

JAMES M'GILL TO HAMILTON.

MONTREAL 1st August, 1785.

DEAR SIR, — In my last respects I partly anticipated yours of the 29th relative to the probability of the trade to the port of Detroit & its dependencies falling soon into the hands of the Americans were private Vessels permitted on the lakes at present, anything further which I may observe will be almost a repetition or perhaps setting the matter in a clearer point of view.

You will be good enough to remark that the Upper Country Trade in general, as now carried on from this place, is extended as far South as the mouth of the Ohio, to the Westward as far as the Rivers falling from that side of the Mississippi, will carry canoes, including from the River of [MS. illegible] in Latitude 33 degrees S to the Sources of the Mississippi & to the Northwest as far as lake Arabaskda [Athabasca] including the whole north side of Lake Huron and Superior, the value of the whole I esteem at £180,000 currency for the sake of statement and I believe I am not £20,000 on either side of the reality — £100,000 Value I think is brought from the Country now within the American line as fix'd by the late treaty of Peace; the other £80,000 I consider as being within our own Line — If this Statement is nearly Just & I am satisfied to risk my reputation upon it as a Merchant, the question will be, whither the Americans are likely to take away any part of our trade when they shall have got possession of the posts & vessels on the Lakes, or whither we are not more likely by having posts on the same Lakes and vessels to interfere with them.

For my own part I am clearly of opinion that it must be a very long time before they can even winter on the smallest part of our trade, for the little that is to be had in the tract of Country lying between Lakes Ontario, Erie & Huron as South Boundaries & the Ottawa river, lake Nipissing and its discharge into Lake Huron as Northern Boundaries, can only be obtained by traders going up the different Rivers which water that tract of Country, there