

Supply

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker, I will be brief. Let me make it very clear. I do not support the government and the Liberal Party does not support the government's decision to terminate the Court Challenges Program. It was not a wise move.

What I take exception to is the self-righteousness, the holier-than-thou attitude of the members of the New Democratic Party. They know that the administration of justice is a provincial responsibility. They know, and their members have indicated time and time again, that it costs \$200,000 or \$300,000 to litigate a case. Surely the issue is not only with respect to the Court Challenges Program, but what ought to be done in order to improve access for all Canadians, not only those to the courts and not only those who are challenging the provisions in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or in the Constitution.

The NDP has a provincial government at Queen's Park and provincial governments in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. If they are so pure and so holier than thou, let me ask what their governments are doing, given the fact that the administration of justice is a provincial responsibility. What are these hypocrites doing in order to ensure—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I think the hon. member might care to withdraw and rephrase his question.

Mr. Nunziata: Madam Speaker, I will withdraw the reference to hypocrisy.

I would like to ask the hon. member what Premier Bob Rae or Premier Romanow or Premier Harcourt are doing in order to improve access to the courts for ordinary Canadians?

Why does the NDP not put its money where its mouth is and stop being so self-righteous and holier and thou, and tell me what those guys are doing in order to ensure that all Canadians have access to the courts. He cannot speak out of both sides of his mouth.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): If I could speak out of both sides of my mouth, Madam Speaker, I would be a Liberal.

I am prepared to put up the record of the NDP governments in Saskatchewan, in Manitoba, in Ontario, in Yukon and anywhere else against any Liberal provincial government, or in fact any Liberal national govern-

ment, when it comes to defending human rights, when it comes to assisting people and obtaining their rights through the courts under programs similar to this. We stand second to no political party.

But I think the member should have talked about what the Liberal governments did in this country. They did absolutely nothing and that is why we are in the situation that we find ourselves in now.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, if the hon. member for York South—Weston would tone it down a bit and look, he might realize that the Ontario government has instituted another look. As Kathleen Ruff said in a speech here on the Hill last night: "another look at how they could make human rights laws effective". They say that we have a human rights law but we have to somehow make it effective and workable. They are looking at all these areas, and they have specifically given that mandate to a group and Ms. Ruff is working with that mandate.

I do not understand the hon. member. This is a Liberal motion; this is a motion from his own party.

Mr. Nunziata: Yes and we support it.

Mr. Waddell: Does he support it? He just said that lawyers should give charity a few minutes ago. I do not know, the critic better grab him and get the Liberal position together so they do not talk out of both sides of their mouths.

An hon. member: He's a closet Tory.

Mr. Waddell: I want to ask the hon. member from Comox—Alberni this. The hon. member who spoke gave a very eloquent speech. He mentioned the Egan case and the difficulty that sometimes great cases that establish advances in human rights are lost in the trial division, but ultimately win in the higher courts.

I think a perfect example, and I wonder if he might acknowledge this, was the Nisga case. In the early seventies, Tom Berger, a lawyer in Vancouver on behalf of the Nisga nation, brought a case, lost in the lower courts, I believe lost in the Court of Appeal—if my friend would help me—and a divided Supreme Court of Canada allowed political pressure in this House and elsewhere to convince the government for the first time to really recognize aboriginal rights and we have moved on from there, of course.