

Abortion

do not think that that is the kind of thing that Canadians are looking for.

I have heard a great deal of discussion among members of the public ever since the Supreme Court decision came down. After the decision came down there was a great deal of speculation with respect to what would happen. What we saw was a variety of types of services delivered across the country.

As a woman, as a New Democrat, I would like to see the same type of services available to all Canadian women so that they will be able to have equal access. I would also like to see them have the types of services that would enable them to make a choice decision. It would be very nice if we knew that women were not any longer earning 64 cents for every \$1 that a man earns. It would be very nice if we knew that there was safe, quality child care available for every woman who has a child. It would be very nice if we knew that women had access to health services where they could have pap tests and mammary examinations, as well as contraceptive information, all easily accessible to them. That is not easily accessible in the country right now.

It would also be very nice if we saw all our mother led families in adequate housing and living above the poverty line. When I hear people telling me that they are worried about the children in the country, and I realize that 40 per cent of the clients of the soup kitchens in the City of Toronto are children, I say it is a scandal and a disgrace. For us to pretend that children are a priority to us is absolute nonsense.

If we really want to start treating each other as dignified human beings with quality care, with relationships of quality, if we want to look at life and value it in the true sense of the word, then what we should be looking at is public policies that give us the ability to give each person a sense of dignity. It would give each person the ability to have access to education, nutrition, and the types of things we think are so important. It is certainly not the type of thing that we need to do by having a Gallup poll conducted in the House of Commons to decide whether or not we will have legislation, knowing very well that this Parliament will never implement any.

If we were being honest and if the Government felt very strongly that there was a vacuum which needed some legislation to fill it, then it would have brought legislation forward. Because it cannot come to any consensus in its own caucus, what it has really done is say: "We will use the House of Commons to conduct a Gallup poll".

If Members of Government want some Gallup poll information, I have some here dated April 13. At that time 69 per cent of people thought that the decision whether to have an abortion or not should rest with the woman in consultation with her physician. If the Government wants the results of Gallup, we can give it to it without it bringing it to the House of Commons.

I can probably find other figures which are far different from that. The Government can pick out whichever ones it

wishes. But, please, Mr. Speaker, do not use the Members of the House of Commons to do this Gallup polling. The Government is here to govern. It is not here just to try out a resolution. It is disgraceful that what we are being asked to do right now is to pretend that we are doing something that will never happen in this House of Commons.

We know that in the next election, sure, there will be a lot of discussion. But I will be very comfortable to go out on the campaign trail to say: "You thought, maybe, that the Government was doing something about this question, but it was doing absolutely nothing. What it did was try to raise the expectations of Canadians about how seriously it was taking this subject and what it was really doing was making a sham of it". That is totally unacceptable. It is the kind of thing that as New Democrats we resent very much. I think that the women of Canada should resent it as well.

They do not know into which crack they have to fall since at this point in time there has not been a great deal of chaos. Services are being delivered. The number of abortions has not increased. The ability for Canadian women to make responsible decisions is there. The ability for our medical profession to deliver adequate care is there. Those are the types of decisions that are being made now. There is not that terrible vacuum that some Members are referring to which claims that there is a chaotic society. We are not living in chaos. If we really do care about what the future of this country will be, we will start to look at comprehensive, public policy that respects the dignity of men, women, and children.

That is the type of law that I would like to see in front of the House. That is the type of society in which I would like to live. I hope that the rest of Canadians feel that way. I think that after the next election we will find that they do.

Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, as all of us are fully aware, on January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Section 251 of the Criminal Code which governs abortion.

January 28 was the day on which the sanctity of human life was decreed to be of inferior value to personal convenience. The Supreme Court judgment also forced people to wake up from the mistaken notion that righteousness automatically rules. We have been startled to see that darkness prevails when good people do nothing.

If the Supreme Court judgment has shocked us into recognizing that if we want to influence the laws and rules governing our society, we who believe in the sanctity of life of the unborn have to be in the fight and learn to fight smart, then perhaps it has served a useful purpose. It also reminds us not to rely solely on legislation to solve our problems. Legislation may control actions but it does not change attitudes. Influencing public opinion, changing hearts, are part of the fight as well.

While striking down Section 251 of the Criminal Code dramatically illustrates the new power of the courts under the