

want to reduce the need for abortion, but tough criminal sanctions will not do it.

One of the saddest aspects of the abortion debate, particularly on the part of those who are anti-choice, is the fact that no attention is given to prevention. The federal Government and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) have consistently refused to support positive sexuality programs and family planning. We support it for Third World countries through the UN but we do not support it in our own country.

The Conservative Government and the previous Liberal Government both cut back on funding to Planned Parenthood, which works hard at prevention and has proposed particular programs targeted at reducing unwanted pregnancies in young teenagers. It has published information in the national media. You may have seen a big ad entitled "Five Ways to Prevent Abortion and One Way That Won't". They recognized that all Canadians want to see the need for abortion reduced. This can be achieved by reducing the number of unintended pregnancies. Making abortions illegal will not work. It never has. Whenever governments have made abortions illegal, it has not stopped them.

Planned Parenthood had a recent campaign which advocated the following five ways to prevent abortion. First, ensure that all Canadians have access to contraception and family planning services. Second, ensure that all young Canadians have access to sexual health education. Third, increase the involvement of men in preventing unintended pregnancies. Fourth, increase government support of research into new and safer methods of contraception and, fifth, make Canada friendlier to children. Planned Parenthood studies support the premise that young people with high levels of self-esteem are the least likely to compromise their futures by taking the risk of unintended pregnancies. Thousands of Canadians across Canada have signed petitions in response to these proposals which I think make eminent good sense.

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The one way that will not work in reducing abortions is to outlaw abortion and to have tough criminal sanctions. This will not prevent unwanted pregnancies or reduce the number of abortions. It will make women and doctors criminals and force back street abortions in some cases. It ignores the dignity and the right of women to make their own decisions for themselves and their families. It ignores the reality of statistics which show that women want early abortions and doctors do not perform late abortions except in extremely exceptional circumstances. It also ignores the fact that despite tough criminal sanctions in some countries, desperate women will still seek abortions, largely because of economic and social situations that are intolerable and are injurious to health and well-being.

Some have said that the debate on abortion is obsolete in view of the changing reproductive technologies including *in*

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vitro fertilization, surrogate parenthood, the use of foetal tissue and gender selection techniques, all very serious moral and ethical issues that society must consider and perhaps regulate. Our Party has recommended support for a Royal commission on reproductive technologies composed of at least 50 per cent women to look into this matter and to make recommendations. Scientists and physicians are also asking for directions on these matters.

The NDP supports a policy of choice which allows women to make a personal health decision in consultation with their doctors. We respect our colleagues and members of our caucus and Party who hold different views on this issue. They have the right to express their opinions. Choice does not mean that one favours abortion. I hope no one favours abortion. Choice means that a pregnant woman must have access to a whole range of options. She must have the finances and the emotional support to raise a child. The Government has an obligation to provide adequate income assistance and community support.

Second, men must take much greater responsibility for preventing pregnancies, for planning families and for sharing parenting. Third, there must be parental leave, access to adequate, affordable quality child care. We must eliminate child poverty and give more support to single parents, including affordable housing.

Fourth, adoption is another option which must be available to people. Fifth, in addition to all these options, a woman who is pregnant with an unwanted pregnancy must have ready access to a safe medical abortion with adequate pre- and post-abortion counselling if this is her decision. Free abortions must be available in all provinces and territories in Canada and must be covered by the insurance programs of the Canada Health Act. Public clinics should be encouraged.

In closing, I would like to say that I must oppose this motion. As my colleague said earlier, we object to it for procedural reasons and for technical reasons. We think it is poorly phrased and not adequate. I oppose it particularly because it calls for the recriminalization of a matter which I believe should be a medical question involving a personal decision between a woman and her doctor.

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we are here debating an issue of national importance such as few debates include. In fact, it is an inter-generational debate. We are discussing values and attitudes that we will share with our children and our grandchildren and that we will pass on from generation to generation. We are in fact examining what kind of people we are, what kind of a society we are and what shape we want our society to be in years to come. It is probably one of the most futuristic debates we could hold in this House. It is of incredible importance.

I might add in response to the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) that we are not here to sit in judgment over those who are facing unwanted or unplanned pregnancies.