

HONOURABLE NELLIE J. COURNOYEA
MINISTER OF HEALTH



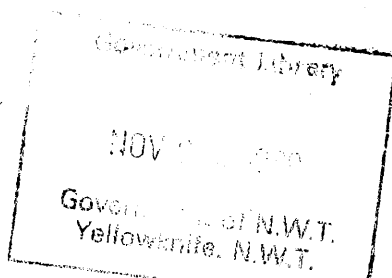
SUMMARY OF N.W.T. HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE B
(HIB MENINGITIS) IMMUNIZATION PROJECT

MR. SPEAKER, I WISH TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE B (HIB MENINGITIS) PROJECT WAS COMPLETED AT THE END OF AUGUST OF THIS YEAR. THIS WAS A JOINT PROJECT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE CANADA AND THE G.N.W.T. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO TEST A NEW VACCINE PRODUCED BY CONNAUGHT LABORATORIES.

THE PROJECT WAS PROPOSED BECAUSE OF THE VERY HIGH INCIDENCE OF HIB DISEASE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES. HIB IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED CAUSE OF MENINGITIS IN THE NORTH. EVEN WITH TREATMENT, DEATH OCCURS IN APPROXIMATELY 10% OF CASES, AND UP TO 40% OF SURVIVORS CAN BE LEFT WITH PERMANENT BRAIN OR NERVE DAMAGE.

THE PROJECT WAS INTENDED TO CONFIRM THE SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VACCINE IN NATIVE INFANTS. (THE GENERAL

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SAFETY OF THE VACCINE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY PROVEN IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES.) A TOTAL OF 267 INFANTS FROM ACROSS THE TERRITORIES WERE ENROLED IN THE PROJECT.

THE INFANTS WERE RANDOMLY DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS. ONE GROUP RECEIVED ROUTINE INFANT IMMUNIZATIONS PLUS THE TEST VACCINE. ALL INFANTS HAD A BLOOD SAMPLE TAKEN PRIOR TO THE FIRST IMMUNIZATION(S) AND ONE MONTH AFTER THE THIRD IMMUNIZATION. THE BLOOD SAMPLES WERE THEN COMPARED, AND THE LEVEL OF PROTECTION GIVEN BY THE VACCINE WAS MEASURED.

THE VACCINE PROVED VERY SAFE TO USE. A NUMBER OF INFANTS HAD SLIGHT REACTIONS TO THE VACCINE, BUT NO INFANT HAS HAD A REACTION SERIOUS ENOUGH TO REQUIRE HOSPITAL ADMISSION.

THE BLOOD STUDIES SHOWED THAT THE SMALL NUMBER OF NON-NATIVE INFANTS WHO RECEIVED THE HIB VACCINE RESPONDED WELL. NON-NATIVE INFANTS WHO RECEIVED THE HIB VACCINE DID NOT RESPOND AS WELL, SO HAVE A LOWER LEVEL OF PROTECTION.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE BUREAU OF BIOLOGICS (CANADA'S LICENSING BODY) IN OTTAWA. THE BUREAU STAFF WILL STUDY THE RESULTS AND DECIDE IF THE CONNAUGHT VACCINE CAN BE LICENSED FOR USE ON INFANTS IN CANADA. IF THE VACCINE IS APPROVED, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WILL MAKE A DECISION AS TO WHETHER THE VACCINE SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE REGULAR IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE FOR INFANTS. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THERE ARE NO OTHER VACCINES AVAILABLE IN CANADA TO PREVENT HIB MENINGITIS.

THANK YOU.

