

Criminal Code

met any such cases. On the other hand, Roy J. Hefferman, a famous American obstetrician, says that to perform a therapeutic abortion is to disregard the new methods of treating troubles inherent to pregnancy or to begrudge the patient the time such methods require.

These amendments are setting back the medical clock; they imply that today's medicine is not advanced enough to save the foetus while protecting the life or health of the mother.

The Minister of Justice is showing his contempt for physicians by defending his bill so stubbornly and by turning down the advice of experts. This is to laugh at the physicians who during the past 25 years have made fantastic progress and have cured illnesses which 50 years ago were incurable and to suggest that since medicine is now advancing, we want to hold it back.

The government members are unable to accept the scientific arguments which are put to us and which we receive in the mail every day. Moreover, the inefficiency of the therapeutic abortion is proven by an American study which indicates that on 1,600,000 deliveries, the death rate is 0.98 per cent on 1,000 in the hospitals where abortions are performed and .087 on 1,000 in the hospitals where they are prohibited.

Considering the scarcity of the cases where the therapeutic abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother, we can ask ourselves if legislation to allow it is justified. Thus, if the legislator wants, through legislation, rule on those extremely uncommon cases, he should include in that legislation some very strict guide lines similar to those advocated by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Mr. Speaker, we have moved in the house some amendments similar to the provisions included in the abortion legislation by the American College of Obstetricians. No amendment accepted in the United States and included in the American legislation has been accepted by the minister.

Why? They are experienced and have been performing the so-called therapeutic abortion for years and today in the light of experience, they say to us, with figures to support their claim, that this legislation is inoperative, that it was not supposed to save the life of the mother or to take care of her health, but rather to protect the thousands of physicians who want to perform abortions openly and do not want to be affected by the legislation.

[Mr. Rondeau.]

It is mainly for that purpose that the Minister of Justice fights for his bill with such stubbornness, because some physicians will benefit from this legislation. They will no longer be indictable.

But no attention is paid to medical experts, hospitals, health officials in Canada. The intent is to protect those business or medical swindlers.

Mr. Speaker, I have here the newsletter of the Catholic Nurses of Canada, for March-April, and at page 56, it says:

Cases when pregnancy—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister of Justice on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Perhaps instead of reading this document, the hon. member could be encouraged to table it to save the time of the house.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I shall table those papers, and I accept the minister's suggestion with pleasure. But, at the same time, I would ask him to table in the house, all the letters of protest that he has received from physicians. If that is agreeable to him, I am willing to produce those papers and letters of protest. Is he prepared to do so? I am waiting for his answer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to call it ten o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has called it ten o'clock. I would like to point out to him that there are only a few seconds left before his times expires. The house might perhaps allow the hon. member to use up the thirty seconds he has left to finish his speech.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Rondeau: I am extremely touched by the kindness of the minister.

On page 56, one reads, and I quote:

There are so few, if any, cases where the pregnancy really endangers the life of the mother, that legalizing abortion in those cases would not constitute, quantitatively, a serious menace to the common good.

Mr. Speaker, I have here many more documents. I shall use them another time.