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# MEMORANDUM

# NOTE DE SERVICE

TO  
À  
Director General  
Program Management  
Medical Services Branch

FROM  
DE  
Regional Director  
Northwest Territories Region

SUBJECT  
OBJET  
ARSENIC - YELLOWKNIFE NWT

SECURITY - CLASSIFICATION - DE SÉCURITÉ
VIA TELECOPIER
OUR FILE - N/RÉFÉRENCE 151-1-5-N (N1)
YOUR FILE - V/RÉFÉRENCE
DATE January 13 1975

Attached is draft of news release for your amendment or approval.

*F. J. Covill*

F. J. Covill, M.B., B.S., M.F.C.M., D.P.H.  
Regional Director

Enc.

ACTION		PA date	BF date
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CONFIRMATION COPY OF TELECOPIER MESSAGE SENT THIS DATE

2-17-1



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MEDICAL SERVICES  
HEADQUARTERS

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QUARTIERS GÉNÉRAUX  
SERVICES MÉDICAUX

COMMUNICATION CODE DE L'ÉTUDE DES MESSAGES 2001-1112-0115

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INFORMATION

NOTE DE SERVICE



YELLOWKNIFE RESIDENTS TO BE EXAMINED  
FOR ARSENIC TRACES

The Department of National Health and Welfare Medical Services Branch has announced the implementation of a special survey to detect any possible arsenic traces in residents of that community.

Dr. F. J. Covill, Northwest Territories Region Director, stated today that his department will conduct the survey comprised initially of analysis of the hair and urine samples from members of the population who may have an increased possibility of arsenic intake such as mill employees and residents using a water supply other than the city system. Although participation in the survey is voluntary, it is hoped that all individuals approached by Medical Services staff will co-operate in the program. In addition, any other residents of Yellowknife or surrounding district who wish are welcome to participate, and may do so by simply contacting the Yellowknife Health Centre.

In making the announcement today, Dr. Covill referred to a previous study to determine what effect, if any, the arsenic liberated in the gold extraction process was having on the health of the people. Although the study showed that no signs of illness due to arsenic could be detected in the general population, it was nevertheless recommended that the city's water intake be relocated and this work was completed in 1968-69. Since that time the city has drawn its

drinking water from the Yellowknife River and a regular program of monitoring of all waters has been maintained.

A recent CBC radio program charged that residents in certain parts of the city were being exposed to high levels of arsenic contamination, a charge which Dr. Covill concluded as simply not substantiated by the facts.