

*Criminal Code*

Mr. Romuald Rodrigue moved motion No. 37:

That Bill C-150, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and to make certain consequential amendments to the Combines Investigation Act, the Customs Tariff and the National Defence Act, be amended by deleting paragraph (c) of sub-section 4 in clause 18 on page 43 and substituting therefor:

"(c) has by certificate in writing signed by the three members of the Committee, stated that in its opinion, the life of the mother cannot be kept safe from danger with the continuation of her pregnancy."

[Translation]

He said: Mr. Speaker, I shall try to be brief in introducing amendment No. 37 since we have already discussed related subjects when amendments No. 26, 33, 35, 36 and 38 were discussed.

The purpose of the amendment I have moved is to replace clause 18 (4)(c) of the bill by the following:

"(c) has by certificate in writing signed by the three members of the Committee, stated that in its opinion, the life of the mother cannot be kept safe from danger with the continuation of her pregnancy."

Therefore the legislation would allow two doctors representing the majority, such as mentioned in paragraph (b) of subclause 4, on a three-member committee, to authorize abortion on health grounds, such as specified in section 18 (4)(c) of the bill now before us.

Some people may have different views on this subject, and the same may be true of abortion committees.

The community will soon find out which committees are more broad-minded. That is one of the reasons why I am inclined to think that the bill, as drafted and submitted, will lead people to believe that abortions will be performed on request.

Some doctors may question the value of the life destroyed by abortion. However, judgments of value are not medical judgments, and doctors are not any more competent than others to pass such judgments. In any event, Bill C-150 would confer upon them the supreme authority to judge what a human being is worth before his birth.

The establishment of committees does not provide any guarantee that the law will be properly interpreted, that this legislation will safeguard the common good and will be observed.

If we consider the differences in the frequency of abortion in the world, we find that the hospitals where the greatest number of

abortions are carried out are those where the committees are the most tolerant.

I sincerely believe that in so amending the legislation, committees called upon to take such a decision will be respected.

If the majority reports is accepted as such, the reasons put forward by the third member of the committee who will refuse to sign the report, would probably be as sound as those of the majority.

The decisions to be made by the committees are most important and we must take all the necessary steps to prevent lives from being destroyed, or health endangered, because of a hasty decision.

It took the medical profession many centuries to gain the trust and the consideration of the people for its devotion to life and the relief of suffering. The best medical tradition has always showed deep concern for the life of innocent defenceless, weak or crippled human beings.

● (4:30 p.m.)

Now, we are asked to change all that and to renounce one of the main provisions of the Hippocratic Oath, which reads as follows:

I will give no deadly drug to any, though it be asked of me, nor will I counsel such, and especially I will not aid a woman to procure abortion.

Modern medicine provides us with hospitals and techniques which surpass anything mankind has known so far; nonetheless, we are constantly told that the progress of medical sciences dehumanizes the patient. The patient has become a "heart case", a "brain case" and so on.

We feel sure that the legislation on abortion will speed up this process. The doctor recommending abortion will become, reluctantly perhaps, a sort of quality expert. As his counterpart in industry, his responsibility will be to reject substandard, abnormal human beings.

There is no easy solution to the abortion problem and it is a mistake to try to solve it through a vague legislation.

Because of its complexity, we cannot hope to settle the problem easily.

The procedure to follow is quite different. Respect of human life throughout its various development stages should be promoted through education and educational laws. A serious study should be undertaken on the frequency of illegal abortions and on the measures to be taken to eliminate them. Such a procedure must promote medical research and really attempt to make available to moth-