

They take a prominent part and a very active part in the administration of justice. When we go out to these isolated points, no matter where it is, Eskimos all attend the courts sittings. They behave well and listen carefully. They understand what is taking place. Everything is interpreted for them. They take a very active part in the administration of justice. I feel that those Eskimos can take the same active part in respect of all administration, and I think they should be allowed the opportunity of doing so. We call upon them to act in this capacity, why should we not allow them to exercise the voting franchise and run their own affairs in this way?

Mr. ALKENBRACK: Sir, you have certain per capita records kept up there, no doubt, the same as in any province or municipality of the more settled parts of Canada. How do you find the incidence of crime per capita and the observance of law? Would you care to comment?

Judge SISSONS: I could not; all that goes to Ottawa. We have no attorney general's department in the Northwest Territories. Our attorney general is the Attorney General of Canada. I do not think our per capita crime is as large as in other parts. I think we are more law abiding than in any other part of Canada.

Mr. RHEAUME: I preface my remarks by saying I know that the judge may decline to answer.

From your travels throughout the Northwest Territories in the last three years and the discussions you hold with community people including servants of the crown, would you say the implications of the bills to divide the Northwest Territories were well understood, partly understood or not understood at all by the bulk of the people who live in that country?

Judge SISSONS: I would not like to answer. The information I have is from people who are civil servants, and they have said one thing to me and I am quite sure they have probably said the very opposite thing to their superiors. One could not expect anything else, you know. When you are travelling in those areas, you throw your sleeping bag down in the house, it is very informal; they are talking to you off the record, and they do not expect you to go ahead and tell their bosses what they have said. Of course, my travelling is very informal, as I say, and I make it a point of visiting all around and of listening to them. The Eskimos call me "Erkoktooyee"; that means the one who listens to things and to whom people tell things.

Mr. TURNER: Do you also have a pseudonym "The Walrus"?

Judge SISSONS: I have a lot of them, but I like "Erkoktooyee" better than any of them, and I like the thought. My finest recollection is of when I go into one of those Arctic settlements and the plane circles round, the children yell "Erkoktooyee comes", and they come running down to the beach to meet the plane. I would rather have that than that they should yell, "The judge is coming" and run to the bush, you know. There is none of that in our country. I like the thought again when I have sentenced people that the clerk comes up and says, "This man would like to say something to you; is it all right?" I say, "Yes, sure it is all right." They come up to me and say, "I want to say that I have had a fair trial", and even when they have served for a few months they will say that it was fair. They are very fine people, you know, and I have a great deal of respect for them. I have great respect for their ability, too. I think they could take a better hand in the administration than could most white people, and that they could do a really good job in all fields of administration.

Mr. RHEAUME: May I go to a different line of questioning now, Mr. Chairman?