

property, it was found expedient to use the agency of the land office: It becomes necessary therefore to take some general notice of those regulations.

In regard to the confiscating act itself I have before mentioned that it embraced, in the first instance, all property (debts excepted) found within the state belonging to British subjects, but that other exceptions and reservations some positive, and others of a conditional nature, were contained in its subsequent provisions. It defined the persons who should be deemed and adjudged British subjects within the intention of the act; it left a liberal opening for such as had heretofore resided in the state, and had absented themselves on business, or even through a presumeable disaffection, not attended with other demonstrations of hostility, to return and secure their property from forfeiture. It appropriated certain property by name, as the act of June 1780, ch. 24, had provisionally done, for the redemption of bills of credit emitted under that act: it declared that the subjects of the state, creditors of British subjects, should be paid their claims out of the property of their individual debtors, and that those *citizens* of the state who had manifested their attachment to the new government, by exerting themselves in support of the independence of America, should be fully paid and indemnified, so far as their British debtors were solvent, out of the property confiscated by the act. It took necessary precautions against the concealment or embezzlement of books or other evidences of debts due to British subjects, and against gifts, grants, sales, devises or conveyances tending to defeat the design of the confiscation, by declaring fraudulent and void all such as should have been made and executed, after the nineteenth day of April 1775, and before the first day of December 1779, with intent to cover and protect the property from confiscation; but allowing as valid such transfers as might have been made between those dates in pursuance of an existing contract, or in payment of a debt; the proof of that fact to lie on the person claiming under such conveyance, &c. and, in the case of a precedent debt, the property not to have been conveyed for less than three fourths of its real value; but, if thus unequally transferred, the purchaser, grantee, or devisee either to pay (to the state) the difference of value, or to be considered only as a mortgagee for the security of his debt and interest. The act further declared that all the property confiscated, except what was, as before mentioned, appropriated for the redemption of the public bills of credit, and the payment of debts, should be subject to the disposal of the general assembly.

The commissioners just mentioned were appointed at the same session (October 1780) "for the purpose of preserving