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enhanced the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities.

It has been a decade since our charter became law. During the past 10 years the Court Challenges Program has been extremely useful in helping to advance the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Canadians. It has certainly strengthened the laws of Canada and influenced attitudes as we strive to ensure equality for all citizens.

However, nothing remains constant. This nation is going through many changes, as are countries throughout the world. We are not abandoning support of our basic rights and freedoms. We have many programs that address those issues and the government will live up to its commitment to provide funding already granted by the Court Challenges Program.

Yes, this government can be very proud of its accomplishments under the program. We have not shied away from giving the program the freedom to operate independently. However the hon. member knows, as do all hon. members, that we must make tough decisions to get our financial house in order. It is time to ask our provincial partners and private sector groups to share the burden and take on additional responsibilities in the area of implementing equality rights for Canadians.

I say to my hon. friend: "Let us work together to ensure the equality of all Canadians. Let us build on the foundation of the Court Challenges Program. Let us move forward and make this magnificent land a place in which all Canadians, whether citizens by birth or citizens by choice, will be equal under the law and full participants in their communities".

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I have a question relating to some of the comments made by the member, particularly dealing with the appeal process.

We all know that court cases start at trial level and proceed up to other levels of the justice system until they get to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Minister for Multiculturalism and Citizenship said today when he made his statement in the House that the government will honour its funding commitment: "For the level of court at which funding was approved". Most

of the cases funded by the Court Challenges Program are at the trial court level.

Therefore, I want to ask the member if he has inquired of the government or of the Minister of Justice, and since she is here maybe she would like to inform him, what the government proposes to do to ensure that the cases funded by the Court Challenges Program, which will be honoured, will continue to be funded if they proceed to appeal without imposing on those minority groups—the underprivileged, linguistic, women, multi-cultural groups—the onerous financial costs incurred by an appeal to the decision at a court level which has been approved for funding.

My question is simple. Is there an answer for these groups that find themselves in a very difficult situation? They have been approved to go to a certain level, that has been guaranteed. What happens if there is an appeal?

Mr. Corbett: Madam Speaker, I can well understand the hon. member's concerns about commitments that have already been made to previous groups because when his party was in power there was a blatant disregard for commitments made by his administration for future undertakings when it came time to pay the piper.

The fact of the matter is that this government, of which I am proud to be a supporter with all good reason as the record will show, honours its commitments. It has made the commitment that it will honour those cases that have already been funded under the process. It will see them through to fruition.

I see the hon. minister shaking his head in the affirmative, agreeing that this is the case. Although I am not privy to decisions that are taken in cabinet the fact of the matter is that when cabinet ministers of this government advise me that certain things will take place then I have no difficulty in accepting their word at face value. I am sure that as these groups express their concerns—and he mentioned underprivileged groups, women's groups, minorities and a host of others.

On this side of the House we are extremely proud of the work. I understand that when this program began there was very little funding required because there was very little activity in that direction. This year and in previous years this government has been providing funding to the tune of up to \$2.5 million a year to assist