

D. W. Wathinson

P.A.

C455-10-13

June 6, 1956.

Mr. R.G. Robertson,
Deputy Minister,
Northern Affairs and National Resources Department,
Langevin Block,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Robertson:

Last November I sent you three copies of a report by our Occupational Health Division on "The Arsenic Problem at Yellowknife" which described the Yellowknife situation from the time it arose until August 1955. I am now enclosing three copies of the supplemental report which discusses data obtained between September 1955 and March 1956.

The report indicates that the general hazard to public health in the area as a result of arsenic deposition is no greater than it was last year and suggests that the precautions taken and warnings given in previous years at spring runoff time should be sufficient this year.

Concentrations of arsenic in Veronica, Jackfish, Frame, Long and Kam Lakes have increased to the point where their waters are considered unsafe to drink. Although these lakes are not usually used as sources of drinking water, persons camping near them might use them for this purpose. The report therefore recommends that notices should be posted at each of these lakes warning that the water contains arsenic and should not be drunk. I have been advised by the officers of the Occupational Health Division who are directly concerned with this problem that they think that this should be done immediately.

I believe that this is something which can be undertaken only by your Department. If you concur in the recommendation, I should appreciate it if you would inform me when the necessary action has been taken.

I have written to Dr. Hume on this subject and have sent him copies of the report.

Yours very truly,

G.D.W. Cameron, M.D., D.P.H.
Deputy Minister, National Health

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