

said, to or for the use or benefit of any private person or persons, shall be, and the same are hereby declared utterly void, and of no effect: Which being separately put, was carried in the affirmative, without any dissent or amendment, by a great majority. The yeas being 50 and 28.

June the 17th, 1779, the assembly passed the following law respecting the right of *pre-emption*.

To remove and prevent all doubts concerning purchases of lands from the *Indian* natives, Be it declared by the general assembly, that this commonwealth hath the *exclusive* right of *pre-emption* from the *Indians* of all lands within the limits of its *own* chartered territory, as described by the act and constitution of government in the year 1776—That no person or persons whatsoever have or ever had, a right to purchase any lands within the same, from any *Indian* nation, except only persons duly authorized to make such purchases on the public account, formerly for the use and benefit of the colony, and lately of the commonwealth, and that such **EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF PRE-EMPTION SHALL, AND OUGHT TO BE MAINTAINED BY THIS COMMONWEALTH, TO THE UTMOST OF ITS POWER.** And be it further declared and enacted, that no purchase of lands hereafter made by any individual, citizen of England, or of Great Britain, or by the distribution of any bounty, shall be valid, unless it shall first be made to some person or persons, for the use and benefit of the commonwealth, or for the use and benefit of the *other* *free* *people* *of* *the* *same* *country* *or* *colonies*, which *lands* *shall* *be* *sold* *to* *any* *Indian* *or* *Indians* *on* *any* *other* *account* *whatsoever*, for land within the said limits, or guarantee of any person or persons, or for any other purpose, and the same are hereby declared null and void.