

547. Within your own experience as Clerk?—I do not remember one alteration of statement or of fact in my own minutes.

548. I am speaking of minutes of others that came before you?—Yes, in my own knowledge.

549. And how was the error in the minute ascertained?—In the case I have referred to the error was discovered upon the perusal of the Judge's notes.

550. What was done when the error was discovered on perusal of the Judge's notes?—In the case I referred to an alteration or erasure was made and the correct statement inserted—that is, it was corrected from the Judge's notes.

551. I wish to know this from you, then: the Clerk keeps the minutes, and the Judge his notes?—That was the practice, and always has been the practice.

552. In cases of difference between the Judge's notes and the Clerk's minute-book, which would be looked upon to be correct by the Registering Clerk?—The Judge's notes were always relied upon.

553. And you say you have known one or two cases, at least, in which the minute-book was corrected to correspond with the Judge's notes?—Yes.

554. By whom was the minute corrected?—By the Clerk.

555. Can you say how long after the entry the discovery of the error was made?—I cannot say how long. I only know it was after the rising of the Court.

556. After the Court had been adjourned *sine die* and the staff had returned to the head office?—Yes.

557. After the staff had come from some place?—Yes.

558. On perusal of the Clerk's minutes?—Yes.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce*: Perhaps you would ask whether it was customary to compare the minute-book and the Judge's notes.

559. *Mr. Bell*: Can you answer that question, Mr. Bridson? Was it the practice to compare the Judge's notes with the minute-book kept by the Clerk?—I cannot say what the practice of other Clerks was. My own practice was that I did not.

560. Then I should like to ask you how it came about that the error was discovered in the case to which you have referred?—The Clerk himself told me that, on comparing the Judge's notes with his minutes, they did not correspond.

561. Then, in the case of that Clerk, he did make it a practice?—Evidently it was his practice.

562. It was not your own?—No, it was not mine.

563. Can you say what was the general practice?—I cannot say what was the practice with other Clerks.

564. *The Chairman*.] Did you, as a rule, see the Judge's notes, or did he keep them in his private custody?—They were always accessible for the Clerk if he had any doubt as to the correctness of his minutes. I know the Judges were always courteous enough to give access to their notes.

565. But they were not in your care or subject to your inspection unless you asked for them?—No.

566. *Hon. Sir R. Stout*.] What is the name of this Clerk that you refer to?—Mr. Austin.

567. It was not Mr. Woon or Mr. Brooking?—No; I have never been near enough to them.

568. Suppose the Government asked the Chief Judge for information as to what took place in the Court, what would be forwarded to the Government—an extract from the minute-book or the Judge's notes?—I think it would be an extract from the minute-book.

569. Then it would be assumed that the minute-book was a correct record of the proceedings?—I presume so.

570. Was that the practice?—I know of no instance where the Government asked for the copy of the minutes.

571. Suppose applications for rehearings were made to the Government, would not the Government like to know what took place in the Court before they considered the advisability of granting a rehearing?—That is likely; but I do not remember a single instance where the Government have asked for a copy of the minutes.

572. But for what took place in the Court?—Yes; there is the case you referred to. On an application for rehearing the presiding Judge would be asked for his opinion, and if any copy of the minutes were required I have no doubt his minutes would be sent.

573. And then, if the Judge sent a copy of the minute-book as a record of what transpired, would the Judge say that the minute-book was correct?—I do not know; I do not think I could answer that question.

574. Very well then; I put it this way: Did your office consider that the minute-book was a true record until the contrary was proved?—Yes, I think so.

575. You assume, *prima facie*, that the minute-book stated correctly what took place in Court?—Yes.

576. It was kept for that purpose, I suppose?—Yes, for that purpose.

577. Were minute-books of the Courts held outside Auckland sent there?—They were kept in Auckland except during the sittings.

578. For what purpose?—More as a record of the proceedings of the Court, I think, than anything else.

579. They were kept in Auckland to be considered as a record of what took place in the Courts, I suppose?—Yes. If I may go a little further, I would also say that the Clerk's minutes were frequently deemed of not much value as compared with the Judge's notes.

580. Were the Judge's notes filed in the head office in Auckland?—No; they were always deemed private property.

581. Then, do I understand this: that the administrators of the Native Land Court in Auckland