

Abortion

maturing and aging—in developing. We must see the unborn child as a human being.

Should every child not be a wanted child, you may ask. This makes the incorrect assumption that unless a child is wanted by the parent, they are not wanted, period. Simply to be unwanted becomes then a capital offence. The child itself, though, must always retain his or her right to continue living. A child is not a piece of property. There are so many couples trying to adopt children that many agencies cannot take any more names. Yet, 60,000 babies are aborted each year. It is a crying shame.

You may ask the question, do not unwanted pregnancies become abused children? Abortion has not solved the problem of battered children. In fact, since abortion has become commonplace, child abuse has increased by at least 500 per cent. These facts show that in more cases it is the so-called wanted children that are abused.

I mentioned at the beginning of my speech that guidance must be given to the woman who finds herself in the situation of being pregnant and not really wanting her baby. I believe that the medical profession has a role to play in this, one that should be giving all clients the relevant information regarding abortion, including such things as the true nature of the procedure, the nature and development of the life to be terminated, the risks to the client both during and after the abortion.

Many women, when they understand what abortion really is, the risks associated with it and the actual nature and development of the life, would look for alternatives. Are we giving them this information? Such disclosures by the medical society would lead to greater education, encouraged scientific knowledge on the abortion question, and place the onus directly on the people involved. Those who practice abortion must be held responsible for its consequences. Even the United Nations has a declaration of the rights of the child. This reads that “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after, birth”.

There is an alarming and disturbing amount of evidence, and it is growing, that the post-abortion experience may be even more traumatic than the pre-abortion period of decision-making. We must not forget that every baby who dies in an abortion has a whole family whose lives are connected with that baby: the grandparents, the aunts, uncles, cousins, sisters, brothers. Society is also closely linked with that baby. For instance, within the last year the B.C. Ministry of Social Services conducted the province's first-ever apprehension of a foetus. The seizure occurred after a woman, 36 weeks pregnant, told doctors at the Vancouver Grace Hospital that she did not intend to consent to medical treatment for her child after it was born.

The doctors used the word “child” when referring to the foetus and the social worker conferred with a supervisor and a

superintendent, and all three of them agreed that the child should be apprehended.

This shows us that society is definitely involved in one single case, and this is not an isolated case. In Ontario, a judge ordered a 38 week old foetus to be made a ward of the Belleville Children's Aid Society after its mother, who planned to give birth in an underground parking lot, refused medical treatment. I think these are landmark cases.

I commend the churches and those organizations which have sought to help by giving direction for what they deemed to be right. I would like to acknowledge the material that was sent to each Member of Parliament by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Salvation Army, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, the Coalition for Family Values, and the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. These organizations have endeavoured to help give us direction as to how we might proceed on this very, very important question.

Many people today have opted for a self-serving role in society because their vision of life is limited and based on selfish value systems. Today, we, as leaders, are struggling to give leadership to a society which seeks to do what is right in its eyes.

What do we do? I have already said that there is a need for agencies and places that will help in a time of crisis. When an unwanted pregnancy occurs, the Government has to help these agencies in these circumstances. Many churches are now coming to the assistance of people who find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy. One organization which I have already mentioned, the Salvation Army, has been at the forefront of this practice for many, many years. They must be commended and they need to be copied on what they have done.

How do we deal with this? How do we try to find the balance between making sure that the rights of the mother and the rights of the unborn are kept in proper perspective when we try to put forward legislation?

I would like to support at this time the amendment tabled by the Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer), which I feel will go a long way to reach that balance, and the personage of the woman and the personage of the unborn will be clearly recognized. I thank you for this opportunity of putting my thoughts on the record and to let the people of Fraser Valley East know where their Member stands on this very important issue, and to thank the 2,500 people of Fraser Valley East who have written to me and substantially backed me on the statement that I have made tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1930)

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all of us will agree that abortion is a very emotional, ethical, and moral issue. The differing views in this House reflect the Canadian pluralistic society, although not in