

Harriet Pilpel

'Freedom to birth control will check population'

"Give people a chance to have access to contraception, abortion and sterilization" and coercive laws will not be need-

ed to control population.

New York attorney Harriet Fleischl Pilpel's speech, "Sex versus the law" given Thurs-

day in the union, outlined the progress of legislation dealing with birth control, sterilization and abortion. She stated her position as favoring "voluntarism" in family planning and sex relations.

"Freedom of choice" is needed, according to Pilpel. "not coercion."

Pilpel said most state's laws concerning sex are invasions of privacy which prohibit almost everything but "face to face" relations. As an example she mentioned New York statutes which, until recently, put oral sex in the same category as relations with dead birds.

Illinois approved a new concept that considers behavior between consenting adults in private to be nobody's business but that of the consenting adults. Pilpel hopes this will be the trend and will include such areas as a movie audience being allowed to watch anything it wishes. She added that homosexual relations should also be legal.

In response to a question about Terry Carpenter's promise to introduce legislation outlawing studies of homosexuality Pilpel said such a law would probably be unconstitutional. However, she continued, "some qualifications or method" could be imposed, such as to the dignity of the course.

She said laws prohibiting birth control were originally

written because of the dangers of the operation. Medical science was crude and many women died during abortions.

New, Pilpel explained, abortion is safer than childbirth and no more risky than a tonsillectomy, but the laws remain.

Progress during the last three years, starting in Colorado, has greatly improved the situation but Pilpel noted that changing the laws does not necessarily cause immediate reform. In states with liberalized abortion laws, like Colorado and New York, doctors and nurses are often reluctant to provide abortions

on religious or other grounds.

She related reports that the rich can find abortion service in Colorado fairly easily but the poor still have difficulty. One account she had heard that made her "blood chill" was that of a Colorado hospital that gave abortions but put the patients in a room opposite the nursery where they had to watch proud parents and newborn babies. Another had placed its abortion clients next to a cancer ward.

Pilpel reasoned that setbacks in abortion and voluntary sterilization were to be expected after a change in the laws just as passing civil rights

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Pilpel . . . "freedom of choice, not coercion," is needed in family planning.

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