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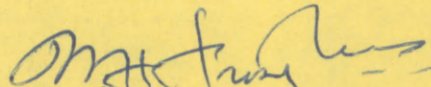
December 11, 1970.

ARSENIC CONTAMINATION - YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

I am enclosing herewith correspondence from Dr. G.C. Butler including a proposed news item on the results of sampling of vegetables and fish at Yellowknife.

For my part, I think the reference to 2 parts per million will lead to confusion because presumably it applies to vegetables consumed throughout the year, if indeed there is such a limit.

Your comments and advice will be appreciated.


W. H. Frost, M.D., D.P.H.

M161

Enc.

SAME MEMO SENT TO DR. J.A. CAMPBELL, FOOD & DRUG BRANCH.

Director General, Medical Services

151-1-5-W (NL)

Nov. 30, 1970

Northern Region

ARSENIC CONTAMINATION -- YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

The local press and radio at Yellowknife are pressing for the results of arsenic sampling undertaken this summer and for a copy of Dr. de Villier's report on the survey carried out three years ago.

I attach herewith a copy of a news release I propose to issue, but before doing so, I would like to have it approved by the special committee set up by you. Early approval would be appreciated.

I would also welcome information on when I may expect to receive a copy of Dr. de Villier's report.

Original Signed by
G. C. BUTLER, M. D.

Regional Director

Enc.

PROPOSED NEWS ITEM

*Not in Food + Drug
Regulations*

The results of the sampling of vegetables grown in the Yellowknife area this past summer have now been received.

In all 22 samples of various vegetables were tested for arsenic content and all but 3 were below ~~(the limit of)~~ 2 parts per million, ~~recommended by Food & Drugs Directorate for minor foods~~. Six of the remaining eight samples showed concentrations of 2 - 3 parts per million, while two samples showed concentrations between 4 - 5 parts per million.

The arsenic content of vegetables is therefore considerably reduced as compared to the concentration found in 1965, and as ~~this analysis~~ ^{these analyses} ~~was~~ ^{were} carried out on unwashed samples, it is probable that the core concentrations ^{were} somewhat lower than the values cited. ~~When one also takes into~~ ^{I'm considering safety one would} ~~account that the~~ ^{estimate} vegetables grown in the Yellowknife area are only consumed over a period of three to four months, ^{each year, which lessens the total} it is evident that there is no danger ^{annual consumed dose} to the health of the public from the consumption of locally grown vegetables over a period of three to four months per year. ^{were low and there is no} ~~arsenic~~ ^{levels} Fish samples taken from Great Slave Lake showed levels well ^{evidence to suggest that fish is not} below the limit set by Food & Drugs Directorate, and ~~are~~ ^{are} therefore suitable for human consumption.

Further sampling is planned for the summer of 1971.

Chief Medical & Health Officer