

*Supply*

This low self-esteem can also keep them trapped in abusive relationships. Disabled women are sometimes advised to stay in a physically or sexually violent relationship because "at least they have a man".

The government has chosen to cut back on funding for this group this time around. This is one of the disadvantaged groups cut back and hurt desperately by the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program.

Aboriginal women have witnessed the disintegration of their own communities. They and their parents are survivors of residential schools where many were physically and sexually abused. They were beaten if they spoke their own language or practised their own religious beliefs and customs. They went back to communities without sufficient skills to survive in a white world. They were met with racism, name-calling, battering and rape.

They went back to communities without sufficient skills to practise their traditional way of life. Residential schools broke up families and supplanted healthy relationships with sick ones.

Many aboriginal children grew up in these schools without affection and knowing only sexual abuse as a model for relationships.

In the general population, women who are raped are six times more likely than other women to commit suicide. Alcohol and drug use is also a symptom of childhood sexual abuse.

• (1130)

Aboriginal communities across Canada are beginning to deal with that legacy of pain. They are trying to reverse that cultural genocide. They are angry at the social and economic state of their communities and are organizing to change it. They are trying to build a life to heal the many wounds.

Aboriginal women are trying to keep their children off the streets. Again, this is one of the groups in our society this government has chosen to punish, a group that is just now gaining enough strength to continue fighting for their rights and to define a distinct place for themselves.

Aboriginal women and men and the generations to come are affected by the complete shutdown of the Court Challenges Program. Only those who can afford them can have rights is what this government is saying. This action of cancelling the Court Challenges Program, in effect, makes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in

this country meaningless. Unless the people who most need access to those rights have the means to access them, it is useless to have a charter.

This is a time when the government has implemented a racist and sexist regulation to keep foreign domestic workers, particularly women of colour, from ever becoming Canadian citizens. What the government is saying is that no matter how many years one of these women can prove she has worked in Canada and been a good Canadian citizen, this is no longer good enough.

She must now meet the Canadian immigration point system which disadvantages women. Close to 60 per cent of the women entering Canada through the Foreign Domestic Movement Program in 1990 were from the Philippines. Now domestic workers from the Philippines and elsewhere will have to have the equivalent of a grade 12 education to come to Canada. The problem is that in the Philippines the high school system does not go that far and very few women have access to what would be the equivalent of a grade 12 education in Canada.

This government is telling women of colour that they are good enough to clean up after others but not good enough to be Canadian citizens no matter how hard-working, no matter how productive or responsible they are.

Many times when we talk about access to equality, we look for ways that disadvantaged groups in our society can seek that equality. With the cancellation of the Court Challenges Program, there is no recourse to seek equality except for those who can afford it. Guess what? Big surprise to this government: Groups who can already afford it already have those rights.

I feel I am standing here today repeating the same things I said one week ago, one month ago and one year ago. I am sure that there are many Canadians who are just as tired as I am of these same policies. These policies are not just words on a piece of paper, they affect the lives of every woman, every child, every man in Canada.

There are one million children in Canada in need of child care. If I were to attach names to all of these children, I would still be standing here tomorrow. If I were to tell you about their lives, we would be here until next week. Some are children whose mothers are on welfare, unable to look for work because they do not have adequate care for their children. We know that welfare is not enough for a family to live on.