Supply

$10 million for the increase in the judges salaries. But it cannot find $2.7 million for the disadvantaged program.

I also want to ask him about this idea of another motive. What is the real reason? I wonder if the member noticed as I did that months after the Law Reform Commission brought in a report for an aboriginal justice system, it is gone. After the Economic Council of Canada had a different view from the government on Quebec independence, it is gone. The Court Challenges Program was constantly challenging the government, it is gone. Am I being paranoid or does the member see a pattern to this kind of cutback? Is this a government that has a bunker mentality?

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for his intervention. I agree completely with what he has said.

What we have is a move by the government to silence its critics. The Law Reform Commission came out with a report on aboriginal justice which I thought was excellent, along with some of the other good work that it has done. The member also mentioned the Science Council of Canada and the Economic Council of Canada.

● (1700)

Those matters have obviously met their own demise because the better they are at the work they are doing the more ready the government is to pull the carpet out from under them and cancel their work because it does not want critics.

Look at the changes in the House of Commons. We are sitting less and less. The rules are more stringent. Closure is invoked more than it ever has been before. It is absolutely incredible. The whole matter of opposition in this country is being thrown to the wolves.

As the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam says, there is money for anything the government wants. The travel budget of the Minister of National Defence would pay for 25 court challenge programs.

Ms. Clancy: I'll say.

Mr. MacLellan: It is absolutely incredible that this is chosen to be cut. Sure there has to be fiscal responsibility, but not through the people who need the help of

their government and through a program that has meant so much to our jurisprudence and to the fabric of Canada.

Decisions have come from this program that we never would have had. Had these decisions not come, we would have continued to perpetuate the injustice that was going on evidently before the decisions were reached.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, this is the second time in two days that I have spoken on the matter of the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program.

I am glad that my hon. colleague from Quebec over there finds it so amusing. I think a number of his constituents would find the cancellation of the program less than amusing, particularly those members of linguistic groups in this country who might have wanted to use it.

In any case, I too, like my hon. colleague from Cape Breton—The Sydneys, am disappointed that twice in two days I have to talk about the disgraceful activity of this government.

I listened to my other hon. colleague, the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, talk about his fight to end racism and I know he means it. Indeed, both of us have been involved in certain measures and activities in my riding. I know he means it. But the point is, what he clearly does not understand and what this government does not understand is that without access to the courts in this country disadvantaged groups are not going to enforce their rights.

We have a magnificent Charter of Rights and Freedoms and it is not worth the paper it is written on if the people who need it cannot get into the courts. My colleague from Cape Breton—The Sydneys has said that, my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier has said that and my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam has said that. How many times does it have to be said?

We understand this and you do not have to be lawyer to understand this. You have to be a person in the street, a woman or a disabled Canadian or a black Canadian or a member of another visible minority or an aboriginal Canadian to know what it is not to be able to enforce your rights. Perhaps you have to be a member of a