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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**STATUS REPORT**

**ON**

**TUBERCULOSIS IN REPULSE BAY**

Since October, 1988, 35 cases of tuberculosis have been reported from Repulse Bay. Thirty-four of these were identified between October, 1988, and April, 1989; only one new case has been reported since April.

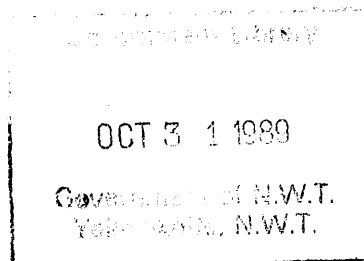
A number of patients and contacts initially identified in October have recently completed their courses of drug therapy. Currently, there are 27 active cases receiving anti-tuberculosis medications and another 76 individuals receiving preventive therapy. With only one new case reported since April, it appears as if the outbreak of tuberculosis in Repulse Bay is under control.

Many of the cases were identified as a result of aggressive case finding efforts. There have been 3 periods of intensive Mantoux skin testing and 3 chest x-ray surveys in the past ten months (November, 1988, January, 1989, and May, 1989). The Keewatin Regional Health Board hired two additional staff members (a tuberculosis nurse and a community worker) to do case management, contact tracing and education.

In the most recent chest x-ray survey, 372 individuals were screened, representing almost 80% of the population of this community. Investigations were conducted as a result of this survey, but no new cases have been identified. Ongoing surveillance for new cases will continue. As individuals currently on medication complete their courses of therapy, they will be followed up in accordance with standard protocols to ensure that their treatment has been effective.

The Minister and Deputy Minister visited Repulse Bay in September, 1989, to discuss the TB problem with the local nursing staff and the health committee. While it was generally felt that the problem is under control, the Minister and Health Board officials received several suggestions from the committee on how to improve understanding of the disease and its side effects.

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The Department of Health recognizes that soliciting community support in the fight against TB is very important. Many of those who have been on medication to prevent tuberculosis will complete therapy over the next few months. Nursing staff who have been involved in active treatment will then become available for community education. Education has been ongoing:

- Health Centre personnel in Repulse Bay have participated in 3 broadcasts on the local radio station; a fourth is planned for this week.
- Individual teaching is routinely given to those taking anti-tuberculosis medication.
- Three sessions have been given at the schools to instruct children about tuberculosis.
- All persons who contact Health Centre personnel regarding tuberculosis are given pamphlets.
- Appropriate educational materials will be developed shortly.