

Criminal Code

beings and to their needs but human life has intrinsic value. These two values come into play for human beings; they have value for others, and an intrinsic value as human beings. It would be dangerous to confuse the two, for we might then be tempted to look upon individuals as upon instruments to be used by others, or even by the state. That is just about the philosophy of the N.D.P. in this regard.

This same faulty reasoning would allow the killing of the unborn child for the sake of family well-being. If we consider, the value of a human being only in his relations to others, any human life becomes expendable.

A cripple, a homeless or abandoned tramp may not seem to have any value for others. If this were the only valid criterion we could eliminate people in cold blood. It is forbidden because we recognize the intrinsic value of human life.

Never mind the circumstantial concepts surrounding the fundamental right to live; we must not be influenced by such considerations. We must safeguard the paramount principle, the right to life, which we have fought for.

Yesterday we had the chance to hear two magnificent speeches by the hon. members for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau) and for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette)—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Does the hon. member have the consent of the house to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Agreed. The hon. member for Champlain.

Mr. Matte: I wish to thank sincerely all the members, particularly since it is the first time such a privilege is given me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: You are getting better all the time!

Mr. Matte: Here is how we must consider the question of abortion.

From the beginning, we have spoken to all the amendments only from a scientific and medical point of view. But yesterday, in order to prove that we were not repeating ourselves, and to show that we had studied the question from all angles, we heard the two speeches of the hon. members for

Shefford and Témiscamingue, who stressed the moral and religious aspects. It was the first time we put those arguments forward, because we wanted to be taken seriously.

We wanted to extend our full co-operation to the government and to clarify the matter.

Everyone knew that the matter was controversial, from the very moment the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) introduced this famous bill, and since the election campaign which all the members of our party waged on that issue in their respective ridings.

Therefore, the government knew that that was an extremely complex matter which would give rise to doubts and would lead to this opposition.

That is why today, Mr. Speaker, the odium of this endless debate should be imputed to those who are actually responsible because they had been warned that we would not let such a matter pass without opposition. Even if this could harm us politically, we had taken for granted that we had the right and the obligation to reassert here, in the house, the truly human stands which are imperative with regard to such a vital and important matter.

If we were the only ones, Mr. Speaker, to think like that, if we had been the only ones to advocate such a thing, I can assure you that we would have realized a long time ago the mistake we were making in trying to extend the debate. But we were sure of having a full and unconditional support. I have not received a single letter telling me to stop. I am still waiting for a telephone call of someone who will tell me: "What are you doing? Enough of that. What are you trying to do?" I am still waiting.

Then, Mr. Speaker, why is it that all the representations we are receiving urge us to carry on and to try and convince the government?

It is a very sad thing indeed—I said so before in my first speech on the subject—to find that this house is often nothing more than a school of verbosity. That was one of the most unpleasant surprises I had since I came here. We realize that all our arguments are only intended for posterity. Luckily, we can at least count on that. When our grandchildren will read those speeches, they will say that there were at least a few who had common sense at that time.

What is disappointing is that we know it is useless to bring forward any argument or to consider the question from every angle, since we know perfectly well that the decision is