In Canada right now we have 10 people working for every one person that is retired, 10 people who will work and raise money and pay the pensions and social benefits of our society. By the year 2000, there will not be 10 people working for every one retired, but only five people working for every one who is retired. How will those five people be able to work and support that one?

It gets even more frightening than that if you look into the early 2000s and you find out that in Canada there will only be three people working for each one retired. The reason is that our low end, the children in our society, are not being replaced, which is another kind of social value that young Canadians are going to have to look at. We are going to have to replace that young end of children coming into our society, hopefully through wanted pregnancies of Canadian people. Where the Canadian people cannot produce that young end of our population, we will have to import that on the basis of immigration, because we cannot exist economically on a ratio of three people working for one retired.

At the same time as we see the problem coming we eliminate—no. Not eliminate. That is not the right word. We kill one million potential Canadian babies. We rob that potential and we destroy that population age balance in our society. It does not matter whether you are talking common sense, whether you are talking moral values, whether you are talking human values, we need children in our society for a multitude of reasons that relate to all of those things.

I have spoken in this House of Commons on this issue before. I have voted in this House of Commons in two different Parliaments; on the Constitution and for pro-life amendments. I have voted for the amendment of the Hon. Member for Grey-Simcoe (Mr. Mitges). He is a courageous man who has made further amendments that I will vote for again.

It comes down to what is Canada all about. What is it that we value and that we respect? If we do not respect life, if we do not want to nurture life, it is not the kind of Canada that I came here to speak about, to protect, to preserve, to develop. I came here to encourage my children and my grandchildren to continue the great building of this nation, and I want them to build it for and with life. That is why I will vote for life motions in this House of Commons and why I appreciate this opportunity to stand here and express this view, which I believe is a view of myself, my family and my community.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton South): Mr. Speaker, it is a lonely night—not just with regard to the numbers in the House—but it is a lonely night because this is a lonely issue. It is an issue in which we stand alone, some of us, because there are those of us who will differ with our constituents. There are those who have not accurately been able to ascertain the views of their constituents because it is an issue on which the country is rather deeply divided.

• (0210)

It is lonely for me because I am about to declare myself. It is not a new position for me but it is the first time that I have had the opportunity to declare myself in this House. I did so during the last election campaign, and I do so now, partly as a father of three daughters of child bearing age. We have been served until January 28 of this year by the 1969 law, Section 251 of the Criminal Code, which in the 1960s was deemed by the then Minister of Justice, presently the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner), to be an appropriate compromise in perhaps the classic Canadian mode. However, time and events have overtaken that Section of the Criminal Code because we now have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

On January 28 the Supreme Court, by a five to two majority judgment, held that Section 251 contravenes the rights of a pregnant woman under Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The majority of the judges further held that this breach could not be saved by the reasonable limitation clause under Section 1 of the Charter of Rights and therefore concluded that the abortion legislation was invalid.

Since the rendering of that decision there seems to have been some division in interpretation of the ramifications of the Supreme Court judgment. Pro-choice advocates celebrated a decision they believed would give a woman complete control of her body. Anti-abortion groups mourned the ruling as a devastating defeat which said that women could now get abortions anywhere at any time. The truth of the matter, Sir, is that both sides are mistaken, the Supreme Court ruling says neither of those things. The majority did not rule that women have an unconditional right to abortion under the Charter. On the contrary, the Supreme Court merely concluded that Section 251 impaired irretrievably a pregnant woman's right to security of the person embodied in Section 7 of the Charter.

Justices Beetz, Estey and Wilson expressly state that law restricting abortions might yet be consistent with the Charter and that at some point in the later stages of pregnancy the state's interest in protecting the foetus might be sufficiently compelling to override the rights that women otherwise have under the Charter. This approach is not inconsistent with that taken by most other western nations. In fact, abortion based on gestation appears to be the currently preferred route. Indeed, the motion before us would take us down that road. However, is the world-wide trend the way to go? Should Canada instead seek her own way?

There is a dissent from the Supreme Court judgment written by Mr. Justice McIntyre and concurred in by Mr. Justice La Forest. I am going to quote selectively and I hope with reasonable representation from Justice McIntyre's dissent.

In my view, he wrote, the Chief Justice's whole position depends for its validity upon a proposition that interference with the right constitutes an infringement of her right to security of the person. All laws, it must be noted, have the potential for interference with individual priorities and aspirations. In fact, the very purpose of most legislation is to cause such interference. It is only when such legislation goes beyond interfering with priorities and aspirations, and abridges rights, that courts may intervene.