

Criminal Code

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): There is no unanimous consent.

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I am told that I am about to make the same speech. I speak about my hon. friend for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch). I wish he could do the same thing. He has been here a long time, and when he defends his bills he can do it very well.

So, as far as this bill is concerned, I am against it. I am defending an amendment and I think I have the right to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané) who earlier made to this debate a contribution he thinks important. I, for one, do not feel that he should be proud of it. He gave us new arguments, should we run short.

But when the hon. member for Matane has acquired a little more experience, first, he will know that he can speak only to the Speaker and he will know also that he cannot speak from anywhere but from his seat. Any member has to know that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. I want to remind the hon. member that the Chair exists specially to call hon. members to order.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Beauce (Mr. Rodrigue) introduced an amendment to the effect that the words: "or health"

be deleted from clause 18 of Bill C-150.

I support this amendment, Mr. Speaker, because I sincerely believe that if these words are left in the bill, they would open the door to many abuses and give rise to fantastic interpretations and to complications which we might regret some day, and perhaps soon, after this bill is passed.

I objected yesterday to an amendment of that kind, but I objected because yesterday's amendment did not go far enough, while the one before us now would completely delete the words "or health" so as to make the bill very clear.

As for me, Mr. Speaker, I accept the idea that whenever the mother's life is endangered, the medical practitioner, who must procure the abortion, or the doctor who has attended that woman during her pregnancy, could perform an abortion.

● (5:00 p.m.)

People speak at length on such a broad subject, on health, a word that is by no

means defined in the law. It is liable to the most fanciful interpretations, as indeed has been the case up to now, since in the evidence given, in favour as well as against Bill C-150—or Bill C-195 previously introduced—or also as regards certain bills submitted by the members in order to make the law on abortion, more lenient, since that evidence has shown that doctors, lawyers or social workers allowed themselves the most fanciful interpretations of the word "health".

Besides, we know that wherever abortion is performed on request, some women will seize upon any excuse to justify abortion.

Mr. Speaker, one could ask certain questions. Why are some women sickly? Why should or would certain women tend to ask termination of their pregnancy for reasons of health?

Let us put the question frankly, sincerely: In what situation do too many of our Canadian homes find themselves at the present time?

Let us just look at the results of surveys made by our unions who follow closely the situation of our workers. A fantastic number of people, for a country as rich as Canada is supposed to be, have to content themselves with living in an unbearable situation, in the type of situation found in the so-called underdeveloped countries.

For instance, let us look at the housing problem. How many housing units are clearly inadequate, for Canada, to house families properly, to house the families we are entitled to have?

Our housing system or economy clearly does not meet the needs of Canadian families. First of all, there is a housing shortage. That is a fact. A lot of housing units are no better than slums and while some of them might be considered as decent, comfortable houses, they only have one or two bedrooms, and seldom three. Under those circumstances, how can children develop properly in houses that are much too small?

When a family finds itself in such a situation, they ask themselves: Should we have more children?

Mr. Speaker, economists and social workers have looked into the matter. Problems have been found to exist but adequate solutions have seldom been proposed.

There is another point which is very important and must not be overlooked. Since the family income is too often inadequate, the young wife must work.