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23 January, 1950.

J.G.McNiven,
Manager Negus Mines,
Yellowknife, N.W.T.

Dear Mr. McNiven,

Mr. A.K.Muir and Dr. Hubler of the Giant Yellowknife Gold Mines visited Ottawa recently to discuss the arsenic problem and a meeting was held in my office on the 18th instant when these officers met Dr. Charron and Dr. Kay of the Department of National Health and Welfare, Dr. Atkinson of the Department of Agriculture, Dr. Katz of the Defence Research Board, and Messrs. Parson and Trail of our Bureau of Mines. As you know, the Department of National Health and Welfare originally recommended that the roasting process at the Con and Giant mines be stopped forthwith as they consider there is a serious hazard in the Yellowknife area caused by pollution by arsenic.

At the meeting held in my office the representatives of the Department of National Health and Welfare were asked whether they would modify this recommendation as Mr. Muir had agreed to purchase and install the Cottrell equipment for the collection of arsenic in a dry form. However, regardless of the assurance which we have received from Mr. Muir that steps will be taken to collect and dispose of arsenic from the roasting operations in a satisfactory manner, Dr. Charron did not care to change their recommendations.

This statement of policy by the Department of National Health and Welfare was reported to members of the Northwest Territories Council who were in Ottawa and it was decided that inasmuch as Dr. Stanton, Medical Health Officer for the area, is also Chairman of the Local Trustee Board, the Council would not order the Giant mine to cease its roasting operations provided Mr. Muir assures the administration immediately that the order for the Cottrell equipment has been placed and also that the advice which we have been able to obtain from the Deputy Minister of Health is placed in the hands of Dr. Stanton immediately with a request that these requirements be observed strictly

A copy of the minutes of the Northwest Territories Council meeting for the consideration of this problem will be forwarded to you shortly.

I have written to Mr. Jewitt of the

Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company advising him of the recommendations made at the meeting held in my office on the 18th instant and of the policy subsequently approved by Council. I have asked him for definite assurance that a satisfactory solution of the arsenic problem at the Con mine will be carried out. I expect to have a talk with Mr. Jewitt and officers of his company shortly in regard to this matter.

You will realize the seriousness of this arsenic problem and if your company contemplates the installation of a roasting process at the Negus mine, it will be necessary for you to provide the approved equipment which will result in the effective collection of the arsenic in a dry form. Mr. Christie, our Chief Mining Inspector, is to visit Yellowknife and explore with officers of the Giant mine the area adjacent to their property for the purpose of locating a suitable sandy area where dry arsenic may be disposed of under careful supervision. When Mr. Christie is undertaking this work he will be consulting both you and Mr. White of the Con mine in regard to the disposal of arsenic obtained as a by-product from your operations.

Dr. Charron is forwarding to Dr. Stanton instructions which should be carried out so as to protect the lives of the people in the area and he is also arranging for a continuing survey to be made. I have written to Dr. Stanton explaining to him the recommendations made by the Department of National Health and Welfare and the policy adopted by the Northwest Territories Council in regard to the collection and disposal of arsenic from roasting operations in the Yellowknife area and have asked him to arrange for the strict observance of the requirements which he will receive from Dr. Stanton.

I would appreciate receiving from you an expression of your opinion on this whole matter of collection and disposal of arsenic in the Yellowknife area after you have read the minutes of the Northwest Territories Council pertaining to this subject and have had a talk with Dr. Stanton.

Yours very truly,

sgd. R.A.Gibson
R.A.Gibson
Deputy Commissioner.