

Family Planning Centres

To get the information on which to base those clinics, on where to locate them, we must have access to studies that are being kept from this House under lock and key. If birth control is not made available to the people who need it, we shall see an increase in the already far too high incidence of abortion in Canada. For that growing incidence of abortion, the government will have been responsible because of its lack of leadership in making birth control and birth control knowledge available to people across Canada. Lack of birth control means illegal abortion with all the misery, mutilation and death that come with this failure to face the facts of 1970. All the shibboleths, theology and mythology that can be uttered will not get us away from that fact.

These are the reasons I want this report and other reports of a similar character. Let me bring it down to cases, Mr. Speaker. Just the other day I was dealing with this matter in the city of Vancouver. In that city there are a number of people who are in the same situation as that of one young woman who is on social assistance. She had several children from a former marriage which broke up. Then, she lived common-law for awhile, and contracted a second marriage once she was able to get a divorce. She already had one child from the second marriage, and she did not know how to avoid having any more children, so she lost a baby through caesarean section.

It was only after going through all the misery of having children that she could not look after—much as she loved them she could not look after them in her circumstances—and only after she had been brought into hospital and underwent a Caesarean section operation which resulted in the loss of that baby, that the doctors finally decided to sterilize her, thus granting her wish of not being vulnerable to having more children. That is a shameful condition in this day and age.

When information about birth control is available, why can it not be circulated? Why can we not have the informed opinion that will make people demand birth control programs? Some of us here may not think the situation is bad. I cite the situation in my own province as described by the Family Planning Association of British Columbia:

Every year more than 5,000 children are admitted to the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare and the Children's Aid Societies in B.C., and more than half can be classified as unwanted—battered, disturbed, neglected, delinquent, abandoned, transient or awaiting adoption.

Babies born out of wedlock in the 1960s in this province increased from 7 to more than 12 per cent of total annual births. The largest group was born to mothers aged 15-19.

There would have been no need for those illegitimate births had we acted earlier and got a family planning program underway in Canada. We knew about the need for it. The Family Planning Association of Canada has been urging the establishment of such a program, as have welfare organizations from coast to coast. Yet we are still being denied information like this.

At this point I wish to congratulate the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) for making available a bulletin about oral contraceptives, a bulletin

for which I asked in April of this year. That was when it was first published. It was sent to doctors about that time, and now we are getting it as a Christmas present. I cannot understand why that delay was necessary but thank goodness we have got it now. I sincerely want to congratulate the minister and the department for getting out this report and I hope it is only the forerunner of others. I don't see why he would not give us the report that I am asking for today, and the other ones that I shall be asking for every chance I get until the channels which need to be opened are opened.

• (5:10 p.m.)

There are some excellent things in this report and we should pay attention to them. A doctor at the Vancouver General Hospital, which is the largest in Canada and which is performing the greatest number of abortions, told me that he was quite certain that a spate of recent articles had terrorized women about the use of oral contraceptives. He felt that these articles were responsible for them declining to use the 100 per cent safe method, the oral contraceptive pill. Many of those women who did not use the pill became pregnant and then had abortions. I know that particular doctor will be thankful to see this report which points out that pills with 50 micrograms of estrogen are not considered dangerous enough to demand any special precautions, though of course some women will still need to beware of these and to have the advice of a doctor.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that to date the oral contraceptive pill is the only method that has been found almost completely successful in preventing unwanted pregnancies. In the report are the facts which underlie the newspaper reports on the pill. The diaphragm method of contraception has a failure rate of 15 per cent; the rate of failure for the condom varies between 4 and 5 per cent; such spermicides as jellies and creams have a failure rate of between 10 and 25 per cent, while intrauterine contraceptive devices have a 2 to 3 per cent failure rate.

In practice, 25 out of every 100 women, one-quarter of every 100 women who use the rhythm method of birth control become pregnant. I am not saying whether or not they should use that method—let them square that with their conscience. But I am saying that they have every right to know the facts and to be told what risk they are running. They do not know that to date. I want to get the facts out to them so that they will know. Some years ago the American writer Robert Ingersoll said that ignorance is the only crime, and he said a great deal. I believe that the more ignorance we have the more crime we get. Ignorance is one luxury that we cannot afford in the matter of population control and population growth. The government has no business to sit on this and other reports which would throw light on this subject.

The report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women brought out some additional facts. According to that report, in 1968 there were 4,378,100 women of child-bearing age, that is 15 to 45 years of age, in Canada. Yet one of the family planning clinics in Toronto was able to