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**From 1593 to 1613**

**1. DON ANTONIO BERRIO TO THE KING OF SPAIN**

**[1 January 1593]**

It is twelve years ago since I set out from Spain to inherit the Indians and estates that the Adelantado Don Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada possessed in the New Kingdom of Granada, with the desire for rest which my age demanded. And the estates yielded more than 14,000 ducats income, which would suffice for one who had travelled and laboured as much as I. And being come to that kingdom, and hearing the great news there is about the expedition to El Dorado, and seeing the insistence with which the Adelantado, in a clause of his will, commands me to continue and complete this expedition that he had commenced, this alone, and my inclination sufficed to impel me, and so I determined to hasten and set out in search of it, and I collected at once a number of men and a great quantity of horses and cows and plenty of munitions and other necessary supplies; and with this equipment, which cost me a large sum of gold, I set out from the New Kingdom and crossed the llanos, and marched more than 300 leagues through them, where no Spaniard has ever entered, until I came to the cordillera on the other side of them, which has been so sought for and desired by twenty-three Captains who have begun this conquest.

I had skirmishes with some of the Indians, and the captives and many others who came peaceably gave me a great deal of information about the land, and all were very much agreed as to the great multitude of the people, and the great riches there were beyond those cordilleras, which I tried to pass several times in different parts, and with light, armed men, and on foot, and I was never able to find any way that the horses and cattle could pass, and it was impossible to attempt to take supplies and provisions such a long way on men's backs; and the troops, seeing this clearly, were so anxious and desirous to pass through and see part of what has been told us that they drew strength out of weakness, and laboured beyond their power, so that nearly all of them fell sick of fevers so violently that they forthwith became delirious; so for this cause, and because I knew that the Indians, seeing us so ill, were uniting to attack us, I decided to depart at the end of seventeen months after I had entered the plains.

And upon arriving at the kingdom I began again to provision myself and to raise troops; and I set out for the second time, and went much lower down than the first time, where I obtained the same information and more, and tried again many times to cross the cordillera, and skirted it for more than 200 leagues, and in all that length it was not possible to cross it, although I tried many times for it is very broad, rough, and wooded, and quite uninhabited. I found large navigable rivers, and much information that lower down the Orinoco the cordilleras ended. And while I was making pirogues to descend it, a Captain mutinied against me, and fled with the greater part of the men, so that I was obliged to set out after him, and could not overtake him until he reached

the kingdom; and this second time it took me twenty-eight months to go through the plains only. And when I started I found new Cedula's from His Majesty, encouraging me to set out for the third time, so I set out with more men and a greater equipment than on the other occasions.

I set out with twenty-two pirogues and a great number of horses by land, and with these forces I reached the great River Caraguan, which lower down is called Orinoco, and there I tried again to cross the cordillera in many places, and made great efforts to cross it and it was not possible. So seeing this, I attempted to march down along the Orinoco, but could make no way by land, although I went 10 or 12 leagues from the river; for all the country is without natives, on account of the fleets of the Caribs, who ascend the river and have eaten them up, and the others have abandoned the plain and gone to the woods.

By this time the pirogues had been lost, and thirty-four Spaniards had deserted me in three bands, taking many horses, and all my slaves and more than thirty Spaniards had been killed by an illness resembling the plague. And it was by this time eighteen months since I had set out from the kingdom, and as I was in want of supplies and had lost the pirogues, I determined to make others, and to kill the remaining horses for food for the men, and to descend the Orinoco, because all the Indians assured me that in descending the Orinoco I should find great settlements of Caribs, and lower still I should find a great river which is called Caroni, which descends from Guayana, and, on account of a great waterfall, cannot be navigated; but that there, and a little above, where there is a Chief called Morguita, the cordilleras end and the provinces of Guayana begin, and then come successively those of Manoa and El Dorado and many other provinces.

So upon this information, when the pirogues were finished, I embarked, and on the same day that we commenced our journey God was pleased to send us guides, in the form of two pirogues of Caribs, who were stealing people for their cannibals feasts and food, and who came with me for presents. They were Caribs of Barima, towards which I travelled in their company down the Orinoco as far as the dwellings of the River Caroni, which will be more than 350 leagues; and during this voyage we experienced much friendship, and two of their Chiefs came into my pirogue, and I gave them a Spaniard, and they disclosed to me great secrets of the country, and confirmed all the information that I had received above, and I found all that had been told me true. I asked these Caribs why they took such a long journey with so much labour, when they were so numerous and courageous, and had Guayana so near. They replied that the Guayanese were numerous, and were very near, and can make war upon them by land, and for this reason they wish to be friendly with them.

These Caribs came with me to the River Caroni, and there I gave them some of the things I brought, and letters to the Governor of Margarita, requesting him to assist me. I had written to him when I started from the New Kingdom, advising him of my departure, and of the great riches that the expedition promised, and that he was to send his reply to Trinidad, and that I had written to His Majesty and to his Royal Council supplicating him to command that it should be settled, and if perchance, it was not, and he wished to do a great service to His Majesty, he should take care, upon hearing news of me, to come and assist me, and that he could easily get news through the traders who went from this island; and the Governor was on the look out, and heard that I was in Moriquita.

And upon this information, and with the desire that they have in this country for Guayana, Faxardo undertook, at his own cost, to go and inquire about me, and assembled thirty-five sol-

diers, and as the intentions of both were very different, they delayed seven months, in which my provisions were exhausted, and I had no more than forty-five soldiers remaining, who were most of them almost blind from a disease which affected them, and others were very ill with other maladies; and owing to this and the delay of help, and in accordance with the orders that I hold from His Majesty, in which he says that, rather than my supplies should fail, I should go and supply myself from the nearest province, I determined to depart, and descended the Orinoco as the sea, where it debouches by a great number of arms and canyons, so that it inundates more than 200 leagues along the coast and more than 40 leagues inland. The arm by which I went comes out opposite the Island of Trinidad, and it is 4 leagues across.

I went to Trinidad, and as it was of great importance to me to see and examine it, I remained there several days. I found that it was thickly people with natives, a very domestic race, the land very productive and signs of gold in the ravines; and I saw clearly that if that island were not settled it would be impossible to settle Guayana. So having seen and understood the aforesaid, I went to Margarita, and when I arrived there I found that Faxardo had set out seven days previous in search of me, and he met with three of my soldiers in a pirogue who returned with him, and brought him to the same place of Moriquita, and the Indians came out to him in peace and gave him food, and in payment for their hospitality and against the assurances that I left them in His Majesty's name, he plundered their houses and stole and carried off nearly 300 souls, whom he is selling like negroes.

I complained to the Governor, who arrested him, and two days after set him at liberty, and they conspired together to turn me out of this island, and make the expedition themselves; and I, when I knew of this wickedness, and that Don Juan opposed it as I was his guest, I desired to agree with him so as not to lose everything, and having spent 100,000 pesos of good gold myself on the three incursions, with 50,000 more that the Adelantado, my predecessor, had spent, gave him half of all the grant which His Majesty had conceded to me and more, so that he might settle the Island of Trinidad at our joint cost, and it should be for him alone; and as it appeared to him I was very old and had received here news of the death of my wife, and that it was necessary for me to visit my daughters and my estates, and that my eldest son whom I brought with me was 14 years old and was suffering from quartan fever, and that I was very far from home, and that any one of these things was sufficient to cause me to return there, and that as soon as I turned my back he could unite with Faxardo, who is a man of small account, and would be contented with little; he did not wish for any agreement with me, and commenced openly to do a thousand villainies which, by my authority, have not been written down. I seeing these wickedness, rendered account of it to the Royal Audiencia of Santo Domingo, and in its investigations, my affairs, or rather those of the King, were forgotten.

I wrote several times to His Majesty and to his Royal Council, and to Señor Antonio de Guevara, to call attention to it, as your Majesty well knows the friendship we have, and I get no reply from any one. While I was waiting for a reply, and was hesitating in my mind what I should do, I found Domingo de Vera here, whom I sent secretly to Caracas, and wrote to Don Diego Osorio, Governor of that province, asking him to assist me, who, solely for the service of the King without any other pretension, and being grieved at the roguery of this fellow whom it is a shame to call Governor, provided me with some troops, and with them and with part of those I had brought, I sent Domingo de Vera, and he settled Trinidad, and I have there today eighty very

good Spanish soldiers, without having more than seven from this island.

Having overrun all the island and made the description of the natives that are there, there are found 7,000, and so many Indians married that they would exceed 35,000 souls. It is a land very abundant in yuca, maize, and sugar-cane. The undergrowth is of plantain, there are plenty of potatoes, a great quantity of cotton, and gold has been found in four ravines.

They say it is very good country for ginger, but the best thing in it is its proximity to the mainland, the number of natives, and the great quantity of pirogues, so that in a single voyage as many troops can be taken as we may risk.

I shall leave this island to-morrow with fourteen or fifteen other soldiers, which will make altogether ninety-five Spaniards, and I hope that Don Diego Osorio will send me twenty or thirty more, with whom, if they arrive, I shall set out from Trinidad with seventy Spaniards, leaving fifty there for the guard of a fort that has been made there, and with these and a number of articles for barter, I shall attempt to penetrate into the interior of Guayana by means of the Chief of Moriquita, whom I have in my power, and of other Chiefs of the same entrance who are my friends, and upon whom the Guayanese have commenced to make war because they are my friends, and every day they entreat me to go.

My intention is, with these few Spaniards and a number of friendly Indians to try to raise war against them and sustain it for some days. And by this means, and by barter, I shall try and see and ascertain what there is inland, knowing that with this information and some gold I shall not want for troops; for, owing to my house being so far off, and this Governor trying in every possible way to hinder me and prevent troops coming to me, I have not finished the discovery or commenced to settle the greatest grandeur and wealth that the world produces. And as in such a great place as Seville, where there are so many intelligent men, and they have so much information about these great provinces, they will desire to know why I have not found the entrance, being so near, I will express my opinion on the matter.

These great provinces lie between two very great rivers, namely, the Amazon and the Orinoco. The Amazon descends from Peru, and the Orinoco takes its source from Quito, and is joined by all the tributaries of the New Kingdom, which run to the plains, which is where I embarked, and many abundant rivers run into this river.

The reason that the Orinoco appears small when it enters the sea, although it is so large is because where the River Caroni joins it, which is the one that comes from Guayana, the Orinoco divides into seven arms, and from each arm come a great number of creeks, and these arms and creeks run each one by itself into the sea, and from this cause and from the rising of the sea, many leagues along the coast are inundated; and these inundations reach 40 leagues inland, and on this account no boat can enter except a little rowing boat, and the people who have entered by these arms to barter, not finding settlements near the water, believed that they were further up, and the Indians, to get them away from their house, said that they were further up and they travelled without finding any and turned back.

But the Indians told the truth, for the great settlements and riches are much above the entrance of Moriquita, but one cannot enter in that place, and it is more than 60 leagues inland from Moriquita to the commencement of the great settlements. I having come down from above, and having skirted the cordillera in the three times that I have entered by land, and having gone more than 700 leagues by water and spent ten years in continual labours, am well informed and know

what it is.

From the mouth of the River Amazon to that of the Orinoco the map shows more than 400 leagues; in all this breadth and more than 1,500 leagues in length, there is not a spot settled by Spaniards, though they have the splendid news that all the world knows, for it is said as a certainty that the Inca Kings of these provinces set out to conquer Peru, and afterwards on account of the disagreements between two brothers the one, from fear of the other, fled back to these provinces.

There are signs of gold in the 700 leagues and more that I have travelled, skirting the cordillera. In all parts I have met with gold, and asking whence they brought it, they all said from the other part of the cordillera, and they describe the quantity to be so great that it is incredible.

I have not felt so much fatigue in ten years wanderings as in the fifteen months that I have been in this island; and in all that time I have not been able to collect a hundred men, and these at their weigh in gold, which has been wanting to me on account of my house being so far off, and my estates very involved. But the chief thing is the opposition which Don Juan makes to me, so that if the powers I hold from the King were not so ample, he would have ejected me from this country. In all the time that I have been in this island I have found nothing that pleases me, excepting only hearing every one in general speak well of you; and although it is so many years since I left Segovia, the fact of having been born there, and being who I am, causes me to feel very great pleasure at hearing those well spoken of who were born there; and such has been the affection that I have felt towards you, and the desire of serving you, and the long friendship between us, that I have been obliged to send this long Report – which I have sent to no one except the Royal Council – in order that by your means the President of the Contratacion may see it, and those who are curious to know in what state this expedition is, and how easy it will be to finish it, if His Majesty will send me orders that they are not to hinder me in obtaining the troops I may require to go there; and also I desire that he may know of the settlement of Trinidad, and what a fertile country it is, and that if God aids me to settle Guayana, Trinidad will be the richest trade centre of the Indies; and in order that people may be encouraged to come there, I desire that the fact of its settlement may be proclaimed.

Among other favours that His Majesty can do me is that two ships of 200 tons each may for the period of five years bring to my Government all the things necessary, as provisions and supplies, and all other necessary stores, and that these may come, together or separately, as I may desire, in a fleet or not in a fleet, and that I may appoint the master and the pilot, even though they may not have passed examination, provided that they are from His Majesty's Kingdoms; and that what these ships bring may be free from duty and averages, and from all the impositions which are usually paid, which favour could not be enjoyed until now, because there was no Government, nor could it be used at present, since for the Isle of Trinidad alone but little is required, still, as I say above, I will enter immediately into Guayana; and if it is one-twentieth of what is supposed, it will be richer than Peru. Then I will dispatch a suitable man to arrange this grant and others, and he shall be sent to you at the houses of Seville.

The grant is also made me of 500 licences for negroes, free from all dues belonging to His Majesty. All this will be negotiated at the same time, and what is necessary at present is to associate me with some trader, who is not a buccaneer, but has courage and wealth, and that he should bring a great quantity of articles for barter, hatchets, which must be good, bill-hooks,

knives, amber, and glass beads, *taguache* ware, and no other, because neither turquoise or coral are profitable; trumpets, some needles, cloaks, bells, small mirrors, and some large and very good ones for the Chiefs. This is necessary at the present time, because if the country cannot be conquered for a great while, it would perish directly, I mean to say in less than a year; but 10,000 Castilian ducats may be invested in this merchandise, and in future, when I have money, I want you to invest it and 50,000 ducats will be little to invest in these trifles, and for others besides I am taking 500,000 ducats. May God bring us to that time.

You may assure the traders who may wish to come to Trinidad and pledge them my word as a Castilian gentlemen, that they will be rewarded, and that I shall endeavour that that city may be called the city of truth, in contrast to Margarita, which, in respect of those who govern it, is called the city of falsehood; and I had many other things to say, but after entering Guayana I will inform you at length with the first despatches that I shall send to His Majesty, and I shall do so if God gives me the good fortune that I have not now. I do not wish to ask for anything except letters, which you may write to Senor Antonio de Guevara, to whom I am writing now in the despatches to the King, and have earnestly begged that the despatches which I have sent to ask for may be forwarded to me.

After this was written, Francisco de Vides came with 150 men. They say that he brings the title of Governor of Cumaná and Trinidad, and other provinces. As concerns Trinidad, according to the Ordinances of His Majesty, unless His Majesty orders me particularly, I cannot deliver it up to him. I have written to him that if he bring a special Cedula by which I am commanded, I will deliver it up immediately, notwithstanding the great expenditure that I have made. I do not know what will be the end of these things, and thus I cannot tell you more than what I report to His Majesty, in order that what he directs in his Royal Council may be accomplished.

This Governor takes such care in searching that I fear the letters I write do not reach the Royal Council, and may it please God that these may arrive, as I am in such a small island, where he lords it, so that he does what he likes, without considering that there is a God or a King. I beg you to show this to the President, so that if by chance the others do not appear, this may serve to show clearly what I am doing, and what a bad turn has been done to me in sending Francisco de Vides. If he were only a soldier, or a man of courage – but you know what he is, and I am certain that the troops which he brings will leave him within a month, each one individually, without having done any good.

May our Lord keep you.

ANTONIO DE BERRIO  
(Seal)

*From Margarita, January 1, 1593*

*(Archivo General de Indias, Seville)*

## 2. DON ANTONIO DE BERRIO TO THE KING OF SPAIN [2 December 1594]

(Extract)

The River Orinoco is a very great river, and so large that I do not know if there are two larger in the discovered world; when it reaches the River Caroni the land begins to be very low, and it divides into seven branches, and each branch into an infinity of creeks, and each of these branches and creeks falls into the sea by itself; and through this and the rise of the sea it inundates more than 40 leagues inland, and more than 250 leagues along the coast, so that until now no place on the mainland has been found where a settlement of Spaniards could be made or ships could be discharged, and the great report and the provinces belong to the River Caroni, above, although the entry is through that same place, it is needful to enter by going some leagues southwards. The settlements begin again towards the south-west, and afterwards to the west; and as the Indians try to drive those who go to them away from their houses, and the Spaniards saw that part so inundated and bad, no one ever disembarked from the river itself, and the information referred to the upper part, for which reason no one ever came to reach and know the said road, or rather, it was not the will of God that it should be seen until now.

ANTONIO DE BERRIO

(Seal)

Trinidad, December 2, 1594

(*Archivo General de Indias – 1597 to 1599*)

### **3. DON ANTONIO DE BERRIO TO THE KING OF SPAIN [2 December 1594]**

Sire,

Whenever I can, I give information to your Majesty and to your Royal Council of the things which are done and which I am doing in the expedition of El Dorado.

Last year I wrote to your Majesty how the Maestro de Campo, Domingo de Vera y Ybargoien, with only thirty-five Spaniards, and by means of 1,000 ducats in barter, had entered and seen the beginning of the magnificence of those provinces which it was impossible to do by force, according to the many people who have tried to do it, with 500 men, and on account of this the neighbouring Governors have been so envious that they try in every possible way to do me harm; and this Island of Trinidad, which I settled three years ago for depot and entrance to these great provinces, is being depopulated, and they are doing it with so much diligence that part of the natives have rebelled, and the Caribs of the Islands of Dominica, Granada, and other neighbouring places harass and injure me, and though they have seen this, and your Majesty wrote and commanded them to assist me, by very precise Cédulas, they have not been willing to do so.

From the New Kingdom of Granada, where I sent my son, he is commencing to send down

troops, which I have placed in the provinces of Carapana, which is the entrance of these great provinces, and he writes to me that this summer he will come down with 150 soldiers or more; and considering the number of troops that I require in order to commence to conquer and settle those great provinces, and the few that I have, and that I cannot get the Indians owing to the malice of my neighbours, I wrote to your Majesty begging for permission to sell the 500 licences for negroes which your Majesty had granted me, as appears by my covenants, so that the proceeds of them might be converted into troops and supplies for this expedition; and as time passes, I have thought best to send Domingo de Vera y Ybargoien, who has served your Majesty as Maestro de Campo in this expedition, to give a very particular account to your Majesty of everything new, and to beg that the favour I ask may be granted; it is for your Majesty's service, and as great service to God will result from it, I beg your Majesty to grant me the favour I ask.

I beseech your Majesty to give the Maestro de Campo, for his great labours and many services, a livery of Santiago, for honour of his person; and for his support, if God will, he shall be satisfied here in your Majesty's name in reward for his many services and labours. And as he brings a very ample Report to lay before the Royal Councils, it is not right to fatigue your Majesty, whom may God, our lord preserve for many years as Christendom needs.

Your Catholic Royal Majesty, your servant and vassal kisses your Majesty's Royal feet.

ANTONIO DE BERRIO

(Seal)

From San Joseph de Orunya  
Island of Trinidad, December 3, 1594

(*Archivo General de Indias – 1597 to 1599*)

**4. EXTRACT FROM REPORT AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE NAVIGATION OF THE RIVER ORINOCO, AND ON THE BEST SITES ON ITS BANKS, BY CAPTAIN PHELIPPE DE SANTIAGO, MADE TO ROQUE DE MONTES, TREASURER OF CUMANÁ, FOR THE KING OF SPAIN**

**[2 November 1595]**

Cumaná, November 2, 1595

The mouths of the River Orinoco are situated on the coast of *Terra Firma*, to the windward of the Dragon's Mouth, and part of them are opposite the Island of Trinidad, and although the exact number of the said mouths is not known with certainty, still some information exists concerning some of them, particularly those nearest to the said Island of Trinidad, and which are most generally used for navigation of the said river. These are the Caroni, Merensa, Arantar, Macares, and Capure. That of the Capure is nearer to Trinidad than any of the others; indeed at the nearest point there is only a distance of 3 leagues between it and the said island.

There is another mouth, called the Manavo, by which it is known that the Englishman, Wal-

ter Raleigh, entered the Orinoco in the present year [15]95, after having caused much trouble and injury in the Island of Trinidad. He left two young Englishmen in the Orinoco for the purpose of learning the language of the natives and becoming acquainted with the country, for on his departure therefrom, it is said, he left with the intention of returning later.

There is another mouth called Orinoco, the largest of all and more important, and more frequented than all the others. And on the banks of all these mouths mentioned many natives of two tribes, known as the Chaguanes and Tivitives, dwell, both of them living in swamps.

Entering by any of the above-mentioned mouths, and going up the river Orinoco in the direction of the new Kingdom of Granada, various territories of several tribes of natives are met with, such as the Aruacas, Yayos, Sapoyos, Caribs and Napuyos. On passing these the territories of the Province of Guayana are reached, and one of them that is entered is the Province of Moriquite. Having passed this province one arrives at the large Indian town of the natives of Guayana, of the extent and riches of which so much is heard, and of so favourable a character, that great hopes are entertained of it.

These territories extend from the bank of the said River Orinoco along the windward side as far as that of the Marañon so that they lie between these two mighty and celebrated rivers. These territories are considered to be very rich, for some gold is taken from them, although with great caution and secrecy, for the Indians are very watchful and always endeavouring to conceal and hide it, from fear and suspicion that the Spaniards may settle there.

The best sites and lands, and most adapted for settling on the bank of the Orinoco, with the best conditions, the greatest fertility, and the best climate, in case His Majesty is pleased to command the said bank to be settled, and the navigation of the said river to be continued, as well ascending in the direction of the kingdom from Trinidad, as descending therefrom to the said island, appear to be the following: –

Entering the Orinoco by the mouth of the Caroni, and going in the direction of the new Kingdom of Granada, on arriving at the territories of Guayana, having passed the Province of Moriquite, some 2 leagues higher up, on the left hand, on the side of the Marañon, there is a good site for making the first settlement of Spaniards. They said that lower down nearer the said mouth it cannot be made, on account of the land being liable to inundation. And although there are villages of the natives, the Spaniards could not live there nor keep their own villages in these parts.

Continuing the journey by the said river in the same direction towards the new Kingdom of Granada, about 70 or 80 leagues higher up, is the Province of Caura, which is very fertile, and inhabited by a great number of natives. Although Caribs, they are friendly towards the Spaniards, and disposed to serve them, on which account it appears to be a good site for the second settlement of Spaniards, by taking the country on the right-hand side in the Province of Caracas.

Following the same course, up stream from the said Province of Caura, still in the direction of the new kingdom, about same distance 70 or 80 leagues, the territories of the Amaivas are reached, where the Province of Curuana is situated, which is very convenient for founding the third settlement of Spaniards, for, besides that the land is very fertile, and the climate good, there is a great number of natives, and it is very rich in gold, although in this province the natives are very much persecuted by the Caribs, who descend upon them in fleets every year, and also upon the others inhabiting these territories in the neighbourhood of the new kingdom.

Continuing the voyage from this Province of Curuana up the river in the direction of the new Kingdom the river Meta is reached, which flows into the Orinoco. That river is now left and the Meta must be followed upwards as far as the river Cazanar which flows into the Meta, then the Meta must be left and the Cazamar followed to within 2 or 3 leagues of the ridge of the new kingdom, where there is enough water to float pirogues and canoes. For the rest of its course the Cazanar passes reserves and allotments of Indians of the new kingdom, from which point roads are open. The Spanish settlements of the new kingdom are the passed, of which the first and nearest is that of Tunja, which is from 40 to 50 leagues from the river Cazanar; the above-mentioned roads continue to Santa Fee and to Pamplone, and are quite easy.

The navigation of all these rivers is considered good, as in going upstream when some difficulty might be experienced, it is easy because it is possible to sail with constant north-east winds, particularly in summer, for they are most frequent.

From the plains which extend from the Province of Caracas to the banks of the Orinoco the provinces and sites of the said settlements might be supplied with both cattle and horses and many other necessaries, of which there is abundance in the Province of Caracas. Although the journey across the plains from the Province of Caracas to those on the banks of the Orinoco is difficult, as there are few men who know it, the road is considered good and easier than elsewhere, at least for cattle and horses, which are what is most necessary for the settlements.

*(Archivo de Indias; also, Archivo de Simancas)*

## 5. EXTRACTS FROM A DESPATCH OF DON ROQUE DE MONTES TO THE KING OF SPAIN

[18 April 1596]

Cumaná, April 18, 1596

Sire,

I had the honour to transmit to your Majesty on the 15th October of the past year [15]95 a despatch with two duplicates by three different routes – though the Governors of Carthagená, Margarita, and the Bishop of San Juan de Puerto Rico – in which I gave your Majesty a Report of this province on all matters of interest relating to the Royal service, in compliance your Majesty's commands, as conveyed to me by Royal Order, and as to that which I am to do in furtherance thereof, and I am continuing the work as it presents itself, praying to God for His helping grace.

At the beginning of the month of November of the said year [15]95, Captain Phelipe de Santiago, Lieutenant of the Governor Francisco de Vides, departed from this city for the Island of Trinidad, intrusted with the commission of settling it, for which object he took with him a number of soldiers, stores, and all necessary for the settling and defence of the new town and the island.

On my side I have given every assistance in my power towards the settling of that island and of the new town, so that it might be carried into effect as quickly as possible, on account of its

great importance to your Majesty's service, and that the said island may not remain deserted but inhabited, and in a manner capable of resisting and defending itself against the great number of the enemy's privateers which generally surround and molest it, as well English as Caribs.

And among other things with which I charged and instructed Captain Phelipe de Santiago for your Majesty's service was that he should, without loss of time, ascend the bank of the River Orinoco and apprehend the two Englishmen whom Walter Raleigh left there last year [15]95, when he had the intention of returning and settling it, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the country and the best sites, and learning the language of the natives.

And in like manner I instructed him that he should warn the Chiefs of the Indians on that bank not to admit nor receive any strangers henceforward in their territories, except Spaniards in your Majesty's service.

And according to a Report I have received from the said Captain Phelipe de Santiago, he fulfilled his commission by going directly to the said bank of the Orinoco, ascending it as far as the Province of Moriquite, where he took out of the power of the Indians one of the two Englishmen above referred to, named Francis Sparry, and learnt that the other had been devoured by a jaguar, and he gave the Indians the necessary warning.

The young Englishman informed him that Walter Raleigh departed with the intention of returning to the said bank during the month of March of the present year, and the Indians declared that they were awaiting him during the time of the moon of the said month of March.

But as it appears that he had suffered considerably after leaving there, and had a much less number of men and forces than when he sailed from the Orinoco, owing to the victory we gained over him; I trust in the Lord that his designs of carrying out his injurious purposes may be frustrated.

On the said bank of the Orinoco Captain Phelipe de Santiago and the Governor Antonio de Berrio met each other, where a serious difference arose as to the duty each claimed of settling the Island of Trinidad. Finally, Antonio de Berrio remained with his people on the said coast, and Captain Phelipe de Santiago proceeded with his expedition to the said Island of Trinidad, where, in the beginning of the month of January of the present year, he founded a settlement on the south bank, 3 leagues distant from the sea and from the port called "De Espana", on a river they call Caroni and named it San Phelipe de Montes, as may more particularly be seen from the documents of proofs in possession of the Governor, Francisco de Vides, and at the beginning of the following month of March, Captain Andres de Belasco left with more men and arms and other necessary provisions for the said settlement, and the place will be so fortified that they can make a good resistance against the enemies who may attack that coast, and they will clear it of Caribs. I have appointed to the said town of Santiago, Phelipe de Montes as Treasurer, an able man capable of taking my place in the administration and collecting the Royal revenues belonging to your Majesty in the said Island of Trinidad.

As it appears to me to be of the utmost importance to your Majesty's service that the bank of the Orinoco be settled. I have considered it well to push that matter forward, and in like manner the navigation of the Orinoco, on account of the communication that might exist between it and the new Kingdom of Granada, as well as the neighbouring provinces, as whatever may be brought from Spain will go by that route; and the gold and silver be brought down by the same river; and any other produce that there may be to be sent to Trinidad, from which there would be

a very good passage to Spain, as it is the best place in this country and is so far to windward, and there is no need to disembark. And particularly is this matter important for the conquest and settlement of the Provinces of Guayana, Caura and El Dorado, for this is the entry and road to attain that which those provinces give promise of; and this will be more clearly seen from the Report I am forwarding to your Majesty in reference to the navigation of the Orinoco, and the best sites on the banks of that river.

And in like manner no opportunity will be given the enemy of settling it, nor will they have any entry to it by any other way; for, according to the intention of Walter Raleigh who surveyed the whole of it in the past year, it is much to be feared that he will keep his promise and carry out his bad purpose. . . .

The want of Spaniards in this province will be shown by the following facts. Last year, 1594, a settlement was established here called Our Lady of Clarines, in the Province of Piritu, a very important position as regards the conquest of the Indians and the clearing of the ground; but the numbers fell off so much that, to save the remaining inhabitants from the risk and danger in which they stood from the Indians in the neighbourhood, it was necessary to place them elsewhere; this was done, and they were added to the settlement of San Cristoval de la Nueva Ecija, which was established long before among the Cumanagotos; this has caused disturbance among the Indians, and I cannot but regret the inconvenience which has ensued as regards the increase of this province. I have frequently warned the Governor Francisco de Vides to collect and bring in the people required by him to fulfil the Covenants which he made with your Majesty, for by acting in good time we shall attain our object better with fewer people than we should with many more people if we waited till later.

Standing in fear of our enemies and the corsairs by whom we have been harassed, especially Walter Raleigh, who was angry and irritated on account of the loss which he suffered in the victory won by us last year (1595), and taking our precautions in good time against his pernicious plan, and trusting in God for a still greater victory if he returns, and wishing to protect ourselves against any other enemy, we have built a high wall right across a valley close to this town, as being the weakest spot in the neighbourhood, and that by which the said enemy assaulted us. With this wall and the fortress of the city itself, and on the other sides a river and high hills, we are very well defended against any attack, and I am well satisfied that I can make a good resistance...

ROQUE DE MONTES  
(Seal)

*(Archivo de Indias, Seville; also, Archivo de Simancas)*

## **6. THE DECLARATION OF DIEGO MARTINEZ, MASTER OF THE FRIGATE, AND HERNAN PEREZ** **[19 June 1596]**

The declaration of Diego Martinez, master of the frigate named "Nuestra Senora de la luz,"

and Hernan Perez, pilot, who come from Caracas and entered today, the 19th June, into the port of Bonanca, is as follows: –

That the said ship is of 40 tons burden, and the licentiate Liano, judge of wrecks, went by it, and it arrived at La Margarita on the 23rd of last January. It comes laden with sarsaparilla and Guayacan wood and skins, and they bring a register drawn up in Caracas whence they set out on the 27th of April, and they bring neither gold nor silver nor pearls more than what they have said.

That the Indians who serve the town of Santiago de Leon, seeing that the English burnt it a year ago, and that they told them that they would return at this time to aid them against the Spaniards, have revolted and united to kill the Spaniards, and that they had heard from the Lieutenant of the Governor, named Joan Riberos, that he had taken some caciques and hanged three, and has proceedings against the rest, so that the Indians were quieted in some degree, but the town was still keeping on guard.

That the greater part of the town was already rebuilt, and that there had been no corsairs upon those coasts since the said town was burnt and (? Drake) went along the Rio de la Hacha.

That the Maestre de Campo, Domingo de Vera, had reached Trinidad in safety with the troops from El Dorado, and that on the 21st April one of the vessels which conveyed the said Maestre de Campo arrived at the port of Caracas, and he sent about fifty soldiers to enter by land into that province, and join those who should enter by the River Orinoco, and get together other able men who were willing to go on that expedition; that General Berrio had come to the mainland with the troops that he had been able to collect, and it was settled with friendly Indians; and that two of his soldiers had taken authority from Francisco de Vides and returned to settle in Trinidad, and that the said Maestre de Campo had seized them upon their arrival as rebels who had acted against the said Verrio, and that it was said that he would set them at liberty, and that he forthwith sent information to Berrio of his arrival, and that it was not known whether they had met.

That they had met no corsairs on the road and that 15 leagues from here they met yesterday afternoon three Moorish galliots, which came near enough to fire musket shots at them, and they defended themselves and left them astern about 9 leagues from here, and they were following them; and that one galliot was large and the two others small; and that owing to the fresh weather the Moors did not dare to bear up to them.

That they bring a passenger who comes to oppose the commission of the said licentiate Liano, who they say does them many injuries and is called Nicholas de Penalosa, Regidor of Caracas, and that the other people they bring are sailors.

That they sailed on until they sighted the Island of Puerto Rico, and passed through the passage, and came in sight of the Island of San Miguel de les Terceras, in 37 degrees, and have neither found nor seen any land except the bar where they found themselves at dawn; and that this the truth under oath, which they made in due form, and signed in San Lucar de Barrameda, on the 19th June, 1596.

HERNAN PEREZ  
DIEGO MARTINEZ

Before me:

MATHIAS DE AMYYUGO, *Notary*

*(Archivo General de Indias)*

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## 7. LETTER FROM DOMINGO DE YBARGUEN TO THE KING OF SPAIN GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXPEDITION TO DORADO

[27 October 1597]

Dated from the Island of Trinidad, October 27, 1597

Sire,

I give thanks to the Majesty of God that the time has come when I can make a report to your Majesty on the events and circumstance of this expedition to Dorado. I arrived on this island after as prosperous and successful a journey as I could wish, as I have informed your Majesty. Before reaching the principal port I landed at some friendly Indian villages some 10 leagues from the port, and spoke to the natives, who entertained me well. I left with them 66 men, as well as a man with a good knowledge of this country, whom I brought from Spain with a quantity of goods for barter, to go to the place where the Governor, Don Antonio de Berrio, was, and tell the natives of the country of my arrival and to bring me boats to take all my people across to El Dorado. He did this work with great diligence, and within six weeks there came 44 large canoes, with which I sent 470 men to Guayana, who arrived there safely.

At the same time came the man whom I sent to the rivers with 33 pirogues and a large quantity of cassava and hammocks, and other necessary stores, with which, under God, I made all secure and crossed with all my men and stores to the place where we all joined. On the way, six days' voyage from this town, I fell in with a fleet of Caribs from the Islands of Dominica and Granada, who, pretending to be friendly, had attacked and killed him, and I destroyed the whole fleet; this was the beginning of all the troubles which I have experienced. Then I started, without loss of time, with 100 men, to wait for them at the mouth of a river, where they are on terms of peace and friendship with other Caribs, and where they go to divide their spoil and offer sacrifices, and eat the Indians, whom they take alive.

It was God's will, as a punishment for my sins, on the passage from this island to the mainland, which is 3 leagues, after I had started in fair weather, to send upon me a hurricane, in which forty men were drowned and the provisions and ammunition thrown overboard. I now found myself without means of prosecuting my purpose, and the return to this town without provisions was most difficult; and so (having taken my decision) I determined to go to see the Governor, Antonio de Berrio, as I was half way, and along the rivers there were dates to eat until we reached an inhabited country.

A friar went ahead with a pirogue to give the news of my coming, with which all seemed pleased, who wished success to the expedition; they came together and said to the Governor, "Since you have sent into the country 470 men and the natives are asking for the Maestre de Campo, and know him, you should send him, for he will be here tomorrow in this country." The Governor listened, and the answer he gave was, "that they should not speak to him on the subject

as he had nothing to say, but I did it all, and had sent Captain Jorge Alvaro, a man of over 60 years of age, in winter and on foot." He said that Alvaro being ill, and 30 leagues in the interior of the country, the Indians entertained him and gave food to all the soldiers, and he told them how, being blind and weak, he died, and when he died the command was shared among the captains, and each one, according to the number of his supporters, committed outrages, and they began to demand gold and to take the daughters and wives of the Indians, and ill-treat them before their children; consequently their men broke up in disorder and confusion, and the Indians, losing all respect for them, killed over 350 men. When the death of Captain Jorge Alvaro became known, the Governor sent the Sergeant-Major to command the people. Upon his arrival there he found the people so terrified that he drove them away in confusion, and came to Santo Tome' which is the town established at the entrance of Guayana.

The result of my journey to Guayana was that in three days that I remained he did not even say from complaisance, "I will supply His Majesty's wants," or anything else that was due in consideration of my good will and labours; accordingly I said to him, "Sir, will you order these pirogues which are here to go to Trinidad, and we will buy a great quantity of provisions and objects of barter, and ammunition for the expedition and we will join our people and I will go along the rivers among friendly Indians, where provisions will be procurable; we will keep all our men together until the beginning of summer for active service." To this he answered, "If we wish to do so many things we shall do none," and so on the third day I returned to this town and island.

I had taken five Flemings, whom I found on land, belonging to a Flemish ship which had come to traffic at Margarita and Cumaná, and in this island. When winter came on boats failed me, and I had many men ill and dying, and troubles which I omit, for fear of wearying your Majesty. And during eight months neither letter nor boat passed between him or me; had we undertaken anything we should have lost the venture, for sixty of my men mutinied whom I was sending there, and other times many others did so, and, lastly, as being more secure, I sent a friar who has been in this expedition for many years with a quantity of necessary articles. The soldiers who were with him bound him and beat him severely, and wanted to throw him into the sea with a weight tied to him, and finally left him in a desert, whence he miraculously escaped. With the pirogue and goods the soldiers went to Cumaná where they were received and entertained like other mutineers, who going as leaders from here, have been made captains by the men they carried away with them, and such personal honours, so that any one who injures us has but to go to any one of the neighbouring Governments, where he is clothed and given passage through the country, and if he likes to remain there receives favours, so that to destroy us is in their eyes a great work of mercy, but God supports his own cause.

The people thus left the country in fear and confusion, and without reflection, the Governor and all the rest taking no heed of the matter, for had the corruption of our people been less the thing would have been impossible, for there were provinces and places which could have been fortified. Then the men began to mutiny by twenties and thirties, and went away down to the river, and licence spread among others who saw what went on, and as they were not skilful in navigating the river, which is divided into many streams, and as there was little food, of all these numerous people only three survived at the end of seven months. Now it seems that from regret for the want of cattle and horses in Venezuela, a supply of which was the real remedy for her distress, and from sorrow for the confusion and misfortune which, through the want of government,

had happened in the interior of the country, and from the reflection that the success of the expedition was delayed, and from other reasons, the Governor thereupon fell ill and was in danger of his life. He had recovered a little, when it pleased God his son, Don Fernando de Oruna arrived. Six days after his arrival Don Fernando informed me of his presence, saying that it would be well to put this island in as good order as possible, and asking to see me. I at once set out for the city, where I found that the Governor, Antonio de Berrio, was already dead, and his son, Don Fernando, had taken possession of the government.

For three days after my arrival I was occupied in considering what should be done for your Majesty's service. I found that the Governor, Don Fernando de Oruna, had some fear of a cedula which your Majesty had given me, by which, on the death or in the absence of his father, I was to govern. He showed so much wisdom and tranquility, and was so careful as to his guard and all necessary measures, and above all so good a Christian and disposed to act well, and seeing that I was not to undertake the expedition, I never left him during the day, and was to remain at his side, and that he was so ready to take advice as to what should be done, and that he was the master; all this being so, I gave him the Royal cedula, saying that I did not wish to make use of it. Thus all was settled, and it was the greatest service which I could do your Majesty in the circumstances; after this, we discussed many questions concerning the measures to be taken to bring in cattle, and to weigh the information which we had concerning the 300 leagues of the sea-coast, among different tribes of Indians. And we attended to both the one and the other, and in this way we sent the Sergeant-Major to Venezuela with twenty men, who explored the road. I then went to the River Essequibo, where I had much information as to the people wearing clothes and using the same arms in fighting as the people of New Granada, and so in all the other provinces. . . .

Your Majesty's humble servant  
(Signed) DOMINGO DE YBARGUEN Y VERA

*(Archivo de Indias, Seville)*

**8. ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY TO GUIANA AND THE ISLAND OF TRINIDAD, PERFORMED IN THE YEARS 1597 AND 1598, SUBMITTED TO THE STATES-GENERAL BY THE "COMMIES-GENERAAL," A. CABELIAU**

*An Account of the unknown and unperform Voyage of America, beginning from the River Amazon to the Island of Trinidad.*

[3 February 1599]

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen, and in the year of the same, 1597, on the morning of the 3rd December, we set sail from Briel, with two ships, the one named the "Zeeridder," of the size of 160 tons, whereupon is skipper Jacob Cornelisz alias Oom, the other named the "Jonas," of about 120 tons, skipper, Martin Willemsz, of Schiedam, and so we went to sea together and sailed with the others until the 7th of that month, and from that time we got separated from the others outside the channel, at about 44, and did not see each other again during the whole journey, though it was arranged to wait for each other in case of separation at the Island of

Palma, being one of the Canary Islands. On the 7th we got the Island of Palma in sight and stopped there, but not perceiving Marten Willemsz, we arrived on the same day off the town of Palma, and stayed there to procure our wines until the 15th January, 1598 and seeing that Marten Willemsz did not come, we sailed from there and steered for the Island of Teneriffe.

Where we arrived on the 16th, and laid to with our ship there in order to speak some vessels which were coasting there whether they had seen or heard of Marten Willemsz, but hearing nothing of him we, on the 17th, proceeded on our way between the Island of Great Canary and Teneriffe to the Islands of Cape Verd, and so to Cape North. On the 9th February we came in sight of land at about 5 degrees north of the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer, where we put out our ship's boat and sailed with it around the islands, noting whether there were no places fit to land our yacht or sloop, but found them unsuitable, and quite rocky, so that we were compelled to place the yacht on the ship, and there repair and caulk it as was needful, not without great danger.

On the 15th February we perceived a boat, called by the Indians a canoe, which came about 2 miles from the continent out of the River Caurora, in which were six men, one woman, and little child of the Beribus and Jau nation, and they were quite naked, and it was long before they dared to come on board, but, finally, by beating of drums and other means they were emboldened, and came on board, and called out to our men, "Anglees" and we replied, "Si, Si" and so they came over, and we led them into the cabin, and meanwhile made them understand that we were from Holland, and said Hollandees, and treated them as well as we could, so that the next day they left the ship joyfully, and after that showed us again much friendship. Again, on the 17th, there came on board from the continent, out of the aforesaid river, three other canoes, in which were about sixty persons-men, women, and this tribe, together with the tribes Hebio and Arwaccus, continued to come on board with their wares and victuals, so long as we lay off the aforesaid islands, and also during the time we lay in the River Cayane following hereafter.

On the 27th March we set sail for the River Cayani, and with great opposition from the skipper, and although he was sufficiently assured by us and by an Englishmen named Captain Johan Meysinge, of London, and by his own people themselves, that he could enter the aforesaid river without danger, and by our promises and those of his crew, we entered the aforesaid river with God's help and without any hindrance on the 31st, and dropped anchor near the vessel of the aforesaid English Captain. On the next day we sent our yacht upwards to the River Cauwo, and found the Jaio nation living there, and from there we brought, of their own free will, present Indians, the one named Arymowacca, about 40 years old, as far as we can understand, and the other, Cayariwara, about 20 years old, and together with them, a yacht full of timber, being a kind and colour of Brazil wood, and also tobacco and some other drugs (unknown to me). And on the 8th April this yacht came back to the ship, and we traded in this River Cayani, and lay there until the 27th June.

On the 16th April the aforesaid Englishman set sail.

On the 29th there came to us, with our assistance, two ships from Amsterdam, the skippers of which were Dierck Jans Roomscherck and Wouter Syvertsz, and on the 10th May they sailed again from us to the Island of Margarita.

On the 3rd June there arrived near us two ships from Amsterdam, named the great and the small "Sphera Mundi," whereupon are skippers Jan Cornelisz van Leijen and Adriaen Raynderts-

soen, and we made company to visit together the whole coast as far as the River Worinoque, so-called by the Indians, by the English, Reliane, and by the Spanish, Rio El Dorado. And whatever should fall to us on the aforesaid coast the same should be shared, three-eighth parts for our Company and five-eighth parts for the Company of the said Jan van Leyen, and we visited the following rivers: Wiapoco, Curassawini, Cunanamae, Juraco, Mavary, Amano, Marawini, Carapi, Surinamo, Saramo, Coupanama, Waycara, Curetini, and Worinoque. In the Rivers Worinoque, Rio Parymo, and Amacouza we negotiated and traded. The rivers lying between the Rivers Amazonis and Wiapoca are these: the Aroway, Arafico, Maycary, Cassipoura, and Arrocaya; these rivers we neither visited nor traded in since we could not get there by the ordinary current which always runs westward along the coast. The rivers between the Wyapoco and the Caurora are these: the Wanary, Apperwacca, Cawo Wya, Cayany, and Macuria. These we visited and traded in our own account, excepting the Rivers Wanary and Apperwacca. Between Mamiamanory and Syamary are two small steams, named Owapary and Paurama, where lived no people. The River, or the mouth of, Surinamo comprises two rivers, the River Cammawini lying on the east, and Surinamo on the west, and they run so together into the sea. Between the Rivers Curetyni and Worinoque are these rivers: Berbice, Apari, Maychawini, Maheyca, Demirara, Dessekebe, Pauroma, Moruga, and Wayni. These we neither visited nor traded in on our own account nor on account of the Company, since much of our time had elapsed, and there was not much to be got, as the Indians told us, and, moreover, because our provisions were very low; we therefore did naught else than coast along the land in order to have a knowledge of the same as far as the River of Worinoque, into which we sailed on the 27th July, and 2 miles from the mouth of the said river we all came to anchor.

On the 28th there were prepared to visit the River of Worinoque the ship of Jan van Leijen, about 72 tons in size, our yacht of about 18 tons, and the yacht or roy-sloop of Adriaen Rijndersen, manned altogether by about fifty persons.

On the 29th the said ships and persons sailed up together against the mighty stream, which runs down at that time of the year, and by the direction of these present Indians they sailed in the time of twenty days not more than about 40 (Dutch) miles to the place or hamlet where the Spaniards dwell, which is named St. Thomé, the Governor of which is Don Fernando de Berreo and Marques of Weyana, the River Worinoque and the whole coasts being still unconquered as far as the River Marignon or Amazonas, and they are there about 60 horsemen and 100 musketeers strong, who daily attempt to conquer the auriferous Weyana, but cannot conquer the same either by the forces already used or by any means of friendship, since the nation named Charibus daily offer them hostile resistance with their arms, which are hand bows, and they shoot poisoned arrows therewith, which are so poisonous that if any one is hit by them so that blood flows, he must perforce die within twenty-four hours unless a remedy is immediately applied, and all his flesh would drop from his bones, so that the Spaniards greatly fear that nation and their arrows, for in battle they stand unmoved, and will not budge, and they have maintained their ground up to the present, and the Spaniards seeing that they can win nothing there, have commenced to make a road through the rocks and hills of the mountains of Weyana, about six days' journey south of the River Worinoque, which road is about 1,600 "stadien" long, and so broad that they can march five horses abreast through it, and they think by these means to conquer the country.

From St. Thomé the yacht of our ship and the sloop of Adriaen Reijndertsen, with the two

herring-boats of Jan van Leijen, sailed as far as the River Caroni, which has a great and terrible fall, and falls out of the mountain, and makes such a noise that it can be heard about 4 miles off. We have, according to our description (made by Sir Walther Halley), sought thereabouts for some gold mines, but have found none; whether this is by our omission or that they are not about that place we do not know, but we have done our duty in everything according to our opinion; we are more certain about this since the Governor Don Fernando sent with us on our search his miner, who brought us to all those places where, as he believed, Sir Walther Halley had been, and where he was said to have got his minerals, and the places which we saw we could not imagine that there could be any gold under them, but we understand from our Indians that there is a place about 6 miles higher up where there ought to be some mines, but the water had inundated it very much, so that it was impossible for us to visit it. The Spaniards also said that upwards there was much gold, but they dared not come there on account of the war with the aforesaid Charibus. In fact, briefly said, there is upwards that river certainly much gold in the territory of Weyane, as the Indians from there, and also these our present Indians, together with the Spanish themselves, say, but for people engaged in trade, it is scarcely the proper thing to except anything good out of it, unless some important forces were prepared in order to attack the Spaniards, which is the only means of getting to know of any gold mines from the Indians, because they who are enemies, and who bear enmity to the Spaniards, are friends with the Indians, and they constantly hope that they will be rid of the Spaniards by the Flamings and Angleses, as they told us, since a captain of the Indians taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and being about to be hanged, said that he had spoken with a spirit Wattopa, and the latter had prophesied to him the liberation by the Dutch and by the English. I should like to help do the same, if it might be done to the profit and interest of the country, and succeed. Not having done any other business with the Indians or with the Spaniards in this river, we unanimously agreed to depart again from the town of St. Thomé to the ships, and arrived on board on the 30th August with express promises from the Spaniards that they would come and trade with us at Trinidad.

On the 1st September we sailed together to the Island of Trinidad, and on the 7th we arrived at the west of Trinidad, and came to anchor. This is a fine fertile island, in itself adorned with many kinds of products and wares serviceable for many things, and we bartered away all the rest of our merchandise and wares, with the exception of certain goods which we bring back, to the Spaniards, since we could not do business in such assortments with the Indians.

On the 21st, Jan van Leyde and Adriaan Reyndersen left us and sailed to Margarita.

On the 31st October, we set sail for this country and sailed, through want of victuals, through Pragonis and Aeso, between the Islands of St. Luga and Granado, and on the 6th we spoke there the galley of Sir Walther Halley, of London, being about 25 tons or 12 "lasts" in size, and coming from the coasts of Barbary, on the same day we sailed further within the said islands, and on the 22nd again through the Islands of Dominica and Poorebano, and so made our way to the Islands of Tersera, of which we got the Island of Fayal in sight on the 21st November, and sailed past it, and in the evening we sighted an English pinnace, and spoke it next day, on the 22nd, near the Island of Graciose, and from there we kept our course up the Channel, and on the 11th December put into Plymouth in English on account of contrary winds, and lay there till the 25th, and set sail to this country with various ships, and arrived on the 28th at Middelburg in Zeeland.

So that we have discovered, found, and navigated in this voyage more than twenty-four riv-

ers, many islands in the rivers, and other divers harbours which were not known in this country nor had they been sailed upon, nay more, that had not been described or discovered before the date of our voyage in any maps or cosmographies. All of which, I, the undersigned, as Commissary-General of this voyage, declared to be true, being ready (if necessary) to declare the same to your Honours more circumstantially by mouth or in writing. As documents of the truth I have signed these on the 3rd February, 1599.

Your Honours' humble Servant,  
(Signed) A. Cabeliau.

*(Translated from the Dutch text)*

### **9. PETITION TO THE NOBLE AND MIGHTY LORDS THE STATES GENERAL OF THESE UNITED PROVINCES CONCERNING THE POPULATION OF THE COASTS OF GUIANA SITUATED IN AMERICA**

**[Undated document, but believed to be written between 1600 to 1606]**

I doubt not that it is sufficiently well known to the noble and mighty Lords, the States-General, what a rich, beautiful, fertile, populous, pleasant, and splendid country has now recently by some of the merchant-ships of this county been discovered situated in America and named the Province of Guiana, where there are not only many fine harbours, sufficiently deep, navigable rivers, pasture in abundance, suitable for all kinds of cattle breeding, but also a fertile and very suitable country for the cultivation of wheat, wine, oil, sugar-cane, ginger, cotton, Brazil and other pepper, wood, aniline, indigo, and all other kinds of products which we are accustomed to cultivate in the same latitude and in similar climates in other quarter of the East and West Indies.

This country also produces palmites and balsam, different kinds of gums, white olibanum or mastich, a fast orange dye called annota, with which sixteen different colours can be produced, a certain black dye which is non-corrosive and fit for dyeing silk and linen, lignum gaiacum, Brazil wood and other pleasant smelling woods.

There is, indeed, also no doubt that in time it would be possible to produce good cochineal there, which conjecture is strongly based upon the fact that there is found to grow in an abundance the plant or bush named tonnael or ficus indicus upon which the little worms are fed out of which cochineal is made.

Both works and experience bear testimony to what hope and expectation there is of finding a rich gold and silver mine, because already a mine has been discovered of which the veins are gold, and the surrounding ore is silver, of which ore (found by some unexperienced or unskilled people on part of the mine) brought from thence some proofs and assays have been made, and which ore they took and dug (without any knowledge or discrimination) from the top of the aforesaid mine, and of which some was found to yield more and some less.

Some proofs amount to 60 guilders per quintal of ore, whilst other assays have been made which only half, 2, 5, 7, 4, and 45 pence, and also other 3 guilders per lb. of ore.

But how rich this same mine shall prove to be cannot be known before experts and experi-

enced miners are employed to dig, which it is not yet opportune and expedient to do and discover before the same land has been populated and invested with good strong cities and fortresses, let otherwise other surrounding nations, be they friends or enemies, moved by the riches of the same, may take it into their heads to anticipate and forestall us in that same enterprise whilst we are here occupied in devising or considering how this enterprise could be carried out in the most safe and proper way, and also by and with what means this under taking should not only be commenced, but also carried to a successful issue.

For we find indeed by long and varied experience that from the aforesaid coasts of America no riches or profits are to be drawn or gained either from the mines or from the fertility of the country unless the said land be first populated.

Which the merchants and first discoverer deem to be no enterprise or matter to be attempted or commenced by them alone, or upon their own responsibility and costs; not that they shrink from the costs that would have to be made for such population (which one can guess could easily be found amongst a number of merchants and other rich nobles, considering the good hope and expectation there is of making profit), but they consider it a duty which is only competent and meet for the highest authority or sovereign prince to do or which should certainly only be done and undertaken with the assistance, favour, and protection of the same.

It is therefore for your Lordships to declare and resolve whether you would desire to undertake and commence the aforesaid population at the cost of the country alone, or therewith with the help of some rich nobles and private merchants.

To which undertaking God Almighty will undoubtedly grant His blessing good fortune and prosperity so soon as it has been resolved and put into execution, that without further delay there shall be transported to the aforesaid coasts of America a goodly number of people with whom in the first place all suitable harbours shall be occupied and some towns or fortresses invested, which at this juncture can very easily be done with slight cost on account of the opportunity afforded by the salt ships which annually sail thither in great numbers and as every one who is acquainted with the situation and locality of the aforesaid American coasts can easily know to be well-founded.

For the instruction of your Lordships it should be stated and ought to be known that the Province of Guiana, situated in America, lies upon 4, 6, and more degrees north of the equator, extending from the great River Amazon to Punt de la Rae or Trinidad, having a healthy, suitable and well-tempered atmosphere and climate, with abundance of all the necessaries of life, and so situated that the nearest settlements [palen] inhabited by the Portuguese in Brazil are more than 300 [Dutch] miles distant from there. And the nearest places inhabited by the Spaniards are also about 200 [Dutch] miles distant from the quarter where the afore-mentioned mine was discovered, which should also be first populated and fortified.

The said province is also separated and cut off from the boundaries of both the aforementioned nations by very deep rivers and streams, and (in addition to the aforesaid great distance) inaccessible from them on account of many high mountains, extensive deserts, and woods. The sea-shore is everywhere very flat, and the entrances to the harbours are also encumbered with shallows and sand-banks which can be opened by means of beacons and buoys for friends, and on the contrary closed to enemies by the removal of the same. All of which serves to the better investment and fortification of the aforesaid American province; although no attack, annoyance,

or invasion is to be expected there from the coast of Brazil.

And no power or violence is to be feared from the coasts of Spanish or West Indies, because they lie below wind and stream.

Whatever is to be feared from Spain or Portugal must be attempted with great vessels and ships which will not willingly betake themselves into the aforesaid shallows and flat sea shores against a continent and an iron-bound sea-coast, all the harbours being closed when necessary by the removal of the beacons and buoys as has been described.

The aforesaid province is also so well situated that it can at all times of the year be reached from these United Provinces without any one being able to prevent, hinder, or disturb the said voyage, since the passage from here to there is broad and wide, and the ships are continually in the full sea without having to round any capes or pass through any channels or straits.

Which province can also be much better reached from here over and again than from Spain, our ships usually taking six weeks or two months to sail there from here. So that apparently, may undoubtedly, much navigation and no small trade and commerce will in time come to be done with the aforesaid Province of Guiana, not only in salt and produce, which will be shipped and cultivated there, but also in various manufactures and other wares which will be sent thither from this country, and retailed both among the Christians and among the Indians, and especially among the clothed Indians residing a few days journey inland.

I will be silent concerning the profits and emoluments which your Lordships would come to enjoy when once the aforesaid American province would be populated, both from the yearly revenues or tributes of the mines and otherwise, and of what importance and consideration it would be that the aforesaid Province of Guiana were annexed to these United Netherlands not only in respect of the navigation salt trade (which grows there naturally and by itself, and is shipped without any cost), rich mines, and other products, but the most important and principal thing that your Lordship have to observe is the suitable situation in case chance or your Lordships should in the future resolve (in imitation of the Romans) to divert this long war from these lands, and carry it thither, this province being the most suitable and best situated place in all America in which to establish an arsenal and a *sedem belli*, where the war could easily feed itself or be carried on and supported by all kinds of foreign nations-of English, French, Liegeois, Germans, Austrians, Swedes, Danes, etc., who will most probably betake themselves thither at first in the same population, they having peculiar inclination to mining, and especially since there is gold and silver to be dug for.

And it only remains that some way and means be conceived and found how and in what manner such a sum of money may be got together as will be necessary for a beginning of the said enterprise, there being no doubt that the said Colony will ere long be able to support itself by its own means and revenues.

Which first means could very easily be found by the Noble and Mighty Lords the States General alone, because it is firmly believed and hoped that this Colony could easily be brought into existence by means of an annual sum of 100,000 guilders-nay, even for a somewhat lesser sum than that-because it is conjectured that for 30,000 guilders 1,000 souls could be transported thither, for to transport these at the smallest cost we should be able to use the ships which go over empty to Punte de la Rae, in the West Indies, for salt, and who would willingly go as far as the coasts of Guiana for a small payment to land the people.

The sailing and navigation of which ships your Lordships could make much more frequent by employing a ruse and stopping the use of all Spanish salt in this country with the exception of that which must be employed in the fishery, and forbidding most expressly the use of any other salt in the salt-pans in this country than what comes from Punte de la Rae, etc.

Fishermen and sailors should also be made accustomed to use white or pan-salt for herrings, etc.

And whereas this enterprise and Christian undertaking not only tends to the honour of God and the propagation of His Holy Word, to the welfare not only of these United Provinces in general, and to the particular shippers and merchants who shall come to direct their trade and navigation thither, but also as a consolation, refuge, and asylum for many thousands of poor, oppressed, persecuted persons and desolate families who by this long continued war have lost their welfare and fled from their means, and who at present are roaming or lying scattered about the whole of Europe in desolation, great poverty, and misery, all to the greater disgrace and contempt of this our Dutch nation, and to the great sorrow of the aforesaid wanders and the desolation of our fellows, some of them having strayed as far as the dominion of the Great Turk.

By which devastations and dispersions all the fine arts and manufactures (a treasure and source of riches of these seventeen provinces) are scattered over the whole earth, to the great prejudice and damage of these countries. Would it also not easily happen (what we recently, God better it! have been obliged to look upon helplessly) that many thousands of souls have been obliged, from want of nourishment, to leave these provinces, and especially the towns of Harlem, Leyden, and other surrounding places, many of whom (not knowing whither further to go) have again returned to the other side, under the yoke of the Papacy, all to the greater loss, contempt, and shame of the true Christian religion, to the loss and prejudice of these United Provinces and to the reinforcement of the country's enemies.

Who knows whether some would not rather have gone to the utmost confines of the globe, in the liberty of their religion and conscience, than to have again gobbled up the Papacy which they had eschewed.

All of which would partly be redressed by this above-mentioned enterprise and proposal, and would also in future be guarded against and prevented in so far as all such dispersed and desolate people could be gathered upon the aforesaid American coasts, where they would not only fare well, but also bring great service, profit, and advantage to these countries.

Your Lordships need also not be afraid that by populating Guiana these United Provinces would be depopulated, because there is nothing to make one believe that any wealthy persons established here, or such that are well-to-do, will leave this country to go thither, seeing the unseemliness of the aforesaid American chaos, in which there will be a great deal of work to do before it is brought into cultivation.

Whither probably peasants and other poor people well accustomed to work will betake themselves from other provinces and districts from east, west, north, and south, who can scarcely feed themselves over here in Europe, and who will be easily drawn from all quarters so soon as this Colony is undertaken by your Lordships, and is presented under some favourable conditions to the passengers who may wish to go and live there.

And some poor people wander so far from these provinces who, through want of nourishment, small earnings, and the burden of many children, cannot stay here on account of the heavy

rentals, and the same could very probably be compelled to transport themselves elsewhere in the same way as we see happening, which God better only too well daily.

It only remains for your Lordships to commence immediately, and without further delay or protraction, the aforesaid population, appointing for that purpose an Indian Chamber, or other Deputies, who shall immediately frame such Articles and conditions as your Lordships shall desire and consent to submit to the emigrants, and also, if it be necessary, to devise means with which the costs of this population might be defrayed.

*(Translated from the Dutch text)*

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#### **10. EXTRACT FROM A DESPATCH IN REFERENCE TO THE FOUNDING OF A DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[7 January 1607]**

Don Juan de Mancidor to Secretary Prada, Brussels.  
January 7, 1607

The Dutch are now actively pushing forward the formation of the West India Company, which resolution was rather wavering before; but with the return of the Rear-Admiral, unexpectedly, who appears to have given them same important information, the project, is now about to be carried out.

*(Archivo de Simancas)*

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#### **11. THE MARQUIS DE SPINOLA TO THE KING OF SPAIN**

**[7 January 1607]**

*(Extract)*

January 7, 1607

The Dutch will enter into no agreements with His Majesty that will not assure to them all they possess and have conquered, with the full right of trade and navigation with the Indies.

*(Archivo de Simancas)*

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#### **12. SANCHO DE ALQUICA TO THE KING OF SPAIN**

**[11 February 1612]**

Sire,

The affairs of this country are so different from what they sound in your Court that they bear no comparison.

I was charged to make the official investigation respecting Don Fernando de Berrio, and further, to make a report on the contraband trade of this island, and on that of Santo Thomé with the English and Flemish enemies who are on the mainland, and to execute the Cedula of your Majesty which is in force in this island. It was a wrong report that was made to your Majesty in this matter, and consequently, in conformity with the said report, the commissions were sent to me with orders to complete them within three months, which is an impossibility. For from this town to that of Santo Thomé is a distance of 60 leagues by sea, and up the River Orinoco; and furthermore, boats are not to be found when they are wanted in this town, and when they are found, Indian rowers are not to be got, on account of their having been so harried by the Caribs, that in consequence of the great ravages they make amongst them they have retired inland, and do not come to this town unless they are fetched; and this is a matter of considerable difficulty, as not less than twenty-four soldiers can go at a time, for if less go, it is like sending them to destruction; and there are not more than thirty-three residents here, and with them this town has to be protected against Flemings and English, for they go about in this port just as in the English Channel.

And yesterday I exchanged shots with two Flemish launches, and since they cannot trade as they used to do they are possessed of the devil, and I have few men, and cannot go to fight, but in order to fight as soon as possible I will do what I can, as I am in duty bound. It is more needful here to go with musket on shoulder than with pen in hand, for there are so few men, and so many enemies, and I must say, it is necessary to sleep like the crane, on one foot. From here to the Orinoco there are twenty-seven of the enemies' ships; consider therefore, your Majesty, how can I finish the inquiry in so short a time? For in order to go to Santo Thomé I must go out on a dark night through the ships that are in this port, which are five in number.

I do not complain of the 6 ducats which are allowed me daily for the inquiry, for the interest I have in serving your Majesty is more than the obligation I owe to my King and Lord, and is that he may honour me and confer favour on my sons; for with respect to the salary it is nothing, since an auditor receives 10 ducats a day on any commission that he may be sent from Santa Domingo, enjoying his regular salary at the same time, without the obligations which are incumbent upon me. For in every journey I make I have to take soldiers, and supply them with necessities, for they are so poor that they have nothing under heaven if I don't supply them. If I had to make the expenditure with the 6 ducats this country would be more trodden by Flemings than by Spaniards, owing to the ships that come to this port daily, for through not going out to meet them with soldiers, it was necessary to hold the land and to draw lots among the residents on account of their small number. I am doing what I can, and spending what I do not possess with great pleasure, for I know I am serving your Majesty thereby, whom may God preserve as he is able, and Christendom needs.

SANCHO DE ALQUICA

(Seal)

From San Josephe de Oruna,

Island of Trinidad, February 11, 1612

*(Archivo General de Indias)*

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### 13. SANCHO DE ALQUICA TO THE KING OF SPAIN

[13 June 1612]

(Extract)

Sire,

I prohibited the sowing of tobacco in Guyana for this year; and did so because while I was in Trinidad, Don Fernando de Berrio and the residents of Guyana, though aware of it, sold this year's crop of tobacco to the enemy, saying that it was seized by 1,000 or by 1,500, as your Majesty will see more fully from the inquiry. And from this it is certain that next year, in October and November, the said ships and others will be in Guyana, and not finding tobacco, which they will not find, they will not set to work to attack the town as they did this year, when they poured more than 150 shot into the town, which had none to answer them with; and although this was done during the day they carried on trade by night, and the person who did this was Don Fernando and his associates.

Directly I entered Guyana I made an ambushade against a couple of ships that I found in the harbour, and I passed across their prows and was perceived, and they went a league further down the river, so I made another in the place they went to, and when a boat reached the shore some Flemings were killed and one was captured, who begged me for the love of God to spare his life, and to let him know what I wanted from the ship. I asked him for four pieces of artillery, 200 shot, and 10 hundredweight of powder. They would not give from the ships more than two cast-iron guns, of 15 to 16 hundredweight, and twenty-four shot, and considering how unimportant it was to hang a Fleming and much so to have two pieces for the coming year, in view of what might occur, I gave the Fleming his life, and took the guns and put them in a trench, where they will be of great service, and the city was much pleased therewith.

Your Majesty will be pleased to provide a remedy for this matter, since it is of great importance, seeing that the river is such that they can go up to the kingdom by it, and the Flemings know the shoals of the river better than our people, owing to the care with which they have taken sounding; and if they were to take possession of the land it would be very injurious to the New Kingdom of Granada, for they would daily fortify themselves in settlements.

In Trinidad this year not an ounce of tobacco is bartered, with my consent, nor shall it be bartered in future, for they have been severely threatened. And I assure you that the same thing shall be done in Guyana, for I am leaving two very able men as Lieutenants; one is Don Juan Tostado, and the other Antonio de Moxica, very excellent soldiers, to who in justice your Majesty ought to grant honours for their zeal and services. Some negroes that I caught from an English ship have assured me that there are forty houses of English and Flemings in the settlement which I report to be on the River Guayapoco, and that there will be about eighty men in it; and they occupy themselves in sowing tobacco and cultivating it.

If long-boats should come to punish the Caribs as I have written to your Majesty, the same

thing might be done to these heretics, and it would be of great importance; for on their way back, when going to their country, they pass Trinidad and this Island of Margarita, and plunder whatever they find on the way.

May God preserve your Majesty, as he is able, and Christendom needs.

SANCHO DE ALQUICA  
(Seal)

From this Island of Margarita  
June 13, 1612

*(Archivo General de Indias, Seville)*

#### 14. SANCHO DE ALQUICA TO THE KING OF SPAIN

[14 June 1612]

Sire,

From this island I reported to your Majesty that, in fulfilment of your Royal orders, I went to the Island of Trinidad and Province of Guyana to make the official investigation concerning Don Fernando de Berrío, Governor of these provinces, and his Ministers and officers, and to investigate and punish clandestine trade.

I there received information that there were in the town of Santo Thomé eighteen vessels trading; and so on account of the risk there was in this matter, and since the navigation from this island to that of Trinidad is more than 60 leagues to windward, and infested by Carib pirates, who commit great damage. I started from this island on the 14th December last with three launches and a pirogue in which I took thirty Spaniards and not more than 100 Indians and negroes as rowers.

I spent sixteen days on the voyage, and arrived on the 29th December at the said island, at which there is a town called San Josephe de Oruna, containing as many as thirty-two straw huts and about forty men.

I presented my commissions to the Corporation, and having begun to hold audience therein, the Procurator-General and all the said residents, as I came from my lodging, read me a Petition confessing that for the past eight years they had traded with French, Flemings, and English and other nations; and they fell on their knees asking pardon of your Majesty.

And as this step was taken beforehand, and it was rendered unnecessary for me to draw up a brief, confessions were taken from all those who were included in this act, who declared upon oath that the contents of the said Petition were true, and that they had traded for the said period.

I reprimanded each one separately, and some of them made excuses; they alleged that they had suffered great necessities, and that being overwhelmed thereby, they had been driven to act thus. This system was pursued with all the said residents in general; for, having drawn up a list of them it appeared that there were on others beyond those with whom this course has been taken, and I forwarded these cases to your Majesty for decision.

I spent thirty days on these investigations, and having ended them, I caused the inquiry to be published against Don Fernando de Berrio and his Lieutenants and other Ministers and officers on the 8th February of this year, after making the general interrogatory.

And in accordance with the letters and instructions which your Majesty ordered to be sent to me, I examined certain witnesses, from whom it appeared that the said Don Fernando was seriously inculpated in having traded and permitted trade during the said period.

And since the town of Santo Thomé, in the said Province of Guyana, is where the said Don Fernando resided and had his dwelling during the period of his government, and the investigation had to be made therein, I left a person in the said island to conduct the said investigations, charges, and excuses, and set out for the said city, which is more than 90 leagues distant, 30 by sea and 60 up a river called the Orinoco.

And since during the time I was in Trinidad many ships had come from the said nations, and also the report of the said eighteen ships from Guyana, which was certified by the inquiry I made afterwards, I took with me forty Spaniards and sixty negro [and] Indians, and entered by the mouth of the said river, which they call Capure.

I arrived at the city of Santo Thomé on the 23rd of the said month, and on the 24th, Saint Mathias day, I caused the said official inquiry to be published, and the Procurator-General took a similar measure with all the residents of the said city about forty in number. From the secret inquiry there resulted thirty-eight charges against Don Fernando of having traded from the said time until now, and even after knowing that I was in Trinidad, and of having permitted trade, together with other serious circumstances and of having permitted the seizure and sale of Indian natives of that province unjustly, and other things as appears therefrom, for which an excuse was made on his behalf, confessing the trade and alleging that it was from the absolute necessity which he suffered during the sixteen Years that he exercised the Government. And this was completed within sixty days from the date of publication of the said inquiry in the said Island of Trinidad; and I sentenced the said Governor, and he was condemned to pay a fine and to suffer perpetual deprivation of office, and as some charges were serious, and it seemed to me he deserved the penalty of death, I referred to your Majesty; and some charges against the Alcaldes and Magistrates of both cities, who were all implicated, I referred to your Majesty.

On the completion of the said investigation it did not seem to me desirable that Don Fernando should come from Santo Domingo until your Majesty should order otherwise.

I presented to the Corporation of the said city the Cedula by which your Majesty orders me to continue the Government thereof until you are pleased to order otherwise, since I have not finished the affairs of the Island of Trinidad, and have to draw up the accounts of what belongs to your Majesty's Royal Treasury.

I returned thither with the said men and ships, and found, in going and returning, both in the said River Orinoco, through which I went to Santo Thomé, and on the coast of the said island four vessels of the said enemies, and great care and caution was necessary to avoid any disaster.

All this I have done at my own coast, spending therein more than 3,000 ducats from my fortune, and suffering many labours and much sickness.

The inquiry and Commissions are completed, and all else that your Majesty commanded me, but as it has to be drawn up and put in order, I am not sending it on the present occasion, but in order that your Majesty may know what has been done in this matter I have sent this short report,

promising to draw it up in better form to be sent with the accounts which will go by the next vessel.

May our Lord preserve, &c.

SANCHO DE ALQUICA  
(Seal)

In the Island of Margarita,  
June 14, 1612.

*(Archivo General de Indias)*

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**15. EXTRACTS FROM A REPORT ON TRINIDAD DE LA GUAYANA IN  
REFERENCE TO THE DUTCH IN REFERENCE TO THE DUTCH SETTLEMENTS  
ON THE COAST BETWEEN THE AMAZON AND THE ORINOCO  
[25 June 1613]**

Señor Don Antonio de Muxica, Deputy Governor of Santo Thomé de la Guayana, to His Majesty.  
June 25, 1613

The Dutch have a strong fortress, well defended by artillery, in the Corentyne. That river is situated at a distance of 200 leagues from Santo Thomé de la Guayana, and the Dutch are strongly united with the Caribs.

And with regard to the other settlements existing, it would be well to clear those coasts of them, for, from the River Marañon to the River Orinoco, there are three or four more settlements, very flourishing, from which they derive much utility and very great profit; and with the mouths of these two rivers they are making themselves masters of the possessions and the fruits of the natives; and this must call for some remedy, for there is great necessity for sending men, artillery, and arms for the defence of the city of Guayana must not be neglected.

*(Archivo de Indias, Seville)*

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