

*Criminal Code*

have been called thalidomide babies. Action was taken on their behalf on account of damage done to them as foetuses because certain drug companies or doctors had acted or prescribed negligently. The courts upheld the right of action on the part of the foetus.

All this seems reasonable to me. These are principles which the law has recognized for many years. Now we are being asked by some people to dispense with these rights, to do away with this protection. I have a lot of respect for those who put forward arguments in favour of the proposals now before us. I have examined these arguments but after serious consideration, and, still with great respect, I cannot accept them inasmuch as I feel it is the duty of the state to protect innocent persons.

It is said by some that parents should be free to do whatever they want to do, that this is a question for them alone to decide, and the state should not intervene. Well, Mr. Speaker, we do not take this attitude with respect to cases of non-support by a father or in cases where a mother or a father batters a minor child. We do not take this attitude with respect to education. The state has decided that regardless of the wishes of the parents children should be educated to the age of 16; free and compulsory education is provided for them and we feel this is in the interest of the children no matter what the mother or the father might prefer. There are many other questions which the state decides because it wishes to protect children against the damage or intrusion upon their human rights which may be occasioned even by parents and those closest to them.

There are those who say, in support of arguments in favour of a wider amendment than the one I am now suggesting, that no one should be forced by law to have unwanted children. It is argued that families should have the right to limit the number of their children. Few of us would disagree with that proposition. I, myself, support the principle that families should have the right to limit the number of their children. I call attention to the fact that the government has put a bill through parliament, Bill S-15, legalizing contraception and the sale of means of contraception. I fully support that bill. But to say parents should have the right to decide the number of children they want to have does not conflict with the principle that we ought not to countenance abortion on any condition whatsoever.

[Mr. Allmand.]

• (5:30 p.m.)

I maintain that we must make up our minds whether we want the child before it comes into existence. Once it has come into existence we have forfeited any right to dispose of it for any reason whatsoever. Those who say we have a right to dispose of the child surprise me. Many hon. members have suggested that you must protect human life, and even animal life; yet, at the same time they suggest we can deprive a child of existence. This Criminal Code omnibus bill contains amendments which will make it more difficult for some to abuse animal life. Those are good amendments. On the other hand, I maintain that the grievances of a woman seeking an abortion can often be dealt with by means other than the performance of an abortion. Society can help to cure some of her grievances.

I could say many things on this matter but we are limited to speeches of 20 minutes. May I wind up by saying that I moved this motion to amend because I was a member of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare which worked hard to bring out a report on this matter. I thought it was a good report. In no sense did I move this motion as a motion of non-confidence in the minister. I have full confidence in the minister. I think he is a good minister and in bringing forward this omnibus bill he has done good work. Only on this one point do I disagree with him.

My only regret is that the Creditistes may use my amendments as a pretext to continue their filibuster. Their behaviour here has been deplorable. This is the first time I have spoken in this debate. I did not speak on second reading or on any of the other motions to amend, thinking other members would wish to speak. I feel that the Creditistes, in carrying on a frivolous debate, have been undemocratic. I feel uneasy when they support me on this motion. I am uneasy about giving them an opportunity to talk more, because I completely disagree with their reasons for supporting my motion. I feel they are acting most undemocratically and they are paying lip service only to the principles of democracy. After I have spoken on my motion I will sit down, hoping to have the support of other members in this house. In any event, I wish to see the vote come as quickly as possible so that we can dispose of the matter. Hon. members here will determine whether they wish to support my