

The two reasons for exemption from the application of the law punishing abortion, namely the risk of death for the mother and the threat to her health, could have in legislation, disastrous consequences, I think, for the whole Canadian nation, if they are given basically the same value or the same importance.

In my opinion, the first motive, the danger of death for the mother, is certainly the most serious and the most justifiable. Therefore, the Canadian episcopate does not make it a moral duty for the catholic citizen and legislator to fight against any extension of the legislation in that sense for the reason that scientific progress in the medical world reduces this practice to extremely rare cases.

But with regard to abortion for reasons of physical and mental health, the Canadian episcopate maintains its strictness and condemns any attempt for its legalization. An abortion committee would have the exclusive right to judge the matter; such a legislation would result in the worse abuses and would greatly jeopardize the common good. In fact, the law would allow two doctors, the number which constitutes the majority within a committee of three members, to authorize abortions for the reasons of their choice.

We would be very credulous to believe that we can pass an act which would enable abortion to come out in the open, without increasing the number of foetal deaths. During a CTV program on December 27 last, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) confirmed our apprehension that abortion committees would make the law themselves.

He asserted that the word "health" would not be interpreted by courts of justice, but by the various therapeutic abortion committees. In other words, the decision of those committees would, in his opinion, override the law.

On February 7, 1968, Doctor Henry Fitzgibbon, of Penticton, in British Columbia, wrote to the health and welfare committee as follows:

As has been said many times at the hearing of the above-mentioned case, there is no valid medical reason for terminating pregnancy.

The requests for abortion made to doctors are invariably based on social grounds.

One can also find scientific facts in a book entitled: "The Canadian Mother and Her Child", published by the government of Canada. On page 24, it is said:

When one of the spermatozoa and the ovule meet and unite, a new life begins.

Criminal Code

This assertion is supported by Dr. Edward L. Lessel, Director of the Department of Biology at the University of San Francisco. I am quoting:

Scientific findings prove unequivocally that life begins at the time of conception.

He adds:

The rapid rate of development . . . shows us human life in its most intense stage of activity.

Therefore, it is clear that it is not only a potential life, as some would like to believe, but a real life which is recognized by the criminal code in section 209 dealing with the death of an unborn child.

To legalize therapeutic abortion on grounds of physical or mental health would alter the moral standards of an entire nation. The lack of public morality in this connection can lead a country to its downfall and its death.

Should Canada become as Poland, where 30,000 Swedish women go each year to get an abortion? A member of a parliamentary committee humourously said once to the delegates of the Canadian Medical Association, and I quote:

Canada had never seen such a large group of well-meaning criminal abortionists.

Could he truly repeat that tomorrow? I hope not.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations states that:

Each human being has an inherent right to life.

And the Declaration on the rights of the child asserts that children are entitled to some protection before and after birth. The legalization of abortion obtained for those various reasons would be as if Canada was repudiating the principles which it approved at the General Assembly.

Personally, I have proven, even if I am young, that I have confidence in life and in Canada, because I have ten children.

We do not believe, my wife and I, that having ten children occasions tremendous work or that it is a heavy task. We have confidence in the present government; we have confidence in the future and we find it is better to say that we have done something for the nation than that we should have done something.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is necessary to be positive and to do what we preach.

In concluding my remarks, I ask again that that part of the proposed legislation on abortion be taken out of the omnibus bill and