

*Criminal Code*

Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer). This Bill is of great moral and ethical significance to society today. The Bill seeks to protect the life of the unborn except where the continuation of a pregnancy would or would be likely to endanger the life of a pregnant woman.

This Bill is very important because it recognizes that a human being does not just become a person the moment he or she is delivered from the security of his or her mother's womb but that he or she is a member of the human race from the moment of his or her conception. Self-defence is the only rationale given in this Bill to end the life of an unborn child. Proof must be given that the female person is in actual physical danger irrespective of her mental, social or economic condition. The addition of Section 8 gives a more succinct reason for ending the life of the unborn. No longer would women be able to use the excuse of mental strain or of not having the financial capabilities to raise children as a reason for ending the lives inside them.

I believe that life begins at conception, and I have stated previously and in letters to my constituents that I cannot support abortion unless the life of the mother is in danger. I would like to explain my reasons for this stand.

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care including appropriate legal protection before as well as after birth. Why do some people believe that an unborn child is not a human being until it is born? Do they not recognize that even at its earliest development, say at one or two weeks, the unborn child is simply at one special stage in a whole series of steps which will eventually lead him or her to old age?

The only difference in the existence of a child at one or two weeks or at two or three years old lies in the process of maturing and aging, in other words, in developing. By assuming that one only becomes a person when one is at full term or is capable of sustaining life independently of the womb, we might as well say that the nine months the unborn child spends inside its mother's womb is irrelevant to the rest of its life because it was not a person anyway. Of course, this is a ridiculous assertion.

What of the full-term infant who is not capable of sustaining life independently due to some physiological deformation or serious health problem? Do we then not consider him a person either? Have we the power to say that this is not a life as we perceive it and therefore we can disallow this non-person's existence? We can certainly see how deep this issue goes when it comes to moral and ethical decisions.

From a fertilized egg will come 100 trillion cells, the average number of cells in an adult. Before it is even 30 days old, an unborn child is one-quarter inch long and has all the genetic programming which will determine his height, eye colour, hair colour, the shape of his nose and all the characteristics he has inherited from his parents. At 60 days, the same unborn child is the size of a thumb and responds to painful stimuli. At 16

weeks, he is 5.5 inches long and weighs less than a pound. At 40 weeks, he weighs over seven pounds, is 20 inches long and is ready to be delivered. At what point in this continuum can we say that this unborn child became a human being?

The British Columbia Government has permitted communities to run local hospitals with elected boards, and their guidelines have resulted in dramatic decreases in abortions in some hospitals. Despite this, however, there are still many abortions being done in other hospitals around the province. In 1984, there were 11,509 abortions in B.C. In 1985, B.C.'s abortion rate was 50 per cent higher than the national average. For every 100 live births, there are 26.1 abortions. What makes this figure even more horrendous is that 25 per cent of these were repeats.

A repeat abortion means that the woman having an abortion has had at least one other. The number of repeat abortions has risen dramatically over the last 10 years on the national level. In 1975, 8.6 per cent of all women who had abortions were repeats. In 1985, that figure was 20.3 per cent. In fact, more women were repeaters in 1985 than the total of all the officially recorded abortions in 1970.

Prior to 1969, doctors performed abortions on rare occasions when they believed the mother would die if the pregnancy continued. It is only since 1969 that induced abortions have come to mean a deliberate decision to terminate the life of an unborn child. We should make the changes to the Criminal Code which will protect the life of the unborn child except when the continuation would endanger the life of the pregnant woman.

The number of Canadian hospitals with therapeutic abortion committees is given as either 250 or 253. Of this figure, 39 hospitals have reported a total of 45,369 abortions or 74.4 per cent of the Canadian total. In other words, 15.6 per cent of hospitals with therapeutic abortion clinics are performing three-quarters of the abortions.

This makes one wonder about the use of the word "therapeutic". In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, it is defined as the branch of medicine concerned with the treatment of disease and the action of remedial agents in disease or health. I think we could all agree that pregnancy is not a disease and abortion is not therapeutic. It heals no disease but kills human beings.

When therapeutic abortion committees were originally developed, the intent of the law was to ensure that all alternative methods of preserving the mother's life or health would be used before the drastic step of aborting a child was permitted. I do not believe that the 11,509 abortions performed in B.C. alone in 1984 were to preserve the life and health of the mothers. It is hard to accept that the women of British Columbia are that unhealthy.

A few weeks ago, the B.C. Ministry of Social Services conducted the province's first-ever apprehension of a foetus. This seizure occurred after a woman, 36 weeks pregnant, told doctors at the Vancouver Grace Hospital that she did not intend to consent to medical treatment for her child after it