

Copy

23 January, 1950.

Dr. O.L.Stanton,
Medical Health Officer,
Yellowknife, N.W.T.

Dear Dr. Stanton,

I am enclosing copy of my wireless message of the 21st instant in reference to the recommendations which you will be receiving from Dr. K.C.Charron, Chief, Industrial Health Division, Department of National Health and Welfare, in regard to the precautions which should be taken to eliminate the hazards from the arsenic which is a by-product from the mining operations in the Yellowknife area.

A copy of your letter of the 16th instant to me has been given to Dr. Charron who has assured me that he will write to you immediately on the important subject. In your letter you ask about payment of accounts for analyses. Any expenses occurring in connection with these analyses will be paid promptly by this department if you will forward certified accounts.

A meeting was held in my office on the 18th instant which was attended by Mr. Muir and Dr. Hubler of the Giant Yellowknife Mines Limited. 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 Traill of our Bureau of Mines. As you probably 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 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 made by the Department of National Health and Welfare was reported to members of the Northwest Territories Council and it has been decided that inasmuch as you, as Medical Health Officer for the area, are also Chairman of the Local Trustee Board, the Council would not order the Giant Mine to cease

its roaster operations providing Mr. Muir assures the administration immediately 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 your hands immediately with a request that these requirements be observed strictly.

Mr. Muir said he was prepared to recommend to the officers of his company the purchase of the Cottrell equipment to take the arsenic from the roaster smoke but explained that if this order was placed at once it might be from 12 to 15 months before installation of it could be completed. I have now been informed by Mr. Muir that he has placed an order for the delivery of an electric precipitation unit which will be delivered to Waterways not later than the 1st of August, 1950.

The Deputy Minister of Health has offered to advise on precautions which should be taken to protect the lives of the people both before and after the installation of the required Cottrell equipment. I advised Dr. Charron I would inform you by wireless message immediately that you will be receiving word from him about the precaution that should be taken. Council decided that they would ask the Deputy Minister of Health for assistance in the matter of a continuing survey and Dr. Charron will refer to this survey in his letter to you. The Northwest Territories Council would be very glad if you would act on these recommendations promptly and in your capacity as Chairman of the Local Trustee Board, it is suggested that you advise them of the policy which has been approved by Council for the collection and disposal of arsenic and the protection of the lives of the people of the Yellowknife area.

I am writing to Mr. Jewitt, Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, advising him of the recommendations made and policy approved at the meeting held in my office on the 18th instant and asking for definite assurance that a satisfactory solution to the arsenic problem at the Con Mine will be accomplished within a reasonable time.

As you probably know, the management of the Negus Mines Limited is contemplating the addition of a roasting unit to their plant and I am writing to Mr. McNiven advising him that adequate precautions will have to be undertaken to effectively collect and dispose of the arsenic from any roasting process adopted by his company.

There is also the problem of the disposal of arsenic in the dry powder form from the Cottrell process to be considered and Mr. Christie, our Chief Mining Inspector in company with Mr. Homulos and officers of the Giant Mine, is to make an examination of the

territory in the vicinity of Yellowknife for the purpose of locating a suitable sandy area where this poisonous material may be disposed of under proper supervision.

Dr. Charron has sent me copy of his telegram of the 20th instant to you and I think it would be an excellent idea if you could arrange to visit Ottawa for the purpose of discussing this important problem with officials of the various departments. The Northwest Territories Administration will be responsible for your travelling expenses from Yellowknife to Ottawa and return. Would you please let me know whether you will be able to make the trip and if so when you will arrive at Ottawa.

Yours very truly,

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