

Supply

term is a little too harsh. As I check the House I do not see that any persons of the cloth are here.

An hon. member: Except yourself.

Ms. Clancy: Well, no, no, I cannot make that claim. I include in those who would agree with me on this matter the hon. member for Don Valley North, chair of the subcommittee on the Status of Women. I know she would agree with me on this, too.

Mr. Milliken: She may not have read it recently.

Ms. Clancy: Well, perhaps not, but most of us remember the story. It was the first time that we got blamed for a multitude of sins.

Further to that, to get back to the seriousness of this issue, we have the Butler case where the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the obscenity provisions in the Criminal Code, arguing that while they were a contravention of the freedom of expression provisions, they nonetheless constituted a reasonable limit under section 1, a reasonable limit prescribed by law that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. That may sound like a legalism but there is a tremendous sense of freedom in that phrase.

It was recognized that the violent and degrading acts in pornographic material are harmful to the equality and dignity of women. Does anybody in this House disagree with that? No, I do not think so. I am sure not. I do not think there is anyone in this House who would stand up and be a proponent for the kind of garbage in pornographic productions that we have unfortunately seen in this country, and I do not think there is anybody in this House who does not realize that this kind of garbage is harmful to women, both in a general sense *vis-à-vis* the way men will deal with women in general and in the particular sense of making a direct attack on the dignity and the equality of women.

If there had been no Court Challenges Program there would have been no Butler case. What would the answer be? We would be faced with the continuing inequality.

Then we have the Albrecht case. The courts ruled that upon separation or divorce, a woman is entitled to share her spouse's Canada Pension Plan benefits. How many of us have dealt with that as from time to time governments of both stripes made mistakes when they amended the legislation.

The Liberal government amended it first and then, the second time it amended it, it knocked out the provision. The Conservative government amended it, and the second time it amended it, it knocked out the provision.

Finally, the Supreme Court of Canada, through a Court Challenges case, made the definitive statement and those women are protected. Again, without the Court Challenges case, we would have been on a continual legislative merry-go-round.

Fourth case, the Canadian newspapers case. The Supreme Court upheld the right of Canadian women and children who have been raped to have their names withheld from the media. Again, it is a fundamental question of individual privacy. It is a fundamental question of choice.

I could go on and on, but it is enough in this particular area to say that the Court Challenges Program was crucial, fundamental to the advancement of women's rights. Many cases have yet to work their way through the courts. Many discriminatory laws have yet to be struck down.

Ten years after the inception of the charter, in the words of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the news is not good. Women are initiating few cases and men are using the charter to strike back at the hard won protections for women and the hard won benefits.

The Advisory Council continues by stating that much has yet to be done: "The barriers to women's access to the courts must be removed", and interpretations of equality which are meaningful to women must be advanced more often in the courts.

I do not know how you could say it more plainly. I do not know how it could be more evident that what has taken place here is a travesty and an attack on the rights of the majority of the population in this country.

Basically, it is a shame. We use that word in this House. Sometimes we use it lightly, but in this case, we do not use it lightly. It is with heavy hearts that those of us on this side of the House look to the government and say: Shame.

Unfortunately, the Court Challenges Program is not the only program cut which will adversely affect women. The national child care program has also been sacrificed on the altar of deficit reduction.