

*Government Orders*

Further, I think it must be recognized that no law adopted in this House which would have as its object the abridgement of that right, for that is what we are speaking of, could succeed. There is no law which we could fashion in this Chamber which would end abortion. It is a social impossibility. We know that from our experience during those years when there were such laws.

They did not serve to end abortion, Mr. Speaker. They did serve to end the lives of some women who sought abortions illegally because they had no choice, and again that would inevitably be the circumstance were we to pursue any kind of law that had as its object the curtailment of the fundamental right to security of the person.

Once again we would find ourselves in a situation where the lives of poor women—for it is they who would have no option—would be placed at risk. The return of the back alley butchers would once again mar our society. In those instances where such a law was effective, where women were forced to carry through to term babies they did not want, we would in most instances merely add to the 1,120,000 poor kids in Canada today, causing that cycle to repeat itself in ever greater degradation.

• (1530 )

There is no need for such a law because it is a fundamental fact of our society that individual Canadian women are able to act as competent moral agents. We need not collect into this Chamber that decision-making capacity. Canadian women are perfectly capable of exercising it themselves. They can make those achingly complicated moral decisions.

The proof of this is in current practice where the overwhelming majority of abortions performed in Canada are performed early in the first trimester as soon as the pregnancy becomes known. In almost no instances, I assume, and certainly in none of which I am aware, has anyone undertaken a second or, God help us, a third trimester abortion for any other than the most horrible reasons in the face of the most horrible circumstances.

The one instance, in fact, which comes immediately to the minds of everyone in this Chamber is that of Chantal Daigle, who was forced into the second trimester be-

cause of interference in the Canadian judicial system. Other than such instances, and those where discoveries of deformed fetuses are made, it is indeed rare to the point of negligibility to find third trimester abortions. So, we can trust Canadian women to make proper moral decisions based on their circumstances, for they are the only ones who can know those circumstances as intimately as is necessary in this instance.

Further, the law that is before this House presents us with what can only be seen as a potential nightmare of litigation. Relying as it does on the opinion of a doctor, it invites the intervention of a contrary opinion of another doctor. Indeed, it conjures up images of anti-choice vigilante squads moving from doctor to doctor and from hospital to hospital attempting to intimidate doctors and thereby further restrict and reduce Canadian women's access to abortion, using a poorly crafted law as an instrument of terror against women.

Disgruntled ex-boyfriends, as was the case in the Daigle case, could challenge any doctor's opinion and could launch a third party court action. In fact, this bill will once again open up that very door to all kinds of civil litigation which the Supreme Court in its wisdom closed just last week. It would be a terrible error.

I think it must as well be made clear that nobody in this House, and of this I am certain, favours abortion. Nobody in this Chamber can honestly be said to want women to have abortions. The question that can legitimately be before this House is what steps ought properly be taken by a government concerned about this matter? How can a government concerned about reducing the incidence of abortion in Canada conduct public affairs such that that perfectly commendable goal is achieved?

You do not do it by attempting to ban abortions, as I have already argued. You do do it to the extent possible by making birth control devices and counselling widely, publicly and freely available. That is the only way you can do it.

But you have to acknowledge that even when such enlightened public policy is in full flower, there will still be errors, accidents and, God help us, violence against women. In those instances, the option of abortion must remain available at the sole discretion of the woman involved.