

pain and thus the ultimate death of an innocent human being?

Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that:

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

I suppose it is a foregone conclusion that if we all accepted the premise that "everyone" included the unborn then this debate would not be taking place here today. Consider the following statement made by Jules Carles, director of research at France's National Centre for Scientific Research:

The first cell formed by sperm-egg union is already the embryo of an autonomous living being with individual hereditary patrimony. Such that, if we knew the nature of the spermatozoid and the chromosomes involved we could already, at that point, predict the characteristics of the child, the future colour of his hair and the illness to which he would be subject. In his mother's womb he will form, he will not accept everything she brings to him, but only that which is necessary to his existence. Therefore he will realize his hereditary patrimony. In that first cell the dynamism and the precise direction of life appears. In spite of its fragility and its immense needs, an autonomous and genuinely living being has come into existence—

The law must therefore aim at protecting the rights of the unborn from the moment of its conception, not merely from some subsequent point of human development. The law must set its face against functional definitions of personhood. People function as humans because they are human; they do not become human by performing human functions—

Mr. Troy Weber, who wrote to me on the subject of fundamental issues inherent to abortion, stated:

The scientific, genetic criteria speak plainly. The foetus is a human being from the moment of conception.

Since we cannot refute the argument that the foetus is a human being from the moment it is conceived, and since the medical community and the genetic information we have received from it both concur with the argument that the foetus is a human being from the moment of conception, our most logical recourse is to accept that the foetus is a human being at conception.

Mr. Speaker, I agree. From the time of my first nomination meeting in March of 1978 and through four federal elections I have made public my views on abortion. It is on the record back home and it is on the record in this chamber that I am pro-life and anti-abortion. The easiest course of action then for me to take

would be to vote against the bill. It will be difficult for me to vote "yes" at second reading and I will do so reluctantly. But let me tell you why I expect to do so.

• (1610)

I will work diligently with other pro-life members to bring in amendments, both in committee and at report stage, to strengthen this bill. Some of my constituents have told me to do everything in my power to defeat Bill C-43 because a bad law is worse than none. I do not think I am going to buy that logic. This law is better than none at all. Not for a moment do I believe that the majority of my constituents want a lawless society. No law on the books is truly abortion on demand.

I recognize the fact that this is the position of many members in this House. It occurs to me that if I and other like-minded MPs cannot pass a pro-life bill then I must do everything in my power to restrict the number of abortions that occur and the wanton destruction of life.

In conclusion, I want to throw out a challenge to the churches because it is mostly they who demand pro-life legislation. The challenge to them is that they provide counselling and, more than that, that they provide facilities and financial assistance with the love that goes with it for women who are facing this dilemma.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, the issue of abortion is not for the timid. In general, legislators have displayed a great deal of frailty and evasiveness by refusing to confront what must surely be called the ethical, social and political quagmire of our time. The verdict of this House will determine the value which our society places on human life itself and the very foundation upon which all our laws are based.

In the past it had been possible for those who wished to avoid taking responsibility for their decisions to hide behind the neutrality of the courts. Recent legal decisions have shown that there can be little neutrality on an issue which deals with the primary concept of life. Since the previous legislation was struck down, individual judges were forced into making complicated legal decisions based on their personal and independent interpretation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have recently witnessed how the community and the courts