Right to Life

elective surgery is backed up and operating theatres are constantly tied up. Abortionists would like to force the other hospitals and doctors into accepting the backlog. That must be prevented at all costs. Never do I want to see individuals and institutions forced into the taking of life of those who are classified as unwanted by a society that cannot be bothered with the question, let alone try to find an answer.

In most of the disagreements and arguments that have taken place between pro-lifers and pro-abortionists, the focal point has been the issue of contraception. Those who favour abortion state that pro-lifers want to put women into a state of continual pregnancy. I have said before and I must stress again that proper birth control methods must be made readily available to all. Sex education must be taught in such a way as to make all people understand those methods. Money can and should be spent on the education of all people, not just those attending high school or college. Once that is done, people will be able to make the choice concerning the birth of children.

As it stands now, abortion is becoming a means of contraception. Many women and men are choosing not to make full use of contraceptives. It has become much easier to terminate an unwanted pregnancy than to take the time to use proper birth control methods. Destruction of the unborn child has become the accepted means of ensuring that a sexual relationship is not based on artificial means.

Even the Badgley Commission agrees that the number of abortions will continue to rise if some means is not found to ensure that women have contraceptive protection.

For those who do not wish children, contraception is proper and necessary. Once conception takes place there can be no more contraception. Once a life has begun it has the same right to reach its natural end. That life has the same right to protection under the law as has its mother or any other member of society. The Right to Life movement must be willing to show the people of this country that it does care. It must show that it is aware of the problems of illegal abortions, of the pregnant women who need assistance and guidance before, during and after pregnancy. The public must learn what the Right to Life movement is really trying to do, not what pro-abortionists say it is trying to do.

● (1610)

Governments and the medical profession must be willing to offer assistance and to explain what that assistance is to women who are pregnant. Men cannot be forgotten either. The development of women's rights does not demand the end of male responsibility. Sexual relationship demands responsibility on both sides in the understanding and use of contraceptives, and in the care of any child which may result from that relationship. The legalization of abortion must be averted and the type of abortion available must now be ended before there will be any change in the values of Canadian society.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this subject. It is one that has concerned me for a good many years as it has many other people. I take it very seriously. The motion is:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the Constitution Act, 1982, to include unborn human persons—

I want to come back to that phrase, Madam Speaker:

—and that the Governor General issue a Proclamation under the Great Seal of Canada to amend section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights so that it reads as follows:

7. Everyone including a human foetus or unborn being—

I will come back to that phrase also:

—has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

Although the motion itself does not mention abortion, it is of course not produced for the purpose of a philosophical discussion only, but as the Hon. Member for Grey—Simcoe (Mr. Mitges) has illustrated it is a part of the discussion on the laws relating to abortion.

I do not consider this an easy subject, Madam Speaker. I have struggled a lot with it. I think perhaps the Hon. Member for Grey—Simcoe does not consider it easy. He does not want to be stereotyped as somebody who is out of sympathy with women who are pregnant, troubled with other circumstances. I think he is quite right not to want to be stereotyped and put down as being unsympathetic. I have many good friends who take the same position as the previous speaker has. I also would not want to be put down as somebody not concerned for the foetus.

As a father of some children and a grandfather of some children and as one who had some minimal familiarity with disappointments relating to miscarriage, although no experience directly with the choice of abortion, either by my wife or anyone else, I have great respect for the foetus which is the subject of this motion. I do not understand it yet, at least in quite the same way as the Hon. Member for Grey—Simcoe does. To say that this is a human being, a human person or a unborn being with the right to life, liberty and security of the person is farther than I am conscientiously able to go at this time, farther than many people quite serious, quite compassionate of both the mother and the foetus are able to go at this time.

The peculiar situation that does not exist anywhere else in our law is that if we talk about the foetus as a person and we talk about protecting the rights of that person, we must protect a person inside another person. That is obvious, but I think the point may have escaped some. I cannot force a woman to protect a life that is inside her. I may encourage her, persuade her, help her or whatever, but without risk of serious damage to one or both—the person outside and the alleged person inside—I cannot compel her. The attempts to do so have been very unhappy with very poor results in public experience.

I think the decision the Member for Grey—Simcoe has asked us to make is at best premature. It may be that society will arrive at a point where that is the view, but it has not yet