

*Criminal Code*

● (3:30 p.m.)

Does a physician give penicillin to any woman as soon as she feels unwell? Is morphine given to any patient who asks for it? Are X-rays, laboratory tests or hospitalization recommended for no reason at all?

If it is therapeutic to comply with a request or a wish, to yield to feelings of freedom or immediate compassion for anything related to medicine, we only have to rationalize all our sympathy and compassion, to cry with depressed persons, to be frightened with those suffering from phobia, anxiety or obsession and to give them at any time the therapeutic care they ask.

I therefore suggest that medicine should be really, adequately and efficiently organized to take care of all underlying conflicts of those who believe that an abortion is essential.

A physician has said in the logical way of scientists:

It seems that medical science has always tended to prevent rather than to cure. There may be circumstances when abortion appears necessary, but all things being considered, we realize it is a desperate solution. I do not think medicine should endorse despair, but by basing its actions on symptoms, incite a re-organization of the patient's global energies. Who, in his medical or personal conscience, has not often considered abortion as a therapeutic solution but has finally found other possibilities? The function of a physician has never been to deny pain or suffering, or to prevent death, but rather to help and release recuperative powers, to stimulate curative powers on the physical, psychological and mental planes.

Mr. Speaker, this is a proof that we cannot accept at first hand, the definition of health given in this bill and that it has been impossible for the Minister of Justice and even for physicians to say what is meant by health, when it starts and where it ends.

And when, for instance, the employees of the various health departments are sworn in, before serving in various health services, here are the words they utter about health:

Faced with the abortion problem, employees in health services turn more and more to the code of ethics which says, among other things:

Any health services employee must consider abortion as something harmful biologically, medically, psychologically and sociologically. The principles of socialist humanism and of medical knowledge require that human life be respected from its very beginning. Consequently, the health services employee should strive to consider the human privilege of motherhood as of greater value than the privilege of abortion. As a health services employee, it is his duty, in each individual case, to seek the professional help which is likely to be to the best advantage of the woman and of the family. At the same time, he must, because of his profession, work towards making useless, through responsible parenthood, such extreme measures as abortion.

That is the code of ethics by which health services employees must abide, whatever the services they are called upon to give to the sick.

Prevention more than cure is the object of medicine. If we accept abortion on grounds of health, it would mean that we are putting aside the principles of medicine, that we are saying that physicians are not sufficiently skilled to cure the discomforts of pregnancy. I do not say the ills of pregnancy because pregnancy is not an illness.

There are no illnesses either that can justify abortion during pregnancy. To accept abortion for reasons of health is to deny the beneficial effects of medical science, to deny medical science, to deny also that there is now on the market good and efficient medicine to cure various indispositions and, if need be, real illnesses.

It is to deny also that our hospitals have at present to provide medical care to sick people and pregnant women, when the removal of the foetus is decided upon for reasons of health. To do that is to want to kill instead of curing. To want to kill instead of caring for. To want to kill instead of providing treatment.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, we cannot accept that because the words "or health" are not defined in the Criminal Code, abortion should be permitted. I wish the provincial governments, that are now against the abortion legislation, could pass a law in order to define health and prevent the Criminal Code from being used in such cases as a means to procure an abortion.

Mr. Speaker, we do not accept abortion for reasons of health. First, because it is an act of folly, it is pure nonsense and it runs counter to real medical science. It means admitting a pregnant woman is right by accepting to procure her miscarriage instead of giving her the proper care, so that the pregnancy may be completed in due time.

Unfortunately, in the Liberal party, even outside that party, no doctor has given clear, definite and precise grounds as to health or illness that could be used for resorting to abortion.

There was but one instance in the past, which was the most frequent one, where abortion had to be automatically performed: in the case of German measles. But nowadays, German measles can be very effectively cured, because medical science has developed efficient vaccines against it. Besides, we have no more cases, no other medical indications