The elimination of the Court Challenges Program is perhaps the most fundamental example of this government's failure to protect the rights of Canadian women.

This program provided funding to allow disadvantaged groups to go to court to defend their rights according to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Many landmark decisions could not have been made without the Court Challenges Program.

More recently the program allowed the Women's Legal Education Action Fund to argue successfully that the obscenity provisions in the Criminal Code are indeed constitutional in that they reasonably attempt to prevent harms that affect the dignity and equality of women.

The elimination of the Court Challenges Program will silence the voices of many Canadian women before the law.

Along with minorities, seniors and children, this budget is directly attacking the fundamental rights of women all across Canada. An attack on women is an attack on families. It is an attack on children. It is time that this government stopped paying lip service to the women who make up over 52 per cent of the population of Canada and give every Canadian her full entitlement of rights and freedoms. I would like to read into *Hansard* a few comments from the *Toronto Star* made by Carol Goar. She says:

> Why, after seven and one-half years of Conservative government, has the number of food banks in this country risen from 75 to 292? Is it right that 700,000 Canadian children, one out of every nine, should have to depend on charity to eat?

• (1200)

She goes on to ask:

> Why, during the devastating recession of the past two years, has the federal government reduced its support for low-rent housing by 46 per cent? Does the Prime Minister realize that thousands of families in urban centres go hungry each month so that they can pay the rent? What has changed since the summer of 1988 to convince the Prime Minister that child care is no longer a fundamental right? Does he realize that most single mothers cannot enter the work force to build a better life without affordable child care? Does the Prime Minister remember saying in Toronto 10 years ago "There is nothing I see that is more painful to me as a citizen of one of the most blessed nations on earth than the continual fighting and bitching—

The Prime Minister's words.

> —that is going on among and between just about every major group in our society.". Can the Prime Minister explain what he has done to improve the mood of the nation?

> Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to speak here in the House on women this morning. I believe nothing has changed. I have been here almost three and one-half years and I seem to be saying the same things over and over again. I hope this government will start to listen to those of us who are most concerned about the rights of women in this country.

> Thank you.

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, a number of questions have been raised in the House relating to why the federal government has abandoned its promise to initiate a national day care act.

I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight. Hon. members have couched their questions in a manner that is very misleading. Their questions would lead one to believe we have turned our backs on day care and no longer believe that day care is an important service needed by many Canadians.

This is just not so. The House will recall that the federal government put forward a day care bill, Bill C-144, that would have spent $4 billion over a seven year period. You will also remember that both of the opposition parties did everything in their power to defeat this bill. Their stalling tactics were almost unprecedented.

Nevertheless the federal government persevered and finally, when the opposition members had exhausted all of the avenues open to them, the bill was passed and sent to the Senate. The opposition members were still not content with their previous efforts to frustrate the will of the majority of Canadians, and urged the Liberal-dominated Senate to further block and delay the bill.

The Senate decided to hear from further witnesses. They knew full well that almost every individual and association from every part of Canada had already been extended the opportunity to appear before the parliamentary committee. This was also after a lengthy task force on child care heard from interested parties from every region of this country. There was no question that the Senate was going to prolong this exercise for as long as it could. Given the Liberal-dominated Senate skills