

*Government Orders*

No one segment of our society should have the right to decide whether another life can continue or not. The rights of one must not take precedence over the rights of another. It is not a question of gender here, it is a question of life.

We as a society must adopt an attitude which clearly states that all life is precious. We have to accept the responsibility to share in the nurturing and care of both mother and child, born and unborn, so that human life is supported and enriched. It is all too simplistic to end the life of a human foetus. Every effort must be made to preserve life.

We have to pursue all avenues in making it easier to continue with a pregnancy, rather than to end one. If we really believe that the abortion of a human foetus solves the problem then we as a society have failed.

In conclusion, Bill C-43 must be defeated, but the matter will not end there. We will have to present an acceptable alternative, one which will take a firm stand and enshrine the principle of the right to life of the unborn.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, I take part in this debate with sorrow in my heart. I have heard my colleagues on both sides of the House express their opinion. I agree with some of them and agree less with others.

Let me take a few minutes in this House to share my deepest convictions with you.

Mr. Speaker, as member for La Prairie since 1984, in the service of my fellow citizens, I was elected according to the ethical principles found in our modern democracy. I would like to tell hon. members to ponder this principle: "Do not seek greatness and strive for honour, but excel in the practice of virtue."

This maxim of our philosophy is the very essence of what guides me in this debate and all the debates in which I have taken part in this House since I was elected to the Commons.

I have always professed good humour, sincerity and discussion. My trademark is open-mindedness and moderation in all my dealings with fellow human beings. Mr. Speaker, in my humble opinion, patience, kindness, trust, self-knowledge, but especially warmth and love for humankind, justice and honesty, should guide this debate, in spite of everything.

For years, Mr. Speaker, although I lacked a university degree, I pursued my education methodically, I questioned and consulted and today I speak in this debate, as in all others, as my conscience dictates.

• (1920)

Mr. Speaker, I listen to my constituents and I heed their advice. Such are the very premises which guide my choice when it is not tied to a party policy and when that policy does not disturb my conscience.

Mr. Speaker, human laws do not supersede God's commandment: Thou shall not kill. The Supreme Court of Canada does not consider the foetus as a human being, but geneticists tell us that the first cell division occurs 30 minutes after fecundation. Six days later the foetus measure 2 centimetres and the embryo is taking shape. The heart muscle begins to beat on the 25th day. After 30 days most of the organs essential to survival are already growing.

Mr. Speaker, foetus is the name given to the child in the womb of his mother from the moment he can be recognized as a human being, after about two months. To destroy a foetus is to get rid of a child to be born.

What is life, Mr. Speaker? When does life begin? At conception? When the cell first separates? Even scientists cannot agree. Have they proof to state unequivocally and absolutely when life begins?

What is happening to the conscience of man for whom killing is no longer a question of ethics but more often than not a question of comfort, luxury, materialism? What is happening to men, they who no longer feel love in their heart for a child to be born?

Mr. Speaker, nowadays we are witness to too much youth abuse. Abortion is the killing of the smallest of the small. Who will come to their defence? Who will give them a chance to claim their place under the sun? How many more potential human beings are we going to destroy this way? At the rate we are proceeding we will do away with the next generation before they are even born.

If we give the permission to destroy, how many Canadians will see the light of day? Mr. Speaker, will the next generation have to be ever grateful to their parents for not killing them? What are the moral, mental, psychological and spiritual consequences for future generations? What is the future of a civilized country like Canada from which a number of developing countries draw inspiration? Are we going to have another genocide? Will countries that look up to us follow our example? Will they not be left with the impression that we Canadians can afford to do without human beings,