

*Private Members' Business*

regional medical council put very strict conditions on his future work.

Some doctors resented the verdict of the court because euthanasia had been requested by the patient and her family. However it was clear that the doctor did not administer a drug aimed at relieving pain but rather a drug aimed only at killing the patient.

This case emphasizes the fact that the criminal law prohibition against euthanasia as murder plays a very necessary role in helping the medical profession regulate itself. It educates the profession in what the law, which reflects social values, regards as permissible and what goes beyond the boundaries of societal acceptance.

Had the doctor administered a drug aimed at relieving pain and the patient died as a secondary effect, provided he did not act in a negligent manner, he would not have been prosecuted.

It was made clear in a jury direction many years ago and was recently confirmed in this decision in the English Court of Appeal that such a case of the law regards the death to be from the disease and not from the attempt to alleviate the pain.

The consequence of this educational and regulatory effect of the criminal law is that members of the medical profession are encouraged to improve their ability to provide effective palliative care, to secure the knowledge they are not going to be in conflict with the law. In contrast, medical practitioners in the Netherlands are really not encouraged to improve their ability to provide effective palliative care because in appropriate circumstances, they may act directly to kill the patient.

I personally think the way to go is to improve our palliative care methods. There is a great deal more we can do in society within the medical profession to alleviate the pain of those suffering. I cannot and do not support the member's motion.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, as I begin my remarks I notice some of the members presently in the House. I see at least two members who are medical graduates. I see a former teacher of nursing. I see former clergymen and a number of others. All I am sure are interested in this topic.

• (1140)

I want to take a moment to talk about this issue of euthanasia. It is an issue about which I have very profound feelings. Euthanasia is so-called mercy killing. Presumably under certain conditions it would be seen as being merciful. It also means a good death.

By definition, that kind of a death must then be potentially good. Those who are in favour of it are in favour of merciful killing and good death. Obviously those of us who are against it presumably do not want all these good and merciful things. One can see how quickly one can fall into that trap, particularly when all of this only rests on the abuse of a few words in the dictionary.

Until recently euthanasia was not even legal in a country such as Holland. We all know that Holland practises more euthanasia than any other country on the face of the earth. It has one-quarter of Canada's population and up to 12,000 people per year are sent to premature death in that country.

On February 9, 1993 the Dutch parliament formally adopted so-called voluntary euthanasia. A week later a Dutch justice department spokesperson, Liesbeth Rensman, told the Associated Press that legislators would be studying the effect of this voluntary euthanasia law for three months. This would be done to "see what happens and how careful physicians are, then perhaps there could be regulation for killing without request". If you do not think we are on a slippery slope when we discuss this issue, think again.

I want to speak about the medical profession in all of this. First it is important to remind everyone that we are not talking about patients who refuse medical treatment. In fact that is already protected by section 265 of the Criminal Code and a colleague who invoked that as a reason for euthanasia was obviously wrong. That is already covered in the Criminal Code. We are talking about giving physicians the right to kill, pure and simple, albeit under certain conditions.

In the sixth century BC, the Greek philosopher Hippocrates wrote a note to which physicians are still bound today. It states in part: "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel". In modern times, that particular Hippocratic oath has been rewritten as the declaration of Geneva. The declaration of Geneva repeats the same idea in different words.