

*Criminal Code*

amendments would have been cancelled automatically, which might have been more logical. Whereas now we are discussing small changes, to be made in the various paragraphs of clause 18, while we will soon be discussing the last amendment which proposes the deletion of clause 18. It must be understood that we are merely seeking the most suitable formula to the greatest number of members in this house. That is the only reason why we have a series of amendments the general purpose of which is the same.

An amendment on the official languages cannot be moved when we are dealing with abortion. It is obvious that all the amendments deal with abortion; and I cannot understand why some members cannot see that. It is obvious that the amendments are repetitious. We are dealing with abortion and all the amendments deal with it. One does not have to be exceptionally bright to understand these nuances.

• (4:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, paragraph (c) of subsection (4) reads as follows:

(c) has by certificate in writing stated that in its opinion the continuation of the pregnancy of such female person would or would be likely to endanger her life or health,

Mr. Speaker, we have tried to get the term "likely" deleted. Since we failed, if the word "certificate", were followed by "in writing signed by the three members of the Committee, stated that in its opinion, the life of the mother cannot be kept safe from danger with the continuation of her pregnancy", as far as we are concerned, the amendment would solve the problem on abortion, and would make the law acceptable to us.

Far from being an empty measure it is something extremely specific. For someone who can read and understand, it is obvious that this amendment would provide us with all the guarantees which we are seeking, that is to prove to all Quebecers including the hon. member of Matane that this is no idle talk. If the hon. member for Matane wants to stake his seat I would be the first one to go and fight him in his constituency on that matter.

Mr. Speaker, to prove to you that we are sure of what we are saying when we maintain that we represent the public opinion and that of people we know quite well, people we took the trouble to consult, people who have responded to our calls and who have sent us loads of letters and documentation of all kinds, we take the liberty of discussing a problem which is not foreign to us but which

we know quite well. This matter is so important to us that we do not think we are mistaken in defending the very right to life.

Mr. Speaker, if the minister would give serious consideration to this amendment he would realize that it summarizes the opinion of the Ralliement créditiste as a whole, which is at least the opinion of the whole province of Quebec. And when it is requested that such certificate allowing abortion be signed by the three members of the committee, this makes it slightly different. Some people may not realize it, but it is different indeed. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that through this amendment, which makes all the difference in the world, we are doing away with all the possible interpretations of the word "health". Abortion must then become justified within strictly defined limits: the danger to the mother's life. Consequently, by means of that amendment, we wish our position to be clarified as much as possible; and we are not the only ones who should show goodwill.

Goodwill should be shown by the government. Of the 44 amendments initially moved and later grouped together this amendment at least should be studied and given more consideration. If the minister were not content to kill time and wait for the end of this, we would long ago have proceeded to something else.

The decision authorizing an abortion must be reached in the most adequate manner possible, and, in this regard, even the authority of the doctors may be questioned. That is why the committee must be unanimous in its opinion that the continuation of the pregnancy would endanger the life of the mother. That gives the guarantee that we are looking for. The amendments to the Criminal Code that have been submitted would legalize abortion for various health reasons, that are not clearly defined, but that favour a wide interpretation. The effect of those amendments is to say to the medical profession: this is your problem, do what you want with it, we do not care.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the right way to deal with a problem as serious as this one. The question has been debated for a number of months, not to say a number of years, and the people appear to be bored with it. The reason is that, during the election campaign, the present Minister of Justice, as I clearly remember, had given to understand that amendments would be brought to the bill as submitted by our present Prime Minister who was then Minister of Justice. The people relied on the government to introduce the