

*Criminal Code*

weal which it has undeniably the right, as well as any other group of citizens, to conceive and to defend according to its own views.

The bishops, in the present case, are deliberately addressing the Catholics. If they feel they should abide by their views, the latter have henceforth to trace the line, where abortion is concerned, between moral and civil law. As in any temporal matter, and whether they support or oppose the intentions of the government, they should, as citizens, trust their own conscience, trust their own private judgment on what they feel the common good requires according to their experience and inner thinking, and not necessarily according to whatever wording the bishops have deemed advisable to draft.

In practice, the foetus should be always considered as a human person; abortion, from the standpoint of morality, is always the murder of an innocent being.

Mr. Speaker, we would yet have many a thing to say on the subject. There were, for instance, lively discussions in the committee; but the members who sat on it did not adopt a stand directly. Highly competent men come before the committee as witnesses, among others, Dr. Benoit Légaré, a gynaecologist from the Saint-François d'Assise Hospital in Quebec City. He appeared before the committee. He expressed his point of view; he spoke as a Christian and spoke conscientiously. He did not stake his conscience; he entrusted it to the Almighty and spoke laconically, logically, humanely and like a Christian on that situation;

We have not come here as Catholic doctors. We would, indeed, be ill-advised to try, through legislation, to impose our moral code on those who do not share our religious beliefs. Any argument based on those principles would weaken our plea considerably.

We have come here this morning as doctors concerned with helping our legislators to formulate a law that is just and respectful of human life. Accordingly, we will remain strictly on the level of natural law. We therefore intend to convince you that the foetus, from the instant of its conception, is a human being, albeit imperfect. If we achieve this, I feel that our testimony will have been very useful.

Doctor René Jutras, paediatrician, basing himself on genetics, will take care of the technical aspect of what we have to say to you.

I admit that doctors and biologists have yet to agree unanimously on this point.

I know that there are some who will maintain that at the start the foetus matter is too imperfect to be classified in the category of human beings. But, where is the one so learned he can decide whether this perfection appears in the eighth or twelfth week of life?

Mr. Speaker, all the evidence given by serious, competent and responsible men who want the good of the nation, who understand the very essence of life shows clearly that

they oppose the clause now before us and that they do not think it should be agreed to for any reason whatever because it runs contrary to the respect that every person in his right mind should have for human life.

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

**Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments on this particular clause. It is interesting to note that while I may not confine myself strictly to legal interpretations, I am glad to adopt that course because there are certain moral and social principles involved in a bill like this. The situation could not be otherwise.

● (5:50 p.m.)

Why we do not practise preventive medicine in this field, rather than draw up clauses that pretend to treat the problem after it has been created? Sex used to be taboo; now it is a consumer item. Books by the score are written on sex. Television portrays sex almost every night. I am sure the Minister of Justice watches television and must have seen this program the other day on which a lady was introduced who was not even wearing coloured glasses—

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I turn that kind of stuff off now.

**Mr. Rynard:** The minister says he turns that kind of stuff off now. I think that by the introduction of this bill the minister is giving encouragement to the publicizing of sex. This is the sad part of it. I have a very high regard for the minister and did not think he would be led into the position of not protecting the public better than he is. All the minister is doing by means of this bill is an indirect way, by permissiveness of stimulating the rapaciousness of the sexual appetite, when he should be preventing it. Why ask the doctor to murder? Why not prevent this situation from arising?

The promotion of sex goes on and on. Let us stop and take a good, clean look at this question. Knowledge and science have arrived at the point where almost complete birth control is possible. Why should the medical profession be put in the position of treating something which can be prevented? The minister talks about hospitals in this regard. I am sure that many hospitals will not want to