

DR. E. SOMERS

850-5-X751

Director General  
Directeur général

Environmental Health Directorate  
Hygiène du milieu (direction)

TO Mr. J. R. Hickman  
A

DATE January 28, 1975

☐ PASS CIRCULER ☐ RETURN RETOURNER ☐ RETAIN RETENER  
BY  
PAR Friday, January 31/75

☐ DIRECT REPLY RÉPONDRE DIRECTEMENT ☐ INFORMATION PRENDRE CONNAISSANCE

XXXX ☐ PREPARATION OF REPLY RÉDIGER RÉPONSE  
Signature of Ann Jamieson  
XXXX ☐ COPY TO THIS OFFICE NOUS RETOURNER COPIE ☐ COMMENT COMMENTER  
☐ SIGNATURE PLEASE SIGNER S.V.P.

REMARKS  
REMARQUES

NHW 227 (9-74)



A.B. MORRISON, Ph.D.  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
*Sous-ministre adjoint*  
Health Protection Branch  
*Direction générale de la  
protection de la santé*

To  
A

DR. SOMERS

Date

JANUARY 27, 1975

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREPARATION OF REPLY RÉDIGER RÉPONSE VERS LE FEB. 3.....1975	
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REMARKS:  
REMARQUES:





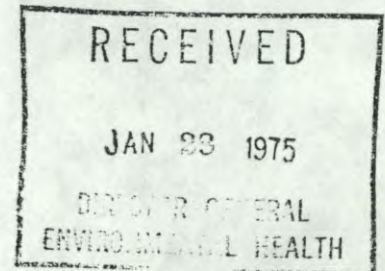
McGILL UNIVERSITY P.O. BOX 6070, MONTREAL 101, QUE., CANADA

50-8-5

Biology Department

January 20, 1975

M. Marc Lalonde,  
Minister of Health and Welfare,  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ont.



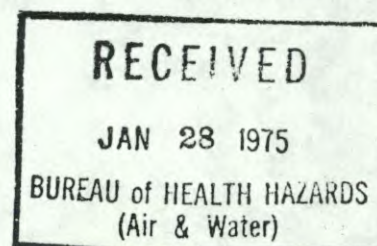
Dear Mr. Lalonde,

I am writing in connection with the Yellowknife arsenic study (1969)\* which you indicated in your January 9th statement would be made available to anyone requesting a copy. I would like to get this report as soon as possible, either through you, or through the appropriate government outlet (and would appreciate knowing exactly how in the latter case).

Your comments on several points arising from the CBC programme exposing the problem are requested. I trust that they will be enlightening as well as reassuring.

- (a) What steps have been, or are being, taken to find out why this report was not made public as soon as its gravity was apparent?
- (b) Are you suggesting in your Jan. 9th statement that the connection between agent and disease was not devastatingly obvious in this case - a point made by the expert comment included in the CBC programme referred to?
- (c) What other 'secret' reports exist, waiting to be disinterred from your department's files, perhaps by those whose consciences finally get the better of them?
- (d) What would your reaction be to a move for legislation making your department's complete files public at all times for perusal, and for making it an offence for the minister of health to conceal any type of data on health collected by public survey?

It may be said, in relation to your January 9th statement, that any studies on public health problems inevitably contain data and the statistical analysis of those data; your comment that such a report made dry reading is particularly incongruous when contrasted with the apparent



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JAN 27 1975

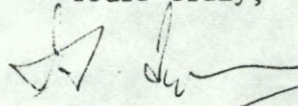
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incompetence of the Federal health minister in appraising the work done by his subordinates on a matter of this gravity. It is also important to emphasise the valuable role of programmes such as CBC's 'As it happens' in the area of public exposés of health problems and criminal neglect, whether they be concerned with lead, arsenic, uranium, cadmium, vinyl chloride or whatever. A corollary would be that any evidence of curtailment of such reporting activities by this programme would be viewed as an extremely serious matter. The term 'criminal neglect' is used not in the narrow legalistic sense, but in the sense of matters responsible for gross and appalling danger to the ordinary people of this country.

Yours truly,



H. Tyson,  
Associate Professor

HT: emf  
(attach.)

\* Is the attached reference to drinking water standards the latest available?





Health  
and Welfare  
Canada

Santé et  
Bien-être social  
Canada

\$0.50

CANADIAN DRINKING  
AND  
OBJECTIVES  
1968  
WATER STANDARDS

