

Thus it will be seen that in the Piako claim, 16,754 acres being granted and only 7,500 acres admitted by the Natives to have been sold by them to Webster, the entire difference between the two acreages had to be provided out of the Crown estate.

In the examination of Mr. Webster's Claim 305k, for 5,000 acres at Piako, Commissioner Bell found that almost all Mr. Webster's titles for land in his other claims had become mixed up together with his titles in 305k, and also with the titles of derivative purchasers from him in his several claims, in joint or separate mortgages to the same parties in Sydney. For the disentanglement of this confused web the Commissioner prepared an elaborate abstract of title, showing the various transactions which had occurred from time to time in respect to these lands; and, as this very valuable document throws a great light upon the nature of Mr. Webster's land transactions generally in New Zealand, an extract therefrom is printed here :—

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS.

Extract from the Award made by Commissioner Bellin the matter of the Grants issued 1st May, 1844, to the extent of 12,674 acres at Piako, in the claim Webster, 305k.

On the 18th December, 1843, Commissioners Godfrey and Richmond reported, in Claim 305k, that William Webster had made a *bona fide* purchase of a tract of land on the west bank of the River Piako, which was estimated by the claimant to contain 80,000 acres, and they awarded a grant for the maximum of 2,560 acres. By a further report of the same date, after stating that a total quantity of 7,541 acres had been awarded in the separate claims of Webster, they recommended that amount to be reduced in the aggregate to the maximum grant of 2,560 acres.

There were a great many derivative claims from this one, 305k, but in all of them the Commissioners reported that, as the maximum grant had been awarded to Webster, no grants could be recommended to them, viz. :—

	Acres.
1. Peter Abercrombie, one-half, or	40,000
2. Henry Downing	1,280
3. John Johnson	5,120
4. Vincent Wanostrocht	1,000
5. Jeremiah Nagle and J. Wrenn	600
6. A. Devlin	5,020
7. George Russell	2,560
8. Felton Mathew and G. Cooper	10,240
9. Charles Abercrombie	
10. Robert Abercrombie	
11. William Abercrombie	
12. W. Drake	
13. R. G. Dunlop	
14. J. Gibbes	
15. Thomas Jeffrey	
16. W. Liddell	
17. John Mackay	
18. John Wrenn	

These were derivative from Peter Abercrombie, who had bought half of the Claim 305k. Each claimant bought one-tenth of Abercrombie's half, and was to have one mile frontage to the Piako.

On the 10th April, 1844, the claims of Webster having been brought before the Executive Council, a minute of the Council was passed, authorising Mr. Robert A. FitzGerald (whom Governor Fitzroy had appointed a Commissioner under the Land Claims Ordinance) to recommend an extension of the award to Webster; and in pursuance of that authority Commissioner FitzGerald, on the 22nd April, 1844, recommended that Webster should receive grants to an amount not exceeding 18,000 acres, which recommendation was approved by Governor Fitzroy. The reasons given for this extension were, that the outlay by Webster amounted to the sum of £7,787; whereby, according to the scale of computation by the Schedule to the Land Claims Ordinance, he might be considered as having paid for 50,904 acres; that, even limiting his outlay to the mere payments made to Natives, he would be entitled to 17,950 acres; and that, having made sales on the faith of all his valid purchases being recognised by the Crown, he would, unless treated with great liberality by the Governor, be overwhelmed with lawsuits, and subjected to great losses. Under these circumstances, Commissioner FitzGerald recommended that there should be granted—

	Acres.
To Webster himself, in claims 305, 305A, 305c, 305g, 305i, and 305k	5,000
Henry Downing, in 305, 305c, and 305k	845
Peter Abercrombie, in 305 and 305k...	5,125
David E. Munro, in 305c	550
Felton Mathew	2,560
John Johnson	1,280
Vincent Wanostrocht	250
J. Nagle and J. Wrenn	150
Arthur Devlin	1,255
George Russell	640
One-fourth of the amounts they purchased from Webster	
Making a total of	17,655