

*Criminal Code*

from the remarks just made by the Minister of Justice, that he is completely unaware of it. I should like to tell him that we are not legislating about trucks but about human beings, who do not grow like mushrooms and that there is no such thing as spontaneous generation. We are deciding about their life: grow or die, or die or live, according to the decision of the Minister of Justice.

It is not a question of starting or stopping a truck. Since we are discussing life itself, I do not mind being called to order, but there are limits. When we talk of abortion, I agree that we should stick to the subject. However, we should at least be given the chance to speak on the amendment itself.

I was saying that birth is not the beginning of life, but only a stage. Therefore, when we want to establish therapeutic committees in the hospitals, impose no restriction and adopt a law which will oblige the doctors to practice abortion with the approval of this famous therapeutic committee, not only do we contribute to the murder of a human being but we also violate the freedom of the individuals who will have to commit that crime.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious situation. The Medical Association of the province of Quebec spoke categorically against the bill, not as a whole, but on that particular point. The Canadian Medical Association also spoke against it, all of it. The medical practitioners want to practice freely. I feel it is obvious that nothing more is being proposed in this amendment. But, on the other hand, since we must consider the subject itself, I feel I was not out of order when I said that birth was not the beginning of life, but a stage.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many things we could say that I do not know where to begin.

A statement on abortion made by the Canadian episcopate and published in *L'Église de Montréal* reads as follows:

Consequences of the proposed amendment

The proposed amendment is well known. According to it, those who will perform an abortion will be, as in the past, liable to life imprisonment, but a qualified medical practitioner will be able to perform an abortion when the continuation of the pregnancy of a woman would or would be likely to endanger her life or health, provided it is performed in an accredited hospital and provided a certificate in writing has been obtained from the therapeutic abortion committee of that hospital. This proposed amendment urges us to make the following remarks.

Not only does this amendment allow for a direct and voluntary interference with an innocent's life, but it opens the door to the broadest interpretations.

This is exactly the purpose of this amendment and amendments Nos. 22, 23, 31, 39, 40 and 41, which are meant to clarify this legislation, and not to object to it, so as to enable any qualified medical practitioner of an accredited hospital to perform or not to perform abortion as he decides. I quote again the same article:

As can be noticed in the press and on the air, our people are already expressing opinions which reveal an obvious and alarming decline in the respect due to a child's life before his birth.

For instance, some merely see in the proposed amendment now under consideration a first step towards the official recognition of the "right to abortion" at will. Others see already in the amendment itself the possibility of making abortion available in a great many cases.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal separately with two points.

First, "the official recognition of the right to abortion at will."

The bill, according to clauses 14, 15 and others dealing with abortion, do not specify in which case abortion should be authorized.

There are a great many cases that can be foreseen, after discussing the matter with several doctors. I think we cannot pass a legislation to allow abortion in all cases, or every woman who requests it.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation we are going to pass must be restricted to certain cases where abortion is necessary, since, according to briefs submitted by the Canadian Medical Association and by the Quebec Medical Association, such cases are becoming increasingly scarce, due to the scientific progress of medicine.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, the bill is only a first step towards the right to abortion at will. In other words, if a mother asks a doctor for an abortion, the doctor procures it.

If another mother who does not have the same illness as the first and whose pregnancy does not have any ill effects on her health asks the doctor for an abortion, the doctor will have to do the abortion whatever the motives the patient may have in asking for it.

Another mother may tell a doctor, she is sick, when actually her sickness is psychological and temporary, and ask for an abortion even if neither her health nor her life are in any way endangered. The doctor will then have to do the abortion.

● (5:20 p.m.)

The minister will say: There is always the hospital's therapeutic abortion committee. If that is so, then that committee should be free