

Criminal Code

That is why it does not give a clear definition of the word "health" and resorts to the word "likely".

Now, the medical practitioner will not have to be sure that the health or life of the mother is being endangered, and any illness might be considered as threatening one's health. Consequently, it could be a valid excuse to ask for an abortion.

Mr. Speaker, if the house rejects the amendment moved by the hon. member for Gatineau, it will prove irresponsible, since the hon. members' basic duty is to be explicit. Mr. Speaker, before completing my remarks, I would like to tell the house that I am pleased to see, as I was saying at the very beginning of my speech, that the hon. member for Gatineau was not afraid to rise and to move an amendment to the bill since everything cannot be perfect from the start.

In my opinion, it is important that everyone should contribute in some way to the improvement of the legislation. That is why we are legislators and if we do not express our opinions, we do not fulfil our responsibilities and duties.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to see that the hon. member for Gatineau was not deterred by the fear of being given a good scolding by the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who do not want to understand anything. However, it is important that his colleagues, the members of his party, should take the floor to encourage him and that the members of the Ralliement Créditiste should rise to support him because he feels lonely. I think it is a pity, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore I would like to invite his colleagues to support him, as all of us should. All hon. members should be free to move amendments which might improve the legislation. Perhaps the minister thinks he has a full knowledge of everything, but I have a feeling that it would be to his advantage to listen to what people say to him, in order to improve the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have so much to say that I just do not know where to stop. My head is simply buzzing with ideas. But if we fail to delete the words "or would be likely to" in the wording of the bill, we are on the wrong track and fail to assume our responsibilities. Let us be honest enough to ask ourselves where this law is likely to lead us.

[Mr. Fortin.]

Could any member or the minister tell me about a single case in which under the law, a doctor would not be allowed to perform an abortion?

There would not be a single case, where abortion would be forbidden. Indeed all the doors are left wide open, every pretext and every excuse is good, because the government fails to assume its responsibilities and, under all sorts of phony excuses is legislating without giving us the slightest assurance, that the law will be effective, in some cases at least.

The government is introducing a bill that will open every door; and tells us: Here's for you, all cases are permitted. Go ahead. Abortion is legalized. No more problems, thanks to the great, big Liberal party.

Mr. Speaker, this is an irresponsible approach. The minister does not realize the awkwardness of his position and we would all admire him if he had the guts to, urge his colleague, the hon. member for Hull to enter the debate instead of merely telling us that we are wrong.

Mr. Speaker, ministers would profit by considering what ordinary members are doing. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) is wrong when he says that it is merely a subtle distinction, and house should be enlightened as to the exact meaning of the words *probablement*, *certainement* and *santé*. Otherwise there will always be some grave doubt in our mind and, as I said earlier, any doubt involves a risk which, in the present case, may lead us to commit a criminal act.

In conclusion, I urge for the third time the hon. member for Hull to tell us whether our statements are true or not.

• (5:20 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) I extend my congratulations to the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont) on taking a stand that he feels he should take regardless of the position of his party. However, any similarity between my views and those of the hon. member for Lotbinière on this question end there. That, indeed, is the reason for my taking the floor for just a few minutes.

I want to say that I feel, and I am sure most if not all of my colleagues agree with me, that this amendment must be rejected. The hon. member for Lotbinière suggested.