

Private Members' Business

We have all had members in our families who have been exceptionally ill. They have not known where they were and have clearly been in pain. It is so easy to pull the plug and kill them.

• (1145)

I do not think we have the right. We would certainly have to think very long and hard if we were to change the way our society has developed with respect to the right to life and the belief in life. Belief in life is a sacred and continuing thing.

I will be voting no on this motion today. I think it is important we discuss the matter but I do not think it is the time today for us to ask the government to legislate on euthanasia.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I intend to use only a few minutes of my speaking time and leave the rest for my colleague, the mover of the motion.

I welcome this opportunity to support my colleague's motion, and I think there are three questions we should ask ourselves. First, do we need this kind of legislation? I think it is clear that we do. Just consider Sue Rodriguez and Nancy B. in Quebec, and so many other cases we have seen. At the very least we should consider the advisability of legislation on euthanasia for people who ask for assistance in bringing about their own death when their condition is such that they would rather die than go on living.

The second question: Is this proposal premature? I do not think so. We may not talk about this problem all the time, but it is nevertheless a very real problem in society today. It is the kind of problem that requires legislation or at least a discussion on its advisability. Gallup and other polls have shown that nearly 70 per cent of respondents agree there should be legislation on euthanasia. I do not think it is premature.

The third question, to which I think we must answer yes, is: Will there be a positive impact as a result of this legislation? The answer is a resounding yes, because if we look at the Netherlands which passed its own legislation, there has been no abuse whatsoever. What we want above all is to be able to get a medical decision and ensure that the last wishes of a patient who would rather die than go on living are respected.

Do we need this kind of legislation? The answer is yes. Is it premature? No. Will it have positive consequences? The answer is yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I just wanted to point out that when the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam is recognized, he will be exercising his right to reply and will be the last speaker on the motion. The hon. member has four minutes, until 11.52 a.m., when the proceedings on this motion are to expire.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I want to say first of all that I am very proud of this House of Commons. This is the third hour of debate and the level has been superb. It has been thoughtful, passionate and relevant from all sides, no matter which of the two positions people have come down on. It has been a marvellous debate.

I just mention the hon. member for Don Valley West and my colleague, the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap, who made passionate speeches about their own personal life. We have heard very moving speeches, today from the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood, and the other day from the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

• (1150)

This issue belongs in Parliament. Two judges in the Supreme Court of British Columbia said that we should deal with it. We are dealing with it and this House has to have the courage to deal with it.

I think the vote this evening is only the beginning. No matter which way the vote goes, and I hope it will be a free vote and members will vote different ways, it is the beginning of Parliament facing this issue.

I crafted the motion delicately so that it would be open to the government to bring in legislation. There is a direction and it is a direction in the way that it was referenced to the Rodriguez case.

Parliament is dealing with it and I predict a future government will have to deal with it. If this government does not deal with it, eventually the people will expect Parliament to deal with it.

We cannot expect sick and dying people to be dragging themselves through the courts. Parliament has to deal with this issue. It belongs in Parliament. That is what we