was (and it remains) to hand you the papers and say, "You are at liberty to search the claim and all judicial documents relating to it, but the correspondence is not part of your right."

647. Would you take the correspondence out?—Only if there was any chance of my suspecting that there was any information to be obtained by the searcher. I would give him the pile of papers and say, "You are at liberty to search only papers judicially relating to the claim." If there was private correspondence I should tell him not to search that, but I should trust to his honour not to do so.

648. But you would not separate them, and hand him what you would consider records, and withdraw from it what you would consider not strictly part of the papers?—No.

649. You gave him the bundle, in fact, merely trusting to his honour not to look at what did not concern him?—Yes.

650. Now, with regard to the question of notice to these Natives: Was the distance of the block where these Natives resided from the Court ever an element in the length of notice? Supposing, for instance, Natives resided twenty miles from where the Native Land Court was sitting, was that ever taken into consideration as against Natives residing, say, one hundred and fifty miles away from the Court? Would not the question of distance be an element in considering what notice they should have?—I do not think it was the practice to consider them.

651. So that the question of distance was not taken into consideration in fixing the length of notice?—Well, I am not very sure on that point. I do not think it was an element.

652. I understand you to say that in some cases less notice than a month was given or considered sufficient?—It was not the rule.

653. You say that more than a month's notice was sometimes given?—Yes.

654. You have never known less except in certain cases, I understood you to say?—I have known less than one month's notice.

655. I want to know how did that period of less than a month's notice come to be considered as sufficient?—In all probability the convenience of the Natives to the Court.

656. Now, supposing the Court met, did the Court not first satisfy itself before it proceeded to the consideration of the cases that the Natives had proper notice of the sitting of the Court? What proof of notice to the Natives did the Court see before going on with the case?—It was taken for granted. In very many cases it was——

657. How was this notice given—through the *Gazette*, or how?—There was a separate notice in the form of a sheet.

658. Whose duty was it to serve this notice on the Natives? Was it addressed to individual Natives, or how?—The names of several of the first claimants in a case (where there was more than one name) were taken, and the notices were addressed separately and distinctly and put into a separate envelope, and the letter was sent to them containing these notices.

659. But who exercised discretion as to which Natives should be served?—The interpreter generally had that duty.

660. Who was despatched to serve the Natives?—They were delivered by post.

661. And the interpreter exercised discretion as to which Natives should get special notices, so to speak, or any notices?—Yes. The rule was to send them to all the important men; and the interpreter was expected, and in most cases did know, all the important men in most districts. The most important men in the claim, I mean.

662. Do I understand you to say that when the Court sat there was no inquiry as to how the notices were served, and, if so, by whom?—I do not think so.

663. The Judge went on the bench and proceeded to hear the claim?—Yes: the cause-list was read over and he proceeded to hear the claim.

664. Now, supposing, in the course of inquiry, it came out that other persons were interested in the block than those then before the Court, but that no definite information was got as to the extent of their interest or the particular interest, what would the Court do under such circumstances? That is to say, I am assuming this case: Supposing in the course of the inquiry it came out that persons not before the Court had an interest in the land, what did the Court do? Did it proceed to summon these witnesses before the Court?—It would adjourn the case until their appearance. It would adjourn the case, and give notice to those parties who were supposed to have a claim.

665. And then, I suppose, after their appearance the Court would proceed to adjudicate upon the claim?—If certain persons were not present who were known to be owners or had an interest, the Court would not proceed until they were present that were entitled to be included; but if they were not present, and others could show "sufficient authority" to justify the Court in proceeding, it proceeded.

666. Upon this question of sufficient authority: supposing two Natives attended the Court and stated that they had arranged with other Natives who were supposed to have an interest in the land that the titles should be issued in the names of the persons in Court, what proof would the Court require as to the absent Natives?—It would be very slow indeed to take cognizance of such a case.

667. Would they take the evidence of other persons in Court?—Yes; I have known cases of that kind.

668. That the Court has admitted the evidence of disinterested persons?—Yes—of a chief of considerable rank or men of standing with the Natives.

669. Do you mean to say it was not the practice?—I do not say it was not, though I only recollect, I think, one occurrence like that.

670. Did the parties who were present make any objection afterwards?—No. The case to which I refer was a matter of a Crown purchase in the North, where money had been paid in advance, or what they call——