

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
7<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL, 47<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 21-47

TABLED ON OCTOBER 11, 1972

TABLED: 11:10:72



PLEASE QUOTE

FILE

*T. Butters*  
*with attachment*

GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
CANADA

TC 21-47

*Tabled on Oct. 11, 1972*

Yellowknife, N.W.T.  
XOE 1HO  
October 3, 1972

Mr. Tom Butters,  
Member - Western Arctic,  
Council of the Northwest Territories,  
Box 1069,  
Inuvik, N.W.T.  
XOE OTO

Dear Mr. Butters:

Re: R.C.M.P. Statistics

Further to my letter of August 17, 1972 with regard to the above I have now received replies from the three R.C.M.P. Sub-divisions in the Northwest Territories.

The R.C.M.P. do not have any "hard and fast" rules or procedures for members to follow when approached to intervene or settle a domestic quarrel. Every effort is made to attend as quickly as possible and a commonsense approach is employed. The welfare of children is a major concern. In the majority of these incidents, alcohol is a major factor, and as such, each situation has to be dealt with on its own merits. When circumstances warrant, an arrest is made and depending upon the parties involved, court action may or may not follow. If no charges are laid the person taken into custody is released when sober in compliance with existing legislation.

The R.C.M.P. do not maintain statistics that are readily available which would answer your questions. In order to supply them, they would have to check over each and every individual complaint report at every detachment. The Frobisher Bay and Inuvik Sub-divisions, however, did do considerable work in certain detachments to provide some of the information you requested. I am attaching copies of Statistics forwarded from the Inuvik Sub-division and reports from the detachments at Frobisher Bay, Cape Dorset and Resolute Bay. Inuvik Sub-division has detachments at Aklavik, Good Hope, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, Norman Wells, Fort Norman, Tuktoyaktuk and Sachs Harbour. Frobisher Bay, Cape Dorset and Resolute

Bay have the larger volume of police work in that region.

It is generally felt by members of the R.C.M.P. that only a small percentage of marital assaults are reported. I am also advised that members are encouraged to solicit the assistance of other community services such as family counselling, members of the clergy etc., if and when available.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Murray Smith', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

W. Murray Smith,  
Director,  
Department of Public  
Services

c.c. Commissioner

# INUVIK SUB.

## ASSAULT STATISTICS

(A) Cases of Assault where wife laid charges:

- 29

(B) Length of sentence received by husband:

- Jail sentences varied from two (2) weeks to three (3) months in jail with only four persons receiving a prison term. Fines varied from \$15.00 and costs to \$100.00 and costs. The average fine for the 30 persons convicted was \$27.85.

(C) Insufficient evidence presented in court to obtain conviction:

- Nil

- Total convictions - 34

(D) Charges that have been preferred by police:

- 5

(E) Convictions by police after preferring charges:

- 5

(F) Complaints received by police from wife who refused to prefer charges:

- 213

(G) Ethnic background:

- All detachments reported their ethnic backgrounds to be Indian or Eskimo with the exception of Inuvik who reported that out of a total of 125 complaints all but approximately 25 involved Indians or Eskimos.

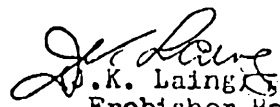
Frobisher Bay, N.W.T.  
August 24, 1972

O. C., FROBISHER BAY

Re: Policing of the N.W.T.  
By the R.C.M.P. Police

1. In reply to correspondence from Mr. BUTTERS, please be advised that it is the general policy of this Detachment to take whatever action may be necessary to protect life and property when answering domestic complaints. This action could include the arrest of the husband where there is evidence of an assault, or removal of the complainant to some other residence at her request. In all cases the welfare of children is considered and Social Development officers are contacted where necessary.
2. Statistics relating to domestic complaints to date in 1972 where the wife laid charges are as follows:
  - (a) Charges of assault laid by wife - 4
  - (b) Ethnic background of accused - Eskimo - 1, Other - 3
  - (c) Sentences - 2 months, \$40.00 Fine, 6 months probation
  - (d) Insufficient evidence for conviction - nil
  - (e) Victim refused to testify - 1
3. Statistics relating to domestic complaints to date in 1972 where R.C.M.P. laid charges are as follows:
  - (a) Severe assault - charge by R.C.M.P. - 2
  - (b) Convictions - 1
  - (c) Accused released because victim would not testify - 1
4. During the three month period from April to June a total of 40 complaints were received which involved domestic fights or assaults. In only four of these instances investigation resulted in charges being laid. In two of these instances convictions were obtained, and in two others the victim refused to testify against her husband. In the majority of cases encountered either one or both the husband and wife had been drinking or were drunk.

(J.R.G.) Cpl.  
1/c, Det.

 Cpl.  
J.K. Laing, 18567.  
Frobisher Bay Det.

Cape Dorset, N.W.T.  
30th August, 1972.

O.C. FROBISHER BAY SUB/DIVISION

Re: Policing of the N.W.T.  
by the N.C.M. Police

With reference to your memorandum dated 11 AUG 72, the following information was compiled from available detachment records for the years 1971, 1972 - to date.

1. When a call is received and action taken regarding problems between a husband and wife, each case is approached differently depending on the circumstances involved. In most cases of fights between the husband and wife, both of them are usually intoxicated. This results in either the members having to take the action in way of charges or to quiet the disturbance and no charges are laid due to the circumstances involved.
2. (a) 1971: One charge laid by wife.  
1972: None to date.  
(b) 1971: Both local Eskimo residents.  
(c) 1971: Three weeks imprisonment.  
(d) 1971: Nil.  
1972: None to date.  
(e) 1971: None.  
1972: None to date.
3. (a) 1971: Seven charges laid by detachment members on behalf of wife.  
1972: Two charges laid to date.

(2)

3....

(b) 1971: Conviction on each person charged.

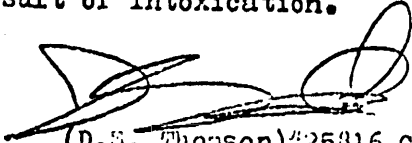
1972: Conviction on each person charged to date.

(c) 1971: None.

1972: None to date.

4. I agree that where the wife is afraid to charge her husband for fear of another beating, the detachment members have laid the charge resulting in the husband blaming the Force and not the wife, for charging him. No doubt there are cases where, as a result of the members laying the charge, the husband has assaulted the wife again, however, the number of these cases is felt to be minimal.

5. In conclusion, most assaults arising from marital disagreements are felt to be the result of intoxication.



(D.S. Thomson)#25816.Cst.  
Ti/c Cape Dorset Detachment.

"G" Division

RESOLUTE BAY, N.W.T.,  
XOA OVO,  
18 AUG 72.

O.C. FROSIBLER BAY SUB-DIVISION.

Re: Policing of the N.W.T.  
by the R.C.M. Police.  
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1. Receipt is acknowledged of correspondence from Mr. Tom BUTTERS, Member, Western Arctic dated 22 JUL 72 together with forwarding memorandum from the Officer Commanding Frobisher Bay Sub-Division dated 11 AUG 72 relative to the above matter.

2. In reply to question 1 of Mr. BUTTERS letter, the normal procedure to do when police are called to a home in Resolute to settle or break up an argument is first of all, attend the scene and speak to the persons concerned and if talking do not solve the problem, one of the persons are asked to leave the home and spend time with a relative or neighbour until the quarrel cools off and their temper subsides to a degree to enable them to discuss their problems sensibly.

3. For question 2, the following information is from files of this Detachment to cover the calendar 1971 and part of the current year.

(a) 1971	(3)	1972	(1)
(b) Eskimo		Eskimo	
(c) One person served three months, other two persons fined.			Still awaiting Court.
(d) NIL		NIL	
(e) NIL		NIL	

4. Question 3 is answered as follows:

(a) 1971	NIL	1972	NIL
(b) 1971	N/A	1972	N/A
(c) 1971	N/A	1972	N/A.

5. To comment on the first part of page 2 of Mr. BUTTERS letter insofar as the wives in the Northwest Territories having little or no protection against assault and physical degradation inflicted by their husbands while in a drunken condition, I can only say that in the majority of



**Re: Policing of the N.W.T.  
by the R.C.M. Police.**

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cases where members of this Detachment have been called to family quarrels, the complaint is originated by the children of the family concerned since not only is the husband of the family drunk and beating up the home but the mother herself is also inebriated and not physical capable of defending herself or leaving the home to seek help. Also, in a large number of cases, especially when liquor is involved, the woman of the house will not leave if there is a quantity of liquor in the home and available for her consumption. It is a known fact in Resolute that liquor is not a rare commodity for the Eskimo people and the women feel as though they are entitled to as much liquor as their men folk.

6. In general, it is agreed at this point that the Eskimo women are afraid to testify against their mate because of repercussion.

7. Insofar as a reply about the latter part of Mr. BUTTERS's letter, I have no comment to make on his remarks.

Cpl.  
P.J. POWER, 20789.  
i/c Resolute Bay Det.

TABLED: 11:10.72

T. Buelin

To be read in conjunction with  
letter on 11th March 1971. October 9, 1972

Northwest Territories Council

Dear Sirs:

I would like to bring to your attention my concern over the situation of the native women of the Northwest Territories with regard to cases of assault.

During the 1971-72 season, there were 29 cases of assault where the wife laid charges, in the Inuvik Region. 5 charges were laid by the police, with a total of 34 convictions. Sentences ranged from three weeks to three months incarceration. Average fines for 30 persons convicted was \$27.85, with fines ranging from \$15.00 and costs, to \$100 and costs.

However, there were a total of 213 complaints received from wives who refused to lay charges. My concern deals with the 213 complaints wherein the victim did not lay charges. The native woman does not lay charges for very practical reasons. She must consider the severity of the sentence should she win her case. If the sentence be two weeks can she expect her aggressor to repeat the offence on his return? In the case of fines it should be remembered that the money must come out of the family earnings and in that sense deprives the victim and her children. There are those who may say that she should leave home, but the severe shortage of housing in the North is one answer to that.

Beatings. Women who land in the hospital with broken faces and bodies is a fact of life that does not personally touch many of the people in the North. For them this tragedy has no reality except perhaps for the native women they may see down town with a hardened eye. They tend to shrugged off with a philosophical, "Well, they don't lay charges, you know, and they are just as bad as the men!" But in the meantime, there are women within the Northwest Territories who lead a daily existence of terror. Women who cannot get adequate protection from the law because laws regarding domestic assault are just not extensive nor practical enough to meet the demands.

Native women are citizens also with the same basic need for dignity and pride as his men. I believe that it is time that the courts whether Supreme or Magistrate give notice notice that they consider the native women as citizens also and began to give her the protection she needs. Two years for homicide may be using the law as a buffer between the effects of the 19th Century and the confused Native man but it is also another way of saying that the life of the Native woman is not to worth it.

I do not have immediate solutions to this problems nor can I suggest ways in which the laws regarding domestic assault may be changed. But I urge you to give this matter your greatest attention.

A concerned Citizen