

Private Members' Business

That is a valid point and to respond to that I would simply have to say that transportation is only one component within many components or elements that determine the price of a product. I think the belief and the understanding is, and I buy into this philosophy, that any time a smaller economy has the opportunity to sell into a larger economy that smaller economy at the end of the day is the winner. I believe that our competitive position in New Brunswick will be enhanced by that arrangement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being six o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 81(17), proceedings on the motion have expired.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 30(7), the House will now proceed to consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

EUTHANASIA AND CESSATION OF TREATMENT ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) moved that Bill C-261, an act to legalize the administration of euthanasia under certain conditions to persons who request it and who are suffering from an irremediable condition and respecting the withholding and cessation of treatment and to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee G.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to participate in further debate about the desirability of legalizing euthanasia in Canada, a position which is supported by some 80 per cent of Canadians in circumstances in which persons who suffer from an irremediable condition, an irreversible medical condition, and who request their life to end be permitted to do so, and to protect physicians who assist in that process.

If I can begin with a little background dealing with health and quality of life.

The World Health Organization, as we all know, utilizes an holistic definition of health which includes spiritual, emotional, family, environmental and physical aspects. Not only is our society's concept of health changing, but patient expectations of the health care system and its professionals are changing.

Many patients refuse to accept the simple reassurance that the doctor knows best. They are no longer content to be passive recipients of medical magic and in ever increasing numbers individuals are demanding to be active, informed and in part participants during the process of utilizing the health care system.

Whereas in the past the basic expectation of physicians was simply to extend life, Canadians now are looking for improvements to their lives, which most of us can safely assume will be long. We want not only to live to a ripe old age, we want to be healthy, free of ailments which could impede our ability to enjoy life to the fullest. Because each person's idea of a fulfilled life is unique, society has begun to assert its desire that the health care system be responsive to individual needs and desires.

All this is happening when, through modern medical technology, past fatal diseases have become conquerable. Unfortunately, such medical advances have led to the situation in which perhaps almost 75 per cent of us will die as a result of some chronic, degenerative disease such as cancer or heart ailments or strokes. Today's lethal diseases often cause us to suffer lingering and painful deaths.

On occasion the practice of medicine gives rise to conflicts between healing, preserving life, alleviating suffering and administering comfort. For some preserving life means more suffering.

With all of these changes, the evolving holistic concept of health, increasing patient participation, ever-advancing medical technology, it has become more difficult to define health just in terms of life alone.

Today it is possible for individuals to have life without enjoying any of the characteristics of health. The issue of quality surely must enter into any consideration of life and/or health. A better quality of life is only one-half the problem. People also deserve a better quality of