

Supply

profession is making as a contribution to this type of litigation to ensure that people with legitimate cases that ought to be litigated *vis-à-vis* matters affecting the Constitution have an opportunity to do so?

Mr. Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Madam Speaker, that is a legitimate question. Indeed it is one that we asked the Canadian Bar Association and others who appeared before our committee.

It is worth pointing out—and the hon. member for Fundy—Royal mentioned it in his speech—that around \$35,000 is provided under the program for each case. It costs anywhere around \$300,000 to take the case through the system. The only way it can go through the system is by the Canadian Bar Association and its member lawyers providing what they call *pro bono* service, which is initially free service or for much reduced fee charges.

The Canadian Bar Association and its members have actually given the Canadian public a very good deal. When we take the \$2.7 million that has been chopped from this program and weigh that against the value that Canadians have received under this program by free work by lawyers, by reduced work by lawyers, I think we got a basement bargain deal. Why we are destroying that is beyond me.

• (1900)

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I just want some clarification. The member for Beaches—Woodbine was at the committee. I have just heard a question by the Liberal member from Toronto who appears to be advocating, unless I am wrong, that this become a matter of charity from the bar. I do not know if the Liberals have two positions on this.

I understood from all their speakers today that the Liberals had been for this Court Challenges Program. Now we have a Liberal who stands up and seems to say it is the charity of the bar that has to do it. You cannot be all things to all people. The Liberal Party cannot do that. It cannot keep doing that and have any credibility in Canada. I have to tell the hon. member from Toronto that.

I want to ask the hon. member for Beaches—Woodbine, what position did the Liberal Party take on the committee? Did the Liberals appear to be in favour or

against the cutback of this program? The member said very brilliantly that one, the program is needed; two, that it is a sad case to cut back and it is wrong; and, three, that it cannot be done through the charity of the bar. It has to be done as a proper program.

As a lawyer who did public interest programs, these cases also have to be co-ordinated. It is not just hit and miss. That is where the member for York South—Weston is wrong if he is advocating that it be the private bar.

I am angry because the Liberals cannot have two positions on everything. I want to ask the hon. member for Beaches—Woodbine: What position did the Liberal Party take in the committee?

Mr. Nunziata: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member from Vancouver is clearly misconstruing and misinterpreting my position. Now if he wants to score some cheap political points he can. But I could ask him what his government at Queen's Park is doing or what his government in B.C. is doing.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, I have no hesitation in rising to support this motion which calls for the restoration of the Court Challenges Program. I would like to congratulate the Liberal member for Ottawa—Vanier for bringing this motion to the House.

It appears that the government is arguing that the Court Challenges Program must be cut in order to reduce the expenditures and consequently to control the public debt of the country.

Canadians should know that this program costs only \$2.5 million a year, perhaps a little less. It has been suggested before in this House that we could save the same amount of money if we cut back the tremendous amount of clipping services and media analysis that goes to the Prime Minister's office every single day. The polls that he does at the end of his media interviews. Most Canadians feel that that kind of money is wasted.

Yet the Court Challenges Program is an excellent expenditure of taxpayers money and should be continued.

The problem is that we have a Constitution. The Constitution contains the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.