

*Criminal Code*

Concerning the amendment under study, when it says *certainement* or *probablement*, we find that the wording of this legislation is much too vague, because a pregnant woman will be able to get an abortion on any ground. Even here, doctors have questioned the merits of this argument and their experience proved to them that even the committees of doctors once they start practicing abortion, accept more or less any reason given by the patient.

To corroborate my argument, here is an excerpt from the brief submitted by the Quebec Association of Medical Boards and I quote:

It is universally admitted by all serious obstetricians that the cases where therapeutic abortion would really save the life of the mother have become extremely scarce and are getting even scarcer with the progress of science.

It is alleged that therapeutic abortion would certainly or probably endanger the life of the mother but we think that this argument is not valid.

We have also here all the evidence of the doctors given on page 606 of the proceedings of the standing committee on health and welfare on the same bill, in which these words by Dr. Whyte are reported, and I quote:

Yes, I think they should include mental disorders.

I know it is difficult to define this area and those who have tried to find such a definition have had difficulties. For some people, this includes even social balance. For example the birth of a child can cause a complete upheaval in the way of living.

And Dr. Whyte has this to say about health on page 695:

That is a very hard word to define, I agree; you can define it as meaning happiness if you like.

• (8:10 p.m.)

We can also read at page 667 of the report submitted by the Hôtel Dieu du Sacré Cœur de Jésus, of Dolbeau, and I quote:

We feel that the health of the mother is an elastic criterion which may involve rather wide interpretations of the law, particularly when psychiatric reasons are taken into account.

We may also read, at page 682 of the same report, the evidence given by Dr. Quigley, and I quote:

We submit that your committee and the government have recommended a change in the law to include health grounds, without adequate information on such a vital issue and without any definition of the meaning of the word "health".

We are here legislating on health, and the text of the law fails to define the word "health".

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At page 486, Dr. Quigley goes on saying and I quote:

The word "health" is used rather loosely. Are you talking about a cold in the nose? Are you talking about a girl who comes into your office and says that she is so upset at being pregnant and so forth? Somebody can say that this girl is really upset and her health is jeopardized. Is this serious enough for abortion?

I am not being facetious when I state that somebody could say, "I am so upset; I am so nervous about this pregnancy that you have to abort me." Now, her health at this particular moment is interfered with. She is a nervous, upset, anxious, possibly depressed, woman. Is this going to be sufficient justification for terminating that pregnancy?

Thus, the word "health" is not defined and it is felt that any meaning can be applied to it. Furthermore, at page 488, one can read the question asked by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) and I quote:

I gather that you are not happy about the inclusion of the words "and health", the health of the pregnant woman, as proposed in the Criminal Code.

And Dr. Quigley answered:

I am very unhappy because I do not know what is meant...

...by health. And here is what Jack Walters said about this, and I quote from page 540 of the report:

How you are going to change this law is something that disturbs many of us.

I think the omnibus bill, which has already been submitted, extends it into a field which is going to be very difficult to interpret, and I would submit that we are getting out of a frying pan into a fire. "Health" as defined by the World Health Organization or by a final year medical student on an examination paper, entails a tremendous area—economic, social and emotional.

Again, it is going to come down to interpretation of what you mean, what we in London mean, or what somebody in Ottawa means by "health"... This is going to be the problem in including "health" as well as "life".

The wording of the bill refers to health and states that life begins at birth, when medical authorities tell that life begins long before birth. This is what dismays the medical profession.

On page 541 of the report, Dr. Walters says:

There is difference of opinion in the medical profession. When you have a group discussing this in a specialty, or in a multi-specialty—the general practitioner group—you have differences