

I bumped into Father Lemer on the airplane coming down here. I would like to have had a chance to talk to him about this situation, but that was the first time I had seen Father Lemer for over a year. Our communications set-up and so on are not conducive to rapid communication across the Arctic at the present time, but that does not mean to say it could not be remedied.

However, that is the state of affairs at the present time. Hence, there is a tremendous degree of ignorance in respect of these bills and what is intended here. As I say, I have travelled about and some of us did hear there was a proposal to divide but we never took it very seriously. That may sound contemptuous but when and where we hear about it varies to a great extent; sometimes the council is sitting at Cape Dorset or Resolute Bay or even in Ottawa, and to us in Yellowknife it is the same thing at the present time. We are not too well informed. The Eskimos call us *aperksooktee*, meaning one who asks questions.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. de WEERDT: As a result of this, I have asked people as casually as I can with as little intent to arouse any particular response what they thought about this division, and the response I have had usually was a puzzled expression. People say: division; yes, I have heard about that. And, then they say: I guess our taxes will go up, whatever happens. That is about as much as anyone cares to say about division, at least the ones I have spoken to. I can count on the fingers of one hand people who have said to me that they think division might be of some benefit, and those people are fairly well convinced of that; in respect of the remainder it is a negative response, a strong negative response, or simply a puzzled expression showing that they do not know what it is all about.

As I read this telegram—and I admit I am putting my own interpretation on it—to me it really means that the Eskimos are not anxious to see the court changed, nor should its jurisdiction be restricted or interfered with in any way.

I could tell a little story which might help you to understand their feelings in this connection. I was on the banks of the Mackenzie river at Aklavik a year ago talking to an old man. I asked him how are things now compared to what they used to be, and he said to me: "Well, in the old days there was one boss and if you had any troubles or anything had to be done you would see that person, but nowadays there are too many bosses."

As I understand it, under this legislation there is a proposal that we have *ex officio* judges from the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, eminently distinguished judges, but a total of approximately 40 in all and, with the very very greatest respect, I suggested that the comment of that Indian may be applied to that rather excessive number of judges for such a small number of people.

There are a little too many bosses, to use the words of the average Indian or Eskimo. It is a great help to these people to identify the person, to know him year after year and to feel that here is a solid institution, something with which we are familiar, and here is the person who runs it; we know him and his quirks or his attitudes, we can have confidence in him. I suggest that if a lot of strangers flock in and out to administer justice this will have the effect of diminishing the confidence which the Eskimo people will have in that institution. Also, there is the power given to these judges to sit beyond the territories. From the Eskimo point of view, taking into consideration their rights and customs, I do not think they would think well of it if it was brought to his attention that a judge would come into the territories from outside, when they already have a perfectly good court within the territory. It is necessary