion of the physician in charge of the case, there is no other way to save the life of a pregnant mother. We do not object to that, to that kind of abortion where it is a choice between the life of the mother and the life of the foetus. Surely no one, even among members of the Ralliement créditiste, is opposed to that. That is what is being done now when a therapeutic abortion is authorized. In such cases, the abortion is self-defence, I repeat self-defence for the mother, the woman in question.

It is her life or that of the foetus; in those cases, therapeutic abortion is acceptable, but not without reservations, since even in such a case, we must admit that the role of a conscientious doctor is to try to save both lives, if possible.

Even with regard to the mother's life, there are some reservations, some doubts, and it is not every day that a case occurs where the mother's life is weighed against that of the child. Such cases do not occur every day. That was emphasized yesterday, and I will not dwell on that.

But, when we come upon the second expression to be found in the bill, when it is no longer just a question of life, but the question of "health" is added, especially when one reads "likely to endanger her health", that is the substance of the whole discussion about abortion. It is the main element, the reason why so many public as well as private organizations have protested. They have realized that the only free spokesmen in this house are the Crédiatistes, and it may be that they have entrusted us more specifically with their submissions because they knew that we had the greater freedom of action.

Criminal Code

Mr. Speaker, we are now playing a role as essential as that which some are trying to suppress, the role of doing away with the normal transmission of life. Some will say I am exaggerating. This goes entirely beyond the purpose of the legislator.

• (5:30 p.m.)

We do not have to discuss the purpose of the legislator, because we are known for having both feet solidly on the ground and not to get lost into the clouds. Consequently, we know very well that the intentions of the legislator, as noble, as logical and as admissible as they may be, are nevertheless something else in practice.

That is why we are fighting. On some points we might be inclined to say: In theory, this is true, it is not funny to be sick, to lose one's health because of a pregnancy and all that.

We are often charged of playing morality and sentimentalism. This is sentimentalism. That is where sentimentalism is.

When one wants to permit abortion under the pretense that the health is affected, that the pregnant woman will miss a series of social events, and that she wants to get rid of the product of conception, of course she will get sick.

It took only a few days of discussion to make the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané) really sick.

This essential point raised in this amendment deserves that we look at it most seriously and perhaps,—I said perhaps,—if the words "or the health" were deleted and if the clause was limited to life, that the present discussion would end and that we would be most happy to deal with something else.

Amongst the organization which got in touch with us, there are excellent ones which will be called upon to apply the act we are now discussing.

Those organizations are the hospital associations to which will be entrusted the duty of applying the act on abortion. Now those organizations are doubtful, to say the least, that clause 18 is justifiable. They have doubts to the extent where if we refer to the amendments to the Criminal Code proposed last year, when Bill C-195 was studied, and to the 880 pages of *Proceedings and Evidence* of the standing committee on health, welfare and social affairs, we see that the various interpretations of the word "health" given by the witnesses uphold one position as well as the other.