

*Criminal Code*

Someone said that his mother had several children. If anyone had asked her: Which one would you do without, she really would have been hard put to pick one.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of asking a mother to sacrifice her children, or even of allowing a young miss who has been indiscreet to procure an abortion because her pregnancy annoys her. It is a question of allowing a mother whose life or mental health is in danger to be examined by the members of a competent medical board, in a recognized hospital. We could then go by the diagnosis of that medical board.

Some people say that doctors would abuse the law, and that some of them would be more broadminded than others. Of course, Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of times some human beings have had weaknesses. Perfection is not of this world; it only exists in heaven where, I hope, the abortion problem will not crop up. Still, we must aim towards the lesser evil and accept the best possible human control which, to my mind, this bill provides.

Let us go back now to what I said a while ago when someone stated, "My conscience will not allow me to vote for this bill." Now, I ask that person by virtue of what principle he wishes to impose upon all Canadians the dictates of his conscience?

One's conscience is a personal thing. Other Canadians feel that the bill is right. Some members of the clergy feel that the bill is right, while spokesmen of certain denominations tell us it goes too far.

What is the legislator to do? Above all, he has no right to impose his religious convictions on his fellow-citizens.

Secondly, he must ask himself whether he took adequate precautions to insure that serious principles govern and condition the legislative measure.

I ask those whose conscience dictates that they vote against the bill whether they are not troubled at the thought of condemning to death the mother of children whose life, according to doctors, is endangered by her pregnancy. Will their conscience not bother them for having condemned to death both mother and child instead of choosing and saving the life of the mother whom the other children need?

It seems to me a basic moral principle not to sentence to death in advance a mother who has experienced unforeseen difficulties in pregnancy. Besides, we are forcing no one to

have an abortion. Only those who will agree to it will have one with the consent of their doctor. There is not one single mother of a family who will be obliged to have an abortion. Any attempt to impose on others one's religious principles seems a little behind the times.

Mr. Speaker, I am against abortion and I shall not allow any member of my family to have an abortion even if the law made it legal. My attitude is dictated by my conscience but I cannot impose my religious principles upon the believers of other faiths or the people who do not share my views.

If some people question the value of my argument, I should like to risk an indiscretion and relate a personal experience. I should like to remind them that I have seen my wife lying on a sick bed with three doctors at her side. They told me for two weeks that with an abortion they could save her life but because of my moral principles, they did not induce abortion and I lost my wife and child. I ask those who, are bothered by their conscience if it would not have been better to save the mother rather than to sentence to death both mother and child.

In recognized hospitals, doctors will take usual precautions. That solution is a lot better than to force a woman to get an abortion from any quack abortionist.

I have the very distinct impression that upon sober reflection, one must admit that this legislation is a step in the right direction although it is not perfect and does not go far enough. It is a step in the right direction even though to the best of one's knowledge and belief, one objects to it.

I object to homosexuality, Mr. Speaker. Personally I also object to abortion. My conscience is at peace because I shall not resort to those things. However, I cannot impose the dictates of my conscience upon others, and this is what we are trying to provide.

We should be as broad-minded as possible when considering this legislation. We should display the greatest possible measure of oecumenism—I did not coin the word—and be very considerate of all beliefs. As for those who have problems with their conscience, they simply have to waive the provisions of the act and obey the voice of their conscience.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe we should support this bill. By doing so, we may not attain perfection but we will at least try to choose the lesser evil which would certainly be a remarkable achievement in a society such as ours.