

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Dr. K. C. Charron,
Chief,
Industrial Health Division,
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FROM: Dr. K. Kay

OUR FILE NO. 455-10-13

REF. YOUR FILE NO.
DATED

DATE: Feb. 8, 1950.

SUBJECT: Meeting in Mr. Gibson's Office with Con Mine Officials.

Reviewing this afternoon's meeting, it is obvious that Mr. R. A. Gibson's current official philosophy embraces the concept that having told Con that they must contain their arsenic, one must stand aside and await the results of their trials; that the Government should withhold comment until bad results ensue.

This has the effect of putting pollution into the realm of common law dealing with nuisances rather than threats to public health; it is apparently not the duty of public officers to prevent large scale experimental storage of poison in the midst of organized communities but rather that they should inherit the task of capturing the poison when the tonnage begins to elude confinement.

As the N.W.T. administration is prepared to assume the responsibility, I am afraid we have wasted our time giving serious thought to the problem. Why they ever invited us to consider this serious matter is not clear as they have consistently spurned our advice.

Considering the urinary arsenic levels disclosed by Dr. Stanton and particularly those for the Bevan's, I am again reminded of our advice to N.W.T. that the Bevan's drinking water was unsafe according to the sample Mr. Christie submitted. Can it be that they are afraid to warn Mr. Bevan of the danger lest he should become so alarmed as to go to court and create another Espanola? Meanwhile, they seem to hope that by some miracle he won't develop poisoning.

I think the time has come to remind Mines and Resources that while we may not be responsible for N.W.T. health by statute, we have a moral responsibility and are not satisfied with what they are doing.

K.K.