

Code says a doctor cannot prescribe the pill. It is the Food and Drugs Act that allows it or purports to allow it. Presumably that is committing an offence.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Chairman, will the committee be given an opportunity to hear from some officials, perhaps officials from the Department of Justice, who might advise us whether amendments can be made to existing laws to give permission for the sale of certain types of contraceptive devices, and to prohibit others. We could have that evidence in order to make a decision on this?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. I am trying to establish contact with the Department of Justice in this regard.

• (12: 30 p.m.)

Mr. BROWN: I think before we make a report we should hear them.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure we will. We will also hear from the Canadian Bar Association and other associations.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I would like to suggest this is not the type of legislation that should be introduced through private members' bills at all. I have some strong reservations about the whole idea. It should certainly come as a government measure not under the subterfuge of private members' bills which, in some cases could be—I do not suggest they are—looking for some publicity.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee is not really talking about the bills at all but about the content matter and how and what this committee reports to the house will depend on the committee itself.

Mr. BASFORD: If I might comment on that, if some people are seeking publicity, I think the sponsors of these bills undoubtedly have received some publicity. It might interest the committee to know that the publicity I have received has not resulted in one unfavourable letter. Every letter I have received has been in support of the bill.

Mr. PRITTE: I do not think there is any member around this table who is not concerned with publicity at some time or another. I agree with Mr. O'Keefe. I would be glad if the government brought a measure in; but Mr. O'Keefe must know that the private members' bills have been used to advance certain ideas in the hope that the government will eventually act on the subject. If they want to bring in a good measure, that is fine.

Mr. ISABELLE: Just a few comments on this question. I agree that something should be done. We are treading, I imagine, on very slippery ground because we are dealing with words and I imagine that lots of us do not have the right definition for the right word.

A question was brought up about the legalization of birth control and limitation of child birth, which is not the same at all. One is permitted by the church. The rhythm method is permitted by the church. At the same time if we get into this field of limitation of child birth we get into a field of morality, if I may express it in that way. So I think this is a very important point that we do exactly know the definition of the word before going any further. I have a question to ask both gentlemen. When we are talking about contraceptives, what are we talking about? Are we talking about articles that are in existence on the market today or are we dealing with existing pills which are not contraceptives? They could be used as contraceptives but they are not con-