

The Canada Metals story: A chronology

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Seven News, February 28, 1980

1925: Plant built on Eastern Avenue.

1971: Ontario Environment Protection Act passed.

1973: BREMM, a local citizens' group, demands blood tests of residents in the area surrounding the plant.

Sept. 11, 1973: Environment Ministry issues control order against Canada Metals.

Oct. 26, 1973: Environment Ministry issues Stop Order against Canada Metals to stop emitting lead and lead compounds based on the opinion that the discharges presented "an immediate threat to the health of residents" living in the vicinity of the plant. The Stop Order was issued on the advice of medical experts from the Ministry of Health and the Toronto Board of Health.

Oct. 30, 1973: The Stop Order is disallowed in court because, according to the judge, no health hazard could be attributed solely to Canada Metals.

Nov. 1973: A community meeting on the lead pollution issue is held. At the meeting, the results of blood testing in the area are disclosed, showing potentially harmful levels of lead in about 50 of the 732 tests, many of them in children at Bruce School. Dr. Parkinson of the Hospital for Sick Children says that the government did not present the evidence it could have in court to keep the plant shut down. It is revealed that the Environment

Ministry has been negotiating with Canada Metals for years about pollution control standards. It is also revealed that in the first part of 1973, there were 16 occasions on which lead in the air near the plant was above the legal maximum. Monthly dustfall was higher than the maximum every month from January to July 1973.

August 1974: Formation of Working Group on Lead Emissions at Canada Metal. The working group recommends a number of control procedures; monitoring of lead levels; regular blood tests of residents, and a clean-up of soil in the area. The soil clean-up is carried out in June and July 1977.

January 1975: Environmental Hearing Board public hearings begin and continue to October 9, 1975. The transcript of the hearing filled 7,663 pages.

April 5, 1976: Control order to abate fugitive emissions and from plant upsets issued.

October 12, 1976: A committee on the Environment Hearing Board's recommendations is set up. Membership consists of residents' group representatives, company representatives, and government officials.

November 1976: A public meeting is held, sponsored by the Committee.

March 1977: A summary of the Environmental Hearing Board recommendations is tabled. Of the 103 recommendations, 39 were completed or under way.

March 28, 1977: Committee members representing residents' groups resign.

June/July 1977: Removal of soil contaminated by lead is carried out, at a cost of \$80,000.

April 18, 1979: An Ontario Environment Ministry official admits that new lead contamination of the soil in the area exists. He says that residents have not been informed because "it would only upset them". The Ministry had known about it since November 1978, but had done nothing.

April 23, 1979: Readings for lead in the air are published in the press. They show that the "acceptable" level was exceeded 10 times in June 1978, five times in July 1978, eight times in August, nine times in September, 15 times in October, eight times in November, nine times in December, and five times in January 1979.

June 1979: A community meeting on lead pollution is organized by the South Riverdale Community Health Centre. At the meeting, evidence is presented suggesting that previous levels of "acceptable" lead pollution are too permissive.

October 1979: A new liaison committee is set up to look into the situation of lead levels near the Canada Metals plant.

October 1979: The Board of Health and Ministry of the Environment give their approval to the building of a proposed new apartment building at Pape and Eastern, near the Canada Metals plant (and close to the A.R. Clarke Tannery). The planning commissioner recommends that the building be "air conditioned". The city neighbourhoods committee later recommends approval be delayed for a year until it is seen whether Car Metals complies with the latest control order against it.

February 22, 1980: Canada Metals is given a suspended sentence after pleading guilty to charges of air pollution. The judge said he was suspending sentence because Canada Metals is a good corporate citizen, because there is "no physical possibility of recurrence of the offence", because there was little, if any harm done.

Reference:

Seven News "<http://www.connexions.org/SevenNews/Docs/7News-Diemer-CanadaMetals.htm>," (accessed January 11, 2013).