

Adjournment Debate

The Royal Canadian Mint Act clearly sets out that the activities of the Mint must be carried out in anticipation of profit and the Mint has the corporate powers, embedded in law, to carry out this mandate and ensure that it is a financially viable enterprise. It is not the intention of the government to subsidize the operations of the Royal Canadian Mint and it must therefore continue to undertake and carry out activities within its corporate powers to ensure that it remains self-sustaining financially. It follows that, in so doing, the Royal Canadian Mint may find itself in competition with Canadian private enterprises which have acquired or developed a minting capability.

In fact, the minister has been advised that since the Royal Canadian Mint has recently intensified its marketing efforts in the foreign markets, it has found itself competing along with a Canadian company in a few instances.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret I have to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but he has gone beyond his time.

● (2220)

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—REPORTED INEFFECTIVENESS
SURVEILLANCE OF THERAPEUTIC ABORTIONS—GOVERNMENT
ACTION TO CORRECT

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, two years ago the largest petition ever brought into parliament, signed by more than one million Canadians, urged the government to tighten the law on abortion. The response of the government was to set up the Badgley commission which issued its report a few months ago.

Among the conclusions of the Badgley report was a very strong finding expressed in the report that the basis of the chaotic situation on abortions, which now amount to approximately 50,000 a year, is in the federal abortion law itself which does not clearly define the reasons for which abortions can be performed. The therapeutic abortion committees in hospitals across Canada are interpreting the word "health" according to their own whims and perspectives. The Badgley report maintains that most abortions now being performed are not based on any actual hazards to the woman's life or health.

The response of the government to the Badgley report, which is a very important document—time does not permit me to give the full range of its findings here—has been to tell the provinces that they will have to ensure that therapeutic abortion committees are operating within the perspective of the Criminal Code.

The response of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), who has taken the initiative in this regard, has been to advocate the setting up of comprehensive women's clinics across Canada and to collaborate with the provinces in ensuring federal-provincial support for these clinics.

The clinics have been attacked by such organizations as the Alliance for Life and indeed by many people across Canada who are espousing a pro-life position, on the grounds that such clinics will bring in by the back door what has been prohibited

officially by the law, namely, wider entry to abortion. I appeal to the minister to make a definitive statement on such clinics.

Obviously clinics are needed for a wide range of health conditions related to women, including pregnant women. I appeal to him to make a specific and firm statement tonight that such clinics will in no way counsel abortions or lead directly to therapeutic abortion committees in hospitals. Otherwise the charge that is being made will be proven correct.

The issue I want to highlight at this moment is the fact that the terms of reference of the Badgley commission specified that the report would be debated in the House. It has not been debated. Rather, the action has been to toss it over to the provinces. It is scandalous that no debate is being offered in the House or that a standing committee of the House has not received the Badgley report for study.

Over the week end the Festival for Life met in Ottawa to try to indicate to members of parliament that the people who believe very strongly in the preservation of life insist that the basic issue is a change in the law.

It is to be deeply regretted that the pro-life movement is now fighting not only government inertia on this, because the government has taken a position that it is a political no win situation when both sides seem to be sawed off even though, as I said, a petition from one million people has made clear a very strong opposition to the widening of abortion or to the continuance of the present level of abortion. The fight is not only against government inertia but against the media which is giving a distorted view of the reality of the pro-life movement. I speak specifically of the Festival for Life over the week end.

I want to put on record a statement made today by Mrs. Gwendolyn Landolt, the vice-president of Alliance for Life, who said, and I quote:

This week end Canadians of all religious and ethnic backgrounds, from every province, reaffirmed their commitment and concern for the well-being of those least able to help themselves, the unborn, the handicapped, the aged and the dying. Twenty-five thousand Canadians participated in the Festival for Life which featured distinguished international and Canadian speakers, including Malcolm Muggeridge, Dr. Paul David, Marshall MacLuhan, John Howard Griffen and Dick Gregory.

It was discouraging that such a gathering of important thinkers should have received such scant attention from the media. By giving such scant attention, the media indicated that the pro-life position was of little interest to them, and thus they have performed a grave disservice to the people of Canada.

When I watched the CBC news myself on Saturday night I found that the impression was created that the counterdemonstration to the pro-life movement was about equal. When I came back to Ottawa I found that there were around 30 to 100 pro-abortion demonstrators countering the demonstrations of 2,000 people who came up on Parliament Hill on Saturday afternoon. The CBC has done a real disservice to the fair representation of what actually took place on the week end.

I do not believe that abortion is by any means a lost cause. Perhaps the government hopes the issue will go away. I appeal