

normal ten parts per million of arsenic in human hair and since more recent scientific research findings suggest that levels of one part per million or more can be significant in causing the destruction of human nervous systems and thereby call in question the validity of the previous report, will the minister tell the House if he will ask the working group to which he just referred to consider the previous report in the light of the new findings concerning significant levels of arsenic in hair?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member's question, I would like to indicate first that all the studies I considered as well as all the comments I have heard are to the effect that no judgment can be made solely on the basis of the arsenic levels in the hair, and that urinalyses must also be made particularly to know the arsenic level there could be in the whole system and not only in the hair.

As for the second part of the hon. member's question, I would say that the working group set up by the Canadian Public Health Association has broad terms of reference which will permit it to consider even the standards referred to and to see whether such standards should be more restrictive.

[English]

**Mr. Yewchuk:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask another supplementary question? The minister seems to have missed the point of my question. He indicated that other tests have been done. That is the point. The research report which he tabled was not based on arsenic levels in hair of less than ten parts per million, and for that reason I suggest that the report is totally invalid. The experiments should be reviewed and more studies carried out. The tests to which he referred must be carried out on all whose hair contains one part per million or more of arsenic. That was the question I wanted the minister to answer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, I will not argue with the hon. member on the scientific value of such or such report. This is why an independent group appointed by the Canadian Association of Public Health will assess all those reports and will also submit a report which will be made public. And if this working group comes to the conclusion that the previous reports were somewhat deficient, I would be glad to agree with the hon. member.

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[English]

#### REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

PURCHASE OF CRUISE SHIP BY METROPOLITAN AREA GROWTH INVESTMENT CORPORATION OF NOVA SCOTIA—STATUS OF MR. McNUTT AS VICE-PRESIDENT

**Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion is engaged in a conference with Quebec ministers. I gave

#### Oral Questions

notice to his office this morning of my intention to raise a question concerning Metropolitan Area Growth Investment Corporation of Nova Scotia. Perhaps an acting minister can answer my question. In view of the continuing failure of MAGI, funded as a venture capital agency to the tune of \$20 million several years ago by the federal government and the government of Nova Scotia to make a meaningful contribution to the Nova Scotia economy, can the acting minister indicate whether the minister or his department have been consulted or, indeed, have approved the multi-million dollar purchase of a cruise ship, by this agency, to operate in the Caribbean?

**Mr. Ed. Lumley (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member may know, the minister on his way to New Brunswick last week to sign another multi-million dollar development agreement with one of the Atlantic provinces, made a side trip to Nova Scotia and had discussions with the premier. One of the topics discussed was MAGI. Unfortunately, I do not know the details of those discussions.

**Mr. MacKay:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I thank the parliamentary secretary for his answer and ask by way of a brief supplementary question whether he is able, in view of the continuing history of controversy surrounding appointments to the executive positions of MAGI, to clarify the present status of Mr. Scott MacNutt, the vice president of MAGI who now appears to be operating in limbo between the Workmen's Compensation Board of Nova Scotia and MAGI?

**Mr. Lumley:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, MAGI is incorporated in the province of Nova Scotia. Its two shareholders, the government of Nova Scotia and the government of Canada, do not become involved in the day-to-day decisions of MAGI.

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#### GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

POSSIBILITY OF CHANGES IN FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT TO GIVE GREATER CONTROL OVER CROWN CORPORATIONS

**Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Since the deputy secretary responsible for the financial administration of the Treasury Board admitted in the public accounts committee yesterday that control of Crown corporations under the Financial Administration Act is inadequate, specifically in that the government does not now have the right to obtain interim financial reports from Crown corporations to which it has lent millions of dollars, I ask the minister what changes are planned in the Financial Administration Act and when we can expect to see them?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, certain plans are under way to amend the Financial Administration Act. When the final decision has been taken it will be made known to the House. It will be soon.