

Status of Women Study

There are no good alternatives. Abortion is not a good alternative. It may be the lesser of two very bad ones. It is simply a question of death on both sides. Will the child die, or will the degree of dying that will take place in the mother's life outweigh that of the child? This very brutal decision must be made. It is perhaps the toughest decision our culture affords in any set of circumstances anywhere, always an unhappy and often a deadly decision. But it is a decision with which no individual should be faced.

• (9:50 p.m.)

The very consideration of abortion is an admission of failure—failure in family planning. It represents a failure of society to make fully available to our citizens, both the youthful and the more mature, the knowledge, the will and the means of preventing conception; and it represents—more serious yet—a failure to establish in our culture a social tone and a public attitude of respect and reverence for life which would bring an intense social pressure to bear on all, both youthful and more mature, to take advantage of the knowledge and the means now available to us to prevent most unwanted pregnancies.

If all else should fail I, for one, would prefer that we introduce a substance into the diets of our citizens which would render them sterile—I might point out to the House that the word is “sterile”, not “impotent”; these are two very different concepts and they should not be confused—so that an antidote would have to be taken before a pregnancy could be initiated. Then even the most illiterate, the poorest, the most victimized or the most mentally retarded would have no need for abortions. Failure to take such basic action is accepting, it seems to me, a far more repulsive and primitive alternative. It is accepting a continuation of what I would describe as a modern-day “slaughter of the innocents”. All the removal of the abortion provision from the Criminal Code would do would be to make this slaughter of the innocents legal.

I would therefore use all the influence a member of this House may have to appeal to hon. members, to the government and to the nation in general to reject this barbaric destruction of unwanted children and accept in its place some humane measures which would clean up this literally bloody mess and bring our social sexual tone into line with this century and the greater emphasis on human values which we all, surely, seek to enlarge within it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to say a few words on the motion brought forward by the New Democratic Party. Such a motion corroborates the fact that women have rights and prerogatives that should be considered.

Mr. Speaker, a woman wants her rights, her prerogatives and her needs as well as those of her family to be satisfied. It is a proposal of that kind that we must

[Mr. McBride.]

support, although we have to go a little further, as regards abortion.

I shall limit my remarks to the rights and prerogatives that are necessary to a woman to enable her, as well as her family, to live decently in a country that can provide all citizens with everything they need.

It concerns love and interest. Love and interest are the most powerful motives that drive men in their individual and social activities. Every individual lives by himself in his family and in society. Everywhere someone is doing something because he likes to do it, because it is profitable. Love stands on one side and interest on the other. Let us stop believing that they cannot go together.

It must be possible to reconcile love and interest. The government must assume responsibility in that respect. The 264 ministers and members elected by the Canadian citizens according to the Canada Elections Act, must see to it that justice prevails among the 21,000,600 Canadians in 1971, taking into account the production of goods and services.

Perhaps it is normal that, while wielding the ultimate power, the governments should, all things being equal, be inclined to favour their friends, their electors and the party members, to the prejudice of the love they owe to other citizens as part of Canada's population. Interest should not make us forget love.

Since we are talking about women, it is only fair to display a little love. If the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) feels any love for his relatives, his wife and the 21 million Canadians under his ultimate authority, in conjunction with the 23 ministers and other hon. members, he should cause all monetary, financial and political bodies to proceed to a fair distribution of goods and services between all Canadian citizens, according to their essential needs, before someone hoards too much of our tremendous production, after having spent what was necessary to live in plenty and even luxury.

This is what we want. We have to love and help each other—

We certainly do not want to be members of Parliament, or ministers, or to establish a new political party, or to set up a new government tonight. We just want this government to instill some social consciousness into the economical and political bodies of Canada. This is clear and simple and would permit all citizens to live. Women would be less demanding since most of them could stay home and take care of their children.

The economy should take into consideration the family, the individual. If there are revenues, expenditures and profits, each family and each institution should have its share. Buying power should be in proportion to population. Each individual has a right to live and therefore is entitled to buying power which enables him to live decently.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It being ten o'clock, the debate is deemed to have been concluded in accordance with Standing Order 58 (11).