



OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

ADMINISTRATION
OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
CANADA

OTTAWA

January 20, 1950.

Dr. K. C. Charron, Chief,
Industrial Health Division,
Department of National Health & Welfare,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Dr. Charron:

Enclosed is a copy of a memorandum prepared yesterday after you were good enough to come over for a further conference with Mr. Muir, General Manager of the Giant Company. Will you please check the statement which you were quoted as having made and let me know by telephone if it is in order.

I am also enclosing a copy of a letter received from Dr. Stanton, Medical Officer of Health at Yellowknife, who, as you know, is also Chairman of the Local Trustee Board which is the local municipal body. As agreed upon, I shall advise Dr. Stanton by wireless immediately that he will be receiving word from you about precautions that should be taken and that we will be glad if he will act on these recommendations promptly.

Incidentally any expenses in connection with the analyses, etc., will be borne by our Department.

Yours very truly,

R. A. Gibson,
Deputy Commissioner.

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY COMMISSIONERADMINISTRATION
OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
CANADA

RAG/MGM

OTTAWA

Copy - Dr. Charron

January 19, 1950.

MEMORANDUM TO MR. WRIGHT:

Yesterday afternoon we had a meeting in this office for the consideration of the arsenic problem at the Giant Mine. Mr. Muir, General Manager for the Company, and his Metallurgist, Dr. Hubler, represented the Giant Company. Dr. Charron and Dr. Kay represented the Department of National Health and Welfare. Dr. Atkinson represented the Department of Agriculture, and Dr. Katz the Defence Research Board. Mr. C.S. Parsons and Mr. Traill of the Bureau of Mines were present.

Mr. Muir announced that he is prepared to recommend to the officers of his company immediate purchase of Cottrell equipment to take the arsenic from the roaster smoke, and explained that though he placed the order immediately it might take from twelve to fifteen months to complete the installation. All the experts seemed agreed that the Cottrell equipment had been proven to be efficient but that there was still a question of disposal of the product to be solved. I asked Dr. Charron whether, under these circumstances, the Deputy Minister of Health would be willing to modify his recommendation that the roasting operation at the Giant Mine should be closed down because, as Mr. Muir explained, this would mean the closing down of the mine, which, in turn, would mean economic disaster in Yellowknife. Dr. Charron undertook to consult his Deputy Minister and to report the result this morning. Dr. Charron now states:

- 2 -

"There is sufficient evidence to indicate that there is a serious hazard in the Yellowknife area caused by pollution by arsenic. Both clinical and environmental analyses have established this fact. The definite recommendation of the Deputy of National Health recommending that the roasting process be stopped forthwith would have to stand. However, if, despite this recommendation, Council are prepared to take the calculated risk, then we would be prepared, on request, to assist in reducing this risk to a minimum. It seems that we might help in developing a set of regulations and providing a continuing ~~one~~ survey for the area in order to provide adequate protection for the community."

This statement of policy from the Department of National Health and Welfare was reported to the members of Council present in the city, and it was decided that inasmuch as Dr. Stanton, Medical Officer of Health for the area, is also Chairman of the Local Trustee Board - which is the municipal body - 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 are 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. We are to make the request to the Deputy Minister of Health for advice. We are also to ask for assistance in the matter of a continuing survey. There is also the problem of disposal of the product. Steps are to be taken to reserve an area for exploration and certification and the details of the arrangement can be settled as soon as possible.

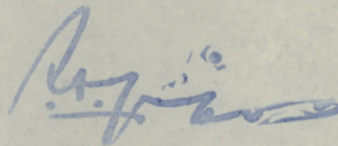
The action taken in this case means that we are to discuss immediately with the Consolidated Company the similar problem which they have at the Con Mine and arrive

- 3 -

at some definite assurance of a satisfactory solution within reasonable time. It will also be necessary to warn the Negus Company in case that Company contemplates roasting operations.

On the above understanding, the Northwest Territories Council is assuming the responsibility for disregarding the recommendation of the Deputy Minister of Health that the roasting operations be closed down. ||

Will you please prepare a minute. The members of the Northwest Territories Council consulted were: Dr. Keenleyside, Brigadier Wood, Lieutenant Commander Audette, Major MacKay, and myself. The other two members were absent from the city.



R.A. Gibson,
Deputy Commissioner.