

Abortion

Most European nations have recognized these limits. Most recognize that there should be sharp restrictions on access to abortion at the stage of potential independent viability. The test should be the survival of the mother and other such significant considerations. The question of what to do between the twelfth week and twentieth week should be determined in the deliberations of whatever committee will deal with this resolution. It seems clear to me that the rational position to be taken, which can be justified philosophically and morally, involves free choice during the early stages of pregnancy with increasing limits thereafter, as this resolution proposes. That is the position that the vast majority of Canadians would accept.

I believe it is an indication of the rationality of most Canadians that they have not adopted either of the two extreme positions, however meritorious they may be to those who hold them. We must find a means to reconcile appropriately the diversity of opinion that exists. It cannot be either of the two extremes suggested by the Hon. Member for Halifax West. It must be a compromise position that does not insist that one employ abortion and one that does not exclude it as a medical means to deal with serious problems which we all know necessitate abortion in many instances. When abortion is not available it leads to all kinds of tragedy brought about by illegal abortions.

I am not standing in this House in support of abortion. No pro-choice individual to whom I have talked, nor anyone I know concerned with any part of this issue, likes abortion any more than they like amputation or other severe medical solutions to a medical problem. If we want to eliminate abortion, we should begin to address the circumstances which have led to abortions.

Twenty-three per cent of terminated pregnancies involved teenagers. Teenagers are all too frequently denied advice and counselling on sexual behaviour. According to a study conducted a couple of years ago, teenagers spend an average of two minutes a day talking to their families. We have created an environment in which the family is under the test. We will not solve the problem by banning abortions. We can certainly do a great deal more than we have to prevent unwanted pregnancy, which means information on contraception should be available and young people should be provided with the kind of knowledge about sexual behaviour that they need.

We must do much more to strengthen the family. If we are concerned about the issue of abortion and deal with that problem in the next Parliament, we ought also to address the other significant issues arising with respect to reproduction. These include the new reproductive technologies, the use of foetal tissue for experimental purposes, genetic engineering, and all scientific and technological manipulations that can take place to shape human beings or select the gender of offspring. All these matters are of equal importance to the future of humankind and to the family.

If we ever resolve this issue, I hope we will also address the other considerable problems that technology presents to the

future of humankind as we know it, and the future of society as we would like to have it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Plourde (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, let me start my speech against abortion by quoting His Holiness John Paul II: "Life must be defended from the moment of conception against everything that threatens it, such as famine and war; it must be cured of anything that weakens or dishonours it, such as illness, alcohol and drug abuse; it must be protected from anything that debases it, such as violence, sub-human living conditions, degrading working conditions and so many ills of that kind." And the Holy Father, at the end of a 10-day trip in the United States, in September 1987, thanked Vice President George Bush with these words: "The final test of your greatness is the way you treat each human being, particularly those who are weak and defenceless. Feeding the poor and welcoming refugees, strengthening the social fabric of the nation, encouraging an authentic advancement of women, guaranteeing the rights of minorities, pursuing disarmament while ensuring self-defence, none of that will succeed unless the respect for life and its protection in law are granted to every human being."

• (2250)

Mr. Speaker, the motions put forward when the political climate does not seem to point in that direction, appear illogical, abnormal and inhuman, and contain drastic provisions which would not even be necessary in most cases if we bothered, in this society, to offer serious sex education programs, particularly with regard to contraception. Both matters go hand in hand. If people only hear about abortion, they won't think in terms of contraception and that will lead to abuses tied to a serious act which represents the termination of a human life through barbarous means and should not have its place in a human and civilized society.

Mr. Speaker, to make myself quite clear and illustrate what I just said, I would like to quote an article from a book entitled *Les trois menaces à la société contemporaine* written by Father Lawrence Abello and published by *Mouvement Pro-Vivère inc.* This article called "Victim declared subhuman" reads as follows: "It is no wonder that so many in our society say, without any proof, that the unborn child is not a human being. Throughout history, every time exploiters wanted to kill a group of persons, they claimed that the victims were subhuman. For example, higher castes, slave owners, explorers and Nazis have rationalized that untouchables, slaves, savages and Jews were subhuman, non-persons in the eyes of the law, and therefore did not even have the right to life, which is the foundation of all rights." Because of such de-humanization, the above exploiters in the past could not realize that killing their victims was killing human beings. In the same way, in our present society, many people cannot realize that abortion is murder.