

*Criminal Code*

government to force members on both sides to vote on these matters on a purely partisan basis. In so doing, they have reversed the trend in this chamber in recent years of members being allowed a free vote on matters of conscience, such as capital punishment. Now, we have a government which, even on questions such as homosexuality and abortion, must assume a partisan posture. This is a rather regrettable and sad spectacle.

• (8:30 p.m.)

I ask hon. gentlemen opposite, why all the concern about homosexuality? I point out to them that we are living at a time when taxes have never been higher; interest rates are escalating; inflation has gone out of bounds; wheat sales are dropping; we have no national oil or national science policy; unemployment is shooting up; disorder and violence are stalking the land; and the government nerves itself to a mighty effort on behalf of homosexuality.

In all humility, I ask hon. gentlemen opposite: Why? Why the concern of the members opposite about homosexuality? What does this bill accomplish? It gives a green light to homosexuality. It makes respectable what heretofore was not respectable. It takes off "the wraps". One of the dangerous features of homosexuality is compulsive conversion. It is no use hon. members opposite saying this is not so. It is not only the experience of the medical profession but the accumulated experience of humanity through the ages. Homosexuals proselytize, and in so doing endanger young people before they are at an age to realize what is involved. That is why in flashing a green light at this time the government is embarking on a course fraught with dangerous consequences. A similar problem exists in connection with abortion. It lies in the difficulty of control. I ask the government how, once this legislation is through, it proposes to control homosexual activities? How does it propose to keep them from becoming even more blatant than they are now? Apparently, the government is not concerned about this. It is understandable, of course, that a government which looks with tolerance on marijuana and takes no interest in the destruction of millions of dollars worth of university property should be unconcerned about exposing young people to uncontrolled homosexuality. But the question is, what degree of control can be exercised?

Coming to abortion, the same question presents itself. How can a panel of doctors

decide the issue? A woman who demands an abortion will get it because there are no grounds on which it can be refused. This government is therefore in a position where at the same time that it is legislating uncontrolled homosexuality it is also asking us to accept unrestricted abortion. I refuse to do so.

I do not intend to go into detail on the moral questions involved in abortion. I think the simple fact of taking away the life of an unborn child is serious enough to impress most people. Once life is there surely a child has the right to its continuation. We have spent millions improving maternal welfare, prenatal and post-natal care, and on lowering the death rate of newborn babies. How casual some of us are about destroying a foetus which otherwise would live.

We know what the arguments are; such a step is in the interests of the mother's health, mental or physical. This includes possible inconvenience or embarrassment, because "health" can include every reason under the sun. The simple fact is that we have agreed that a child before birth has no rights. It is part of a philosophy of our time which is a kind of anti-life philosophy. There is something about new life that seems to frighten some people. Surely, once life exists it must be maintained.

I am against abortion as defined in this bill for the simple reason that there is no way of ensuring that life will not be destroyed unnecessarily or frivolously. Personally, I am against the extinction of life by the hand of man under any circumstances. But the act itself gives no assurance that life will not be destroyed for the most frivolous reason—that is, simply on request. That has been the experience in other countries and it will be the experience here.

We have been given figures showing the enormous numbers of abortions being performed illegally, as though this were an argument to have them performed legally. Surely, these children have a right to be born. Rather than participate in their destruction, why does the state not allow them to be born and undertake responsibility for looking after them? Facilities for child treatment and child care in this country are disorganized and chaotic. Hardly a day passes but the press carries an account of child beating, child neglect, child abandonment. Surely, something could be done in this area by the federal government in co-operation with the provinces.