

to provide opportunity. Some laws have to be changed to eliminate the anomalies—

Other members have spoken in similar vein. For example, the hon. member for Fundy-Royal said there is a difference between equality in the law—equality of rights, as he put it—and equality of opportunity. He talked about the extent to which we should deal with equality in the law, but he also indicated that dealing with equality of opportunity was an attitudinal problem, one which was much harder to reach. The hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) went so far as to say that we cannot change attitudes in this House but that at least we can change the law, and he urged that we do. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) made his plea in terms of the chicken and egg situation—which comes first, the law or the attitudes? He indicated that we ought to deal with the law because the law was amenable to this Parliament.

On this particular point I should like to observe that the two are not separate problems as might appear. Law and attitudes are closely related. I can testify to that since I am a member of a group which traditionally has been the victim of discrimination and of oppression for one reason or another. I could refer as well to the experience of the blacks in the United States. I think that the experience of my own group and the experience of the blacks in the United States is that if you can and do change the law, change of attitude will follow; that there is a close relationship between the two. We should not sit back waiting for attitudes to change to accommodate changes in law; we should take the initiative. At least we should catch up with prevailing attitudes, and then even move ahead to use the law to change attitudes.

Finally, I should like to deal with one other subject, the question of abortion law reform. This subject is touched on in the motion moved by the opposition and a number of hon. members have spoken about it. With considerable difficulty, I have come to the view that we should permit abortion on request. In coming to that view I must say that I recognize that there is, at least in my view, a certain immorality in abortion, whatever are our standards.

I believe, as well, there is also a moral aspect on the other side of the question. There is a certain immorality in forcing a mother, who for a number of reasons does not want to have a child, to have that child and in forcing a child to be an unwanted child and raised as such. So there are moral questions on both sides. Through all this I have reached the view that abortion ought to be permitted on request. My other reservation about it is that I do not particularly want to see abortion used as a birth-control device, because there are birth-control methods and devices available which can easily be used and which should be accepted. But, as I say, although I have this reservation about abortion I am in favour of its being permitted on request.

• (5:30 p.m.)

I should like to close my participation in this debate by making a suggestion to the opposition in respect of a way

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in which this issue could be brought forward. In the Speech from the Throne the government indicated there would be a one-day debate on abortion. That is not wholly satisfactory; I doubt if it would resolve any problems or result in any changes. I think the government indicated that because of the length of time such a debate would take it was unwilling to place this matter on the Order Paper; there are other matters which—I agree—deserve higher priority.

I believe, however, that the opposition could take advantage of Standing Order 75B. That Standing Order provides that if a majority of the representatives of the several parties of the House agree on a time allocation, there can be a time allocation in respect of a bill. I should like to challenge the two opposition parties which are not as encrusted by hidebound ideology and stubbornness as the Social Crediters to get together and challenge the Government House Leader to allocate time to settle this question. I have reviewed the rule, and in my judgment if a weekend should intervene, an abortion reform bill could be finally voted on and disposed of in six days of parliamentary time. That would by no means mean there would be a full debate every day; there could be as little as one hour's debate or less on any one of those six days.

Let the opposition not feel they have no recourse in this matter. I would urge them to make a proposal to the government that the question of abortion be brought forward in the form of a bill, that there be a time allocation for putting the bill through the House and that the matter be dealt with on that basis.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Kaplan:** Yes.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** In view of the fact that Standing Order 75B can operate only if a minister of the Crown makes the appropriate request in the House, is the hon. member undertaking that a minister of the government would agree to such a proposition?

**Mr. Kaplan:** Mr. Speaker, I am speaking for myself and not for the government. But if such a proposal were made by the opposition parties I would use whatever good offices I have in an effort to persuade the ministers to take the proposal seriously and allocate time for debate. Although I have not canvassed any of my colleagues, I am confident some that would agree to a similar disposition.

**Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate. We are touching on some very fundamental and important questions. I have no intention of being caught in the trap of appearing to be against motherhood. However, there are four subjects rolled into one, any one of which might well set a trap for politicians and for any well-meaning or well-thinking person in this country. Whether or not there should be a minister who would look after the affairs of such a ministry is a question which I will leave to the government.