

Oral Questions

take some real leadership in ending discrimination against native people in the Correctional Services, in our prisons, in policing and in the direction of CSIS?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend knows very well my feelings with respect to aboriginal people. As a former Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development I think I have had sufficient first-hand experience to know what the issue is all about.

I have always supported, not only the fact that there should be no discrimination whatsoever in general but that in particular there should be no discrimination with respect to aboriginal people. I believe that this government has been making every effort possible to correct whatever wrongs may have been done in the past.

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[Translation]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State and Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship. Canada is now going through a language crisis. Yesterday, I learned that the Court Challenges Program, which was to stop at the end of March, would be extended for about four months. I would like to ask the minister why the government is hesitant to make a firm commitment to Canadians that the Court Challenges Program will be available to them in coming years.

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, there is no hesitation. I said very clearly that the program was very beneficial. I also indicated that I had met with my colleague, the Minister of Justice, to consider all the recommendations made by the Standing Committee of the House. We will have details soon, after I consult my colleagues. In the meantime, we announced that the program would be extended for four months and we are now having final discussions with the Canadian Council on Social Development, with Mr. Hunsley, so that it will continue to administer this program for us.

[English]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the Court Challenges Program has been with us for 12 years. It has been very useful to Canadians in helping them defray the costs of going to court to try to establish their basic constitutional rights in equality and language.

The government has given the program a four month reprieve. Will the minister give a commitment in this House today that after July 31, which is the end of the four-month commitment, there will be a program helping Canadians to have access to the courts and to have the assistance of the federal government in achieving those rights before the courts?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated publicly on numerous occasions how I personally felt about the program and how beneficial I felt it was.

We have received an excellent report from our standing committee with some 19 recommendations from what I remember. Each one of them has been reviewed very carefully and will be responded to very shortly.

Just recently a new Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada has been appointed, who I am very pleased has joined us. I am sure that she will be taking cognizance of this particular file. We will be bringing that forward as soon as we can.

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INVESTMENT CANADA

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister responsible for industry, I should like to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

The government continues its unprecedented high interest rate and high dollar policy. The government has cut its support for science and technology, research and development, small business, education, training, and even for export financing.