

*Abortion*

unloved child. I think that is the issue and the basis and the decision-making process that should be exercised in this place.

When we talk about the conflict which exists on the fundamental question of abortion, it is often forgotten that right across the board, wherever a group or individual stands on the question of abortion, there is much common ground among all participants. No one values an abortion. No one considers it to be a good or desirable alternative. Abortion is undesirable. What we all recognize on all sides of the debate is that abortions can be substantially reduced and should be substantially reduced because I believe there is the national will to reduce them.

Everyone recognizes that abortions can be avoided in almost every case by better sex education. When I speak of better sex education, I am thinking about parts of our country even having some sex education. There are many parts of Canada where there is none. There must be a national will to change that because that is the method of reducing what everyone recognizes as being undesirable, namely, the number of abortions.

They can be reduced by better planning. They can be reduced by a greater sense of responsibility on the part of women and on the part of men in their individual sex lives. They can be reduced by improved programs for pregnant women. They can be reduced by improved programs for new babies and by enlightened adoption policies.

We can take steps in this country and show leadership in this place to make women feel more comfortable with their pregnancy, more comfortable with the idea of bearing a child. We can assist them to have healthier children. We can do more on this than we have in the past.

I regret that this debate is not seized by the Government as an opportunity to bring forward a policy which would reduce abortions, a policy which would cover some of the bases I just described.

[*Translation*]

This Government has failed to table concrete measures for debate in the House, measures that it is in a position to promote, to reduce the number of abortions in our society. Personally, I regret that the Government has failed to act and has failed to draft a policy to reduce the number of abortions with the exception of those allowed under the Criminal Code.

[*English*]

We should all fight against abortion. I think all Canadians know that a foetus cannot be regarded the way tonsils or gallstones are regarded. There are greater implications of which all Canadians are aware. What is required is a government commitment to do something about it, a commitment which has not been expressed in this place. There must be an encouragement for provincial Governments in their responsibilities which has not been given by this Government.

I conclude by observing for myself that while I would like to see legislation brought in along the lines that I have described, I would not be able to vote for the resolution before us in its present form. I indicated at the outset and want to reiterate that this is a free vote. Members of our caucus will be voting without the whip being imposed. I know that many of my colleagues are looking forward to participating in the debate. I regret very much the failure of the Government to participate in the debate on the substance of the issue of abortion.

• (1610)

**Ms. Marion Dewar (Hamilton Mountain):** I suppose it is with some trepidation, Mr. Speaker, that I rise to speak to this resolution. I think the danger in front of the Canadian people today is the fact that they think we are dealing with an abortion issue. That is sheer hypocrisy. What we have in front of us is a resolution. We do not have any legislation. This resolution is particularly vague. It talks about the early stages of a pregnancy when an abortion would be allowed and the later stages when there would be more restrictions. We do not know what the stages are. Are we supposed to make a decision about the stage at which a child is viable? What is it we are supposed to be dealing with?

We heard the Minister say after the Supreme Court decision that it was now time for leadership, that there was an urgency to bring forward legislation. Six months have passed without any legislation, and I think it is really important we recognize that the number of abortions in Canada have not increased. We have to look at what is in front of us and what this Parliament is going to do. We know this Parliament is sitting in its last stages. We know it can only go for another year at most and probably not. We know that whatever the resolution of this marathon debate we are entering into today, it will certainly not bring forward any legislation.

I think it is sheer hypocrisy of the Government to pretend it is doing something when it knows it will be another Parliament that will have to deal with it. I really take exception to that because if we as politicians want to reduce the amount of cynicism about politics in our country today, we have to be accountable and upright with the people. That is not what we are doing today with this resolution.

The Supreme Court has made the decision that it will hear the Borowski case in another three months. That will be a decision which will certainly affect what kind of legislation, if any, will be brought forward. It seems to me that is just another reason this resolution should not be in front of the House today. I think the crass hypocrisy of the Government is something the people of Canada have to be aware of.

It is not the case that we are afraid to deal with any legislation. If the Government wants to bring a Bill before us, we will deal with it and decide whether it is good, bad or indifferent, proposing or not proposing amendments. What we are being asked to do here is to put forward amendments on a resolution that is vague. We do not know when those early