

*Private Members' Business*

We have created a situation because the law is no longer relevant. This law is not relevant. The needs of society and the needs of people will begin to find ways to circumvent it to meet a very basic need.

We will lose control because we do not have any guidelines, for instance, in the arrangement between Sue Rodriguez and her physician or with the next case or the next one. There are no controls over Kevorkian types.

However we could set some very stringent controls; that you need to be terminally ill, that you need to be mentally competent, and you need to ask repeatedly to be assisted in committing suicide so that you can extend your life. Ultimately you would need to have it reviewed by an independent physician and by the Attorney General. Then some controls are placed over this type of situation.

I do not think we can create a situation where we provide disrespect for the law, where we are unable to enforce it. Physicians are not charged and convicted in Canada for carrying out this kind of activity. Therefore the law is already held in disrepute. It does not meet the needs of the people.

Sue Rodriguez has gone a step further and says: "I have made the arrangements if the court and Parliament are not able to meet our needs". We must do something about this. I am sure it would pass this House in short order if the government could bring forward a piece of legislation that would meet the needs of people.

The arguments against it are interesting. They fall into five categories. Murder is still murder. The issue of murder is still murder if you look at the definition. I guess the five basic points that the critics of it bring out is that murder is still murder. In this case that is not it and I will deal with that at length at a later date.

Another point is that Nazi Germany ran an euthanasia program and that we are heading in that direction. Nothing could be more false and misleading. This is a democracy. It is one of the most sensitive and successful democracies in the world.

The kind of activity we are looking at is not destroying people's lives because they do not meet the social agenda. We are responding to the requests to be able to be assisted with a suicide. We want to empower those people to control their lives.

We cannot argue against a religious conviction that says that no matter what, God created life and God has the ultimate choice as to when it will end. If a person holds those convictions you cannot deal with the issue if you totally ignore the situation that when a person's life is going to end anyway, and it is going to end with pain and degradation, we do have an opportunity to control it.

They say this is the slippery slope. This is the fourth argument. Opponents say that if we do this then we will end up lining up the elderly and finishing them off because it will be cheaper for our health care system. The argument is that we will move from there to other forms of incapacity. We cannot argue that. These are individuals asking for a right and asking to be able to time their lives.

The fifth argument is one of the most interesting ones and it comes from Dr. John Scott at the Elizabeth Bruyere Hospital. I guess one of the key points in his debate against it is this. He says: "If we put in a euthanasia system, even doctor assisted suicide, we will get into a situation where the Netherlands provide no money to hospice care and Great Britain which does not permit physician assisted suicide or euthanasia does provide money for hospice care".

This argument is completely false. Ultimately this caring society is concerned about health care. It is concerned about properly funding hospices for the same reason it would give Sue Rodriguez empowerment and the right to self-determination.

If an individual wishes to end his or her life in a hospice situation we have an obligation and a responsibility to make sure that health care spending provides the opportunity to do that.

This is the last chance. Eighty per cent of Canadians want to see something done about this. Sue Rodriguez and her physician will do something about it, whether we permit it or not. I think respect for the law is critical and respect for the rights of other human beings is critical in this issue.

• (1130)

**Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, this motion of the member for North Island—Powell River on legislation to allow physician assisted suicide raises the issue of euthanasia on request where the