

*Criminal Code*

the patient would obviate the danger of illegality. No one will force a doctor against his conscience to perform an abortion. So far as society is concerned this approach would give to society the right to have children who will have an opportunity to become good citizens. We might look at the pedigree of those young men who were convicted for a mass rape the other day. Look at the kind of homes they came from and the conditions in which their parents were forced to bring them up. If you look at these things you will understand what I mean when I talk about the need of society to be in a position to ensure children an opportunity to become good and wanted citizens.

The argument has been made that in other countries with wider abortion laws there have been difficulties. There has been a tremendous increase in the number of abortions performed. This is true partly because there had been a tremendous backlog of requests for abortions to be dealt with. There were women who were formerly unable to obtain abortions and who wished to obtain them. In addition, there was a great deal of unnecessary red tape and difficulty in ironing out the bugs in the systems in these countries for dealing with abortion.

I suggest that one of the things we might have is a referral centre or clinic to which women who want and need an abortion could be referred. Such a clinic would have a trained staff including doctors, as is the case in respect of birth control clinics, so that a woman could come there and have her abortion dealt with in the very early stages of pregnancy without waiting for the stage at which it becomes dangerous, difficult and disgusting even to the physician who has to deal with it.

Birth control is the first line of defence. It is not legal in this country, and we need much more widespread knowledge of contraceptives and much more widespread use of them. Birth control would cut down the need for abortion to a great degree but would not do away with the need for abortion. There would still be a great many cases where it would be required.

I conclude by making a plea to the members of this house. I shall do so by quoting from the explanatory notes to my bill:

In a pluralistic society such as Canada it is possible in a number of matters to allow some people to carry out their own beliefs in action without infringing on the freedom of others to follow a different course of action.

Such is the matter of abortion. The purpose of this bill is to permit those who believe in the necessity of abortion to seek it legally. Those whose conscience is opposed to abortion may continue, as in the past, to have nothing to do with it.

In view of the fact that we shall never in our lifetime, even in the lifetime of the youngest member here, reach a consensus on this matter, surely we should be thankful that heaven has made it possible for us to have two right courses. There is the right, on the one hand, of people who believe that abortion is criminal and against their better judgment to have nothing to do with the legislation. On the other hand, we can have freedom of conscience and action for those people who believe in the necessity for abortion and who believe in the justice of updating the abortion laws of this country. I do not see any reason why even those members who believe that abortion is wrong cannot weigh very carefully the measures in this bill and then search their consciences to see whether there is anything very wrong in letting an amendment pass which they do not have to be bound by in order to permit those people who do believe in it to have freedom of conscience. Although the abortion section of the bill may be wrong in their minds, they would be voting for many other measures which are long overdue. I ask, what could be fairer than to have the right for both sides in this matter to follow their consciences?

**Mr. Ralph W. Stewart (Cochrane):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate because I feel it is my solemn duty to go on record in opposition to one of the clauses of the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code. I do it even at the risk of being considered uncivilized by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis).

**Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway):** No, I said I respected such people.

**Mr. Stewart (Cochrane):** It is a privilege for me to belong to a government which respects individual opinion and conscience. There are those in this house who have claimed in recent days that members of the government are being coerced into accepting the whole bill. Nothing could be farther from the truth. If that were the case I would not be standing freely in my place at this moment to express an opinion contrary to the proposals of the government. The right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) said that members are not robots or computers to be pushed around by the Prime Minister. No, we are not computers or robots and the Prime