

*Government Orders*

• (1910)

Bill C-43 is a feeble attempt by the federal government to escape a very difficult issue. It has failed in drafting legislation to protect the unborn. Bill C-43 is merely an example of the government trying to appease the opposing sides in this issue. Such an exercise is futile. It pleases no one. It will do very little to settle the abortion issue. Far more importantly, this bill does not insure an unquestionable and most basic right in any society, that being the right of life.

I respect the views that have been presented thus far by all members on Bill C-43. I know that the decisions reached by my colleagues to support or oppose this bill were not arrived at quickly or without serious consideration.

In the past year, every member has had contact with representatives of the pro-life and pro-choice organizations. As members, we are also aware of the views held by a large number of our constituents. I would certainly like to thank my constituents and Canadians from all parts of the country who have written and talked to me on this issue. Their personal opinions were valuable to me and I certainly know that they were very sincere.

During the 1988 election campaign I clearly identified myself as a pro-life supporter. I believe that life begins at conception. I also believe that there must be legislative protection for the unborn to guarantee their right to life. Since being elected as the member of Parliament for Stormont-Dundas my position has not changed nor has it diminished. I have always shared my views on abortion with my constituents. The people of Stormont-Dundas know where I stand.

Bill C-43 is an attempt by the government to apply a political answer to an issue that is way beyond politics. Whatever position we as legislators take on abortion, it is understood that lives are in the balance. This fact is indisputable. We are debating legislation which, if passed, would permit the ending of human life. This House, and our entire society for that matter, cannot view this in any other light. Abortion ends the natural progression of human reproduction. In the final analysis, if this bill is passed without protecting the right to life of the unborn, our society as a whole will be the real loser.

We can argue numerous points in this debate. We will, however, actually end up weighing the value of human

life. Whatever we argue and however passionately we present our arguments, the hard fact remains that if Bill C-43 is accepted then there will be no protection for the unborn. We would be sanctioning the right for life to end.

Every member of this House knows the multitude of issues tied in with the subject of abortion. There is a myriad of questions involving issues of a legal, ethical, moral, societal, medical, religious and constitutional nature. With such an array of items to consider, it is easy for this government to present Bill C-43, and hope that the Canadian people accept it.

I cannot accept this bill and I am certain that a good number of Canadians will not either. It was incumbent on the government to introduce abortion legislation when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the previous abortion law. The government, however, took a considerable amount of time to present such legislation.

While this issue is certainly complex, it is by no means a new one. I believe the government would have been content to sit back and do nothing except that two sensational cases arose this past summer which forced the government into action.

These court cases made it clear that the government could not hide from its responsibilities. The pressure for the government to act reached a point where it had to. We see the results of the government's response here in the contents of Bill C-43. One could say that Bill C-43 is a compromise. Unfortunately, it is impossible to compromise on matters which involve life and death. As is to be expected, both sides of the abortion issue have condemned this bill.

As I have said, I support the pro-life position with regard to abortion. I formulated my position as a result of a number of influences. Certainly the environment in which I was raised played a part in my own views on a very personal matter. The information that was available to me and the many discussions I had were also significant factors.

I do, however, believe that my views reflect a reverence for human life and I know I am not alone in this thinking. Society has a fundamental duty to protect and foster human life and its development. To lessen that duty in any manner would be inconsistent with our social and moral values.