

*Government Orders*

with her own moral position and the doctor must apply his own professional standards and ethics.

I want to make absolutely clear that because one opposes the criminalization of abortion does not mean that one is saying that abortion is all right, that abortion is okay, that abortion is a good thing. By opposing the criminalization of abortion, we simply mean that in a pluralistic society, the criminal law is not the proper response to the problem of unwanted pregnancy and abortion. I think that we have too many abortions in this country, both legal and illegal, and I think we must do all in our power to reduce that number.

The question is how we deal with the problem and how we reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Once again, I do not believe that the response is a strict criminal law dealing with abortions. If we are serious in wanting to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, then we must have preventive programs. We must have better programs to help mothers keep their children and raise them properly. We especially need better programs for child support, housing, nutrition, education, pregnancy leave, day care and so on. If we did more of these things we would find that more mothers would be able to keep their children, and would want to keep their children. We would have fewer unwanted pregnancies.

• (1520)

We also need better programs in family planning, in reproductive education and in moral instruction. By doing these sorts of things I think we will see the number of abortions and unwanted pregnancies decline.

There are some in this House and some outside the House who say that abortion is murder and should be treated like murder since the moment of conception. The state has never treated abortion history of our Criminal Code you will note that several crimes have been treated differently than murder. The crime of murder at one time had the penalty of capital punishment, which then became life imprisonment. We had the

crime of infanticide, the crime of manslaughter, and the crime of abortion which was always treated differently than murder.

Even within our Christian churches the death of a foetus in its early stages was never treated like the death of a child after birth. No church that I know of believes in the baptism of an infant immediately upon conception. As a matter of fact, it treats that unbaptized child in a different way from a theological point of view.

I will conclude by saying that I intend to vote against this bill because I believe, first of all, that it is an inappropriate use of the criminal law. I could accept some criminalization in the later stages of the pregnancy, but even then I doubt whether the substance of the law should be in the Criminal Code but perhaps in some other federal or provincial statute. I am also opposed to the bill because I do not believe that it deals with the real causes of unwanted pregnancies and with the means that will bring about their reduction.

It is my intention to continue to listen to the arguments in this debate. The bill will probably go to committee and then we will have another debate at third reading. For the moment that is my position. I will vote against the bill.

I repeat that this is a difficult subject. I have no problem with my own personal moral position. I am opposed to abortion on moral grounds, but what we are discussing in this House is not what is moral or immoral about abortion. We are discussing to what extent abortion should be criminalized. That is the issue that we must address.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Before I recognize the hon. member for Edmonton East there is a point of order by the President of the Privy Council.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, there have been, as I indicated earlier, discussions among the parties and I think you will find that there will be unanimous consent for me to move the following order and to vote immediately without debate.