

parlours. It has to be faced now while we are in good health and while we have the capacity to act with compassion.

It is time to put fear aside. It is time for courage. This is not an easy decision for Parliament to make. It is not an easy decision for us to frame. I know it is hard. I know my bill may not be quite the right answer or quite the right motion, but let us make a decision about whether we have the right to withdraw surely and truly from treatment if we are terminally ill? Does a doctor have the right to be protected if, in fact, he gives us maximum comfort from pain and suffering? This is common practice in Canada today. We must either charge the doctors or change the law, but let us not live in this grey, middle area or we will be, as some of the others say, on that slippery slope.

This is the inevitable life and death question for all of us and all those we love and care for. Since I first raised this in the House of Commons I have had members of Parliament from all sides come and tell me: "I want to get up and speak on this but I will cry because I went through it with my parents" or "I went through it with a friend and I saw them suffer more than they needed to suffer when they were begging to be let go." It does not occur too often, but if it occurs one time it is too many and I know it occurs many times in many people's lives.

This motion may not be quite right but I urge a free vote. If this is the method to get the discussion going, let us at least get the discussion going in this Parliament. Let us resolve to act in this Parliament and, if not in this Parliament, to ready ourselves to do what the majority of Canadians want, which is to die in peace.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I never thought, until not long ago, that we would be having this debate tonight in this Parliament. I think I can say that I have some knowledge of the issue, having lost my father and my mother-in-law, my wife's mother, in the past 18 months, both from a cancer. I had to suffer the loss of beloved family members who both died from very serious dis-

eases. They were not the first, but they were recent cases.

[*English*]

What we are discussing today is not whether a doctor has to provide treatment against the will of a patient. That is not so. That is not what we are debating tonight. It is not even in the motion. What we are not debating either is whether or not a patient has the right to refuse medical treatment. Clearly a patient has that right and is protected by the Criminal Code of Canada. A patient has that right, Mr. Speaker.

What we are, however, debating is whether we will give the right to any human being to kill another human being. That is the debate that we are having right now.

We can say: Yes, but it is not just any ordinary human being, it is a human being who is going to die anyway. Perhaps that is so. It is a human being in the case of what is happening in Holland now whose life is not worth living. I am not exaggerating the point when I read this headline entitled, "Euthanasia for newborns who face 'poor quality of life' gaining acceptability". That is what we are dealing with and that is what we are debating tonight.

• (2030)

Why are we debating this? We are debating this because of an unfortunate person who is very ill in British Columbia and who I believe has been used by others in a propaganda campaign on this issue. That is sad for all of us as a society, and it is particularly sad for that woman. Of course I am referring to Mrs. Sue Rodriguez.

Last week it came to our attention that the so-called protector of Mrs. Rodriguez who came here to testify on her behalf admitted to newspapers that he had forged the signature of Mrs. Rodriguez on certain documents. Yet that person is the one who asks us to trust him or others like him with the life of an individual when he was not even trustworthy enough not to forge the signature of someone else. That is why we are here, because of that. It is sad, but let us bear it in mind when we are having the discussion.

I see an hon. member who is a medical doctor. He will no doubt have other concerns as well, such as the trust between the patient and the medical practitioner. What does it do to the medical practitioner when we have a situation such as the one that exists in Holland where people will decide whether or not to enter a hospital