

*Right to Life*

Another "yes" response reads:

I also do not know whether a foetus is a human life. However this does not prevent me from forming a belief based on the available information. I strongly believe that human life begins at conception—for those who disagree I have a question—Can you afford to be wrong?

A third reply reads:

Women are screaming "I have a right to control my body". Let me say as a woman, that I have a "right" to say no before jumping in the sack with someone. That is my ultimate control over my body—when I choose—to engage in—intercourse and a child is conceived—there is where my rights end and the right of another life begins.

● (1730)

Of the correspondence which I received—and there were in excess of 1,700 letters—the most touching and heart-warming letter was one from a nurse. I should like to quote it:

As a nurse working with first and second trimester abortions, I would like to make you aware of some concerns I, and also my colleagues, have.

Abortions are legal here up to 20 weeks gestation. They are done by injecting the amniotic fluid with digoxin—to kill the baby, and prostaglandin—to induce labour. The woman then delivers a dead baby. Many of these foetuses are larger than those being cared for in intensive care—dates are very unsure sometimes and abortions are done past 20 weeks... On Wednesday, 17 December, someone at the lab got fed up and sent back a foetus which was over 500 grams (or viable weight) and it had to have a death certificate filled out. The weight on the lab report was 640 grams. The weight on the report for vital statistics read 560 grams.

Before extra billing was banned, we saw many foetuses larger than this—

The abortion committee approves all requests. The diagnosis is always given as depression... For my one and a half years here I have seen only one abortion done because of foetal abnormalities and none done for medical reasons of the mother's.

Aside from these moral and legal questions, second trimester abortions are very dangerous. The woman's body is not ready for labour and she often experiences severe pain... The placenta rarely delivers spontaneously and the woman bleeds profusely—

Another problem we have is that sometimes the doctor can't safely inject the woman so a procedure is done that results in a live birth. We are told to wrap this gasping, wriggling, crying infant, and leave it to die... One was born weighing one kilogram and was taken to intensive care but was left to die since it was an abortion.

This personal issue is a central issue to me. It deals with the sanctity of life. I cannot prove, nor can I disprove, whether or not a foetus has a soul.

I was amazed that my seat-mate from New Westminster—Coquitlam said that a mother had more rights than a child. Are we to wind up having first-class and second-class citizens? This bothers me.

I should like to draw an analogy. If I went hunting and saw a bush move, prudence would dictate that I should not start shooting into the bush in case it was not the animal I was hunting but another human being. That same sort of prudence dictates that we do not terminate foetuses unless we can absolutely, irreversibly prove that they are not human beings.

What we do in Government is to look after the disadvantaged. What can be more disadvantaged than a foetus?

As I read into the record earlier, let me repeat:

I strongly believe that human life begins at conception—for those who disagree I have a question—Can you afford to be wrong?

We cannot afford to be wrong. We do not know the answers. We have to say yes to this Bill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Madam Speaker, first I want to thank you for recognizing me. I will try to shorten my remarks because I realize that although we have little time left a number of Members would like to speak to this motion.

Madam Speaker, there was a time when charity was a virtue, but these days it has become an organization. There was a time as well when education was dispensed by a system, by institutions, schools, families, and by the Church. Oftentimes nowadays they have lost sight of certain values, and the Parliament of Canada is fully expected to fill the void created by undeveloped values.

Madam Speaker, I enjoy these theoretical debates because they enable me to discuss openly with people and, without accusing those who are for or against, or without making anyone feel guilty, I will vote against this motion because, as the Hon. Member for Argenteuil—Papineau (Mrs. Bourgault) said earlier, we are not necessarily speaking to the basic issue.

I see my colleague from Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) on the other side who stated in an interview somewhere that he had already changed his mind about capital punishment, and when I began the debate on capital punishment, Madam Speaker, I was like him, I was in favour of the death penalty.

I once asked myself this question: If, on the eve of the vote in the House of Commons, my son were killed in a bank robbery, would my vote necessarily be the same if, instead of being the victim, he were the killer? If I am not sure I would still vote the same way, I must forget my emotions and take a dispassionate view.

Madam Speaker, I am here because I want to try and build a better world. I won't make a criminal of my daughter if some day she says: Dad, I don't want this baby. Madam Speaker, I would do everything I could to prevent her. I would tell her: Isabelle, we can raise that baby, we will take care of it because it's your child. But, Madam Speaker, I would not let my daughter go to court with a bunch of lawyers, all because she would be considered to have committed a crime.

In fact, my only alternative, Madam Speaker, would be to dig into my pockets and give her some money and tell her to get an abortion in the United States. But I don't want to do that. I don't want to put people through a judicial system that would put a terrific burden of guilt on them. But I also think that using abortion as a means of contraception is absolutely degrading. Yes, degrading. However, legislation is not going to make abortion any less degrading. I find it depressing and repugnant. I can find nothing positive in that kind of outlook.

However, Madam Speaker, branding my children and your children as criminals is not going to help me build a better world for those children. I do not really like the implications of free choice but to me, the important thing is not to criminalize