



James Stevenson

## Gov't fails with new abortion bill

The weak-kneed Federal Government has once again proven their incompetence by attempting to create an abortion law while remaining on the fence of this contentious issue. In presenting the Government's new abortion bill last Friday, Justice Minister Doug Lewis attempted to find an arrangement to satisfy both Pro-life and Pro-choice camps, yet managed only to infuriate both.

In the Saturday edition of the *Edmonton Journal*, Lewis was quoted in saying "It balances the constitutional rights of the woman with society's interest in the protection of the fetus." While these seem to be the right motives, the government has effectively assured that yet another one of their bills will be struck down, long before it ever becomes law. The vital flaw in Lewis's abortion bill comes from the proposition that all abortions would be considered illegal, unless the woman's health (mental, physical, or psychological) is threatened.

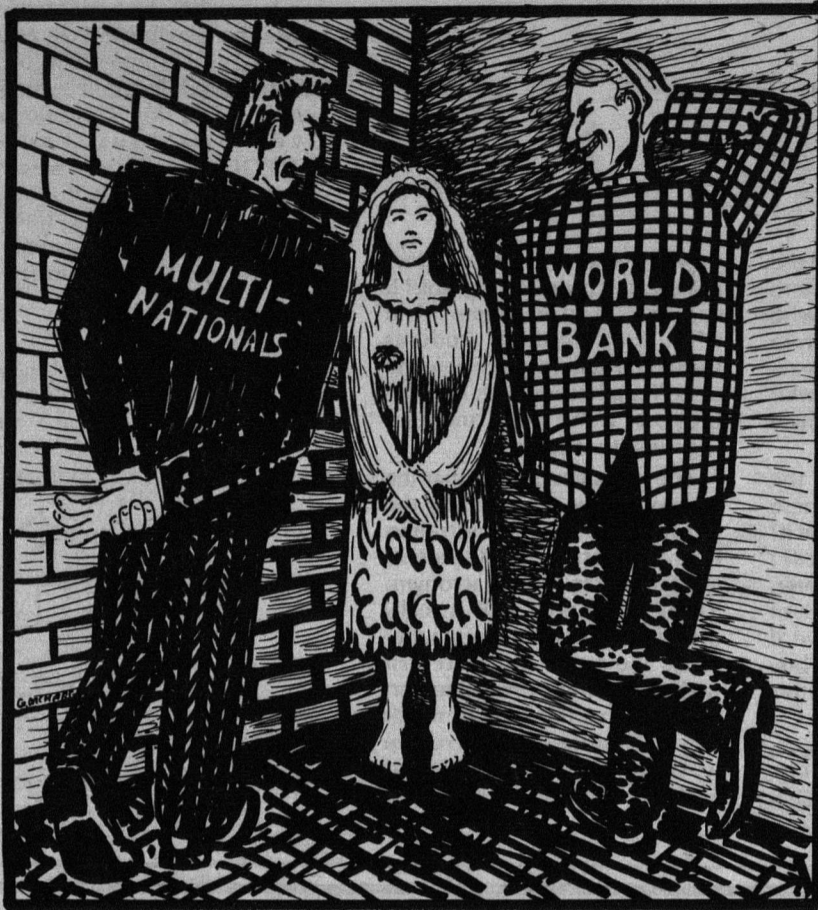
While the Pro-lifers are jumping to arms over the ridiculous and all inclusive term 'psychological health', Pro-choice has received a serious blow, with abortion being placed back in the criminal code.

It is absurd to re-criminalize abortion again, with a law that seems to encourage women to lie about their health. Nor does the new bill take any steps to prevent the modern problem of ex-boyfriends or anti-abortionists taking women to court over abortions — questioning their health reasons publicly.

Perhaps the most dangerous result of this new abortion bill is the fact that the new act effectively shrugs all responsibility from the Government's shoulders and places it onto the individual practicing doctors. With the threat that violators could be jailed for up to two years, doctors across the country may become reluctant to perform the operations. This reluctance will only give rise to the same old problems of abortions risky and dangerous to desperate women.

It seems that regardless of where you lie in regards to this tense and sometimes violent subject of abortion, our federal Government has once again clouded the issues with useless bills. It seems unfortunate that Mr. Lewis and associates are not equipped with the necessary tools needed to take a stand on this very important issue, and are happy to remain on the fence of the inept.

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