

Criminal Code

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The remarks of the hon. member are very interesting, but I cannot see how they are related to the amendment moved by his colleague for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau) to delete in clause 18, line 5, page 43, the words "or health".

Soon the housing bill will be dealt with in this house and it will then be proper to discuss housing in Canada.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I think I am not out of order, because I am seeking the reasons which would prompt women to request an abortion for reasons of health. Those are the reasons I am trying to set forth in order to make my point.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Laprise: If the income is inadequate, then the woman worries all the time. She will not be able to feed her children properly, and give them a decent home.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. I see no relation between the mother's health and the arguments put forward by the hon. member.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, I accept your remarks, but the amendment makes it quite clear, as you said yourself a while ago that it is meant to delete from clause 18 of Bill C-150 the words "or health", to avoid ambiguity in this legislation.

So I think that we have the right to express or explain our interpretation of health. If not, the debate on the bill is as good as over. These are grounds that may lead a woman to ask for the termination of a pregnancy, on grounds of health.

Another excuse can be put forward: the danger of mental deficiency. Yesterday, in another debate, I stated the opinion expressed by Dr. Marcel Boisvert in that respect. I am not going to quote him all over again. It is all in yesterday's *Hansard*.

But, I have in hand another interpretation from another doctor just as prominent, who can very well understand women's behaviour in such a situation, since this doctor is a woman, Dr. Suzanne Carreau. She states and I quote:

—if we refer to the most recent biological data, all the characteristics of life are found in an embryo of less than four months, the period during which abortion is usually carried out.

The abortive methods then applied are, in general, curetting or injections designed to bring on the miscarriage.

[Mr. Laprise.]

But I think that the fact that abortion is ten times more dangerous than childbirth is not emphasized enough.

There, Mr. Speaker, is the evidence of a woman doctor on the matter. If we make it easy for any woman to get an abortion for health reasons, Dr. Suzanne Carreau warns of the risk involved when she says, and I quote:

—abortion is ten times more dangerous than childbirth. Moreover, since health is a state of physical and mental well-being, it leaves a very large margin of interpretation. For a doctor, it is sometimes difficult to make a very clear diagnosis as to the state of health of the patient faced with another pregnancy.

That is the question, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes we hear doctors tell a woman that her health will be endangered if she pregnant again. But in that case, every time, and I believe rightly so, the doctor gives the necessary advice to prevent another pregnancy. It is right at that time that the question should arise.

Those are the reasons why I support the amendment of my colleague, the hon. member for Beauce, in order to prevent any misunderstanding and so that the legislation on abortion will not be jeopardized, but given all the required scope, as I hope we are willing to do. That is why I said a while ago and am repeating now that, personally, I accept that a pregnancy be interrupted if the life of the mother is in danger, because it is a potential life at that moment. We must also respect that one.

For those reasons I accept the amendment on the question of life, but I object to the inclusion of the health clause, because I believe in the conscious developments of medical science, and I feel there are other ways of improving the health of a woman apart from taking a life or terminating a pregnancy.

• (5:10 p.m.)

I believe it is easier to provide medical care than to perform surgery and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment of my colleague the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Rodrigue).

Mr. Bernard Dumont (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to speak, but after listening to the nasty remarks, the wrong interpretation given by the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané), I feel it my duty to bring out some facts. We, in the *Ralliement créditiste*, are the champions of the truth and of christianity—and we have been