

Private Members' Business

based on their chances of escaping euthanasia if they go there. What does that do to the trust that exists between the medical profession and the patient? I do not think it does it much good. I do not think the doctors who sit in this Chamber, or elsewhere, would think it does much good either.

In Holland there are some 10,000 cases of active euthanasia per year. In Holland there is a virtual absence of hospices and palliative care, and the two are linked. In Great Britain where there is a good level of palliative care, and there is never enough of course, there is a virtual absence of euthanasia. In other words, euthanasia has been the quick fix for the lack of care provided for the dying. That is what this is all about.

We had before the committee that studied Bill C-203 Dr. John Scott who directs what I believe to be the largest palliative care hospital in Canada, *le Centre Elizabeth-Bruyère*, here in Ottawa, who talked to us about that issue.

Dr. Scott told us what he thought of euthanasia. He is not in favour of it. He has assisted people in the last stages of their lives more than any one of us has or probably ever will. He said: "Unrelieved suffering in Canada urgently needs to be addressed by palliative care strategy which includes widespread education, research and bedside services. The fear and the pain of dying can and must be relieved in Canada".

Dr. John Scott totally rejected euthanasia, mercy killing, assisted suicide, or anything like that as a solution.

At the same time, we should all pray for Mrs. Rodriguez. We should think of others who are suffering from this disease. I am thinking of Judge Sam Filer, an Ontario court judge, who is also suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease.

From a report that I have, in 1989 Judge Filer suffered a respiratory failure. The medical profession asked his wife: "What do we do with him? Do we revive him?" His wife allegedly said: "I will take care of his quality of life, thank you very much. You take care of saving his life". They revived him. Today, even with the difficulties that the judge has in communicating, he says that he is glad to be living. Do you know what he also says? He says that

eight or ten years ago when he became sick, had someone asked him at that time: "Would you want to live like this 10 years from now?" he would have said: "No".

Who will change Mrs. Rodriguez' mind if she could sign a document like that and if there were no criminal law to protect her? Who would save her? Is it John Hofsess? I hardly think so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, it is true that this is a difficult issue. It is for me as it is for all members of this House, and I do not take it lightly. I must also say that it is much easier not to talk about it than to talk about it. It is difficult for all of us, even for those who claim that they have the courage to talk about it. However, we must voice our opinions. Whether we are afraid of the issue or not, we must do everything to protect the human life.

I would like to conclude with a quote from a Law Reform Commission report concerning the need for legislation protecting the dignity of human life. The quote reads as follows: "The repression of unlawful actions is neither the only mission of the law, nor even its main mission. The law is the expression, in the fullest meaning of the word, of the type of society to which we belong".

[*English*]

That is quite true. That is the purpose of law, to state where we stand as a society.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I did not want to interrupt my friend during his very interesting speech.

I know he did not want to make allegations to the contrary, but with respect to using Mrs. Rodriguez, I know he will note that my motion has been on the Order Paper since May 15, 1991.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, tonight this House is considering the motion put forward by the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

The last half of that motion reads:

—of ensuring that those assisting terminally ill patients who wish to die not be subject to criminal liability.