

Birth Control Methods

kind of study that gave rise to the report on the status of women, but I am sure the hon. member would agree that not every study would benefit from such an official atmosphere.

• (5:30 p.m.)

The ease of establishing a group to work quietly in an unofficial and anonymous way and to get to the heart of the problem that faces us in this or any other field is an advantage well worth retaining. But in order to do that, there must be assurance that the study which is being prepared is of a confidential nature. That is so, whether it be in private industry or for the government. If this were not so, every one of these studies would have to be undertaken by way of a public inquiry. As soon as that is done, I submit that much of the value of research and study will be lost.

Accordingly, the pressure that would be on the government to insist that every study be carried out so that no one could say that such and such a group did not have an opportunity to appear, to insist that all hearings be conducted in public and all inquiries conducted officially, the pressure that would be put on researchers to conduct their function in a public and open way and, finally, the position in which the government would be put, would seriously restrict the value of the research.

This leads us to the conclusion that there are many studies, and in fact the long list of the hon. member's notices of motion covering many different studies indicates that each one may have dealt with a different aspect of the work and may have been able to explore just one aspect in one part of the country. Indeed, it may have benefited from being done in a quiet and unobtrusive way. The length of the list testifies to the fact that it is an advantage to carry out studies in this way.

That being the case, we come to the point where the hon. member is suggesting that all these studies should be released and tabled, becoming public information. I come back to my original point. I do not blame the hon. member for taking advantage of private members' hour to put forward the excellent views she has on the important subject of family planning. But I say it is a pity that our system necessitates adopting this procedure in order for the hon. member to put her views on the record. Personally, I am hopeful that in this session the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization will have an opportunity to review not only this aspect of private members' business but, indeed, all aspects of it and of the use of this valuable time of the House so that it can become more meaningful and productive. It may well be that the hon. member, having examined some of these studies, would be the first to agree that it would be detrimental to publish them and that she has had to use this procedure to press for this kind of disclosure simply to get her views on the record, when she should have had many other opportunities to do the same thing.

So from the procedural point of view, I endorse the substantive remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). I regret, however, that this procedure had to be used. At the same time, I endorse

[Mr. Jerome.]

completely the government's refusal to disclose these studies, because to do that would, in my opinion, virtually destroy their usefulness.

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member who preceded me, I find myself in substantial agreement with the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). It is unfortunate in many respects that there is only one representative of her sex in this House. We are delighted to have her here, but obviously the House would reflect Canada's problems much better if it had more representatives of her sex.

The motion she has placed before us and the tenor of her remarks today deal with some of the problems that are of great concern to women in society. I found myself in almost total agreement with what she said today. In this respect I dissociate my personal opinions from those of the previous speaker, my colleague on this side of the House, with regard to the abortion legislation. But I agree with the argument he put forward that we should re-examine our procedures.

In putting forward this motion, the hon. member has used the device of a motion for the production of papers to put forward substantive arguments for changes in a wide variety of public policies and legislation. I recall when in 1964 as a member of this House I had the privilege of introducing a second private member's bill dealing with family planning. The first member of the House to introduce a bill on this subject was a gentleman who is no longer here and who now, I believe, is the mayor of Burnaby in British Columbia.

These were the first of a number of bills on this subject which eventually led to the amendment of Criminal Code provisions which many of us believed were unjustified and unduly restrictive. I could not help but feel, as I listened to the first two speeches in this debate, how great the change has been in public opinion in seven years and in opinions expressed in this place. We have made a great deal of progress.

The hon. lady quoted from a number of documents that have been put into the public domain. One of the first from which she quoted was the report of the royal commission on contraception, which was produced a matter of weeks ago. I think she must give credit to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) for his initiative and for his consistent interest in this matter. I know that her quotations from the report were favourable ones. I detected from her remarks—she can easily correct me if I am wrong—that she thought the report was a good one and that by and large it was the kind of document that should be repeated, dealing with a number of subjects in this general area.

The hon. lady also quoted from the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. I may say that occasionally telephone calls have come to my house asking if there is a Miss Anne Francis in our household. We are not in any way related. But I agree with the hon. member that many parts of this document are worthy of serious consideration. There is no question that this document came as a result of a public inquiry initiated by the