

APPEAL TO BRITISH MINISTER OVER LAND TITLES

Montreal 2^d Decemb^r 1808

Dear Sir The very friendly attention which you gave a letter I wrote you jointly with M^r M^cGill on the 5th March last respecting our Claims to Lands on the Michigan Teretory of the United States induces me again to trouble you on this Subject. In consequence of the Law that was passed by Congress, extending the time for produccing proofs to such Lands until the 1st January 1809 we addressed our Agent John Askin Esq^r of Sandwich, advesing him to aveil himself of it and to claim all the Lands we had in that Teretory & tho he has used every endeavour & produced proofs of the Lands having been granted by the French & confirmed, or granted by the British, as appears by the Regesters, was settled & improved, and the regular purchase & Transfere from the former Owner, yet he cannot obtain the necessary Certificates from the Commiss^{rs} & writes as follows, "I am quite at a loss what steps to take relative to M^r M^cGills & your claim to Lands in the Michigan Teretory I may add more expence but (as the Commissioners Interpret the Law) not strengthen your claims. Constant possission & cultivation on all the Tracts from July 1796 to 1807 is what they require otherwise they say they cannot grant Certificates, and tho all were possessed before July 1796 few have been constantly occupied and improved since that time; but assuredly Congress means not to dispoil People of their Property for which they paid a Valuable Concideration, the Law ought to be alt[e]red otherwise the most flagarent injustice will be done." As we were induced to make those Purchases agreeable to the inclosed State[ment], knowing that by Treaty the Property of British Subjects, were secured to them, and that they ought in Justice nor Law to be deprived of them, I should hope the Law may be alt[e]red so as to preserve the rights of Individuals & especially British Subjects by repealing so much of it, as requires, constant occupation and improvement since 1796, & by extending the period of Ulterior proof until January or June 1810 every person interested would then have time to bring such proof forward. if the Titles are fair & supportable, and that part had been improved,