



MEMORANDUM

850-5-X751

CLASSIFICATION

TO
A

Director General, Medical Services

YOUR FILE No.
Votre dossier

OUR FILE No. 151-1-5-N (N1)
Notre dossier

DATE Nov. 30, 1970

FROM
De

Northern Region

SUBJECT
Sujet

ARSENIC CONTAMINATION - YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

TO	FOR INFO.	FOR ACTION	REMARKS	DISPOSAL AND DATE
<i>MH</i>		<i>7</i>	<i>Replied</i>	<i>30-12-70</i>
<i>MIS</i>			<i>looks much better</i>	<i>24-12-70</i>

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.

J. C. Bell
Regional Director

Enc.

025473

MEDICAL SERVICES
SUB-REGISTRY

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PROPOSED NEWS ITEM

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 8 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 was carried out on unwashed samples, it is probable that the core concentration is somewhat lower than the values cited. When one also takes into account that the vegetables grown in the Yellowknife area are only consumed over a period of three to four months, it is evident that there is no danger to the health of the public from the consumption of locally grown vegetables over a period of three to four months per year.

Fish samples taken from Great Slave Lake showed levels well below the limit set by Food & Drugs Directorate, and are therefore suitable for human consumption.

Further sampling is planned for the summer of 1971.

Chief Medical & Health Officer