

# CARAL—Canadian Association for the Repeal of the Abortion Law

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"Our aim is the repeal of all sections of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion, and the establishment of comprehensive contraceptives and abortion services, including appropriate counselling, across the country. We regard the right to safe, legal abortion as a fundamental human right."

- CARAL statement of purpose, 1974.

In the past few months it has become increasingly evident that unless those Canadians who support the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code (and this must not be interpreted as being 'pro-abortion', but rather, pro-woman as human beings with the right to make decisions affecting their own lives), organize themselves and articulate this concern to those who are responsible for introducing legislation, then the minority who vocally bombard the federal government with expressions of the pro-foetus position will succeed in their campaign to make the abortion legislation even more restrictive, discriminatory and oppressive.

### WHERE DO YOU STAND?

For those who are not content to sit back and let the universe unfold as others think that it should, there are channels through which you can exercise your rights and your duty as a citizen.

The Canadian Association for the Repeal of the Abortion Law (CARAL) has been established to present an alternative view to the government regarding Section 251 of the Criminal Code. To introduce the philosophy and organization of CARAL, excerpts from a letter from the Executive Vice-President, Eleanor Wright-Pelrine, appear below.

"Obviously, none of us regard abortion as a realistic alternative to early sex education, availability of contraceptives information and devices, and voluntary sterilization for those people who want no children or no more children.

But Canada's restrictive abortion law, section 251 of the Criminal Code, is discriminatory and inhumane, and denies many women to safe medical abortion in this country.

Unfortunately, most Can-

adian parliamentarians are ill-informed or uncaring about the reality of human need in regard to abortion. Socio-economic and geographic inequities deprive many women of abortion services in their own communities.

Fewer than a third of Canadian hospitals which might realistically have been expected to establish therapeutic abortion committees have done so. Those hospitals which have committees are frequently overburdened because of the failure of other hospitals to accept responsibility for the abortion needs of the community. Other hospitals have imposed artificial weekly or monthly quotas, unrelated to patient need, or are unnecessarily harsh in interpreting section 251. No Canadian woman has the right to be heard in applying for

an abortion, or the right of appeal against denial of her application."

### YOU CAN HELP.

**JOIN CARAL!** Membership fees are: Individual - \$5.00; Family - \$10.00; Group (for purpose of affiliation) \$50.00; and Group (CARAL membership for each member - Individual - \$3.00; Family - \$8.00; All contributions over membership fees will be gratefully accepted. Our advisors are investigating the possibility of making contributions for educational activities tax deductible. More information on this aspect will be provided later.

If you feel that you can not provide financial support at this time, your personal endorsement of the statement of purpose would be welcomed. A great contribution to the cause can be made by sending a letter

off to your MP indicating that you support the repeal of the abortion law. It is not even necessary to purchase a postage stamp to do that! And while you're putting pen to paper, why not let the P.E.I. Medical Society know how you feel about section 251? A committee is presently studying the situation and citizen input will allow them to assess the attitudes of the general public regarding this crucial issue.

If you wish further information, contact CARAL at 583 Church St. Toronto, Ontario, telephone (416) 961-1507. Locally, you can contact Bonnie Macpherson, 44 Green Street, Charlottetown, ph. 892-7147. There are many activities which can be carried out locally; including, the establishment of a P.E.I. branch of CARAL.

