

Abortion

economic components. It is a personal matter which each of us has to settle as he or she sees fit.

For the record, I wanted to make my position clear. I do not see how I could be more convincing than by saying that I am pro-life, Mr. Speaker. Of course I am. That is how I voted throughout my life. I am not a violent man. I believe that abortion on request is an exaggerated and immoderate approach, therefore a bad option as far as I am concerned. That is a personal position which I am prepared to uphold and defend.

● (1800)

[English]

Mr. John Oostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be able to participate in this very important debate. I believe that there are only two positions in this debate. Either one is for life or one is against life. Any position in between is pure hypocrisy. The abortion issue, simply put, is black and white. Therefore, I cannot support the Government's motion. From the time of the ancient Greeks until recently, western civilization has condemned abortion and has traditionally upheld and honoured the Hippocratic oath.

A pagan physician, Hippocrates, wrote the oath to serve as a medical and ethical guide for students in roughly 367 B.C. Hippocrates said, and I quote: "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner, I will not give to woman a pessary to produce abortion."

Taking the oath has customarily been a part of medical school graduation, but lately the part on abortion has been dropped by many schools. Although Hippocrates lived in a pagan civilization, abortion was unmistakably condemned. One wonders if civilization has really progressed over the last 2,000 years.

Opposition to abortion was reflected almost universally by the world's great religions—Hinduism, Islam, and in ancient Vedic spiritual writings in India. With Judaism, from 1200 B.C., there was a strong tradition of opposition to abortion.

Christianity, at the same it emerged in the Mediterranean area during the 1st century A.D., strongly upheld the censure of abortion as a major moral principle. This prohibition was one of the distinctive behavioural injunctions of the early Christian church. The Christian community became vocal in the 2nd century and emphatically deplored and condemned abortion at any stage of pregnancy. Therefore, it is apparent that all societies, regardless of whether or not they had any religious beliefs, were universally consistent on abortion. Abortion was universally condemned as the taking of life or, simply put, murder.

As our society became more and more technologically advanced, religious beliefs began to wane. Science became the vehicle on which mankind began to rely. History has shown that the more a society becomes advanced the less it relies on

religious and moral teachings. However, in the case of life, science has provided irrefutable evidence that life does begin at conception.

Science tells us that when the sperm and ovum unite, they become a complete genetic package programmed for development into a mature adult. Nothing will be added except time and nutrition. Each stage of development from fertilization to old age is merely a maturing of what is entirely there from the start. To put it in better perspective, the fertilized egg is like a computer chip. A genetic program to produce the person is already there.

Even pro-abortion journals admit that life does begin at conception. An editorial in the pro-abortion journal *California Medicine* of September, 1970, states, and I quote: "The reverence of each human life has been a keystone of western medicine, and is the ethic which has caused physicians to try to preserve, protect, repair, prolong, and enhance every human life.

Since the old ethic has not yet been fully displaced, it has been necessary to separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing which continues to be socially abhorrent. The rest has been a curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, the human life begins at conception, and it is continuous, whether intra- or extra-uterine, until death. The very considerable semantic gymnastics which are required to rationalize abortion as anything but taking a human life would be ludicrous if they were not often put forth under socially impeccable auspices." The pro-abortion journal pulls no punches. It recognizes that the concept that life begins at conception is the tenet in which the majority of the population still believes.

The overwhelming number of abortions are conducted for purely social and economic reasons. There is no thought given to the innocent life which is about to be destroyed. The rationale which the pro-abortionists use to justify this barbaric act is to describe abortion as socially acceptable and as a means for a woman to control her own body. By appealing to the feminist principle of a woman controlling her own body, the true reality of the abortion act is shielded. In fact, we are using the argument of the self to dictate supremacy over everything else. The self is the only thing that matters, an innocent life is only an appendage and the father is merely a participant in an act. It is only when we take time to examine the true facts that a truly rational decision can be reached.

● (1810)

When the law changed in 1969, health became the key word. The generally accepted definition of health by 1973 was that of the World Health Organization. Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

In Canada, physicians gave health unlimited interpretation. Therefore, abortions can be performed for "health" reasons