

some tools to disadvantaged people to go to the highest courts of this country.

I want to ask the minister why she is doing this. What is the rationale behind this mean-spirited program? Is it a question of spite, a question of money or is it just simply a paranoid reaction to the Reform Party challenge?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the provisions taken in the budget were designed to try and deal with the very severe fiscal situation that the Government of Canada is in.

One of the axioms one learns in public life is that there is no limit to the amount of good you can do, but there may be a limit to the amount of good you can afford.

I would like to point out in the Court Challenges, for example, that the Government of Canada is the only government in Canada, and it was our government in 1985 that brought forward a program after the initial audit of the charterability of our legislation, to enable Canadians to take those cases to court. No other government in Canada, including governments led by that hon. member's party, have given those kinds of tools to their people to challenge their kind of legislation.

For the past eight years, Canadians have had the opportunity to pursue, beyond what the government's original response was, the charterability of Canadian legislation. I think the provinces should perhaps contribute to that body of jurisprudence by providing support to people within their jurisdiction to challenge their legislation.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, let us not dump it on the provinces. This is a national matter and we are talking about the charter of rights.

The minister says there is a severe financial situation that the government is in. I have her estimates here. In the estimates she is asking for an increase in money for litigation services for the Department of Justice from \$73 million to \$89 million. In my experience as a lawyer, I have never seen the Department of Justice ever come in a court and take one case for an aboriginal person or one case for a poor person. It has never done that. This is money for rich lawyers in Vancouver.

Oral Questions

I want to ask the minister, if she has extra millions for these lawyers to litigate, why does she not have a few bucks for the poor and disadvantaged people of this country?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member's question is unworthy of him.

The litigation expenses of the Department of Justice arise from the fact that Department of Justice lawyers represent the Government of Canada. Many Canadians seek to sue the Government of Canada. There are disagreements that the Government of Canada has with people over a variety of issues and so the workload of the litigation sector of the Department of Justice is not set by the department of the Government of Canada's lawyers.

On key issues relating to matters of principle or the application of the charter, the Government of Canada frequently goes to court. As the Attorney General I go to court not simply to uphold the views of the Government of Canada, but to uphold the prerogatives of Parliament, to resolve certain key issues of fundamental public importance. Those issues must in fact be argued before the courts and the courts will determine what the balance is between them. To suggest that the litigation budget of the Department of Justice is in some way policy driven I think is just ridiculous.

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THE BUDGET

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I prefer that she pay for the Court Challenges Program so that some of the poor people could go.

I want to come back to this matter of severe financial restraints and I will put my final question to the Prime Minister. As has been said in the House this morning, Statistics Canada has reported that the economy shrunk 1.5 per cent last year. That is worse than the budget predictions. The only businesses that did well in the last three months are insurance companies with profits up 23 per cent and banks with profits up a staggering 65 per cent. Yet every other sector is down, contrary to the budget prediction.

My question for the Prime Minister is this: How can he justify economic policies which reward banks and insurance companies when he brings in a budget which refuses to help the economy and does absolutely nothing