



CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF

NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

C-455-10-13

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER
OF NATIONAL HEALTH
OTTAWA

February 14, 1950.

MEMORANDUM TO: The Minister.

As you will see from the attached we have been dealing with the Northwest Territories Council as expert advisers in connection with the pollution of the townsite of Yellowknife and the surrounding territory with arsenic by the two gold mines operating there. The present and potential health hazard is such that we have been compelled to recommend closing down ore roasting operations forthwith and until the mines can work out a satisfactory method of dealing with the arsenic.

The Northwest Territories Council, in formal session, reviewed all the facts relating to the case, including my recommendation, and have decided to instruct the mines to install machinery for controlling the arsenic and have also decided to permit the mines to continue roasting meanwhile. Having made that decision they then turned to us for technical assistance in keeping track of the extent of the arsenic hazard and advising on methods which may be used to circumscribe the danger. We have agreed to do this with the clear understanding that we do not thereby imply any modification of the advice already given and referred to above.

I think our position is quite clear. Responsibility for continuing the roasting operation rests entirely with the Northwest Territories Council and not with us. The purpose of this note is to inform you of the situation in case the matter should arise in discussion with your Colleague the Minister of Resources and Development.

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J.M.

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~~J.M.~~

my desk
J.M.

Deputy Minister of National Health.