

Abortion

I look to church leaders for their views on a number of these issues. Although I did not have the support of the Catholic bishops on my stand for capital punishment, I think I will have their support on my position in the protection of the foetus and the extension of rights to the unborn. Of all the correspondence I have received, this one letter that I received from Archbishop James M. Hayes, a member of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, sums up my position on this issue of abortion. He says:

The Government has introduced a Motion that proposes the totally unacceptable gestational approach for a new Canadian abortion law.

The position of the Catholic Church is that human life begins at conception and must be valued, respected and safeguarded from the beginning. The gestational approach is scientifically and ethically indefensible because it draws an arbitrary dividing line between life which is worthy of protection and life which is not.

The government's Motion abandons a primary function of the law: The protection of human life. Furthermore, it does not achieve the socially imperative balance between the rights and interests of women and the equally important rights and interests of unborn children.

We count on the good will of everyone who values human life to work and pray for legislation which recognizes, values, respects and protects human life from conception to natural death.

To this end, a new abortion law must be developed in the context of other laws and social policies which together will make this a society ever more hospitable to all human life at all stages of development.

Let us carry that to the next stage in dealing with the motion before the House. I was pleased to be able to table an amendment to the government motion that I believe would satisfy the Catholic bishops who have said that they are prepared, when it would cost the life of the mother, to bring the pregnancy to fruition. They would consider in the protection of the life of the mother the loss of the life of the infant.

I was disturbed that the justice critic for the Official Opposition, the Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan), said that one of the most difficult problems arising from Section 251 of the Criminal Code is the definition of the life and health of the mother. If I am quoting him correctly, I believe he said that over his years it has been the number one problem in the broad definition of the term "health of the mother". Yet that same justice critic for the Official Opposition said he would not put in an amendment, but would wait and see.

He does not like our motion and other Members opposite have said that they do not like our motion. Perhaps they are simply not used to a free vote in the House of Commons. Anyone who is at all interested in the protection of the unborn or the rights of the unborn would give serious consideration to amending a motion to allow it to answer their concerns.

According to my amendment, we would delete all the words after the words "to protect the unborn" in the main motion and substitute therefor: "Such legislation should prohibit the

performance of an abortion except when two independent qualified medical practitioners have, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, stated that in their opinion the continuation of the pregnancy would or would be likely to endanger the life of the pregnant woman".

That is the amendment. I believe that in Peterborough we would have more success in finding doctors who would perform abortions if the cause of the abortion was that. What the doctors object to is the rubber stamping of abortion on demand through free-standing clinics like Dr. Morgentaler's.

The motion in the House would allow people like Morgentaler and company to sign an abortion. That would make it legal if we approved the Government motion without an amendment requiring that the life of the mother be the prime requisite for the granting of an abortion.

● (0010)

I would like to close with two thoughts. First I will recap my opening remarks. If we do not win a pro-life amendment to this motion, if this House cannot carry the consent and wish to protect the unborn child, then there are only two other alternatives. The first is to vote for the government motion which recognizes a gestational period but removes abortion on demand and, second, to vote against the government motion and go with the status quo today, thanks to the Supreme Court of Canada, which specifically says we can continue on the way we are, and the way we are today is abortion on demand.

I am still in the position where I am considering. I am pro-life. I want a pro-life amendment as much as I want anything, and I want to be able to offer an abortion to my constituents who require an abortion if it threatens the life of the expectant mother. However, I would much prefer the government motion to what we will have if we do not get the government motion through. We would then have abortion on demand.

I think it is best stated in the words I wrote down this afternoon. I do not want to be too brutal. I do not like to preach "holier than thou" types of sermons. I was raised in a parsonage and I heard a lot of sermons in my day. But I would like to give the House this thought. First, by allowing abortions, we are deliberately allowing a destructive, brutal and violent act to be undertaken with state approval. Second, we live in a society that will not allow discrimination on the grounds of sex or colour. Yet we are prepared to consider allowing abortions on the grounds of foetal abnormality. I feel quite strongly about this. If this occurs, as sure as night follows day it will be followed by infanticide, the liquidation of the handicapped and the euthanasia of the aged.