

*Oral Questions***COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM**

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, we have already indicated several times that Canada has been ahead of the issue as far as ozone depletion is concerned.

In fact, we announced last August through the green plan that we were committing \$25 million to the construction of new research facilities in northern Canada and accelerating our regulatory regime.

I will be meeting next week with the ministers of the provinces at the Canadian Council of the Ministers of the Environment. We will examine this issue and hope to make some announcements then.

I do want to point out that by 1995, 85 per cent of CFCs in this country will have been phased out. We are looking at doing whatever we can to be able to go faster.

**Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

In light of those meetings next week, will the minister make some provision for recycling and recovery? In committee he has made some indication that his provincial counterparts were primarily responsible for that role.

Would he be prepared to indicate that in those discussions he will provide the funds to enable them to do that?

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, there has been some work done for a national action plan for recovery, recycling and reclamation of chlorofluorocarbons.

This work has been prepared by a federal-provincial working group. We hope it will have completed its work on time so that it can report to the ministers next week. We can potentially make some announcements then.

I should also stress that it is not only in Canada where we have to concentrate our efforts in this area. I would like to remind the member that we contribute to 2 per cent of the problem, but we certainly seem to bear more than 2 per cent of the consequences. We also intend to be active on the international front on this issue.

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

In 1989 in a report on the Court Challenges Program, the Standing Committee on Human Rights said: "The virtually unanimous verdict of witnesses who appeared before the committee is that the reasons for continuation are not merely sufficient but compelling".

The report concluded: "The Court Challenges Program makes the critical difference between access to charter rights and no access".

I want to know why the government cancelled this vital program. Why will the minister not say today that he is prepared to reinstate this program immediately?

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that over the years the government did finance the Court Challenges Program and participated in several very important law decisions.

We think that now is the time for other levels of government, the Canadian bar and other non-governmental bodies, to which most of the current court challenges pertain, to take a hand and participate in the funding of these matters.

• (1440)

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, nothing the government has done in cancelling this program is fair. This program costs \$2 million. The government, this year alone, has increased the litigation budget of the Department of Justice by \$16 million.

The government is saying: "It is fair for the government to defend its policies and defend itself, but disadvantaged Canadians have no right to access the charter to defend their rights".

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. MacLellan:** Why is the government not prepared to use some objectivity and common sense and allow disadvantaged Canadians access to our justice system and reinstate this program?