

the face of it, is forwarded to Ottawa. There the evidence is carefully scrutinized, and the statements of the applicant are compared with the records in the department. If the application is found to be satisfactory, a certificate is forwarded to Winnipeg in due course, and delivered to the applicant in person by the Commissioner.

Frequently the applicant has only the vaguest notion of the information upon which the form of application insists. An applicant will tell his age promptly, and without any hesitation. When the question arises as to where he has lived since his birth, he begins to flounder. By the time he has summed up the term of his residence at various points, it will frequently appear that he has overlapped somewhere—that the addition of these various terms makes him several years older—or younger—than the age he has already given. Then the Commissioner, the applicant, the applicant's relatives, and any other Indians or halfbreeds who happen to be handy—



COMMISSIONER SEMMENS AND HIS OLD GUIDE, JOE CHEDLEY

there is always an interested audience at these sessions—dig in and endeavor to create order out of the chaos of years and events. If the applicant is, or has been, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, it is a simple matter to obtain the necessary evidence; for the company keeps a full and complete record of the service of all its employees, with dates and place of residence, nature of employment, age, and character.

Another snag is the requirement of a baptismal certificate. Just what value is to be derived by the department from the production of a baptismal certificate is difficult to tell. In many cases, particularly among the old halfbreeds, no baptism has ever been performed. In many others cases, although baptised, no record of the fact is to be found in the registers; which at the remoter places in the north, have often been grossly neglected by the native missionaries in charge, themselves often able to read little, and write less. Again, baptism may have taken place at birth; or it may have been performed at any age from birth to second childhood. In many of the older registers, the age is absent from the



A TYPICAL SCENE — APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED AND ENTERED WHEREVER THE APPLICANTS ARE FOUND. THE WOMAN IN THE PICTURE IS ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS PUT BY THE COMMISSIONER ON THE LEFT