



MEMORANDUM

NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO
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Mr. Paul Woodstock
Principal Executive Officer
to A/DM Health

FROM
DE

Assistant Deputy Minister
Medical Services Branch

SUBJECT
OBJET

Yellowknife Arsenic Report.

SECURITY - CLASSIFICATION - DE SÉCURITÉ

OUR FILE - N/RÉFÉRENCE

850-5-X751

(M20)

YOUR FILE - V/RÉFÉRENCE

DATE

10 January, 1975

Our review of the files and reports from those involved at the time reveal the following:

The Regional Director, Northern Region, asked Headquarters repeatedly, and Headquarters asked the Environmental Health Directorate repeatedly for the Report in the 1969-1971 period. The answer was that the Report was not ready. (It is possible that the requests from the town for the Report, referred to in today's Globe, were being made in this period.)

In May, 1971, Medical Services Headquarters finally got a copy and sent it to RD/Northern Region, for him to decide if it should be released and if so to whom (Flag 1). He immediately advised release to the Commissioner NWT and the Town of Yellowknife. He also suggested a summary be prepared for general distribution. The following week, he was told that Environmental Health had been asked to send him 12 copies. (Flag 2)

On June 29, 1971 four copies of the Report were sent to the Assistant Commissioner, NWT by the Regional Director, for distribution as the Commissioner saw fit. (Flag 3). It was the RD's understanding that one of these would be given to the Town of Yellowknife. When he learned in March, 1972 that this had not happened, the RD sent a copy to the town. (Flag 4).

Our files also have letters of September - October 1970, in which the Commissioner NWT expressed concern to the Minister, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, about the wish of the RD/Northern Region to issue public health information about the arsenic problem. Mr. Chrétien wrote to Mr. Munro, and the RD was instructed not to make public comments. It was noted that consultations were taking place about further measures of pollution control. (Flag 5)

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I think these documents show clearly:

- (1) Delays in getting the Report to the field, and to the Territorial Government and Town were due to the Report not being ready until May 1971. Once available, it was sent promptly to the Commissioner and (once it was realized he had not passed it on) to the Town also.
- (2) The Commissioner had expressed concern in 1970 about public information on the arsenic problem until steps were taken to try to improve the situation. There is no evidence of requests to restrict distribution (e.g. to the Town of Yellowknife) when the Report became available in 1971.

Original signed by
D. B. DEWAR

D.B. Dewar.