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ARSENIC - YELLOWKNIFE

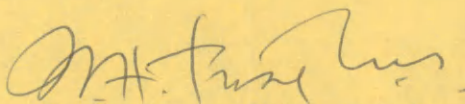
Further to our telephone conversation of September 29, 1970, I am enclosing a copy of Dr. G.C. Butler's recent letter in which he expresses concern about the arsenic pollution at Yellowknife. I am also enclosing a draft summary of the situation which I prepared some months ago and which was vetted by Mr. R.E. Tait and is presently in the hands of the Food and Drug Directorate for vetting.

I discussed arsenic with Dr. Butler on the telephone yesterday and attempted to allay some of his apprehension because it appears there is less cause for alarm today as far as the arsenic content of locally grown vegetables is concerned than there was five years ago when locally grown vegetables contained more than ten times present levels of arsenic.

It would appear from Dr. Butler's letter that the stack emissions of the Con Mine are excessive when compared with those of the Giant Mine. The Con Mine operates a 500-tons per day mill whereas Giant operates a 1000-tons per day mill. Based on the tonnage of ore treated one would expect that Con emissions would be only 50% of those at Giant, whereas they actually exceed the Giant emissions. Actually the Con Mine extracts 80% of the gold by a cyanide process. They roast the residue however which extracts possibly another 18 or 19%.

Since writing the summary of arsenic at Yellowknife, I have also discovered that water from pumps at Yellowknife Airport contains almost 10 times the arsenic content of the town water. Apparently Dr. Butler was not aware of this and is looking into the use to which water from the pumps at the airport is put.

It would be appreciated if we could discuss this problem within the coming week since there is a possibility of me being away on French for the next three weeks.


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Att.