

of our Government. Most of them are impatient for this very beautiful coin to become generally available.

We have prepared a promotion campaign in cooperation with the financial institutions and this coin will be put in circulation as early as tomorrow.

I am convinced that all the Hon. Members will applaud this Government initiative.

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

BILL C-74—SIZE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Minister of the Environment last Friday introduced with great fanfare the new Environment Protection Bill. But if one looks at the money the Government has allocated to the Bill, one finds only \$37 million divided amongst three Departments over a period of five years. Why so little money? Why not give teeth to this very important measure?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Environmental Protection Act is an Act which the Hon. Member has encouraged the Minister of the Environment to bring forward. He has done that with the co-operation of the Cabinet. The Prime Minister had environmental protection in the Throne Speech. I would think the Hon. Member would have wanted to commend the Minister of the Environment for an Act which the Hon. Member, as the former Minister, was unable to get through his own Government.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Davenport, a short supplementary, please.

Mr. Caccia: I would do that if this were not a form of window-dressing.

REDUCTION IN PERSON-YEARS WITHIN DEPARTMENTS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): In order to be enforced this Bill needs teeth. In order to have teeth it needs funds. Does the Minister not realize that his own Department is losing 22 person-years in the Health Protection Branch this year and the Minister of the Environment is losing 103 person-years this year? How can the Department charge and collect the fines this Bill is supposed to impose on the polluters?

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): It is just window-dressing.

● (1500)

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member says that it is window-

Oral Questions

dressing. He was not even given any building materials when he was Minister.

This Government has brought forward the Environmental Protection Act. We know that within the three Departments we can handle the Act. We also know that on the legislative basis in the Act we will go after polluters.

The question now is whether the Hon. Member will be true to his words of the past when he said that he would support the type of legislation that has been introduced. Or will he simply be against it? He always seems to have this type of knee-jerk reaction. If this Government brings in good legislation he has to be against it because it was this Government that brought it in in the first place.

* * *

BANKS AND BANKING

CHARTERED BANKS—REPORTED OVERCHARGING ON LOANS TO FARMERS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance who on March 20 assured me that he was conducting an inquiry into possible interest overcharges on farm accounts by the banks. He assured the Hon. Member for Algoma on June 8 that he would table a report or have a report that week. What has happened to this report? Does the great length of time that seems to have elapsed since the study by the Inspector General indicate that the overcharges were even greater than we had first feared?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this question from the Hon. Member. The report was submitted to me last week. I have examined it. It is clear from the number of instances that this particular matter is best handled by the courts.

We have had one case in which the banks were found out of step. We have found three cases before the courts where the banks were found to be correct in what they did. Therefore each particular case seems to be individual and distinct. It seems to me best that this matter be handled by the courts.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER INTERVENE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell us whether he expects to change that stance given the fact that there seems to be several hundreds cases now being prepared to be put before the courts? Rather than tie the courts up, will he not change his stance and perhaps intervene if it appears that the courts are beginning to rule with more consistency down the line?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how one could change one's stance. One simply lets these cases, as serious as they are, proceed