

## DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

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## INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. G.D.W. Cameron,  
Deputy Minister of National Health.

File No. C455-10-13

From: Dr. F.S. Parney

Date: December 27th,  
1949.

Subject:

Arsenic Health Hazard at Yellowknife.

DEPUTY MINISTER OF  
NATIONAL HEALTH

DEC 27 1949

REC'D

As requested, Drs. Charron and Kay and I attended the meeting of the Northwest Territories Council on December 22nd.

Dr. Keenleyside, Convener of N.W.T. introduced the subject of the arsenic health hazard in Yellowknife. He asked for our comments and I stated that, from Dr. Kay's report, we were of the opinion that the hazard was serious and was increasing day by day and that, as in any other health hazard arising from industrial processing, it should be eliminated or controlled immediately. I then suggested that Dr. Kay might indicate his technical findings, relating to the problem, on which our opinion was based. This Dr. Kay began but was interrupted by Dr. Keenleyside and asked to summarize his findings only, which he did.

Dr. Keenleyside left the meeting at this time and turned the chairmanship over to Mr. Gibson, Deputy Commissioner, N.W.T.

Several members of the Council spoke on the matter, including Mr. Parsons, Chief Metallurgist, Mines Division, Department of Mines and Resources, who pointed out that the hazard was not only increasing daily as a result of the operations of the Giant and Con Mines, but that other mines in the district were approaching production and would also be producing arsenic via the roaster processing, so the hazard should be satisfactorily dealt with at this time, by either the baghouse or cotterell methods.


The question was asked whether such methods of dealing with the arsenic problem would be expensive for the mines. Mr. Christie also of Mines Division replied that such methods would cost the mines something approaching \$400,000 as against \$25,000 now being expended on present methods.



Mr. Gibson summed up the discussion and expressed the opinion that the Council was responsible for the protection of human health in the area and must take appropriate action promptly even if such action involved a prohibitive cost of mining for some smaller claims and thus reducing the number of jobs (employment) in the area.

Mr. Gibson then expressed the Council's appreciation for co-operation and advice on the part of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

For some reason or other, all three of us on the delegation came away from the meeting with the feeling that the Council did not have a full realization of the seriousness of the problem or the urgency for stopping forthwith the roaster process as advised in your letter to Mr. Gibson of N.W.T.



F.S. Parney, M.D.,  
Assistant Director of Health Services.

FSP/GS

*Dr. Parney - Please follow up because if the Council fails to act we should press them, through the Minister if necessary.*  
