

*Supply*

**Mr. Weiner:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to designate tomorrow, Thursday, April 2, 1992 as an allotted day.

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[Translation]

**SUPPLY****ALLOTTED DAY (S. O.81)—COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Gauthier (p. 9154).

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** One must have some experience in the House of Commons to see and appreciate the government's play in this, Madam Speaker.

In any case, I for one found the speech of the member for La Prairie interesting and timely until the last minute. However, when he concluded by saying that we must stop squandering—that is the word he used—when he insinuated that the Court Challenges Program would possibly cause squandering, I protest and say to him: “With all due respect, my friend, I think you are profoundly mistaken”.

For the better part of his speech, the member for La Prairie gave us the views of someone who knows very well the issue of minorities and of access to minority language schools. I thank him, because what he said will be useful and, I imagine, will help various communities to take stock of the situation.

• (1740)

I would like to tell the member about something that is happening not far from here and ask him what he would do as a Quebecer, as a Canadian, as a member of this House and as a responsible person. Francophone parents living in a riding not far from Ottawa have children, five to nine years old, who must spend four hours each day on a bus in order to attend a French language primary school. I will not give any names. The member can read yesterday's *Le Droit* and the editorials in the papers. He will realize what a scandal this is causing in Ottawa.

Just think, these children must ride four hours by bus daily to get to school simply because the board will not create a francophone sector in its jurisdiction. This is a case in point which we as members of a minority thought

we could fight, thanks to a very useful tool called the Court Challenges Program.

Sometimes that program simply gave us a means of saying to the officials, the provincial authorities: “Thanks to the federal government, we can go to court to make sure you honour our rights”. Here is an example of injustice. I am not talking about something that happened last year or somewhere else; this is a serious situation prevailing right here in Ontario where nearly 40 children have to be bused four hours a day to get their education in the official language of their choice.

The Court Challenges Program could have been useful in such an instance. It could have helped in justice being done. I ask the member what kind of an answer he would give to those parents? What kind of an answer would he give to my brothers, sisters, cousins in Ontario who are victims of such injustice? What does he say to those people? I ask the question most sincerely.

**Mr. Jourdenais:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier. I understand his concern about what he just mentioned, because I have the same problem in my riding.

Restraint is nowadays the watchword of all governments, either provincial, municipal or federal, but if we can set up this thing closer to where the kids are so that they would not have to travel. I am not totally aware of this matter, but I will tell about the situation in my riding. It just happens that they want to transfer members of a minority group who would have to travel six or seven miles. I would really like the hon. member to listen to me. I want to give him an answer, because I have the same problem.

There are community agencies which are dealing with that and are getting funds from the Secretary of State for that purpose. There is currently an organization which will get funds to take care of that group. In my province, it is approximately 120 people who will have to travel also about 30 miles. This is not in your province, but in mine. We have exactly the same problem, and I would do the same on the English or the French side. But there comes a time where restraint and cutbacks are becoming absolutely necessary. Otherwise one day these kids will be crushed under the debt we will have left them. That is exactly what is going on. I understand the problem and we must solve it.