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linguistic minority in any one of our 10 provinces to know what it is not to be able to enforce your rights.

What good is our charter? I ask the minister rhetorically at this point, what good is our charter if the people who need it the most cannot enforce it? It is a disgrace and a national disgrace. It is something that we as Canadian parliamentarians should collectively hang our heads about.

I agree further with my colleague from Cape Breton—The Sydneys, we are not going to let it stay here, we are not going to let it rest here. This will be the ghost of Christmas past, Christmas present and Christmas to come for this government. People will remember it.

It will be a disgrace along with the GST, along with all kinds of other policies of this government. But this one will lead the pack because this is one that attacks the weakest and those least able to defend themselves. As a Canadian I am ashamed.

If my colleague, the hon. minister, wants to defeat racism then put the Court Challenges Program back in place. We know what racism is in Nova Scotia. We are ashamed of it. We want to see it obliterated. But unfortunately it is not going to be done by government departments. It has to be done through the courts. That is what the court system is for.

The law is a sword and a shield. In the area of racism and in the area of discrimination generally we need the sword as well as the shield. And it is the courts that provide the sword. In this case the government has removed both sword and shield. Again, I am ashamed.

What was the Court Challenges Program? It was the hallmark of a government that was committed to the advancement and the defence of human rights. We as Canadians can get a little smug compared to our fellow countries in western civilization. We tell ourselves that we are a kinder, gentler country, as has been spoken about, than our neighbour to the south.

Take away this program and we take away a great deal of the kindness and the gentleness and we take away the major reason for Canadians to hold up their heads and say: "We have a record in human rights to be proud of". We will no longer have that record. There will be no way that records of that kind can be made. If the minister thinks differently, I can only say one thing to him: "Prove it, show us, and don't talk to us about government departments because they are empty words". There are many things government departments can accomplish.

There are many things government programs outside this particular sphere can accomplish, but the enforcement of rights not backed up by accessibility to the courts is hollow. He knows it, as does every member in this House.

Talk about hard decisions in hard times and cutting a program that was approximately \$2.7 million per year. It was not a huge amount of money for the great amount of good that it did.

We have heard and seen from my other colleagues here today of the other expenditures of dollars that are still there, that are still thrown around by government members. But who do they take the money from? They take it from the voiceless. They take it from the defenceless. I hope they are proud of themselves.

Without this funding, this small amount of funding, equality for women and other minority groups, linguistic, ethnocultural or whatever, is a hollow concept. The charter is only a mechanism for striking down discriminatory laws. It does not—and this bears repeating over and over again—guarantee the absolutely necessary access to the courts.

Alliance Quebec said it very eloquently: "The issue quite simply is whether the rights and freedoms provided in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have any real meaning or whether they are rights in theory only. Are they living manifestations of fundamental values, or are they merely paper tigers, sound and fury signifying nothing? Under this government they will become sound and fury signifying nothing". I might even extend that quotation to its beginning, which is: "a tale told by an idiot".

The purpose of the Court Challenges Program was not to give minorities, women, special privileges and rights but to guarantee them what was rightfully theirs. We are not talking about giving something extra. We are talking about bringing disadvantaged groups up to the level of the rich man's charter, as my colleague from Cape Breton—The Sydneys so eloquently put it. That is what it will become. That is what it has become in the wake of this policy.

A number of my colleagues here today have cited cases of great importance that have been handed down, decisions that have been handed down because of the Court Challenges Program. Let me cite some, although I know I may be being repetitive. This horror that is being visited upon us needs us to repeat over and over again what the government is doing to us by this cancellation.