

CHAPTER 4.

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE AND IMPOWER BENJAMIN PRATT, JOHN WORTHINGTON AND JOSEPH HAWLEY, ESQRS., TO TRANSACT CERTAIN AFFAIRS OF THIS PROVINCE, RESPECTING THE UNAPPROPRIATED LANDS IN THE WESTERN PART THEREOF.

WHEREAS sundry persons have presumed to purchase of the Stock-bridge Indians, so called, divers tracts of lands in the western part of this province, contrary to a law of this province made in the thirteenth year of the reign of King William the Third, intituled “An Act to prevent and make void clandestine and illegal purchases of lands from the Indians,” whereby great mischief may ensue, —

Be it therefore enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor, Council and House of Representatives,

[SECT. 1.] That Benjamin Pratt, John Worthington and Joseph Hawley, Esqrs., or either of them, be and they hereby are empowered, in the name of this government, to prosecute all or any person or persons, who have already made, or may make, any purchase of said Indians in the western part of this government contrary to the aforesaid law, for the penalties incurred by any breach of the said law; as also, in the name of this government, to demand and to take the possession of any lands which any person or persons now are, or may hereafter be, possessed of by virtue of such clandestine or illegal sale from said Indians; and also to demand, sue for, and take the possession of, any of the aforesaid lands that any person or persons may be in possession of otherwise than by virtue of an authority derived from this government; and that the said Benjamin Pratt, John Worthington and Joseph Hawley be further empowered and directed, by themselves, or some one of them, to enter, in the name and behalf of this province, into any or all of the unappropriated lands of the province, west of Connecticut River; and that the said Benjamin Pratt, John Worthington and Joseph Hawley be empowered to execute, to any person or persons they shall judge proper, any lease or leases of any of said lands, under such covenants as they shall think best for the interest of the province, determinable on notice from the said Benjamin Pratt, John Worthington and Joseph Hawley, or on the order of the general court.

And be it further enacted,

[SECT. 2.] That the said Benjamin Pratt, John Worthington and Joseph Hawley be further empowered to attempt, in such methods as they shall judge best for the province, a settlement of the claims of any Indians to any of the said lands, and to make and receive proposals for that purpose, to be laid before the general court for their determination thereon: all necessary charges that may be incurred by the committee, in the execution of the trust reposed in them by this act, to be paid out of the publick treasury.

[SECT. 3.] This act to continue and be in force for the space of five years, and no longer. [*Passed June 20; published June 23.*]

Preamble.

1701-02, chap. 11.

Benjamin Pratt, Esq., &c., empowered to prosecute, &c.

to receive proposals and settle claims.