

Adjournment Debate

in the Charter of Rights. Therefore, the role of humanness becomes very fundamental. If one reviews the Criminal Code thus far, the status of the "human being" is very ambiguous. Section 206 of the Criminal Code states that:

A child becomes a human being . . . when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother—

I think that this particular definition of humanness overlooks over a decade of medical research and development. We now have *in utero* surgery and more advanced research in genetics and foetal development, and it is clearly evident that a human being, distinctly and genetically different from its mother, does exist before the time in Section 206 when the human being simply emerges from the mother. Therefore, it is very important that we emphasize the humanness of this particular issue.

The motion, as it has been put, should be considered by all Hon. Members of the House within the framework that we are simply asking the Government to consider the advisability of amending the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When Hon. Members vote on this motion, if they vote in the affirmative, that is they vote to agree with the motion, that is not saying the Government will change the Charter of Rights immediately or even proceed to do so. I would like to address this to those Hon. Members who have expressed some reservations about the amending formula and the degree of consultation required between the provinces and Ottawa. Now is the time for consultation. Now is the time we should consider this question as a constitutional question. However, this motion reads that the Government should be asked "to consider the advisability", and I hope Hon. Members will keep that in mind.

Most important, this motion is a call to accountability of Members of Parliament. It has been a very reasoned debate thus far. However, I am a little disappointed in my colleagues on the Government side as well as from the two Opposition Parties when I hear the argument that we need more consultation, that we must give this issue more time, that this issue is so morally delicate that it should not be addressed by politicians. These are some of the points raised, and I know they have been raised in good faith by Hon. Members of all Parties. However, it is because of the moral delicacy of this issue and because of the fundamental importance of this issue in Canadian society that I submit this motion should be a rallying point for Members of Parliament and for the Canadian people. It is vitally important that Hon. Members stand up and be counted on this issue. I do not think it is acceptable that Hon. Members say we should give the issue more time or further consultation.

Often polls and different polling data is introduced into discussion on this issue. I know all of us, regardless of what particular view we take on the sensitive issue of abortion, acknowledge there have been many polls done. However, I think we should, with a balanced and reasonable view, look at the most important poll of all, and that is the lengthy list of the numbers of abortions performed every year in Canada. I agree with Hon. Members of all Parties that in a perfect world there

would be no abortion. I agree with the need for contraception and information. But this is not a perfect world. We have within a myriad of regulations in the Criminal Code an ambiguous collection of laws which allows over 70,000 abortions to be performed every year. That is some imperfection, Madam Speaker. It is an imperfection which is literally depriving Canada of a generation of citizens.

What do we do about that? We can no longer rely on the provinces through their administration of medical services plans or on hospitals under whose responsibility falls therapeutic abortion committees because to do so is to abdicate the fundamental responsibility of this issue. The fundamental question is life, humanness and the definition of where and when that life begins and how we, as Members of Parliament, should deal with the question of humanity. This is strictly a matter for at least the Criminal Code and quite probably, as this motion indicates, for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We cannot, and should not, say any longer that it is someone else's responsibility. It is the responsibility of all 282 Members of this Parliament to see this issue is addressed.

In closing, I want to state again my strong and unwavering support for this motion put forward by the Hon. Member for Grey—Simcoe. I would like to ask—in fact, to put it in stronger terms, I would like to plead with Hon. Members to view this particular motion in its context. This motion asks the Government of Canada to consider the advisability of amending the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I think we should ask the Government to consider looking at this issue. Regardless of what point of view one brings into this House, I think it is not too much to ask that the advisability be considered of entrenching a right to life of the unborn. I know that time does restrain all of us. I have a number of other points to make, but I will close by thanking you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this time. I would like to extend my thanks to all Hon. Members, particularly to the Hon. Member for Grey—Simcoe, and I would encourage all Hon. Members of Parliament to be heard on this issue.

● (1800)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 36(2) this order shall be dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper. It can be expected to be scheduled for debate next on February 13, 1987.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.