

*Criminal Code*

tion or legal committees, made up of several members, are required to render a decision, there is always a difference when a unanimous or a majority decision is reached.

That is why we insist on providing in the bill, if clause 18 is passed, that a unanimous decision is reached by the therapeutic committee concerned.

A few minutes ago, the Minister of Justice referred to the comments made a few days ago, in a similar situation, by the hon. member for Hull. During evidence he gave before the committee on health, welfare and social affairs, as is recorded on page 11 of the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, No. 1, the hon. member for Hull said in answer to a question by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis), and I quote:

Mrs. MacInnis, there is one general observation I want to make on your bill. First, I am not too sure that we can achieve a change. I am for change, but how are we going to achieve this change?

At that time, the hon. member for Hull was asking himself that question.

Another thing is this: you are aware of the fact that for the past 25 years many countries, especially the Scandinavian countries, Russia and some other countries, have widened their legislation on legal abortion and since this legislation has been brought along, strangely enough there has been an increase of illegal abortions in those countries. This is something that we cannot understand, but it could be easily understood in the light of Mr. Stanbury's point of view that therapeutic abortion committees—

**Mr. Cantin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Cantin:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is entirely outside the bounds of the amendment. He is taking us through various countries, reading us quotations 25 years old and talking a little about everything. The question is whether or not a committee should be unanimous in its decision. I suggest that he should be called to order and that he should speak only on the meaning of the amendment.

[*English*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I was listening to the hon. member for Abitibi very carefully, but sometimes it was difficult to know whether the argument he was develop-

ing was leading to a point that was related to the amendment. I was trying to give him the benefit of the doubt. However, I hope he will observe the point raised by the parliamentary secretary, that he is required to confine his remarks to the amendment.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Laprise:** Mr. Speaker, I think I am as conversant with the Standing Orders as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Minister of Justice.

I only wanted to speak about the conclusion reached by the member for Hull in the committee of health, welfare and social affairs. I was just coming to that conclusion in which the hon. member, who is himself a doctor, reminds us that even therapeutic abortion committees, judges, lawyers, doctors etc. are at odds on such matters, which accounts for the fact that the number of therapeutic abortions has decreased while the number of illegal abortions has increased.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, when a woman or a girl comes before a therapeutic abortion committee to request an abortion on physical or mental health grounds, apparently there will be three doctors to pass a judgment, but only two of them will have to decide whether her health is in danger.

But the hon. member for Hull answers the question we are likely to ask ourselves. As the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) was asking him: "Doctor, is the mental health of a person easy to determine?", the hon. member for Hull replied: From the medical viewpoint I think two doctors are not enough to make such an important decision. This is exactly what the amendment is aiming at. It sees to it that two doctors will not be able to grant an abortion, if the third one is opposed to it.

In closing I shall refer to the remarks made by the hon. member for Hull who said that if there are too many of them, there will be chaos then.

Therefore, if we must accept a therapeutic committee to decide whether or not an abortion will be carried out in the case where the health of the mother would be in danger, I would have preferred that one of the three practitioners on this committee to be a gynaecologist. Since we ask that the committee be composed of three doctors to decide if the abortion will be carried out or not, I believe we should state in the legislation that the decision for or against the abortion should be