



Ministry of Defence

Our Ref: FOI2019/08525

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

22 November 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email requesting the following information:

File reference AB16/748

As confirmed previously, we have treated your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and we can advise that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) holds information in scope of your request.

We attach the following document:

- File AB16/748 – Uranium - General – Eldorado Mining

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Nuclear Organisation Secretariat

NOTE

FILE NO. 330/508/1/2.....

CLASSIFICATION REVIEWED

DATE June 1960.....

NEW CLASSIFICATION

SIGNED

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

[Personalities]

Num

330/508/1/2

URANIUM

GENERAL

FLORADO MINE

S closed 966

Registered— 09/3/46

Former File

Other relevant Files

(For Registry Use only).

J.F.A. 2/6/4

AB 16/748

AB 16

748

Referred to

Date

Referred to

Date

PA.

E 72/96

Two years after the date of the last entry on the file a responsible officer should mark it with one of the following instructions. (Delete inappropriate Headings)

1. The file may be destroyed forthwith (Branch to be responsible for destruction)
2. Destroy at (5 years after date of last entry on file; Branch to be responsible for destruction)
3. Review at with view to destruction or preservation (5 years after date of last entry on file; Branch to be responsible for review)
4. Preserve in Archives (for review by Archivist 25 years after the date of last entry on file)

Date 22 FEB 1961

Signature of Branch Officer A. MACKENZIE

Authority for final closing

DECLASSIFIED

Initials

Branch

Date

530/503/1/2

Extra 1134.

File 4-1-521.

18th March, 1946.

Leslie R. Thomson, Esq.,
Special Liaison Officer,
Department of Munitions and Supply,
Ottawa, Canada.

My dear Thomson,

Eldorado Investigation

I was very much interested, and not a little amused, in the contents of your letter to me of February 19th.

I feel sure that Pregel is much too wily a bird to get into your clutches, but his indignant letter of protest is not without its humorous side.

I am, however, sorry to see that Pochon is mixed up in this business as he is undoubtedly a very able scientist who was devoted to his work on the extraction of radio-active elements.

It so happens that Goldschmidt came here last week to say goodbye to us, and he told me that Pochon had had to resign from the Eldorado Company, but he did not know, at that time, that a warrant was to be issued for his arrest.

I hope it will turn out that his share in the proceedings was more that of a weak-minded dupe, and therefore only constructively a conspirator, rather than that of an active member of the conspiracy.

/As

This is a copy

18th March, 1946

As you know, we are not without our troubles on this side, and the legal proceedings against the unfortunate May start tomorrow. Naturally I shall have to be the principal witness for the Crown, and it is not a pleasant thought to have to take part in the prosecution of a man who did excellent work in Montreal, particularly in the dark days.

But, if the Government considers that he has infringed the Official Secrets Act deliberately, then obviously I will have to do whatever is necessary in the matter.

I hope you will be able to pay your long-deferred visit to this country during this summer, although I am afraid that we shall still be under a great many privations as a result of the war.

With kind regards to Mrs. Thomson and yourself.

Yours sincerely,

(W. A. Akers)

330/508/1/2,



WHEN REPLYING 4-1-521
REFER TO FILE.....

DEPARTMENT OF MUNITIONS AND SUPPLY
OTTAWA, CANADA

19th February, 1946. *BF*

W. A. Akers, Esq., C.B.E.,
c/o Dept. Scientific & Industrial Research,
Directorate of Tube Alloys,
16 Old Queen Street,
Westminster S.W.1,
LONDON, England.

Re: Eldorado Investigation

My dear Akers:-

We have reached a point in our Eldorado investigation, under the able guidance of Mr. J. Grant Glasco our official Investigator, at which I can give you some specific information.

We have just issued warrants for the arrest of Mr. Carl B. French, formerly a member of the Eldorado Board and Secretary-Treasurer of the Company, first on charges of accepting secret commissions and of making false entry in the Eldorado books, and secondly of conspiracy. Similarly, we have issued a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Pochon, formerly a member of the Eldorado Board and Superintendent of the Refinery, on a charge of conspiracy. Each of these appeared for preliminary hearing in Toronto on Monday last, the 18th, and the case was adjourned until 8th April.

Eldorado Mining & Refining Co

We also issued a warrant for the arrest of Boris Pregel in New York. But this warrant is something like the Papal Bull against the Comet. It is non-operative in the U.S., because the charge of conspiracy is not extraditable. When notified in the usual manner of the issuance of the warrant on a charge of conspiracy, Mr. Pregel wrote a letter to the Police Magistrate, Toronto, dated 18th February. I thought you would be interested in having a copy of it, enclosed herewith. With your knowledge of the background, the letter will make you smile.

These facts will indicate to you that we are making progress in what is a long and tedious matter. But I know you will be interested.

With kindest personal regards, believe me to be,

Sincerely yours,

Leslie R. Thomson
Leslie R. Thomson,
Special Liaison Officer.

2/24

LRT:EJM
Encl.

BORIS PREGEL
630 Fifth Avenue
New York

February 16, 1946.

The Police Magistrate,
Toronto,
Canada.

Sir:

I have today received from Mr. John J. Robinette a letter with which he enclosed a copy of an information charging me, together with Carl B. French and Marcel Pochon, with unlawfully conspiring to defraud Eldorado Gold Mines Limited, also known as Eldorado Mining and Refining Company Limited, of a quantity of radium and of a sum of money estimated to be not less than \$500,000. Mr. Robinette's letter asks that he be advised as to whether or not it is my intention to be present to answer the charge; however, it seemed to me best to signify my present intention, and my reasons for it, to the officer presiding over the Court before which the matter is to come on February 18th. That is why I am writing thus to you.

Since 1939 I have been resident in the United States, and since September 1940 have been carrying on business here. I have made very few visits to Canada. Everything done by me in relation to Eldorado, during any of my brief trips to Canada, or elsewhere, was done with the full knowledge of Mr. Gilbert LaBine, then and now the President of Eldorado, who, I observe, is not charged as a conspirator. I observe that the information charges an offense committed within the County of York and Province of Ontario and elsewhere within the jurisdiction of your Court, which I take it cannot extend beyond the territorial limits of Canada. How such a charge can properly be brought against me in the light of the above I cannot understand.

It may be of interest to point out that my last visit to Canada was in July of 1945 when I appeared before an inquiry presided over by Mr. J. Grant Classco, at which inquiry Mr. Robinette appeared as counsel for the investigator, and at which time I gave to the inquiry as complete information as was requested. Since July 1945 I have, through my counsel, volunteered a considerable amount of information to Mr. Robinette, and on at least two occasions my counsel, on my instructions, has written to Mr. Robinette offering him the fullest cooperation in conducting a complete inquiry into my connection with Eldorado from the outset, which offers to date have been ignored.

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The Police Magistrate,
Toronto, Canada.

February 16, 1946.

As to my connection with Eldorado, far from having defrauded that Company, or having conspired to do so, the facts will show that I, more than any other person, am responsible for what success the Company has had, and for what assistance it was able to give during the recent war to the Allied Nations. As the evidence in the pending case will disclose, I became the general agent for Eldorado on November 7th, 1940, at a time when the mine was closed and when the Company was in danger of going into bankruptcy. My efforts enabled the mine to open and production to commence. Orders secured by me, and sales made by me, permitted the mine and the refinery to continue in operation. Those competent to judge have said that my labors had much to do with the early development of atomic energy. Apart from the contribution thus made to the cause of society, in the process and through my sole efforts, Eldorado made profits of millions of dollars. Conscious as I am of all this, I am at a loss to understand how it can be charged that I was other than a great benefactor to Eldorado, and to all who were interested in it and in its operations. Certainly, I am astonished at the suggestion that I conspired to defraud, or that I did defraud, Eldorado out of anything. Whatever I, or companies associated with me, did receive was an inadequate reward for the labors performed, and was in every way proper, and fully authorized by the directors of Eldorado. And, it may not be incidental to point out that Eldorado is at this time indebted to me and companies with which I am associated, in an amount substantially exceeding one million dollars; the exact amount I cannot ascertain because of the continued failure of Eldorado to furnish me with statements of account which they are obligated to render.

I, who deserved praise, have been subject to the indignity of suspicion, and now, as a final insult, to baseless charges. Nevertheless, I am still prepared to submit myself to the fullest examination here as to my dealings with or for Eldorado, and am willing to produce my own records and those of any companies with which I am associated, to any Commissioner who may be appointed to take my evidence. At this stage, however, feeling as I do that the charge against me is political and malicious, and not judicial and fair, I am not inclined to make an appearance before your Court on Monday, February 18, 1946, but do not say that I will not appear subsequently during the course of the proceedings, should I so decide.

Yours truly,

BP/br

Sgd. Boris Pregel.

This file has been registered under the M. of S. system as from
1st January 1946. For correspondence prior, refer to file number.

.....*D.T.A. 2/5/4*.....

A.E.11