

Indian Affairs

who are worthy of respect. I suggest that these reasons deserve to be heard: that they deserve to receive a public exposure which at least approaches that which has been given to the other side of the question, realizing, of course, that abortion can hardly be considered a popular topic of discussion. The majority of people, understandably, are loath to discuss it or even to think about it at all.

I pause at that point to say that doctors do not like to talk about it. The doctors who perform these operations at various stages under the old Code do not like to discuss it.

Also, we must face the fact that affluence and the pursuit of pleasure have bred in modern society a certain softness or lack of moral courage which strongly resists subjects which are painful or even disturbing, especially where morals are concerned—

Then she asks these three questions:

Three fundamental questions naturally emerge as containing the whole issue. And it is not necessary to be a theologian, or a medical doctor, or a legal expert in order to answer these questions. And yet, they are never faced and never answered.

1. Does an unborn child constitute human life?

Under the old Code, section 195, we know the answer.

This question usually is disposed of by referring to it as an "old saw"; and red herrings are dragged out in the form of references to such matters as whether the soul is more important than the body. Sometimes the answer is given that an unborn baby constitutes "developing" life. But it is not his life which is developing. He has life already. It is not even his personality which is developing because his personality already has been determined. And how can we speak of life as "developing" anyhow? So the question remains unanswered: does an unborn child constitute human life? And, if not, the interesting question is raised: what then is an unborn child?

2. Under what conditions, in a free society, can direct and voluntary taking of innocent life be permitted by law? The proposed legislation would permit abortion under certain specific conditions. But, if an unborn child is not a human individual, why should abortion be restricted at all? Is the proposed legislation telling us that under certain conditions which may relate to the general welfare of an individual, Canadian law should provide that innocent human life can be destroyed? Or, is the proposed legislation telling us that certain conditions are necessary before a woman can have an unwanted growth removed from her body? It must be telling us the one thing or the other. And both statements are completely unacceptable.

3. What will be the immediate and the long-range effects of such legislation on Canadian women as individuals and on Canadian society as a whole? I think that the main reason this question is never answered is that sufficient study to make possible a satisfactory answer has never been undertaken.

There are two viewpoints, one from a lady writing to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and the other by the Knights of Columbus. These are some of the

questions that the public are asking and these are the matters which the committee must examine, discuss and weigh well. Is the Code badly worded? The minister said so. I agree. Is the minister curing this problem? I think not. I pose this question to the minister: Have the Canadian Medical Association and the doctors in the various provinces agreed to take this responsibility thrust upon them by the Criminal Code? And are the doctors fully protected as well as the female patients?

The special committee sat and studied many briefs concerning abortion, under the chairmanship of Dr. Harley, and were unable to agree on any kind of definition of health. Mr. Speaker, may I call it five o'clock as I think this is a good place to break off my remarks for the moment.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE
DEBATED

Mr. Speaker: Before proceeding with private members' business it is my duty, pursuant to standing order 40, to inform the house that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert)—Canadian Broadcasting Corporation—program respecting pollution problem at Dunnville, Ontario; the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale)—Bilingual Requirements for Commissionaires at Museums; the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie)—Post Office Department—negotiations respecting five-day delivery.

It being five o'clock the house will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motion (papers), private bills, public bills.

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

INDIAN AFFAIRS

"LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON INDIAN RESERVES"

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena) moved:

That an order of the house do issue for a copy of a document entitled "Local Government on Indian Reserves" prepared by the Policy and Planning Directorate of the Indian Affairs Branch, dated August 4, 1967.