

*Government Orders*

were left twisting in the wind because of this government's legislative paralysis.

The decision as to which life merits protection cannot be left to judges, doctors, or even women themselves. The issue must be dealt with on a national level by Parliament so that we as elected representatives may once and for all establish the supremacy of life and the protection of the unborn as would befit a civilized society. We must not be condemned by a future Parliament for legitimizing the termination of hundreds of thousands of unborn Canadians.

This fall the nation was embroiled in controversy. As a result, this government has been forced to hastily draft an abortion law in an attempt to fill the legislative void. The presentation of this bill must be classified as the worst kind of chicanery because Bill C-43, as written, is obviously not intended to be enforced. This bill will not prevent a single abortion, nor was this its objective. Yet it is still being fraudulently marketed as a compromise. On the one hand, this government tells us that abortion is illegal and, on the other, it outlines succinctly how the law can be circumvented in every case.

Bill C-43 is abortion on demand with red tape. The definition of health has been given the widest possible interpretation. One of the authors of this bill admitted in this House that Bill C-43 entitles women to abortion under a wide variety of circumstances. In effect, the legislation makes it possible for women to seek and obtain abortions for reasons that may have more to do with lifestyle considerations than with actual physical endangerment.

In fact, the health clause will operate as nothing more than a rubber stamp condonement of abortion on demand. It will allow women to abort their unborn child based on the fleeting notion of immediate convenience. But life itself is not convenient. Many of the mundane decisions we make on a daily basis are not expedient but we are forced to make them. The value of life is not a function of convenience. Our society grants those who are legally regarded as persons the right to life, liberty and security of person.

We must remember that even during this century the rights of women were severely abridged. We had to fight for what are now considered basic human rights. It was only when social attitudes changed that we were granted full personhood before the law. Thus it would seem incumbent upon those of us who until fairly recently

were denied full legal status and protection to extend those same rights to the unborn.

By the simplest definitions available to us, a foetus should qualify for personhood. But as history has proven, the attributes necessary for the granting of legal status can be arbitrary, capricious and discretionary. The argument that this debate is a conflict between the rights of women and the rights of the foetus is political in nature. The mother has size, voice, legal recognition and voting power. The foetus has none of these endowments. It must rely on others for protection. Accordingly, it is granted not even the most minimal of protections under C-43.

As legislators we now have the duty to examine the basis upon which our laws are founded. We must re-examine why we as a society have outlawed crimes such as homicide. We condemn them not because they are socially or economically destabilizing, but because we recognize the intrinsic value of human life. Our laws are not simply non-aggression pacts between participants, but make some attempt to develop universal social standards. The tragedy of this bill is that it fails to address and grant the logical extension of the recognition of the intrinsic value of life to the foetus. It does not make any attempt to defend the weak, but merely caters to the agenda of the strong.

We must channel the energy and passion which surrounds this debate into dealing with our collective social responsibility for the well-being and security of our fledgling generation. Those of us who wish to protect the unborn must also understand, however, that the role of government cannot stop with merely enacting protective legislation. We must also deal with the true challenge of confronting and changing the social attitudes which so often lead to abortion.

Society must learn to accept the responsibility for caring for unwanted births by providing the social support systems which are so desperately needed by pregnant women. These women are often alone, abandoned and trapped by their predicament.

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Our governments have failed on many accounts to provide the necessary structural environment to assist women to deal with the existing social inequities. They have failed to provide child care spaces, adequate funding for shelters for abused women, and the counselling