

*Private Members' Business*

If we are going to deal with the issues of quality of life they are going to be the hardest issues we are ever going to deal with. They are the ones our people need us to deal with it seems to me. We are well past the issues of quantity of life. We are into the issues of what do you do for a population where we are going to see thousands more cases like my mother and Sue Rodriguez.

We know how to keep people living longer. We know how to make the quantity of life issues produce for us longer, healthier and hopefully happier lives. That means we have to begin to face quality of life questions. This is one of them.

I do not pretend for a minute that I want to be a doctor who would ever want to do what Jack Kevorkian is doing. I could not do it. I know I could not do it. In Dr. Kevorkian's case at least, with the greatest respect for him, if there is a case this morning where he has broken his word and gone back on it then that is awful.

I understood what he was trying to do was to say to people who needed the preparation of a solution that could be dripped through an intravenous tube by flipping a switch when you chose to do so. It is I presume assisting in suicide. It would be in the same way as if my colleague sitting beside me were incapable of getting a glass of water to take the pills he had to end his own life, which is legal. If I went and got that glass of water and put it there for him, would that be the aiding and abetting of a suicide? I suspect it would be.

Should that be a criminal act? Of course not. How can it possibly be imagined that it is reasonable to say to someone who dedicates his life to care giving that when the best care is to aid someone to get out of that misery that it cannot be done? Someone is in a situation which they want out of. You know they want out of it and there is nothing left in their hope. They have no hope left whatsoever and they choose to die. It is a horrible thing. Even if that glass of water created some peace on the way out, I do not know whether I could give it in that circumstance. I know whoever did would be doing a service, as terrible as that is to think.

I will never forget the day when I had to think through all these questions, ever. I suppose we all go through that in our families. We are going to go through it more and more.

Ms. Rodriguez' quotes are all here. We could read them into the record. There is a moving op-ed page she

did. One of the other moving pieces was an article in *The Ottawa Citizen* quoting a book I had forgotten. It was called *Man's Search for Meaning*.

Victor Frankl wrote this book having survived the horrors of the Holocaust. He came out of it and talked about the experiences of all those he faced those things with. He said that if there is a purpose in life at all there must be a purpose in suffering and dying. No man can tell the other what this purpose is. Each must find out for himself and must accept the responsibility that his answer prescribes.

• (1550 )

It goes on, in effect, to say that one has to choose everything now. We have to choose the way we will live and ultimately we are going to be choosing the way we die. We recognized that a long time ago when we said that if someone took their life they did not commit a criminal act.

I think the hon. member's motion is about the notion that if somebody assists someone to do something that he or she chooses to do then should that person be criminally liable, as horrible as in some ways people find that? I have had that experience and entirely accept the reaction the member for Parkdale—High Park had in terms of when there is uncertainty about the consequences. I do not debate one moment the notion of whether somebody should end a coma. I do not think that is the issue here and I do not think it is the issue the hon. member is referring to in his motion.

The motion is about when somebody has clearly defined for themselves the course of action. I accept all the questions that the chairman of the justice committee asked and it is entirely appropriate that he should ask them. However, I wish that the justice committee, when confronted with Ms. Rodriguez, had taken on the case and asked the questions there so that it could have defined something that would have allowed us to move as a Parliament, rather than simply pushing it back out and leaving us with only this way of getting the matter to the floor of the House. That is a shame.

I congratulate the member. As emotional as this issue will be for all of us it is the kind of issue we must deal with. I hope we will get on with dealing with those issues because only we can. It must not be left entirely to governments and oppositions. It will not get dealt with that way.