



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

December 16, 1977

## Memorandum

To: Director of Territorial Affairs

From: Assistant Solicitor, Territories

Subject: Backlog of Cases Pending in the High Court of the TPI

Attached is a proposed draft of a letter. I think it one you should sign, but if you feel differently, I will sign it. In either event, I think it is time a letter such as this is sent in order to get a better understanding of the situation. As of the end of November there were 110 criminal cases and 836 civil cases pending in the High Court. At the end of the previous month 109 criminal and 828 civil cases were pending. During October 19 criminal and 58 civil cases were filed, and 9 criminal and 43 civil cases were disposed of. During November 11 criminal and 52 civil cases were filed, while 10 criminal and 54 civil cases were disposed of. This would seem to indicate either that they need more help out there or that someone is not doing his job. If the breakdown we are asking for is provided it may shed some light on the problem.

/s/

C. Brewster Chapman, Jr.

## Enclosure

cc:  
Subj File  
Reading File  
CBChapmanJr.

SOL:GL-T:CBChapmanJr:vph:12/16/77:5215

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Dear Judge Burnett:

I have been reviewing the recent statistical reports of the High Court and am concerned over the large number of cases pending at the end of each month in contrast to the number of filed and decided during the month. I realize that you were for a while shorthanded and that the logistics of setting hearings in the various districts are staggering, nevertheless the backlog figure puzzles me. I wonder if you would be kind enough to provide me at your early convenience a break down on the pending cases in both the Trial and Appellate Divisions of the High Court which will show, District by District, how long these cases have been pending, and if the time seems inordinately long, say 6 months or more, a brief explanation of the reason.

I shall look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

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