

She said: Mr. Speaker, may I say that the Parliamentary Secretary has explained the matter before us very well. I have no wish to prevent other members from having their turn. I am not dropping these requests because I am satisfied to go without them, but because I feel it would be exceedingly unfair to hold up the House when there are other members waiting.

Last session, and on October 28, 1970 of this session, I placed a number of requests on the Order Paper for the production of papers. The government has been unwilling to produce the reports requested, basically on the ground that these reports were made under private arrangements with researchers and that the government was not at liberty to divulge their contents. I think that is the basis for the government's refusal in the case of these reports.

In this motion today, I am asking that an order of the House do issue for a copy of the study "Causes et conséquences démographiques économiques et social de la pratique de la méthode thermique de régulation des naissances". I do not think this should be a subject kept under wraps privately by the department. On a former occasion, I quoted the remarks of someone who had engaged in research projects for the Department of National Health and Welfare who said he felt that most people doing research would be only too glad to have the public informed of their findings. He said he felt that most researchers felt exactly that way. Therefore, I should like to suggest that in future the department, and the government as a whole, consider changing the ground rules relating to disclosure of these reports. I think the government should lay down the general rule that researchers are told that, under ordinary circumstances, their reports will be available to the public. There is no reason under heaven that I can possibly see for withholding this report.

In the meantime, as long as the present ground rules obtain I think the government—in this case the Department of National Health and Welfare—should at least inquire whether or not there is any objection on the part of those who did the research work or headed up the research team to making these reports public. Quite frankly, I think the government is in a very vulnerable position in this regard. It is using taxpayers' money to get this sort of work done by scientists and others who have every interest in giving the facts to the public, yet the government is refusing to make these facts known. I believe this is particularly the case with regard to the resolutions standing in my name, since most of them have to do with the business of family planning or family counselling, with contraceptive methods, and with the effects, social, economic and otherwise, of, in this case, the thermic method of regulating birth control. The thermic method is, of course, used in connection with the rhythm method of birth control. I think the people of this country have a right to be told the effects of this method of birth control.

I am glad to see that in another regard the department is beginning to loosen up a little. Back in April, I asked for a report that had just been made by a special committee appointed by the Minister of National Health and

### *Birth Control Methods*

Welfare (Mr. Munro) which was to advise the Food and Drug Directorate with regard to all aspects of the safety and efficacy of oral contraceptives marketed in Canada. I asked for the report in April and we received it before Christmas, which is not too bad. I suggest that if a report of this importance can be made available, then some of the other reports which do not cover so wide a field also ought to be made available to the public at a time when it is imperative that we examine birth control methods and contraceptives in as full a way as possible.

**Mr. Baldwin:** They have a long period of gestation for reporting.

**Mrs. MacInnis:** Perhaps they do, but ordinary women do not. Pregnancy does not take all that length of time and cannot wait. This is exactly the point I want to make.

The thermic method used in the rhythm method has to do with temperature, and there are three or four different ways of working that out with the period of ovulation and so on. I will spare hon. members from going into all the fine details at this time. There will be other opportunities to do this, I am confident, particularly if the government insists on keeping so much of this information from us.

In the bulletin that was published by the Food and Drug Directorate embodying the report of the special committee on oral contraceptives, there is this paragraph dealing with the rhythm method:

The contraceptive effectiveness of the rhythm method if correctly taught, understood and consistently practiced, especially if the temperature rhythm method is used, could achieve a low pregnancy rate of 1.8 per 100 women per year. However, statistics show that, possibly because of irregular cycles, or inexpert and careless timing, the result is a pregnancy rate of 25 per 100 women per year.

This represents an effective failure rate of 25 per cent. This is a very serious failure rate and means that there are going to be a great many unwanted births for those people who use the rhythm method. As I say, I have nothing against people using the rhythm method if it is in accordance with their religious beliefs, but I think these women ought to be told that among women who use the rhythm method one out of four will become pregnant. This method is at the bottom of the efficiency scale of effective methods of birth control.

• (5:10 p.m.)

This is not unconnected with the estimate made just before Christmas by the head of the Family Planning Association of Montreal, Dr. Serge Mongeau that in the preceding calendar year there were between 5,000 and 10,000 illegal abortions in the province of Quebec alone. I use this figure only because I happen to have it in respect of that one province. Let me point out that because we have not approached the birth control situation in the way we should have, by getting the information to the people through enough clinics, along with birth control devices, we have this vast number of illegal abortions. They take place in every province.