

Abortion

I see certain people who have argued in favour of the right to freedom of choice. I respect that too. It troubles me to see so many abortions in Canada. Who will perform them once a Bill is passed strictly forbidding abortion? A great deal remains to be done, and I hope that we will be able to do everything possible so that those girls and women can get help one way or another, and I say to my fellow citizens, "I have done my duty. It doesn't always reflect my personal thinking. I'm not here as an individual, I'm here for you, and I have made the choice you asked me to make, and I will be voting against the motion that is on the Table today."

[English]

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it is now 2 a.m. in the House of Commons in Ottawa. When we walk out of these doors tonight into the streets of Ottawa we will find that it is very much closed down. There will be other areas open tonight in Ottawa, and they are the Ottawa hospitals. If one were to visit the wards, in every one of those hospitals one would find expectant mothers. Many babies are being born right now in Ottawa, in Vancouver, and other places in Canada. Many expectant mothers are waiting for the birth of their first, second, or third child. They are waiting with different emotions.

I am sure that there is at least one expectant mother who has an expectant father pacing the hallway in anticipation, who has an excited family waiting at home for the news and for the father to phone home. In fact, they are waiting for a child with a home that is full of love and opportunity surrounding that mother, child, and family. I am sure there is an expectant grandfather and grandmother waiting for that call, no matter how late at night. They waited to hear that very call in that same expectant way for their child and they now await for their grandchild. I am sure there are expectant mothers with emotions like that.

Perhaps in the next bed there is an expectant mother who is more alone than we are, the four or five of us present in the House of Commons tonight. Perhaps there is no father in the home, or perhaps not knowing who the father is. Perhaps there are no parents to give support to that mother expecting that child. Perhaps the mother is jobless and faces raising a child on welfare as a single parent, alone, afraid, but perhaps also committed to giving that child life and letting that child find its potential in its society. It might be because of some religious feeling that she has, or simply that that mother feels it is just not right to take the life of the child inside her.

I am sure there is another expectant mother who probably will not be delivering that child because she has made the decision, after looking at a series of circumstances, that she will not give life to her child, but that she will ask the doctor to take the life of her child from her, to kill that child. One might want to put it in nicer words, but that is the reality.

● (0200)

I feel very different emotions in response to all three. The first mother will share her joy with that very wanted child. For

the second mother I have an empathy, and a sorrow that I as a Parliamentarian have been unsuccessful in creating the kind of society that would not see even her child be a joy to her. We have not provided opportunities for adoption, we have not provided opportunities to support that mother to help her raise that child to its full potential. We have not created the social atmosphere where life and children are valuable and needed in our society. We should try to provide for that mother and her child the extended family or the kind of support mechanisms that would replace that extended family if it is not there for that mother.

I am disappointed in myself and in this House of Commons, and I am pleased that we are starting now to talk about child care and alternatives for child care so that all children can be more welcomed into this world.

For mother number three I feel great sorrow. I feel compassion for her in her decision. I feel sorrow for her and know that out of her decision can come nothing but more sorrow, as well as the death of the child, the sorrow of the mother, the hurt for that mother, because no mother makes that choice easily, or happily. She really is making the choice on the basis of what she believes, her conditioning, her values, her circumstances. I would say to her that freedom of choice is broadened, not limited, when one opts for life.

We must consider not just the choices of the mother; we must consider the choices of all of the partners in creating life, in creating and nurturing life and children. We must consider not only the mother but, of course, the child. As the Supreme Court said, "we must consider". We must consider the rights of the mother, the rights of the child, the rights of the father, the rights of society to that child and, of course, we must consider the other partner, the God of that child.

The last time I spoke in this House I spoke about an issue, about life. I spoke in support of an environmental issue, asking that this House of Commons preserve and add to the Pacific Rim National Park, a primitive wilderness area containing the tallest Sitka spruce trees known in the world. I listened in this House of Commons to the Liberal speakers, the NDP speakers, the Conservative speakers. I listened to all speakers without one word of dissent, saying yes, we must save the lives of the giant spruce trees in the Carmanah watershed. Everyone agreed.

I do not understand how this same House of Commons which said "save the trees", can say a few days later "kill the child". "Save the trees, kill the child". Where is our value? Where is our sense of priority? Somehow we should be able to teach those who believe the value of a balanced environment that part of that balance is a balance of population. If we cannot reach that group on the basis of their moral feelings or their other kinds of values, let us talk environmentally about the balance of ages of people of our society.