

*Government Orders*

In my opinion, the House committee should also deal with the more general issue of access to adequate and secure medical procedures. I don't think that Parliament could simply shirk that decision and leave it to the provinces, although they clearly have jurisdiction in health matters. Of course, we must respect the jurisdictions of the various levels of governments. I have noted how quickly the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) and his colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Beatty) have quoted the statements I made on this subject when I was minister of Justice.

They have discharged their duty. But there is more to this than just respecting individual jurisdictions.

[English]

I do not believe that respecting jurisdiction precludes co-operation and discussion between the two levels of government. I urge the minister and his colleague, the minister of health particularly, to take the lead, to use their influence rather than simply washing their hands of the whole question. As was pointed out, previous federal governments have taken action, for example, when they felt certain provinces were not respecting the Canada Health Act with regard to extra billing.

Family planning and reproduction counselling should be a priority of any government in combating the necessity of abortion. Everyone would agree that it is deplorable that we have a situation where any woman feels compelled to consider an abortion for economic reasons. Naturally we will study the proposals mentioned yesterday by the minister of health with regard to research into family planning, planned parenthood, adoption, education and other reproductive health issues.

The minister confirms that there are 150,000 young, single, low-income parents in need of assistance. If we want to take away economic reasons for abortion, we have to ensure that children brought into this world are properly cared for. I am entitled, I think, as is every member of Parliament, to ask this government, where is that child care program that it has been promising for five years? Where are the proposals to eliminate poverty? Where are the proposals to help women who chose to have children in difficult economic circumstances? Until this government gets really serious about these issues, I am afraid that many women with low incomes will

continue to be forced to consider abortion as an alternative.

I want to ask members of the House to go through this process of determining where we would be if we rejected this particular effort at accommodation introduced by the Minister of Justice. I listened very carefully to his colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and listened to how she reconciled her own views with the current legislation. I look around at members of the House. I happen to know most of the members here and I know who holds one view and who holds the other. I said at the outset that despite the deep convictions we all share on a personal basis, as a result of our own personal religious convictions, moral upbringing and family influence, it is not our personal views that are at issue, it is our views as legislators.

Let us take a look at this issue from both sides. Suppose I were strong pro-choice. Sensing the mood of the country, sensing the mood particularly of this House, I would feel that there would inevitably need to be some control reflecting the collective view of a majority of members and also reflecting the majority of Canadians, that there has to be some law or some control.

All right, from the pro-choice point of view, what would I say? I would say if there is going to be a law, maybe this is the best law we are going to get. After all, it does leave the decision to a woman and her doctor.

If, on the other hand, I were strong pro-life and I considered the same mood of the country and the same mood of this House, I would ask myself; what happens if this legislation is defeated? First of all, we are back to no law so we are back to abortion on demand as we have now. If those who hold a strong pro-life position want to defeat this law and are successful, we are back to abortion on demand. Or would I want the trimester solution as suggested by the Supreme Court, particularly with freedom of choice during that first trimester as suggested very strongly in the judgment of Madam Bertha Wilson? Maybe I come to the same conclusion. Maybe I say from my point of view that this is the best law I am going to get where the "life or the health of the mother is threatened". The earlier words used to be "in jeopardy". I do not believe that the further definition of "health" really changes matters from the earlier legislation. That is a matter for determination by a doctor. I do not think doctors have come any closer to defining the