

Criminal Code

were able to convince the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or the cabinet to put an end to this debate, to adjourn it indefinitely, so that we might pass to other much more important matters, in short, that we might discuss projects for which the people of this country have been waiting a long time and which they would rather hear about than what we are now discussing.

We are not and will not be blamed for it since we are still being urged to continue this gigantic struggle we have undertaken and which we will continue in order to prove that our attitude is supported by the majority of the people, at least those we are trying to represent with dignity in this house.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for having taken so much time in trying to explain a difference of a few inches only.

[*English*]

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, for a number of days we have been debating a series of amendments to the government's proposals in respect of abortion as put forward in the bill. I have lost track of the number of days we have been discussing this matter.

Some of the amendments put forward oppose any provision for abortion within the Criminal Code. Other amendments placed before the house embody the stand that in the event this bill is passed by the house certain improvements should be made. I think it is perfectly proper that a confrontation of debates should take place on this particular matter, and that adequate provision should be made for such a debate.

During previous debates in the house I have made my own stand very clear. I am unable to see my way clear to support the government proposal as it is now before us. There are some amendments I feel I can support; yet there are others to which I cannot lend that support. In respect of this amendment I find it difficult to conceive—or possibly I should say I find it difficult to perceive its exact purpose.

● (3:40 p.m.)

I do not pretend to be enough of an authority on the French language to comment on particular problems that may exist with respect to the French version. However, in trying to arrive at a possible explanation of the English translation and the English version of this amendment, the only thought that came to my mind was that it might refer to the

type of case that I read of a number of years ago, where a 14 year old boy developed pains in his chest and after a period of time, examinations and x-rays it was decided to operate. When the operation was carried out it was found that in fact there was a developing embryo in the boy's chest. Subsequently it was concluded that this was in fact a twin of the boy, the development of which had been arrested in the prenatal stage, that the foetus that was eventually born enveloped the retarded foetus and that with the physiological changes and developments at the stage of puberty the embryo had once again commenced its development.

I thought this might be an explanation of what the hon. member had in mind when he moved the amendment. However, after listening to some of the members who have presented their case in favour of the amendment I find that this is not their concern at all; they are not concerned about a male person ever developing a state of pregnancy. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, I find that I cannot lend any support to this amendment, and I hope the house will proceed with the other more important aspects of the abortion issue now before us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I should like first to thank the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), my colleague, who was kind enough to move this amendment yesterday on my behalf. I had to stay up North to attend the funeral of a very dear friend, and that is why I was absent when that amendment was moved in the house.

Mr. Speaker, it will not be necessary for me to speak at length in order to make the purpose of this amendment clear, for the hon. member for Lotbinière, as well as my colleagues who spoke in support of my amendment, have already done so fairly well.

However, I should like to add that I wanted to delete those words in clause 18, in order to avoid repetitions and also complications in our Canadian laws, as my colleague from Champlain (Mr. Matte) mentioned. We know that the legal officers who draft the laws always manage to complicate them to such an extent that the same pieces of legislation often mean two or three different things, and this gives rise at times to some quibbling between lawyers, but always at the expense of the client, of the little people.

Now, I would like to explain very clearly how I understand maternity. We know that