

1997-1 Text 1

1- It was 3:45 in the morning when the vote was finally taken.

After six months of arguing and final 16 hours of hot parliamentary debates, Australia's Northern Territory became the first legal authority in the world to allow doctors to take the lives of incurably ill patients who wish to die.

The measure passed by the convincing vote of 15 to 10.

Almost immediately word flashed on the Internet and was picked up, half a world away, by John Hofsess, executive director of the Right to Die Society of Canada.

He sent it on via the group's on-line service, Death NET.

Says Hofsess: "We posted bulletins all day long, because of course this isn't just something that happened in Australia. It's world history."

2- The full import may take a while to sink in.

The NT Rights of the Terminally Ill law has left physicians and citizens alike trying to deal with its moral and practical implications.

Some have breathed sighs of relief, others, including churches, right-to-life groups and the Australian Medical Association, bitterly attacked the bill and the haste of its passage.

But the tide is unlikely to turn back. In Australia - where an aging population, life-extending technology and changing community attitudes have all played their part - other states are going to consider making a similar law to deal with euthanasia.

In the US and Canada, where the right-to-die movement is gathering strength, observers are waiting for the dominoes to start falling.

3- Under the new Northern Territory law, an adult patient can request death - probably by a deadly injection or pill - to put an end to suffering.

The patient must be diagnosed as terminally ill by two doctors.

After a “cooling off” period of seven days, the patient can sign a certificate of request.

After 48 hours the wish for death can be met.

For Lloyd Nickson, a 54-year-old Darwin resident suffering from lung cancer, the NT Rights of Terminally Ill law means he can get on with living without the haunting fear of his suffering: a terrifying death from his breathing condition.

“I’m not afraid of dying from a spiritual point of view, but what I was afraid of was how I’d go, because I’ve watched people die in the hospital fighting for oxygen and clawing at their masks,” he says.

11. From the second paragraph we learn that _____.

[A] the objection to euthanasia is slow to come in other countries

[B] physicians and citizens share the same view on euthanasia

[C] changing technology is chiefly responsible for the hasty passage of the law

[D] it takes time to realize the significance of the law’s passage

12. When the author says that observers are waiting for the dominoes to start falling, he means ____.

[A] observers are taking a wait-and-see attitude towards the future of euthanasia

[B] similar bills are likely to be passed in the US, Canada and other countries

[C] observers are waiting to see the result of the game of dominoes

[D] the effect-taking process of the passed bill may finally come to a stop

13. When Lloyd Nickson dies, he will _____.

[A] face his death with calm characteristic of euthanasia

[B] experience the suffering of a lung cancer patient

[C] have an intense fear of terrible suffering

[D] undergo a cooling off period of seven days

14. The author's attitude towards euthanasia seems to be that of _____.

[A] opposition

[B] suspicion

[C] approval

[D] indifference