

200 Kent St.,
Ottawa, Ont.,
Oct. 19, 1951.

Mr. G. E. B. Sinclair,
Director,
Northern Administration & Lands Branch,
Resources and Development Department,
Norlite Bldg.,
Ottawa.

Dear Mr. Sinclair:

This letter will confirm the general details of the arsenic survey which was proposed at the July meeting following the consultations with Negus officials at Yellowknife.

You will recall that necessity for a continuing survey was established early in the considerations of this case with your predecessor, and this continuing survey was intended to proceed concomitantly with efforts to alleviate the danger by bringing collection systems into operation. The situation has been that by far the larger part of such arsenic dispersion assessment as has been done, has been carried out by the mines. The Government was neither in a position to control these efforts in detail nor so equipped with specialized analytical facilities as to be able to confirm reported findings. Additionally, statements on collection efficiency for the Con method have not been confirmed by tests under governmental auspices and a similar situation may now obtain at Giant if the Cottrell is in operation on schedule. Finally, no adequate measure of the extent of arsenic absorption by the general population has been yet possible.

During the early summer extended scientific facilities were brought into operation by the Industrial Health Division, and we became able to undertake a major share of a confirmatory survey at Yellowknife, which would place the Government in a knowledgeable position with respect to the aspects dealt with above. Furthermore, the first human death from arsenic in April emphasized tragically that the dispersion is at a serious level demanding attention not only to collection procedures, but also to the matter of accurately establishing the level of contamination throughout the area. This proposed survey was thoroughly discussed with other agencies having an interest or responsibility in Yellowknife and by mid-September it was evident that the Industrial Health Division might

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count on the active support of these agencies in a task which could, of course, not be undertaken single-handed. The consulting services of Dr. Morris Katz were also arranged with Defence Research Board. It was generally agreed that the fullest value would be obtained by instituting the enquiry as soon as possible following the initiation of collection at Giant. The outline of the survey approach was envisaged as follows:

(1) Soil and Snow Estimations

With the assistance of the Bureau of Mines.

(2) Water Analysis

With the assistance of the Public Health Engineering Division.

(3) Air

By Industrial Health Division.

(4) Collection Efficiencies

By Industrial Health Division.

(5) Vegetation

Food and Drug Laboratory.

(6) Urinalysis

On a statistical sample of the population by Industrial Health Division following a proposed meeting with Dr. Stanton.

(7) Medical Examination and Sickness Survey

On a statistical sample of the population by Industrial Health Division, with the assistance of the Epidemiology Division, following a proposed meeting with Dr. Stanton.

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The National Health and Welfare budget did not include a sum necessary to provide the full expense of such a survey. On this account we proposed, following the July meeting that Resources and Development Department undertake to share the cost. We look forward to your Department's decision on the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Kingsley Kay, M.A., Ph.D.,
Chief,
Industrial Health Laboratory.

KK/th