validity of the grants which had been issued by Governor Fitzroy in the case of such claims; and in the case of one of these, which case became famous because it was carried to the highest tribunals, the validity of Governor Fitzroy's grants had been upset. This caused much commotion, tending as it did to unsettle a great number of claims and rights to property; and Sir George Grey passed the Quieting Titles Ordinance with the object and intention, as expressed in the Ordinance itself, of setting at rest all the questions and disputes which had arisen, and of validating the grants which had been so issued by Governor Fitzroy. The leading principle of that Ordinance was this: It recited that certain grants under these old land claims had been submitted to the judgment of the Courts, and that it was essential to the prosperity of the colony that all doubts arising out of such grants should be removed without delay; and therefore, for the removal of such doubts and quieting of all titles, the Ordinance declared that every grant of land made before 1849 should be deemed and taken to be a good and effectual grant of the land purported to be conveyed, and of the estate and interest of Her Majesty; it provided that compensation should be given where the Native title had not been fully extinguished; it settled how rights of selection by grantees should be exercised; and it provided that, in cases where the persons entitled to the right of selection under the grants met with any serious obstruction in the exercise of that right from any Native claimant, the Governor might grant to the persons entitled to such right, other land of equal value, not being town land. The effect of the Ordinance thus was to confer a validity upon the grants issued by Governor Fitzroy, which they certainly had not before. When the Land Claims Settlement Act was passed, the main provisions of the Ordinance were virtually repeated; and the Commissioners appointed under the Land Claims Settlement Act were enjoined by the Act to recognize the validity which had been so conferred on the Fitzroy grants by the Ordinance of 1849. I am anxious the Committee should understand this, because it has been supposed, I find, that the award which was made in the Land Claims Court under the Land Claims Settlement Acts of 1856 and 1858, in Mr. Whitaker's case, as well as many other cases, were awards which were made by my sole discretion; and I wish the Committee to know that, in the case of the particular grants which they are dealing with here, there was no discretion vested in the Commissioner at all; he was obliged to call in the grants which were supposed to be defective, and to issue new grants preserving to the grantees all the rights which the Ordinance of 1849 had conferred upon them. Among the holders of grants in the class to which I am referring, were the derivative claimants from Mr. Webster, whose rights by a long series of deviations had devolved upon Whitaker and Heale. Now when I took office under the Land Claims Settlement Act, I called in the grants of Whitaker and Heale as well as other grants concerned—I think in 1857—upon a notification duly brought before me by Captain Heale, who was managing the concern on behalf of himself and Mr. Whitaker; and, according to the rules laid down for the Commissioners by the Act, the grants were repealed, whereupon Whitaker and Heale became entitled to demand the issue of new grants in exchange for those acquired by them between 1849 and 1857. In the meantime, the Government of the day had been engaged in transactions for the acquisition of the Native title over certain lands belonging to the tribes in the neighbourhood of Piako and the Waitoa; and Mr. Drummond Hay, then Land Purchase Commissioner for the Government, made certain purchases, one of which included the claim which had originally been made by Webster, and the land covered by the grants which I had repealed. I may as well here say that the grants which had been issued by Governor Fitzroy in Webster's claim, and to which validity had been given by the Ordinance of 1849, amounted to 12,674 acres. I very early saw there were considerable difficulties connected with the claim, and I repeatedly urged Whitaker and Heale to take advantage of the powers which were vested in the Commissioners under the Act, and exchange the land to which they were entitled for other land. I made several visits to the Natives concerned, but was always satisfied there would be trouble in clearing off the difficulties existing in the way of quiet possession being given; meantime, however, the fact that the Crown had extinguished the Native title under Drummond Hay's purchase, had put Whitaker and Heale in the position of almost certainty of ultimately getting the land if they only chose to wait. Mr. Whitaker was then in the Executive Government: and between 1857 and 1860—when the war broke out—I repeatedly recommended both Whitaker and Heale to give up the claim and to take other land in exchange. But they appeared to have an opinion of the value of the property included in their grants, which prevented them from listening for a long time to any proposal of the sort from me. However, ultimately they did consent to make an exchange, and they offered to make an arrangement I shall presently mention, when, in 1860, all the conflicting titles and interests which had formerly existed, became settled by the concentration of title under the circumstances detailed in my Report on the claim. I wish to give the Committee the reasons why I pressed Whitaker and Heale to make the exchange at that time, and why I desired to retain the particular land in question for the Crown. The claim was situated in a position which seemed to me to be very desirable to reserve as a site for a settlement. Accessible by water from Auckland for small vessels, it lay immediately adjacent to the low country which (through a break in the Parawhao and Hangawera ranges) communicated down the valley of the Mangawara with the great Waikato District. This low country was in fact a Native portage, the Mangawara being navigable for canoes to within about two miles of the back boundary of the block ceded to the Crown, and within about seven miles of the Piako River itself. Besides its important relation to the Matamata and Upper Thames District, it was the commanding point of the East Coast water communication between Waikato and Auckland, and presented advantages for a township which it appeared to me ought not to be in the hands of private persons if the land could be secured for the province; especially when it might fairly be expected that the establishment of a settlement there, would be the first step towards opening a country which had been shut up against colonization, and be the foundation of more extended purchases from the Natives. In March, 1861, Whitaker and Heale made a proposal to accept scrip at the rate of 10s. an acre for the claim, provided their offer were agreed to at once. I then submitted a proposal to the Superintendent of Auckland, in a communication in which I reviewed the advantages which it seemed to me would accrue to the province by exchanging Whitaker and Heale's claim in that way, and the disadvantages which to some extent might result if the province agreed to the proposal. The pro-