

this matter which colours the medical, psychiatric and legal considerations, Canadians, including those within the medical profession, range from a truly "liberal" pole, which views abortion within the first 12 weeks of gestation as simply a secondary means of birth control, to a truly "conservative" pole which views interruption of pregnancy in any circumstances as murder. There is no doubt that this spectrum of views will continue to prevail regardless of the law. In a just Canadian society in the year 1970 it would seem appropriate that occupants of neither polar position should be allowed to impose their moral attitudes on the rest of the country. Under the existing legislation with its cumbersome medico-legal machinery which makes it very difficult for women to get legal abortions, it is clear the "conservative" element prevails in spite of the insistence of federal politicians to the contrary.

The CMA Journal is quite correct in stating that we have two definite points of view vis-à-vis abortion in Canada, those who favour abortion and those who do not, and that these points of view are not likely to be overcome regardless of what happens to the legislation. The Journal is also correct in stating that so far those who do not favour abortion have been able to enforce their beliefs on the rest of the Canadian community, as is proved by the fact that up to this point the government has made no move to change legislation under which legal abortions are so terribly difficult to secure. In the province of Quebec, for example, the director of the Family Planning Association recently estimated that during the past year there had been from 10,000 to 25,000 illegal abortions in his province alone.

Pregnancies cannot wait, and where women are concerned they are bound to get relief from unwanted pregnancies in ever-increasing numbers. If they are not given the chance to get legal relief, they will seek illegal relief regardless of the consequences. The only way to stop this practice is to take abortion from the Criminal Code and leave it to the conscience of the individual concerned. There are those of us who believe there are fewer crimes more serious than to bring an unwanted child into the world. No one is going to force an abortion on a woman who does not want one, but surely it is time for the government to change a situation which forces thousands of women to choose between giving birth to unwanted children or undergoing the risks of an illegal abortion.

In view of the overwhelming support from its own Liberal organization for this step, surely the government can find the courage to take abortion from the Criminal Code and leave the matter where all medical procedures should be, that is, between doctor and patient. Surely the Prime Minister, who some years ago had the courage, despite the unpopularity that it engendered, to state that the state had no business in the bedrooms of the nation, should carry this one step further and make sure that the state does not continue to enforce legislation which has proven to be very deleterious to those in the community who believe they should get abortions safely and legally. Those who believe that abortion is wrong have every right to their opinion, but I am not prepared to grant them the right to impose their beliefs on people who do not share those beliefs. I appeal to the government not to delay beyond this session in taking abortion from the Criminal Code.

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Mr. Martin P. O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the persuasive hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) and on behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Mr. Danson), may I briefly restate the views which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has placed before Parliament and the public on several occasions.

Since the Criminal Code amendments were passed in 1969, the extent of public concern over this difficult question of abortion has increased considerably. All Members of Parliament have been made aware of the deep convictions held by citizens on both sides of the argument and of positions being taken by various groups and associations in Canada. It is the view of the government that this House of Commons must also be given an opportunity to express itself on the question of further liberalization of the law. This will be the purpose of the special debate on abortion to be held later this session, as was proposed in the Speech from the Throne.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION—MONTREAL—APPLICATIONS BY CITY UNDER AMENDED INCENTIVES ACT

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, may I refer to the previous speech. I sincerely hope, at the risk of a pun, that that will not be another abortive attempt to obtain this badly needed information from the government.

I am glad to see the Parliamentary Secretary in his seat tonight and to know that he will be responding to my question. Our experience with the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) when we have tried to elicit information from him in this House has not been a happy one. Hopefully, sir, we shall be able to succeed with the Parliamentary Secretary where we have failed with the minister. I say that with great respect, because I have great respect for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. O'Connell).

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: The question I raised in the House today, Mr. Speaker, in my view fulfilled the criteria established by the practice and rules of the House as defined by Your Honour. I realize, of course, and know this was the guiding principle of the ruling made today, that it would not be practical for the Chair to allow questions directed to the minister on all the designated regions of the country, especially since most of the country has been designated under this program. There are designated regions in all the provinces of Canada.

My question was prompted by the urgency of the situation in Montreal. That, presumably, was what determined the course that the government followed prior to the Christmas recess in bringing in an amendment to the Regional Development Incentives Act. The government indicated that it was very important for Parliament to