

Status of Women Study

greater good and decency of society, then I will vote for it. At one stage I was weakening in my stand. A lot of people were telling me that thousands of young women were risking their lives undergoing non-therapeutic abortions, and the removal of abortions from the Criminal Code was supposed to be the answer. But then, Mr. Speaker, on television I saw a man boasting that he had performed 13,000 abortions. In this age of the pill surely this is an abominable attack on human life and is completely inexcusable. The pill provides an alternative which is something short of cold-blooded murder.

When I see pictures of the human fetus sucking its thumb—psychiatrists tell me that sucking the thumb is the child's subconscious seeking of comfort; he is trying to get the human contact which he does not get in the mother's womb; he is looking for his mother's breast and for the human contact that he soon will have—don't tell me that he is not a human being and that subconsciously he is not going through mental torture and requires comfort. But we say, in our kindness, to avoid a little embarrassment for those concerned, that the mother should be aborted. Mr. Speaker, with every passing year there is less embarrassment over such a situation. The fact that one is answering the call of nature is no excuse for killing the unborn fetus. Pre-natal killing is only excusable if it will have the effect of benefiting society, of being for the greater good of humanity.

Now people say that because of the population explosion we cannot afford these unborn children and that we should terminate their lives as soon as possible. Well, we still have hundreds of thousands of bushels of wheat that we are trying to get rid of and could be used for food. We still have immigration laws which welcome people into our country. We still have the baby bonus; it has not been outlawed yet. We still encourage people to raise families—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I do so to advise him that his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Bigg: I thank the House, Mr. Speaker. This is an important subject and I hope I am not boring the House. The question of abortion is a very important one. I do not think that we who have religious scruples should try to force them on anybody else, but on the other hand those who do not have religious scruples should not expect to force their atheism upon us. If, in the wisdom of the Canadian people, 51 per cent decide to take abortion out of the Criminal Code, that will be our law and we will honour it. But, Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly on this subject.

I believe that from the moment of conception there is a human soul which is every bit as important as mine. To clinch my argument I say that only when you become a grandfather can you look at this question in its proper

[Mr. Bigg.]

context. Time does alter attitudes. Last weekend six of my grandchildren came home. One of them is a little adopted girl. Legally she had no daddy. Her mother abandoned her and my daughter took her in. She is our eldest granddaughter. If you want to see a little cherub, a little walking argument against abortion, come home with me some weekend and we will make up a little party of seven.

Which of those grandchildren did I have a right to destroy? If my daughters did not want them, they would not have ordered them. This little six-year old, the eldest, the sweetest of them all, is the product of an unhappy adventure. But there is a much happier ending to the story. She came into contact with love—ordinary, motherly love, unpaid, unpromised, unrewarded with unemployment insurance, unrewarded by old age pension or other such benefits. She has fallen into a home filled with love. This is the complete answer to our problems whether they be unemployment, old age pensions—you name it. It is certainly a complete answer to the question of abortion.

Mrs. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member may call it six o'clock if there is unanimous agreement to do so. Is there such agreement?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have gained a lot of satisfaction from the fact that this subject has been chosen for debate in the House of Commons. Yesterday was International Women's Day, a day which has for many years been celebrated by women all over the world. It seems to me fitting that we should be marking International Women's Day by having this debate.

I think a number of us, although we were very greatly surprised, were pleased with our unpredictable Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who at a Liberal gathering last week chose this as the subject of his speech. We were not quite prepared for the enthusiasm with which he entered into the subject and which he displayed a night or two later by becoming married. This was a great delight to people all across this country.

It is my hope that some hon. members who may be a little lukewarm about this subject will find that as they discuss the matter their enthusiasm will increase. I would not like to see that enthusiasm increased to the point where married members of the House will get into difficulty with their wives, but who knows what will happen if men's liberation takes hold? No one knows where it will end.