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W.A. Moore, P. Eng.,
P.O. Box 1503,
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

January 19, 1977.

The Chairman,
Varsity Fund,
University of Toronto,
TORONTO, Ontario. M5S 9Z9

Gentlemen:

~~Ministère de la Santé Nationale et
du Bien-être social~~
Minister's Office
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JAN 24 1977

Ministère de la Santé Nationale et
du Bien-être social, Cabinet du Ministre
RECU

RE: Varsity Fund

Ever since I was discharged from the army in 1946, I have donated annually to your Fund, and have been a member of the Committee of One Thousand for many years. I have been proud to be a member of the alumni of the University, as I have always considered the University to be the best run University in Canada, with easily the highest educational standards in the country. I have marvelled too, at the manner in which the University has maintained its policies over the years, particularly during the days of student unrest of a few years ago.

However, this week I was dismayed and upset to learn that the University has permitted its staff, its facilities and its name to be used in a political ploy by the National Indian Brotherhood and the United Steelworkers of America to discredit the Federal Government, and the Department of Health and Welfare. I am referring to the study, if one can call it that, on arsenic in the Yellowknife area, released this week jointly by the Brotherhood, the U.S.W.A. and the University of Toronto.

I don't know whether you are familiar with the situation in Yellowknife, in so far as it relates to arsenic in the environment is concerned, or indeed, to the situation that the Brotherhood finds itself in today, with its ranks torn by internal dissension, at a time when it is trying to present a united front in its land claims proposal, and also, the situation facing the Steelworkers in Yellowknife of losing 60% of their membership to a rival Canadian Union. Each of these organizations is trying desperately to find some cause around which it can rally its faltering membership, and it would appear that the University has fallen into the trap.

Arsenic occurs in Yellowknife as arsenopyrite, the mineral in which gold is entrapped in the ore. In order to release the gold, the arsenopyrite is concentrated in the milling process, and then roasted. The hot gases containing arsenic trioxide and sulphur dioxide are cooled, and the arsenic is collected and stored underground in sealed caverns in the permafrost areas of the mines.

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Naturally, the process is not 100% efficient and approximately 1 to 2% of the arsenic escapes to the atmosphere. It is this arsenic fallout which concerns the authors of this study.

Naturally enough, the Department of Health and Welfare, and Environment Canada have been concerned from the beginning with this condition. Over two dozen very comprehensive and exhaustive studies, using both renowned consultants and both Health and Welfare and Environment Canada experts, have been done. Extensive monitoring systems of both the environment and the workers have been devised. Regulations have been drawn up, and procedures set up. Government inspectors and industry technicians alike sample and analyse at regular intervals the environment - inside the plants, and outside - air, water, soil.

The consensus of all these reports, studies, and sampling indicates that there is no hazard to the health of the inhabitants. Levels of contaminants are within accepted standards. Operating procedures are correct. Vegetables grown in the soil around Yellowknife can be eaten, with normal washing. The fish caught in the waters can be eaten. The air can be breathed. The waters are safe to drink.

And now this new study comes out with results (not yet divulged to either government or industry) that are diametrically opposed. Your biologist, Mr. Hutchinson, has stated emphatically that there is a relationship between arsenic and cancer, as opposed to most medical authorities. And that this is the reason for the abnormally high cancer rate in Yellowknife. Hair samples taken by U.S.W.A. members, from U.S.W.A. supporters (some taken at home, some on the job, but how well, how much, how dirty, how clean), show abnormal levels of arsenic, in sharp contrast to samples of mill workers of December, 1976 and analysed by Health and Welfare which showed results of 5 to 40 parts per BILLION. Frankly, as an engineer, the results of this study are suspect until I can be assured of the professional competence of the people doing the work, the techniques used, the care in cleanliness (an industry lab technician takes six hours to wash all the equipment in preparation for such a test), and the care used in collecting the samples.

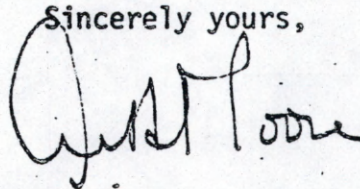
But this is beside the point. The purpose of this study was not scientific. It was political. And with that, I must disagree most emphatically. Neither the Brotherhood nor the Steelworkers are particularly concerned about health conditions in Yellowknife. In fact, they are confident that everything has been done and is being done to keep on top of the situation. But they have created this fuss to draw attention away from their other problems. And the University has gone along with it.

Regretfully, I must withdraw my support from your Fund this year. I will always support the University in most matters, but I cannot agree to

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using your name and good reputation for such a cause.

Sincerely yours,



W. A. Moore
P. Eng.

WAM:jc
Att.

c.c. The Board of Governors,
University of Toronto.

✓ The Minister,
Dept. of Health & Welfare,

Environment Canada.

D. Billing,
Environment Protection Service.

The Commissioner,
Government of the N.W.T.

R.F. Moore

J.R. Smith

D.H. Searle

Convicted killer Gary Gilmore shot at sunrise

Ed. Journal
Private study shows Jan 17/77
Yellowknife arsenic
level dangerously high

TORONTO (CP) — Dangerously high arsenic levels, as much as 50 times above the World Health Organization (WHO) safe level, have been found at Yellowknife, N.W.T., says a non-government study made public Sunday.

It said the cancer death rate in Yellowknife, about 600 air miles north of Edmonton, is almost twice the national rate of 1.4 per thousand population and blamed arsenic pollution from gold mines.

The study was done jointly by the National Indian Brotherhood, the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) union, and the University of Toronto.

The three groups issued a statement calling for a full medical study of all 10,000 Yellowknife residents to determine how many show the effects of arsenic exposure. The statement urged generous compensation for persons who develop arsenic-related diseases, and for federal enforcement of arsenic emission controls.

Tom Hutchinson, a University of Toronto biologist, told a news conference the arsenic problem is so serious that residents should not eat vegetables in Yellowknife.

The study says Yellowknife levels are the highest in North America and Dr. Hutchinson said the northern city is possibly one of the most severely arsenic-contaminated areas of the world.

The findings directly contradict federal government statements. As recently as last September federal officials said no major arsenic problem exists in Yellowknife.

Arsenic is a poisonous substance found in gold-bearing ore and can escape into the air, water and

soil during mining and smelting. Continued abnormal levels in humans can cause respiratory illness, nervous disorders and cancer.

There are two gold mining operations in Yellowknife and they constitute the city's largest industry outside government.

The study did not prove any directly related disease or deaths but Lloyd Tataryn, Indian brotherhood research director, said there is no doubt the pollution is affecting people in the N.W.T. capital.

Hair samples taken from USWA members who work in the gold-mining industry and Indian children confirm dangerous exposure, Mr. Tataryn said.

Union people tested had "extremely high" arsenic levels in their hair, as high as 278 parts per million (ppm). All but two of 39 Indian children tested had levels above one ppm, 44 per cent were above five ppm and one had 28 ppm.

The WHO maximum acceptable level for arsenic in the hair is five ppm.

Among steelworkers and Indian children combined, 50 per cent had levels above five ppm and 30 per cent had more than 10 ppm.

For comparison, testing was done on USWA members and Indian children in Whitehorse, the Yukon capital. None of those tested had levels above one ppm.

There are no gold mining operations in Whitehorse.

Mr. Tataryn said federal studies have revealed high levels of arsenic in Yellowknife mine-smelter workers but never have found elevated levels among Indian children.

More YELLOWKNIFE, Page 3.

Yellowknife

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Also, a still-secret federal study done in 1976 showed arsenic in Yellowknife soil 2,000 times higher than in uncontaminated areas and 40 times higher in street dust.

Eleven of 12 federal snow samples showed levels above the government's emergency level, one 38 times greater, Mr. Tataryn said.

The study says two Indian children died from eating arsenic-poisoned snow about 20 years ago.

Noel Starblanket, Indian brotherhood president, said he will not be satisfied until arsenic levels in Yellowknife Indian children are down to those in Whitehorse.

"I'm becoming damn mad at the biase way the health minister and his officials are treating this problem."

Wally Firth, New Democrat MP for the N.W.T., said in an interview he will demand action to have the levels dropped drastically.

"I never thought I'd see the day when the snows of the Northwest Territories are poisoned."

Mr. Tataryn said federal officials have said the Yellowknife cancer death rate is only one-quarter of the national rate.

But the brotherhood-USWA-university study group asked Statistics Canada to compile cancer death figures that show the following:

The three-year average rate for Yellowknife 1965-67 was 1.7 deaths per thousand population, compared with 2.8 for Whitehorse and 1.3 nationally. The 1970-72 three-year average rose to 2.3 in Yellowknife, fell to 2.1 in Whitehorse and was 1.4 nationally. For 1973-74 the rate was 2.4 in Yellowknife, one in Whitehorse and 1.4 nationally.

Last fall, Dave Gammill, a federal engineer, called 1975 news reports of Yellowknife arsenic pollution nothing but a news media scare.

REPORT BY [illegible] FOR THE [illegible]