

Mr. Speaker, the role of health professionals and physicians could become dangerously ambivalent since in too many cases they would begin to wonder whether they should treat a disease, save a life, or quite simply end one. The cowboy approach might prevail quickly, and by that I mean it might become very easy to eliminate any individual whose behaviour is frustrating or embarrassing, or whose face one does not like.

The interest of any human being commands respect for one's own life and that of others, and everything begins with the life of the human foetus.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you the true story of a mother who is glad she said no to abortion. Here it is:

My baby gave me a reason to live. I was glad I decided to keep my child. My daughter was beautiful and beaming with joy. Her small and warm body made me dream. She was entirely dependent on me and gave me a reason to fight.

After a difficult pregnancy and delivery which required several weeks of rest and hospital care, Marlène finally got her daughter back. She is happy and looks to the future with confidence.

Marlène says:

I had agreed to live with the father of my child in Quebec City. In the beginning I was proud to have my own daughter, at last. We shared a nice apartment, my friend had a job and I was getting social assistance for myself and my daughter. We had everything to be happy, but we were not. There was a big problem between us. I was never satisfied. I was independent and demanding, and gave little. I no longer wanted to stay with my friend who did not provide financial support since I was independent. Moreover, I was not satisfied with his educating skills for our daughter. So I returned to Jonquière with my daughter where I went back to school.

It is at that time that I got back in touch with my girl friend Claude. I was really happy to see her and we renewed our friendship. But she seemed different to me. She had changed. During our separation, she had become a Christian and had learned to put her confidence in God. She took me one night to her church and I was really impressed by the atmosphere of the place. I felt at peace. Claude gave me a bible that evening and I started to read. I did not understand everything but I kept on reading.

Time went by and my little girl was growing up. But as I watched her grow up, I started thinking I had failed in the way I brought her up. This bothered me and it became an obsession. That was when I turned to God to ask Him for His help. When I was reading my bible, I saw in the Old Testament that many problems were due to the fact that people ignored God. My friend Claude also told me that if I talked to God, I could be sure He would listen.

And she concludes as follows:

I have always been very proud of my daughter. I never regretted keeping my baby and refusing to have an abortion. God has always watched over us. He has always been true.

Marlène maintains that although being a single mother is very difficult, she never regretted keeping her child.

When she was small, I marvelled . . .

. . . she says, . . .

. . . at her very presence and at the progress she made. I loved to watch her learn about life. Later on, when times were difficult, her presence meant something to fight for. And often when I felt hurt, her little arms around my neck were a great comfort.

After my marriage, when we had our other children, my husband and I, she was a great help in taking care of the little ones and their education. We are

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really very proud of her. Today, she is a lovely young girl of 13 who is a real joy. We could not do without her.

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of stories like this about women or unmarried mothers who said no to abortion.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, I ask God to enlighten all Members of this House in this important historic debate, and especially during the vote on Thursday, so that reason may prevail.

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to take part in the debate on a subject that I think is increasingly important. But before getting into the subject, I must tell you that looking at the motion the Conservative Government presented, I must express my disappointment, as my colleagues have done, and I think that Quebecers and Canadians are disappointed with the Conservative Government and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), who lacked the courage to present a Bill.

As we speak, I think many Quebecers are certainly asking themselves questions. Why did the Conservative Government not have the courage six months after the Supreme Court decision to bring in a Bill to amend the Supreme Court decision? Why did the Conservative Government wait until July 26? We will discuss it on July 27, at a time when many people are away on vacation. Why did the Government wait so long to come up with just a motion? Why did the Government only bring forward a motion which, in my opinion, is not sufficiently clear and does not meet the needs of the situation? The Government already failed in its attempt to submit to the House of Commons three options for motions that were only meant to sound out people's opinions. Since the Official Opposition, the NDP and even most Conservative Members disagreed with this approach, Mr. Speaker, we would have thought that the Government would have learned its lesson and that it would have brought us at least a Bill to legislate clearly and precisely on the abortion issue.

Mr. Speaker, all that we have before us are unclear wishes.

● (2310)

The Government's motion reads as follows:

Such legislation should prohibit the performance of an abortion . . .

I am all for prohibiting abortion.

. . . subject to the following exceptions:

And then it reads as follows:

When, during the earlier stages of pregnancy: a qualified medical practitioner is of the opinion that the continuation of the pregnancy of a woman would, or would be likely to, threaten her physical or mental well being;

My first question is: What is meant by "earlier stages of pregnancy"? Two weeks? Three weeks? Four weeks? Ten weeks? Twenty weeks? Mr. Speaker, no one in this House can honestly defend the interests of his or her constituents and vote on such a vague motion.