

**- 3 -****From 1629 to 1637****46. REPORT OF THE MARQUIS DE SOFRAGA, GOVERNOR OF THE CITY OF SANTO THOMÉ DE GUAYANA, TO THE KING OF SPAIN****[8 July 1631]**

Sire,

On the 10th March of this year letters were received in this Audiencia from the City of Santo Tome de Guayana, and from Don Luis de Monsalbe, Governor and Captain-General of that province, reporting that in the year 1629 a squadron of nine ships of English and Dutch enemies arrived at that port, and landing a number of men endeavored to seize the said city and take possession of it, and the residents, finding themselves with few men and without arms, and consequently defenceless, set fire to the houses and burned them, with the property therein, and abandoned them by withdrawing to the woods with their families; and that after this squadron had departed, other squadrons of corsairs came and settled and fortified themselves in the arms and creeks of the River Orinoco, and in an island they call Tobago, they join with the Carib Indians who inhabit those coasts, from whom information has been received that the same or another squadron was coming this year to take possession of the city and of a quicksilver mine which is said to have been discovered close to it on the bank of the said River Orinoco, and to prevent this injury and many others which might follow, if for want of defence that city should be depopulated, and the enemy should take possession of it and of the Indians who are already converted and reduced to our Holy Catholic Faith, they have begged for help in men, arms, and munitions; and Alonzo de Aguilar Trujillo, ordinary Alcalde of that city, having appeared with these despatches, as Procurator-General thereof, and represented the same thing by word and petition, an assembly of the Council was called, wherein appeared the Visitor of this Audiencia, the Tribunal, and Royal officers, and other persons of practice and experience, and having considered the matter and inspected the foregoing Acts and Reports, it was decided to be important and necessary to assist the said city with fifty men with arquebuses and shields, and provided with the necessary arms, munitions, and stores, and it was agreed that the expense incurred thereby should be defrayed from your Majesty's Treasury.

The said Alonzo Aguilar Trujillo undertook to send to this Audiencia a deed executed by the said City of Santo Thomé de Guayana, in which it would undertake to obtain confirmation from your Majesty within four years, in which you would be pleased to grant that the expenditure be allowed from your Royal Treasury. And although this security was not regarded as sufficient warrant we accepted it considering how highly important it was for your Majesty's service to send this assistance, which would have to be given even without any security, as was done in 1618 by Don Juan de Borja, my predecessor (whereof your Majesty was pleased to approve), on the occasion when the Englishman, Walter Raleigh, sacked that city and killed the Governor,

Diego Palomeque de Acuna, in the assault.

This relief party started from here in the month of May of this year, under Governor Juan de Campos, a captain of credit and experience, to whom I gave instructions for the conduct of his journey and relief operations, and for occasions that might arise, and for examining the facts concerning the quicksilver mine; and the expenditure which has been made from your Majesty's Treasury (which was spared to the utmost) amounts to 5,628 pesos of 8 reals each, as fully shown by the Acts of which a certified copy is sent herewith.

May our Lord preserve your Majesty's Catholic Royal person as Christendom needs.

THE MARQUIS DE SOFRAGA

(Rubric)

Santa Fé, July 8, 1631.

On the margin is written: "These 'Autos' did not arrive."

**47. EXTRACT FROM THE REGULATIONS ISSUED WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE STATES-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS FOR THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY**

[14 May 1632]

Firstly, no such ships (i.e., from any part of the United Provinces, other than the Company's) may sail to the coast of Africa, or the New Netherlands, or elsewhere where the Company may trade, on any pretence: but they may sail to the coast of Brazil, likewise into the West Indies, to wit, [from] the River Orinoco westwards along the coast of Cartagena, Portobello, Honduras, Campeche, the Gulf of Mexico, and the coast of Florida, together with all the islands situated within these limits, in order there to carry on all manner of warfare by sea and by land against the King of Spain, his subjects and allies.

[*Groot Placaat Boek*]

[*These regulations were re-published on 17 July 1633.*]

(*Original - Dutch*)

**48. ORDER AND REGULATIONS OF MAY 14, 1632, PASSED BY THE STATES-GENERAL, AND ACCORDING TO WHICH ALL FULLY-EQUIPPED VESSELS FROM ANY OF THESE PROVINCES SHALL BE PERMITTED TO SAIL WITHIN A CERTAIN PORTION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CHARTER OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY HEREAFTER EXPRESSED**

[14 May 1632]

*(Extract)*

(I) First none of the said vessels shall be permitted, on any account whatever, to sail to the coasts of Africa, nor to New Netherlands, or any other place where the Company may trade; but shall be permitted to sail to the coast of Brazil; item in the West Indies, to wit, the River Oronoco westwards along the coast of Cartagena, Portobello, Honduras, Campecho, the Gulf of Mexico, and the coast of Florida, together with all the islands lying within the boundaries, in order to injure and offer hostility to the King of Spain, his subjects and allies both on land and water.

(II) Provided they pay therefor as recognition dues to the Company (in addition to the dues belonging to his Excellency the Prince of Orange) four- sixteenths per cent of the revenues proceeding from the sales of all prizes they take from the enemy, south or north of the Tropic of Cancer, either on the journey out or home, and that also as well of the vessels and ordnance which they may take as of the goods on board, without exception. . . .

(IV) The aforesaid vessels shall be permitted to take on board timber and salt, upon the conditions and recognition dues heretofore granted to and required from all inhabitants of these United Provinces.

(V) All vessels desirous of proceeding within the limits of the Charter upon these conditions shall first declare at the Chamber of the West India Company whence they wish to sail, their persons, and the names of the vessels, with the armament of the latter, and bind themselves by surety not to harm any allies or inhabitants of the United Provinces, and to hold themselves strictly by the commission of his Excellence the Prince, also promising not to diminish, take away, or misappropriate on the way the prizes or goods which they may have captured or taken on board, but to faithfully place all the same, as far as in their power, in the hands of the Directors of the Chamber whence they set out, in order to be bought by the latter into their warehouses, and immediately sold by public auction for the profit or loss of the capturers, and the proceeds to be paid out to the latter in exchange for a proper receipt, and after deduction of the aforesaid recognition dues, and a brokerage of 1 per cent for the Company, the adjudication of the prizes being left to the respective Boards of Admiralty. . . .

(VIII) They shall also be bound to receive upon every ship a super-cargo of the Company, and provide him with meals in the cabin, his wages, however, to be paid by the Company. . . .

XI) They shall also be prohibited from bringing thither any merchandise, clothes, stockings, shoes, shirts, or other necessaries, or either any provisions, wet or dry, in order to sell or barter them there at Pernambuco, or the places thereabouts, to soldiers or sailors upon pain of forfeiting them all. . . .

(XIII) All the skippers and sailors of freighted or hired vessels, or those sailing on commission, shall, as well as those of the Company, be subject to the judicature and justice established by the Company in Pernambuco and other places concerning all questions and delinquencies committed by any of them during their stay upon the coast there. . . .

*[These regulations were re-published on 17 July 1633.]*

*(Original: Dutch)*

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**49. ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER), AND ABRAHAM VAN PERE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE TRADE ON THE WILD COAST**

[28 July 1632]

*Articles and Conditions agreed upon, in the Meeting of the Zeeland Chamber of the West India Company held in Middelburg, 16th July, 1632, with Abraham van Pere, regarding the trade on the Wild Coast and the continuation of his Colony in the River Berbice and that of the Essequibo for the Company.*

(Extract)

4. It was resolved to make three cargoes of wares, namely one for himself for the River Berbice, one for the Company for the River Essequibo, and the third to be traded with at various places on the Wild Coast.

This third cargo shall be bought by the Company and Van Pere half and half, and be traded with at joint profit half and half, as also the prizes that may be taken during the voyage, and all minerals of any kind that may be obtained with the said ships.

5. All the return cargoes shall be placed in the hands of the Company to sell them, and receive thereon a brokerage of 1 per cent. . . .

8. It was agreed that, in case the Company should receive more annatto dye from Essequibo than Mr. van Pere from Berbice, or Mr. van Pere should receive more dye from Berbice, in that case the one who shall get more dye shall be bound to bear *pro rata* the expenses.

9. In case the Company should wish to send any persons to Essequibo in the aforesaid ships, it shall pay therefor 7 stivers per day for each person, and for such as shall take their meals in the cabin, 14 stivers. Except that the agent who might be employed on the aforesaid ships, whether for managing the trade or for other purposes during the voyage, shall be at the expense of Mr. van Pere.

Thus done and resolved in the aforesaid meeting, and signed by Mr. van Pere; and in the name of the Company a signed copy hereof granted him by the meeting.

Given at Middelburg, 28 July, 1632

ABRAHAM VAN PERE  
JEAN VAN DER POORT  
ABRAHAM BISSCOP  
JAN VAN DER MERCT  
PR. DUVELAER

(Original: Dutch)

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**50. REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL OF THE INDIES TO THE KING OF SPAIN  
[17 March 1633]**

That a letter having been received in the Audiencia on the 10th March, 1631, from the Governor of the City of Santo Thomé de Guayana, and from the said city, reporting that in the year 1629 a squadron of nine English and Dutch ships arrived in that port, and having landed men to take the said city, the residents being few in number and without arms, set fire to it and to their property and retired to the wood with their families; and afterwards two other ships arrived and settled and fortified in the creeks and arms of the River Orinoco, and in an island they call Tabaco, uniting with the Carib Indians. And as it has been understood that the same or another squadron was going in the same year to seize the city and a quicksilver mine, which has been discovered close to it, they gave help in men, arms, and munitions, and having called a Treasury Council, it was agreed that it should consist of fifty men with arquebuses, and shields provided with the necessary arms, munitions, and stores, for account of the Royal Treasury, the town undertaking to obtain confirmation within four years. He states that the relief party started in May, under Juan de Campos; that the amount was 5,628 peso, and that he gave him instructions to investigate the facts concerning the quicksilver mines.

In the Council, 17th March, 1633. Let them be thanked, and with respect to the expenditure, let it be referred to the Fiscal.

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**51. ADVICE OF THE FISCAL OF SPAIN TO THE KING  
[7 April 1633]**

The Fiscal says that a letter should be written from the New Kingdom to see if there be any means or manner by which this port can be assisted from the Royal Treasury, but that he is to continue to make needful exertions to eject the enemy therefrom, without sparing expense or trouble, on account of the extreme importance of the matter; for since that river affords anchorage for ships of large draught by fortifying themselves there, as it is said they are fortified, they are free to issue forth and overrun all the coasts of the mainland and Windward Islands, and along the river inland, as he has gathered from reports which have reached the Council, they can navigate as far as the River Casanar, which bounds the New Kingdom of Granada; and even if it be only to prevent the enemy from continuing to fortify themselves in different parts of the West Indies, it is absolutely necessary, and he therefore begs that on this question of galleons a reply be given to the Governor, and the despatch be sent directing him to take measures for everything as requested herein.

(Seal)

Madrid, April 7, 1633

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**52. REPORT AND RESOLUTION AS TO THE SACKING OF SANTO THOME (1631-**

**1633)**

[Undated – but believed to have been prepared in late 1633]

[The following documents are included in this report.]

1. **Report of the Marquis de Sofraga to the King, 8 July 1631** [Document No. 46 above].
2. **Report from the Council of the Indies to the King of Spain, 17 March 1633** [Document No. 50 above].
3. **Advice of the Fiscal of Spain to the King, 7 April 1633** [Document No. 51 above].

**Resolution of the King**

[*No date shown*]

Let a Consolata be drawn up as the Fiscal requests, pointing out that this expedition can be approved for the time being, and calling for Reports from the Tribunal and Royal Fiscals if this expenditure has been made as stated.

(The King's Seal)

(*Archivo General de Indias, Seville*)

**53. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER), 1634**  
**[June 29, 1634]**

The gentlemen who shall be sent as deputies to the meeting of the Nineteen shall at that meeting request and even insist that no colonists or other persons shall be at liberty to navigate to the Wild Coast except this Chamber of Confrater van Pere alone.

(*Original: Dutch*)

**54. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER), 1635**  
**[May 21, 1635]**

It was unanimously resolved that the trade to the Wild Coast shall be done by the Company alone, and by no private individuals; and this shall be brought by this Chamber before the Board of the Nineteen.

(*Original: Dutch*)

**55. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER), 1636**  
[2 June 1636]

[The Deputies] shall also come prepared to consider and, if need be, to amend the Regulations for the management of New Netherland, Curacao, Cape Verde, Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Wild Coast, Fernando Noronho, and the Colonies planted here there; and to this end each from his own Chamber will bring with him all books and papers for information thereon.

*(Original: Dutch)*

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**56. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER), 1637**  
[May 14, 1637]

Confrater van Pere was authorized to hand over to Mr. Segers two kegs of syrup, or sap of sugarcane, arrived from Essequibo from Jan van der Goes, in order to make an experiment in reducing it to sugar.

*(Original: Dutch)*

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**57. LETTER WRITTEN TO THE KING OF SPAIN BY DON DIEGO LOPEZ DE ESCOBAR, GOVERNOR OF GUAYANA AND TRINIDAD**  
[28 May 1637]

*[Note: This letter is referred to in document No. 60]*

Firstly, the governor set forth how the King had graciously given him the Provinces of Guayana and Trinidad. Upon his arrival there he had found the Island of Trinidad in a very pitiable condition, it being inhabited only by thirty families, and men of whom barely twenty were fit to carry arms, while it was on all sides surrounded by enemies, both Indians and Dutch, over whom the Lord and His Blessed Mother had granted him a glorious and incredibly great victory in the Island of Tobago, whereby he had depopulated it. He had besieged the enemy there in two castles, the one provided with six and the other with twenty-eight guns (a big and impudent lie); had reduced them, and promised them, in the name of His Majesty, to have them brought free and unhindered to Saint Christopher. He had made bold to pledge this safe conduct, inasmuch as he had seen it practised, both in the Netherlands and in Milan, by the Marquis Spinola, under who he had for many years served his Majesty as a captain.

For this reason he had sent the aforesaid Dutchmen (except three of the principal ones, one of them a son of a certain Governor) to Margarita, requesting Don Juan de Ulate, Governor of that island, to buy them a boat and allow them to depart therein, he having no more convenient means to send away the prisoners in fulfilment of the Treaty, and to this end assigning to that Governor such sums, and even more, as he might need therefor.

In spite of these measures he had taken, the aforesaid Governor of Margarita had ordered all the said Dutchmen to be hanged, an act greatly detrimental to His Majesty, to the credit and reputation of the Spanish Government, and bringing into contempt the quarter that had been promised them under pledge of the King's word. Thank God, the affairs of the King were not in such a bad state that he should have to resort to cruelties, and by such proceedings cause the Castilian name to be despised, hated, and mistrusted by all nations. If the Governor of Margarita had thought it unadvisable to grant the Dutchmen a passage through his province, he could easily have found another and a secret way to do away with them, instead of thus openly doing so before all the world. The inevitable result would be that the Prince of Orange and the West India Company (la Compania Olandeza) would seek to avenge in India such cruelties perpetrated upon their subjects, and before and above all would attack and easily conquer the Islands of Margarita and Trinidad, which are ill-provided with troops. In view whereof, he requested that His Majesty might take this matter into earnest consideration, and at the earliest moment send him 200 soldiers the defence of his island.

In the second place, the Governor set forth that immediately after the conquest of Tobago he had also resolved to carry his victorious arms against Essequibo, a fort lying in his province of Guayana, where the Dutch were carrying on a great trade with the Indians, and were keeping the inhabitants of Orinoco in continual alarm. But after he had learned from the Justicia Mayor of Tobago (thereby meaning the present writer) of the great force which the Dutch Company had there, he had on that account been obliged to defer the expedition until the following March 1638, by which time the Audiencia Real of the Nuevo Reino de Granada had promised to send him 400 Spaniards for the execution of the aforesaid plans; but he complained that the Governors of Margarita and Cumana had refused him aid of troops.

Lastly, the aforesaid Governor declared that not far from Santo Thome in Guayana he had discovered an *abundantisima* and *riquisima mina* (his own words) of quicksilver, from which he sent His Majesty four boxes of ores and 1 lb of quicksilver drawn from them. From this discovery the King's income could expect great profit, this mine being as rich as any heretofore discovered. He therefore requested that His Majesty might be pleased to order that this mine be worked, and 300 soldiers be sent for its defence, before the Dutch should learn of it, and again, as they had recently done, come and attack the town of Santo Thomé and make themselves masters of that rich mine and of the whole country. He took this occasion to show how the Dutch had already founded seven Colonies in the aforesaid province, namely, Wiapoco, Cayenne, N, Surinam, Serrano, Essequibo, and Berbice: wherewith the aforesaid Governor concluded and finished his letter.

This, Sire, is what the writer has considered his duty to communicate to you. Having, moreover, in hopes of thereby at some time serving the Fatherland, industriously studied and personally investigated the whole condition of the lands of Trinidad, Margarita, Punta Araya, Cumana, Caracas, Cartagena, and Havana, with their strongholds and fortifications, he could lay it before you very plainly, if he should find such a Report, as also what he has written above, to be acceptable to you. Meanwhile, he beseeches you to be pleased to consider the unlawful plundering of his trunk and clothes, as referred to above, and to order that the damage and loss of his clothes (which had actually cost him more than 80 pieces of eight at Havana) be made good to him from the prize-money of the sailors. For, considering that the writer was unable to obtain other pas-

sage to the Fatherland, it is neither right nor reasonable that his property and that of the enemy should be on the same footing, and, quarter having been given, be exposed to the same risk of loss. Of the Spaniards, our born enemies, many, nay most, are courteously treated and sent away contented; while our friends and their property might, in this manner, expect to come off' less easily. The severe wounds which he received in the fury of the capture, whereby his face and his sound limbs have been disfigured and spoiled, ought to be sufficient damage to the writer, without his being deprived and robbed by his friends and countrymen of what little the cruel Spaniard had left him. Should it be adduced that the writer's loss was fully compensated by his regaining liberty, he emphatically denies that he was considered a prisoner by the Spaniards, and still less transported as a prisoner; on the contrary, he was recognized and considered as a free person by every one, and particularly by Don Carlos, the Admiral of the Fleet at Cartagena and Havana: the writer having, in the aforesaid, quality, himself chosen and selected his passage, paying for it in advance to the skipper, both for himself and his companion, 50 pieces of eight, in coin.

Wherefore trusting to the equity of his request, and to your wise judgement, etc.

*(Original: Dutch)*

**58. FURTHER ORDER AND REGULATIONS OF THE STATES-GENERAL, PASSED BY ADVICE OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY IN THE COURT OF THE NINETEEN, BY WHICH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE UNITED PROVINCES SHALL BE PERMITTED TO TAKE AWAY WOOD, TOBACCO, AND ALL KINDS OF WARES AND MERCHANDISE FROM A CERTAIN PART OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CHARTER OF THE AFOREMENTIONED COMPANY HEREAFTER EXPRESSED, DATED JANUARY 6, 1635.**

**[6 January 1635]**

*(Extract)*

I. First, the vessels of the aforesaid inhabitants shall be permitted to sail to the West Indies to wit, the River Orinoco westwards along the coast of Carthage, Portobello, Honduras, Campeche, the Gulf of Mexico and the coast of Florida, together with the islands lying within those boundaries; but they shall on no account be permitted to sail to the coast of Africa or New Netherlands, or to any other place where the said Company carries on trade.

II. The vessels wishing to sail to the above-mentioned permitted place will have to be provided with a Commission and written authorization from the Chamber of the aforesaid Company, at the place where the said vessels were equipped and fitted out.

III. And shall be bound to take on board a super-cargo, who shall have his place and take his meals in the cabin at the cost of the vessel and its owners, together with others who are ordered there by the skipper or owners, and the aforesaid super-cargo shall be treated with every respect and fairness, his wages, however, to be paid by the Company.

IV. But in the case of ships sailing alone for salt, in place of such super-cargo, the skipper,

mate, and boatswain, with some of their principal owners, shall truly promise — instead of an oath, which they shall be bound to give whenever called upon to do so — to keep an accurate diary of their voyage, and where they have sailed, what they have taken on board and traded, and will have to hand in to the Company the said diaries, or authentic copies of the same at their cost, upon their return.

V. And the skipper, as well as his owners, shall expressly promise that in addition to the convoy dues upon all the goods they have taken on board or traded, they will faithfully pay the following recognition dues, or at least place security therefor in the hands of the Company before they begin to unload, under pain of forfeiting their freedom, as in the first Article of the Charter.

VI. Which vessels, in addition to the convoy dues and Licent. No. 1 granted to the Company by the Company, shall, moreover, pay to the Chamber of the Company, whence they set out, 10 per cent. on all kinds of Stokvis wood, red dye-wood, and Campechy wood; 7½ percent of letter wood; 5 percent on Pock wood and yellow wood, and 8 percent on tobacco, cotton, hides, and all other wares and produce obtained in the West Indies, even though they be sold — all to be paid in kind or in money, at the option of the Company.

VII. It being well understood that the Company retains for itself the timber, merchandise, products, and fruits obtainable at the place where it has its forts.

VIII. And all strangers and foreigners importing such goods in their own vessels, or those freighted or hired in this country, shall pay similar recognition dues, whether they have come straight here or have broken their cargo in other countries, for whatever reasons such may have occurred.

*[Re-issued on 16 October 1637]*

*(Original: Dutch)*

**59. STATEMENT BY JUAN DE PENALVER, NOTARY PUBLIC**  
**[6 April 1637]**

I, Juan de Penalver, Notary Public, and, Clerk of the Corporation of the Island of Trinidad and of Surveys and Audits in this town of Santa Tome de la Guayana, by commission of Don Diego Lopez de Escobar, Governor and Captain-General of these provinces, in the Island of Trinidad, for Our Lord the King, certify that on this day, the 6th April, 1637, the said Lord Governor caused to appear before him Cornelio de Morg, a Dutchman, native of Frechelingues, a prisoner from the raid made in the Island of Tabaco, where he was at that time Governor; and likewise Juan, a negro of the Santome nation, likewise a prisoner from the said Tabaco, and brought up from his youth among the Dutch; who were asked by me, the present Notary, to declare in all fullness and truth, dividing to each one separately, wherein they both agreed in one and the same thing respecting the settlements which the pirate enemies have made on this mainland coast, from Cape North to the mouth of the River Orinoco, jurisdiction of this Government, according to the covenants thereof; and they said and declared that there are nine rivers called Guayapoco, Cabru, Apuruagua, Quiyana, Surinama, Caramo, Supunama, Bervis, Esquibo, and that there are

in them the settlements of enemies; in Guaipoco, English, where there are silver mines; and in Quiyana there are Dutch; in Surinama, English; in Supunama, Irish; in Bervis, Dutch; in Esquibo, Dutch. And being asked what troops there were in each settlement, they said they did not know for certain more than that, they have good forts, with great shipping trade in tobacco, timber, striped wood, dyewood, and cottons, all in great quantity owing to the many natives they have collected.

And all this took place in the form aforesaid. . . .

Certified:  
 JUAN JAR PENALVER  
 Examining Notary

Santo Thomé de la Guayana  
 April 6, 1637

**60. EXTRACT OF LETTER FROM THE CORPORATION OF THE ISLAND OF TRINIDAD TO THE KING OF SPAIN**

[11 April 1637]

Sire,

Recognizing the great benefits we have always received from the powerful hand of your Highness, we should without doubt have informed your Highness of the condition of this Government. The cause of it not having been done has been the Governor Cristoval de Aranda, who in a different way has done so much for the service of your Highness and the injury of this Commonwealth; not because he failed to recognize the protection we have always received from your Highness, but because he took his own course with a high hand, and treated this Corporation with contempt. Governor Don Diego Lopez de Escobar succeeded him, to whom we have reported these things, and who, jointly with this Corporation, is advising your Highness of everything.

The forces of the enemy have increased in this Government on the mainland, with new settlements among the Carib and Aruac nations, who are allied with them, and they are settled on the River Essequibo, which is 20 leagues to windward of this River Orinoco on the same mainland coast, with two forts well supplied with artillery and soldiers and a quantity of negroes, and another fort on the River Berbis, which is near the Essequibo, and they have recently settled in the River Aniavero, which is at the mouth of this River Orinoco, and it is a province of 4,000 Indians of the Carib nation, who are pirates and eaters of human flesh, and we have information that they are expecting more people from Holland, and they have likewise settled the River Guayapoco, and the River Quiana, the River Surinama, and the River Supanamo with a quantity of people, all of them in order to extend their settlement further, wherewith they have taken the whole of the mainland with the design of associating all the tribes and expanding their trade by the great quantity of articles of barter they give them; and their correspondence and traffic reach such a height that they pass above this town through the hands of the natives, and sometimes the

Dutch come with them, and this year they were on the point of attacking this town, which compelled the Governor to come from the Island of Trinidad while in ill-health, for in the time of the late Governor the boldness of the natives by themselves reached such a pitch that they came up to this port and carried off all the vessels and some Indian and negro servants, a thing the like of which has not happened since its settlement. And when the Governor, Don Diego Lopez de Escobar, arrived to take possession of his government in the Island of Trinidad, he found the enemy settled therein in two forts and in alliance with the natives, and seeing the great necessity for a speedy remedy, as there was not a *real* in the Royal Treasury of this Government, he sent, at his own cost, to solicit help, however little, from the Governors of Cumaná and Margarita, with which and the men he collected from this city and the Island of Trinidad, and likewise the settlement he held in the Island of Tabaco, being present at everything in person, as your Highness will see by a report sent herewith.

CRISTOVAL DE VERA  
 A.LONSO DE AGUILAR TRUJILLO  
 PEDRO PADILLA  
 FRANCISCO DE MIER  
 ALONSO MONTES TRUCHADO  
 DIEGO RODRIGUEZ  
 JUAN DE AGUILAR TRUJILLO

By their command,  
 JUAN BAUTISTA de ARECULA  
 Notary of the Corporation

From Santo Thomé de Guayana  
 April 11, 1637

[*Note appended to the letter*]

These Acts, with the letter of the Governor of the Province of Guyana and that of the Corporation, Justices, and Magistracy of the City Santo Thomé de la Guayana, came down from the Royal Council of Justice on the 3rd August, 1637.

ANGULO

## 61. LETTER FROM DON DIEGO LOPEZ DE ESCOBAR TO THE KING OF SPAIN

[11 April 1637]

Sire,

On the 20th June [1636] I landed in the Island of Trinidad to administer the town of Guayana with all that appertains to its government. I found Governor Cristoval de Aranda, my predecessor, in this island, and the whole place in great danger through two settlements of Dutch being

therein, and all the Indians in revolt and united with them, taking advantage of the Island of Tabaco, close to this, where the Dutch were fortified, and possessed twenty-eight pieces of artillery in one fortification and seven or eight in another, and a considerable settlement of people and soldiers. If your Highness is pleased to command these reports to be inspected, do so, for, by the favour of God, with but eighty men, we have obtained such great victories, and all at my own cost by bringing soldiers from wherever I could obtain them, for there is not a real in this Treasury, or in that of Guayana, as will be shown by a certificate of the Royal officers. On seeing things so desperate, and that they wanted to attack us in the month of September last, I felt obliged to go forth, for while making the official inquiry about my predecessor, I received advices from various parts, and without waiting an instant I began the war, being present at everything in person. I also received advice that the Dutch are fortified in Essequibo, in union with the Indians their confederates, who are many, for they collect all the nations of those parts, and all the coast of Guayana and of Orinoco propose to come and attack the said town, which is quite unprovided with men, arms, and munitions, and everything, for there is not one who has a shirt, as it is many years since a vessel came from Spain, and the residents have no one to whom they can sell the products of the country. The enemy is strongly fortified in an islet formed by the River Essequibo; they have a quantity of artillery and a number of people, and the constant assistance of four or six ships from Holland, and they have often had twelve together, for the trade and traffic are very great, and the Indians frequent them very willingly for the sake of the considerable articles of barter they give them; and that trade, and still more, is increasing daily, and the Dutch are continuing their settlements, for in another river, which is called Bervis, they have another fortification, and are making every effort to extend further, and the remedy must be very speedy, so that, by the help of God, they must be ejected from their present position, and their designs may be prevented, for if they attain their object in possessing themselves of the Orinoco and destroying Guayana, whereby they will become masters of the best land in the Indies for their merchandize and trade, and the most fruitful in all kinds of provisions, they will obtain anything easily, for there are only from thirty to forty men in the town able to bear arms, and those arms have been sent by myself; the munitions are so few that they will not be able to fight for one day against a powerful enemy who is confederated with all the Indians, and at the rear of that kingdom, and with the safest and best provisioned road, as your Highness was more fully informed, and according to the reports I possess; with 300 men well provided with munitions, and with a quantity of Indians whom I will take care to collect by gifts, and with the money which your Highness may be pleased to grant for supplies and ships, with God's help I would undertake the expedition, trusting in His Divine Majesty to give me the same good success as on former occasions, and the same thing might be attempted in Bervis, which is a day and a-half's journey from Essequibo, whereby all those coasts would be secure, and your Highness would be served.

I beseech your Highness to order an abundant supply of munitions and whatever may further conduce to your Royal Service. Don Pedro de Rivero is a gentleman of considerable parts and services, a resident of this town, and is bearing this despatch at my cost, for there is not a real in the whole of this Government. I beseech your Highness to be pleased to order the cost of this voyage to be defrayed for it has been made in the service of your Highness and of your Royal Treasury. From the reports that I have received that there are quicksilver mines at this town, and having seen it purified, I have ordered Captain Cristoval de Vera, my lieutenant in this town, to

take with him Captain Pedro de Vargas and Juan de Penalver, persons who understand such mines; and your Highness will command the metal to be inspected and will order what may conduce to your service, and send the necessary instructions, for I will not discuss the matter further, because it is one of such delicacy and so open to covetousness, and the enemy is so close. I am doing this with all possible secrecy, as I am in such want of men, and so unprovided with everything. I am writing to our Lord the King to the same effect, informing him of the advices I am sending to your Highness, and that having caused the ore to be smelted it produced quicksilver, and in good quantity, as shown by the certificate sent herewith, and as your Highness will command to be seen in the metal now forwarded. The mine occupies considerable space, and shows considerable richness even without working the quicksilver. For having caused it to be smelted in order to ascertain its purity I have incurred great expense, as there is no apparatus for the purpose in this country, nor a *maravedi* in the Royal Treasury, as shown by the certificate of the Royal officer. I pray your Highness to order money to be sent in order that I may be paid, or some grant be given, for since I entered this Government great expenses have come upon me in the war which I resolved to make, through finding it in such a desperate condition. Some gold is likewise found here; and all this and the fact that it is a land so well provisioned, and that the Governor of Margarita, Don Juan de Olate, contrary to agreement, has hanged the people of Tabaco, cause us greatly to fear the coming of the enemy, and I am advised of this very point by Francisco Nunez Melian, who heard from a Dutch prisoner of Curazao that the people of Brazil, in case they relinquish that post or are ejected from it, are desirous of coming to settle in this Government.

And I am informed that the Dutch continue to approach nearer to this town, and that some of them have settled among the Caribs, their allies, and that they have three other settlements and forts further on, and that from one river they obtain a quantity of silver, and that there is almost a province of enemies. Things being in this condition and danger I have resolved to commence a fort, and put therein some artillery I have purchased, in order to have some kind of defence. I am doing all this at my own expense, as well as the discovery of these mines, which I assure your Highness give such a great show of metal, that from the small work done in smelting, for want of apparatus and some one to manage it, there is no possibility of appreciating it; for a great quantity was wasted, and the Indians collect it in tubes. I am sending to your Highness the confession made by the son of the Governor of Tabaco and some other prisoners, in order that your Highness may be more fully acquainted with the strength of the enemy.

May God preserve your Highness many years.

DON DIEGO LOPEZ DE ESCOBAR

From Guayana, April 11, 1637

## 62. DON PEDRO DE VIVERO TO THE KING OF SPAIN

[Undated, but believed to have been written in April 1637]

Most Mighty Lord,

I, Don Pedro de Vibero, citizen and Magistrate of the town and port of Santo Tome de la Guayana, Procurator-General thereof, declare:

That on the mainland, in the jurisdiction of this Royal Audiencia, and of the said Government and port of Guayana, English, Irish, and others, with negro slaves, have established and settled themselves, from Cape North up to the mouth of the River Orinoco, in most productive lands, allying themselves with more than 5,000 peaceful Indians and Caribs, with many forts and a castle, on nine rivers; and they are strongly fortified in that of Essequibo with one hundred and twenty Dutch and a large body of negroes; in that of Berbiz with forty Dutch and twenty-five negroes; in that of Guaya Poco there are English, where there are very rich and abundant silver mines; in that of Quiyana there are Dutch; in Surinama, English; in Supanama, Irish, who have great shipping trade in tobacco, southern-wood, striped wood, dyewood, cottons, mines of gold and silver, great trade with the said natives, and abundance of supplies; according to the declaration of Cornelis de Morg, a Dutchman, a native of Frechilingues, and Juan, a negro of the Santome nation, prisoners from the raid made in Tabaca and the other island which was raided by Don Diego de Escobar, Governor and Captain-General of the Government of Guayana and its province, in the jurisdiction of the Island of Trinidad, as appears by the attestation and map, which he presented with the requisite oath, whereby the position and settlement of the said pirates in the said rivers were known from true and accurate report.

And now recently sixteen Dutchmen have come to settle among the Carib Indians of Amacuru, and they are awaiting [? ships] from Holland for the said settlement; and the said Dutch trade and traffic with the said Carib Indians in all the said River Orinoco, wherever they choose, and they generally have in the said settlement and port of Amacuru four or six ships from Holland, and frequently twelve, and in the River Essequibo and in that of Berviz they have a quantity of men and artillery. The said Governor having perceived that the design of the said pirate enemies is to take possession of the said port of Guayana, the said Governor has commenced a fort and placed some artillery therein for the defence of the said town and its inhabitants at his own cost; for in the Royal Treasury of the said town and port there is not a *real*, as appears from the certificate he produced from Ceprian Frontino, accountant thereof. And it will be very easy for the said enemies to take possession of the said port, because there is neither infantry nor arms therein, and the said residents do not amount to forty, and almost the greater part cannot bear arms; and the said pirates will likewise take possession of the said River Orinoco, and will come up to this kingdom, for they have a quantity of vessels in use, and will enter the Island of Trinidad and that of Margarita, and, by land, the Government of Caracas, and take possession of the best lands in the Indies.

But I am continuing the services I have performed for your Highness since my childhood, and since I came to years of discretion. The said Governor and said Corporation, Justices, and Magistracy ordered and commanded me to come to make report to your Highness, in order that you may afford help with 300 infantry, the majority being married men, thoroughly equipped and with money for the expenses that may arise, and linen to distribute among the poor residents, who are without a shirt, and for the church and convent of Saint Francis, which have neither ornaments nor other necessaries for divine service, through leaving no ship available to dispeople the settlements of the pirate Indians, and eject them therefrom in the service of our Lord God and of your Royal person; and for all the aforesaid I reproduce all the reports and statements made by

the said Governor, Corporation, Justices, and Magistracy, whereof owing to the hurry and expedition with which they dispatched me to give these advices, I did not receive a copy; and it is four months since I started from the said port in your Royal service, going up the Rivers Orinoco and Casanare in the depth of winter in a boat with two companions, wherein I have gone through very great hardships, with risk of my life through going up without soldiers, among Carib Indians and robbers, taking refuge in the trees on account of the great inundations of the rapids, creeks, and estuaries of the said river, which were all flooded; wherefore, I pray and beseech your Highness to command with your great clemency that the said relief be awarded with the speed which the case demands, for it is very serious and of great moment, because the said pirates want to seize this New Kingdom of Grenada, and the ports and Islands of Margarita, Trinidad, and Guayana, in the Government of Caracas and Venezuela, as they have done in Pernambuco and Brazil and other ports, which your Royal person and your Royal Council of the Indies have defended with such care and vigilance, so that the said pirates should not seize the said ports.

And those who are therein have foreseen that upon ejecting them therefrom, they will doubtless proceed to take possession of the said Guayana on account of the great tobacco trade, the mines of gold and silver, and the other products which are being worked by slaves and peaceful Indians and Caribs, who they have attracted to their service by many gifts they have given them. And on account of the great fertility of the land and the said gold and silver ore, and upon getting information about the quicksilver mine, they will speedily endeavour to carry out their designs of seizing the said port and town of Guayana, through which, along the said River Orinoco, they will be able to come up to this kingdom without provisions, since they have on its banks supplies of yucca, plantains, maize, and other vegetables, and great abundance of ground game, and birds; and on its banks, towards this kingdom, a large quantity of wild cattle, and a great number of warlike Indians and Caribs with whom they would unite; and it will not be right that after the settlement of the said ports and towns has cost infinite losses of Spaniards and money to those who discovered them at the risk of their own lives, so great a sum of ducats from our Royal patrimony to maintain the Catholic faith amongst a barbarous people should be lost to such a most Christian King and nation; and your Highness will be pleased to dispatch said assistance, appointing thereto captains, officials, and other soldiers skilled and experienced in Indian, Spanish, and naval wars; for, as I state, it is all required in the present case, which is the most serious that has occurred in the Indies since they were discovered. Besides which, it is very feasible for the said enemies to go up by the River Marañon to the kingdoms of Peru, along the route that General Pedro de Ursua descended in search of the provinces of El Dorado, which is the Province of Guayana, where they killed him, and various captains revolted, the last being the tyrant, Lope de Aguirre, who wanted to go up to the said kingdom, and whom they killed in the town of Barquisimeto.

In everything, I ask that justice may be fulfilled, and that the said assistance may be given with the greatest possible speed, whereby I shall be favoured together with the said town and its inhabitants. And I likewise pray and beseech your Highness to order a certificate to be given to me, in duplicate, of the acts I present, and of the advices and reports made by the said Governor and the said Corporation, etc.

DON PEDRO DE VIVERO

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**63. DECREE BY THE AUDIENCIA OF SANTA FÉ**

[14 August 1637]

Act of the Audiencia of Santa Fé, 14th August, 1637. After the names of those present, etc.

That since from the Acts which have been laid before this Royal Council and Assembly, which has been summoned for the purpose, the exact necessity is not sufficiently shown for dispatching the assistance solicited to the said town of Guayana and other parts, and considering that, from reports which have been received, most of the Dutch settlements specified in the said Acts have been established for a considerable time, and likewise that they are distant several days' journey from the said town of Guayana, and that it has been pointed out that the assistance requested by the Governor is not for a certain and definite object, but rather it appears from the series of his letters that the purpose is that soldiers should be sent to act as garrison without limit of time, for which, besides this Royal Audiencia having no orders thereon, great cost and expenditure would be incurred to the Royal Treasury, to the amount of more than 40,000 ducats, if the 300 men requested were to be sent; and likewise because it is impossible to obtain the said number of persons, or even a much smaller number, in this country, and provide them with arms and munitions, for there neither are, nor could be, found therein 100 arquebuses, nor any powder and shot, and it is difficult to make it for want of materials and skilled workmen; and if it were resolved to send forty or fifty men, which is the utmost extent of the capacity and possibility of this kingdom, the expedition would be fruitless; and if the object for which the Governor asks assistance were not attained thereby, His Majesty's arms would incur loss and disesteem, and the enemy would increase in arrogance and power; but rather considering that the relief force which could be sent would be so small, and having likewise reflected that if the force now in the said town of Guayana were sufficient with the aid of the said assistance to dislodge the enemy from the posts they occupy, the object in view would not be obtained, for they would go to another part, as they have done in several parts of the coasts of the Indies, from which they have been ejected, and forthwith they have returned, which would most likely happen in this case, for, as already stated, the assistance could not be permanent and resident in the said Province of Guayana, as there is no means in this kingdom for maintaining it, nor has this Royal Audiencia instructions to establish garrisons; from all this it has seemed fit that report be made to His Majesty in his Royal Council of the Indies and Council of War, sending the Acts in which the said Governor of the Province of Guayana has made his statement, in order that upon seeing the reasons that exist for not permitting the enemy in that province, His Majesty may be pleased to send sufficient men to eject the enemy from the posts they occupy. And in consequence of all the aforesaid there is no ground for what is requested by the said Governor and town of Santo Thomé de la Guayana. And they thus provided and commanded.

I, Fernando de Angulo Velasco, Notary of the Chamber of our Lord the King, was present.

In Santa Fé, on the 14th August, 1637, I, His Majesty's Notary, notified this Act to Don Pedro Vivero, Magistrate and Procurator of the town of Guayana.

Witnesses:

SALVADOR MENENDEZ  
ANTONIO DE BARAJAS  
FABIAN MURILLO

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**64. MEMORANDUM BY DON JUAN DESOLOGUREN, AS TO THE POWERS OF THE  
DUTCH IN THE WEST INDIES**

**[19 November 1637]**

*(Extract)*

The greatest Monarchies and States have cause for vigilance, and have often been ruined in the end by a contempt and carelessness of small obstacles. This being so, how much more are things to be feared which, from small beginnings, have grown to such a height as the Dutch and their protectors, at a time when they possess so many settlements as they now have in America. I sent warning of what would happen to His Majesty and his Council of War, and the Indies, at the beginning of the year '13, and have pronounced other discourses relating to this evil in the general Assembly, which took place two months ago, to consider whether succour should be sent to Guayana. I wrote these down with the intention that they should remain in the office of the archives, but I did not give them, as the copy of them was useless without that of the vote. Another paper which I drew up, that the Marquis de Sofraga might arrange for the sending of arms from Spain by the first opportunity, was never delivered, news having reached me of your Lordship's arrival at Onda. These papers, which I now lay before your Lordship, that you may be pleased to command them to be considered, are of the following tenour: —

. . . I have made this narration to prove what valiant keepers of what they have once acquired they become on finding your Majesty occupied by the defence of so many parts, and the great negligence of leaving the inhabitants of our settlements unarmed, and how the valuables which they bring from the east have increased the commerce of Holland, and how desirable for their enrichment and the fostering of their vices are the tobacco, sugar, medicaments, precious woods, dyes, and other merchandise, which they bring from Brazil and those parts. The licence of their lives has made them masters of all the people of those islands from which their merchandise is drawn, and of those in all the other States of the northern heretics, and many of those whose vices and excesses make them unfit for the Catholic States, and those sent by several Princes and Republics of the north, to stir up rebellion against His Majesty, which others conceal, and with their surplus population they fill these Colonies and settlements, and the Indians embrace their company, because they imitate the barbarity of their lives and allow them to enjoy full liberty without constraint, of tributes, labour, or the sweet yoke of the Gospel, heavy in their opinion. They obtain from them all goods from Europe with great convenience, at a lower price than in Spain, and sell their produce at a lower price than we can obtain it, there, for, besides the saving of the duty and increase in value caused by bringing them to and from Spain, it is more convenient to carry them to these parts than to Spain, and to take the produce straight from the places

where it is raised than from Spain, and it arrives in a fresher condition and of better quality, so that each new settlement which they found is a source of present advantage to them, and though it may seem an error of judgement to scatter their strength in so many places, it is not so in them, because by these means they divert His Majesty's arms and are not molested by his power, as they would be if their settlements were few, and they can thus advance upon the mainland in whatever part is most convenient to them.

Between the coast and Caçanare there are 50,000 Indians, mostly Caribs, and the others may almost be counted their subjects such is their fear of them; and according to the report of Don Diego Lopez de Escovar, Governor of Guiana and the Island of Trinidad, with the sole assistance of ninety-two Spaniards and sixty Indians, he drove the Dutch from the Island of Trinidad, where they had settled and fortified themselves, with seven large settlements of their Indian allies. He then proceeded to the Island of Tobago, where they had cultivated land and built a fortress with twenty-eight pieces of cannon and a quantity of arms and ammunition, and 150 Dutch, whom he conquered and dislodged, and they finally settled on the River Essequibo, 100 leagues off, with 120 Dutch and many negroes, and on the River Berbice, 90 leagues off, with forty Dutch and twenty-five negroes, both in the direction of Brazil; on the same River Orinoco and its chief mouth, on the part of the mainland of the settlement of Santo Thomé de la Guayana, at 30 leagues distance from it, there were ten Dutch waiting for reinforcements to fortify themselves from the year 1686, and in all these parts they have dealings with the Indians, and in the last-named with the inhabitants both vassals and freemen, and they are incensed against the said Governor for having overcome and dislodged them, and with the Governor of Margarita for having beheaded the prisoners sent to him.

The Spaniards of Guayana possess from 50,000 to 60,000 head of cattle, much coveted by the Dutch to provide their lands and settlements with meat and hides, and these have no other defence than that of sixty inhabitants and less than 4,000 tributary Indians, are as much to be mistrusted as the enemy, unless they see that they have shelter and protection here; and on the mainland from the coast as far as Caçanare are the aforesaid Indians, who, unless there are Spaniards there, will embrace the friendship of the northerners, who will then be able to make themselves master of this kingdom with less than 2,000 infantry; and the said Governor justly fears that the enemy will possess themselves of the town of Santo Thomé, and asks for help to fortify himself and dislodge the enemy from the mouth of the river.

The Governor says that he has begged His Majesty to send him help, giving notice that he has asked assistance here, but that there are better means of providing help from Spain than can be hoped for here at present. This may cause anxiety, especially with the example of those which have been sent on former occasions, and it must be remembered that the exigencies of the wars with France, Flanders, and Lombardy make it difficult to send help from Spain, and the above-said examples of the fleets intended for and dispatched these and other parts of America. When there is an occasion of sending help from Spain it must be done in one of the three following ways: —

That the galleons which come to fetch the silver should extend their navigation by 40 or 50 leagues, and accomplish the end in view, and then proceed to Cartagena or Puertobello to receive it. This plan presents many difficulties because of the time it takes the ships to vary their course and descend the coast, and afterwards return to receive the silver, and the risk of the undertaking,

and the shoals, winds, and storms to which they are more exposed than when far out at sea, on account of the vicinity of the shore and rivers, and they may even be obliged to winter there, and not return to Spain till the next year, especially as the time at which the galleons usually start is from the middle of June forward.

Another way is to increase the usual infantry on board the said galleons, and send out artillery, officers, and warlike stores, which the galleons may land upon the coast, and continue their journey without delay. This plan, in which the risk to the ships is little less than in the former, and that of the people landed and left without their protection very great, is liable to end in great loss and little result.

The third way is to send out a fleet for this sole purpose, which is the most effectual way, but also the most costly, on account of the expense of providing ships and sailors, for four galleons of 450 to 500 tons are required to carry 600 infantry alone, and these cost 150,000 ducats, which at the present rate of exchange here (which is 22 per cent. lower than the value in Spain), makes the expense of the voyage there and back in costs and averages and insurance, 192,310 ducats; thus each man will cost 320½ ducats, and the result of the enterprise will be as before said, there being no land force to harass the enemy in the rear and prevent the retreat of the Indians; so that help sent from here to this end will be more useful under the command of the said Don Diego Lopez de Escobar than a much larger number sent from Spain, for the ends to be accomplished are only to be effected by stratagem in the settlements and retreats which the enemy possess by right of might. And an example of what the said Governor can accomplish is seen in the remarkable feats already performed by him which are worthy of notice, and each man sent from here will cost less than 100 ducats.

Notwithstanding that these reports are not accompanied by such judicial proofs as are required by law, and the misrepresentations likely to be found in accounts from parts so remote and unprovided, yet they are worthy of credit, being vouched for on the word of a gentleman, and a soldier unversed in legal matters, and in a small place with forty poor inhabitants, it is no small thing that there should be some one who can write (even badly), much more one able to draw up an account of facts according to law; and it is not to be supposed that he or the Corporation would attempt to deceive His Majesty and this Royal Tribunal, and even should they do so, it would be a lesser evil that we should doubt their report, which is credited by other information received respecting the settlements of the enemy.

As regards the help which can be sent from Spain, besides what has been already said, it is to be considered that the fleet of galleons sent for the treasure is fitted out by His Majesty and those interested solely for that purpose, and the Council of the Indies, by which it is dispatched and commanded, have no other money, ships, or arms in Spain at their disposition for other purposes; and when it is agreed to provide these, many Councils and Assemblies are first necessary, every Council being anxious to provide first for such things as come under their care; and it is necessary to take the vessels, artillery and forces from other posts, and to raise the money from the contractors at interest, or by their retaining part of the consignments, which comes to the same thing, so that it is almost impossible to hope that it can be decided to send help by the first occasion that offers; and it is a great deal to expect that it may come by the second. Similar delays on other occasions have been the cause of the present state of things in these parts and of the enemy's boldness. Only a moderate reinforcement of troops can be sent from here; the scarcity of

arms and total want of ammunition must be called to mind, as well as the disinclination of the Spanish inhabitants, born here or in Spain, and of the mulattoes and half-breeds, who, while under the protection of the inhabitants, are of equal account from the labours and inconveniences they can endure, but when left to themselves are not to be trusted.

From all that has been said I am firmly persuaded that the reinforcement would have the desired effect, not only of punishing those who have settled at the mouth of the River Orinoco, but of preventing their from taking possession of it again, and the Indians would unite themselves with our people, and then, in imitation of their Majesties Don Fernando and Doña Isabel, we may attempt to expel the heretics and Jews from our midst and from among the ignorant Indians, and restrain all public vice as far as possible. But if the Dutch and their allies of other nations are allowed to make settlements and fortify themselves on the River Orinoco, and take from the Indians the fear and respect (such as it is) which they have for the Spaniards of Santo Thomé, and ally themselves with them, even such a fleet as that sent to England in 1588 would not be sufficient to drive them out of the river, because along 20, 30, or 40 leagues of river, thickly-wooded and deeply indented, a small force would be sufficient to entrench themselves and sink the fleet; they ought, therefore, to be dislodged from the banks, or at least from the mouth of the river, and should forces and occasion ever offer, the Governor would attempt what he could against them.

This is my opinion as regards present succour, and for the future I beg that the danger of the Indies from so many Dutch settlements may be considered, and that in the unarmed state of the inhabitants it would be easy for them to make themselves masters of the Indies, without resistance from the valour and loyalty of the Spaniards and creoles, for nothing can be done without arms of offence or defence; and as in these parts they enjoy the immunities and liberty of nobility granted to the deserts of their ancestors, it is but just to oblige them to keep sufficient weapons in their houses to arm their families, and the "feofees" [*the Spanish landowners*] being obliged by their fiefs not only to provide necessary means of defence, but to assist personally in the general defence, there would be no undue severity in commanding them to provide part of the succour at present required; but if this is not demanded from them, they should be obliged to provide the aforesaid arms; and to enable them to be sent from Spain, a fifth of the profits of the sales, which according to the rate of taxation are free to them for a year, should be levied from those in the district of Santa Fé, Tunja, Pamplona, and Velez, and from those in other parts a third of the profit arising to them from their share in the personal labour of their Indians, which they enjoy independent of the taxes, the whole of which would amount in all to from 10,000 to 12,000 patacoons. This sum should be remitted to the Commander-in-chief and Paymaster of the Spanish Artillery, that the value of it may be returned in muskets, arquebuses, and 200 pikes; a third in muskets, to include a certain number of musketoons, and two-thirds in arquebuses; and when they are received, a sufficient number are to be distributed to arm them and their families, and the rest to be sold to other inhabitants at the price fixed in the places where they are to be sold, the surplus thus arising to be invested for the payment of officers in Santa Fé, Tunja, Musso, and Merida, to go about reviewing and drilling them. There might be another way of providing succour, less costly than those already proposed, which is that help should be sent from the neighbouring forts and islands, as was done from Margarita in the enterprise reported by the Governor; but the coasts being as they are, infested with pirates and foreign settlements, it would be rashness for those in authority to send help, even if they were commanded to do so; and

should they so act without orders, they would be worthy of grave censure, though the issue were successful, on account of the danger of the journey and the risk to which their own posts would be exposed meanwhile.

An account of all that may be decided and thought fitting should be given to His Majesty in his Royal Council of the Indies for approval of what is to be done, and that full information may be had for deciding upon further orders. . . .

I will not dilate here on the extent to which the coasts and islands are infested with enemies, nor upon the advantages which the latter at present enjoy, and may reasonably expect in the future, referring myself to what is contained in my Memorial, and to the general voice of those who have better information of their posts, settlements, and navigation, and to the copy of my discourses which I will order to be made if your Lordship should be pleased to read them.

It should be considered that to make themselves masters of the whole of the Indies, or at least to hold the power of doing so in their hands, the enemy have but to possess themselves of the ports of Havana, San Juan de Lua, Cartagena, Honduras, and Puertobello, and the largest forts being those of Havana and Cartagena, it will be seen that these are but weak, there being no place at hand from which they can receive succour, so that they suffer from the deterioration of their provisions, and both the above forts are in this case; and it is an error to suppose that relief can be sent to Cartagena from this kingdom, both on account of our people being unarmed, and the ease with which supplies can be intercepted by the enemy, by means of six gun-boats, each provided with a swivel-gun and twenty-five soldiers, which they may post near the bar; those of the mainland of Peru, and of the central parts of New Spain, are difficult to access, and of little service, and the islands are unable to assist each other. The Dutch having ports and stations of their own to which they can retire, and obtain men to fill up the losses in their ranks, and our posts being totally devoid of them, and of everything necessary to enable us to assist each other, and the forces of Spain being so occupied, and the succour from thence so dilatory, calls for all possible care and precaution.

The ease with which the people might be armed, at least so far as this Government is concerned, moves me to beg your Lordship to make arrangements for sending the money to Spain on the first opportunity. In times less fraught with danger, Señor Don Juan de Borja made known the necessity of supplying arms, and His Majesty ordered money to be sent from his Royal Treasury here, that arms might be sent out and distributed at cost price, but though in the year 1627, 2,000 ducats were sent accordingly, the money being His Majesty's property, and there being no one to press the matter, the arms were not supplied. At present, when the necessities of Spain give small hope of assistance, and will not allow of money being drawn from the Royal Treasury, a larger sum is required, and there is no other means of raising it than that which has been proposed, and I beg your Lordship to consider the matter, and give the necessary orders, that the money may be remitted by the first opportunity, and the whole credit of the undertaking will rest with your Lordship. These are the two papers referred to, and though it was not necessary to treat the matter at such length, I have done so that your Lordship may be better able to deal with it, and the sooner this is done the more likelihood there will be of a successful issue; and should my suggestions be approved, it might be ordered that the necessary sum should be levied by the mayors from the payment of the Indian tribute due next Christmas and lodged in this Treasury, that the arms may be sent for from Spain at the first opportunity. God keep and

prosper your Lordship according to my desire and the need of this kingdom.

JUAN DESOLOGUREN  
(Rubric)

Santa Fé, November 19, 1637

*(Archivo General de Indias)*

**65. LETTER FROM THE CORPORATION OF TRINIDAD  
[17 November 1637]**

To the Governor, Don Juan de Eulate,

With more pleasure than is now felt in this town, we thought to write and make the same request as now; but time did not admit. Now we are compelled to do it, and to inform you of our troubles as one who can so well assist us merely by giving us the hand of encouragement, for it is certain that you will thus be doing a great service to His Majesty and to us, and you will save our lives which we are in such danger of losing.

The fact is, Sir, that on Wednesday morning, the 14th October, the Dutch, allied with corsairs of the Carib and other tribes, attacked this town, and although we had sentinels, the attack was so sudden and so vigorous, and they spread over the town so quickly, that the women had hardly time to leave their houses and escape to the forest, the guard and the other inhabitants who could render assistance did what they could, but the enemy had made such careful plans and brought such good guides, that they succeeded in their attempt, and burned the town and the principal church, so that nothing escaped.

Now our condition is such that we have no hope but in God and yourself, and we hope for help from you as one who knows well how to give it, and always does give it, and we deserve your kindness no less now, for we are in such great need, and we beg your Excellency to help us in the name of His Majesty.

It is by a miracle that the Holy Sacrament escaped owing to the spirit and courage shown by the curate, who came up during the tumult, and, going among the guard, took it and rescued it from the fire.

You can now imagine that this country is in great danger of being abandoned, and what the danger will be to the whole coast if we are cut down and the enemy settle on this island. We have serious news that they mean to do so from the guide whom we captured when they left the town; he is a Spanish-speaking Indian in the service of Captain Cristobal de Vera, whom the enemy took from Guayana when they seized the place, and who now came with them to fight.

We beg you to send us help in arms and ammunition, for we have none left, and some men also, until they send men from Santo Domingo, for we assure you that the help you send will not be sent on to Guayana, but kept here, but will be sent back at their pleasure when they wish, and at their convenience, for we assure you that if the enemy do not come in greater force to settle here as we are informed, at least, those who have done us this injury mean shortly, according to

what they have said, either here or in Guayana, to seize the Governor in revenge for the affair of Tobago.

The Lieutenant Miguel de Morillas, Provost Ordinary of this town, goes with authority from this Corporation to beg you to give us help, and to send it, or go on to Santo Domingo.

His character is such that we have no doubt you will show him the honour and courtesy which we expect from a hand so generous, and from one who knows so well how to act for the service of His Majesty, whose life may our Lord preserve, etc.

ANDRES GARCIA PARDO  
AUGUSTIN SANTIAGO  
GASPAR SANCHEZ  
MIGUEL DE MORILLAS  
JACINTO DE MENDOCA  
FRANCISCO RUIS MONJE  
AUGUSTIN DE CANOS  
MIGUEL MORENO

From the Town of San Joseph de Oruna, Island of Trinidad, November 17, 1637.

By order of the Corporation,  
JUAN DE PENALVER  
Clerk

This is a true copy of the original letter, and in faith thereof I affix my signature.

Witness my hand:  
FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO  
Clerk

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**66. DELIBERATION OF THE CHAPTER (THE CORPORATION OF ROYAL OFFICERS STATIONED ON MARGARITA ISLAND)**

**[25 November 1637]**

In the town of the Assumption in this Island of Margarita, on the 25th November, 1637, the General, Don Juan de Eulate, Governor and Captain-General of the island for His Majesty said that yesterday at the Angelus he received letters from the Corporation of the Island of Trinidad, telling him that on the 14th October of this year, at 4 o'clock in the morning, the Dutch enemy, with Carib, Aruaca, and Nepuyo Indians brought into their service, attacked the town of San Joseph de Oruna in the said island, and plundered and burned it; on this account they ask for help; and in order that more effectual help may be given, in rendering service to God and the King, he ordered to be summoned to the Assembly the Vicar of the Holy Church in this island, and the other members of the Corporation and Royal officers, in order to confer upon the matter and de-

cide upon what seemed best for the service of His Majesty and the preservation of this island; and in order that all the said members of the Corporation may hear what was written by the said Corporation of the Island of Trinidad, he ordered the letter to be read, and a copy placed in the Corporation register, so that it may appear for all time what was resolved in this case.

Accordingly there assembled the said Vicar, Senor Geronimo Lopez Uquillas, and Senor Don Juan de la Cueva, and the First Lieutenant, Valerio de la Cruz Aguilar, Provost Ordinary, and the Commandant, Pedro Ruiz de Guica Burnaga, the Treasurer, and Lucas de Soria Pardo, Accountant, Judges, officers of the Royal Domain of this Island, and the Chief Bailiff and Councillor (Regidor) Antonio Veneciano, and Dou Luis Fermin, Councillor, and when they were assembled the said letter was read. And the whole matter was discussed and deliberated upon, and the Vicar said that as it appeared that the church of the said island had been burned, he was ready to send some ornaments from this church, namely, a chasuble, and other vestments necessary for the Celebration, this being a work of piety, and the Vicar of Trinidad having pointed out the needs of the church in the said island.

And the said Governor having proposed to ask for subscriptions both for the holy church and for the inhabitants of the said island, it was agreed that they should be asked for, that the Corporation should undertake to join with his Lordship in the matter, and send them what was given.

As to the assistance in men, arms, and ammunition for which they ask: as there are not even the necessary arms in His Majesty's armoury in this island, and as a few days ago a quantity of arms and ammunition was taken from this island to Trinidad and Guayana, which His Majesty sent to this island for them for the said purpose, there are no arms or ammunition to send them. As to the men for whom they ask, it was agreed to issue a notice that those who liked might go to their assistance to the number of twenty men, and to give them each from the Royal chest of this island 10 dollars in aid, on the understanding that they should go to render assistance in the said Island of Trinidad for one month, and at the end of the month might come to this island with permission from the then Governor of that island, to whom a letter should be written recommending them to his good offices.

And, as at present the Royal chest is empty, this Corporation intrusts the said Governor with the task of obtaining a loan of the amount necessary for the purpose, which will be repaid to the lenders out of the first money paid into the said Royal Treasury, and thus the proceedings of this meeting were closed in unanimous agreement, and signed by —

DON JUAN EULATE  
 GERONIMO LOPEZ UQUILLAS  
 DON JUAN DE LA CUEVA  
 VALERIO DE LA CRUZ AGUILAR  
 PEDRO RUIZ DE GUICA BURNAGA  
 LUCAS DE SORIA PARDO  
 DON LUIS FERMIN  
 ANTONIO VENECIANO.

Before me:  
 FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO

Clerk

A true copy of the original, in faith of which I sign myself.

Witness my hand:

FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO

Clerk

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**67. DECLARATION OF MIGUEL DE MORILLAS**  
**[4 December 1637]**

In the town of the Assumption in this Island of Trinidad on the 4th December of the same year, for the same purpose, the said governor and Captain-General ordered to appear before him Captain Miguel de Morillas, Provost Ordinary of the Island of Trinidad, resident in this Island of Margarita, whose oath was taken according to law, and having made oath he promised to speak the truth, and being asked as to the substance of the above Decree, said:

That what he knows of the matter is that on the 22nd July of this year, St. Mary Magdalene's Day, the Governor Don Diego Lopez Descobar being occupied with the transfer of the settlement of the town of Santo Tome de la Guayana to another site up the River Orinoco from the place where that town was situated, which seemed a more healthy site, and better adapted for the preservation of the said settlement, and the greater part of the inhabitants having been already transferred to the said new settlement, where they had begun to form ranches, and the said Governor, Don Diego Descobar, having remained in this first settlement with some few of the inhabitants, for the whole population is small, on the said day of the Magdalene, at 4 o'clock in the morning, the Dutch enemy, with a number of Indians of the Carib and other tribes, attacked the said place and burned the houses and plundered all that remained there; consequently, the said Governor and the few remaining inhabitants were obliged to withdraw, the forces of the enemy being large, and they themselves numbering only twelve or fourteen men, as witness heard said, for at the time witness was in the Island of Trinidad, where he received news of the above-mentioned events.

As to the event in the said Island of Trinidad this witness said that it was he who brought the letter from the Corporation of the said Island to the said Governor narrating what had happened. The fact was that on the 14th October of this same year, being Wednesday, early in the morning, the enemy attacked the town of St. Joseph de Oruna in the said Island of Trinidad, with twenty *pirogues*, bringing with them great numbers of Carib Indians and Aruacas and Napuyos, the latter being natives of the Island of Trinidad. They assaulted the said town and burned the houses, and plundered all the contents, and burned the principal church; and although the few inhabitants of the place, who might number twenty-eight or thirty, defended themselves and resisted the enemy as long as possible, they could not contend against so large a force as that brought by the enemy; nevertheless, when leaving the town, they fought them and killed many of them, while of the inhabitants one was killed, named Juan Gallardo, and Captain Santhiago and others wounded. And the settlement having so few people in it, and the enemy being settled at the mouths of those rivers in the position of Amacure and Essequibo and Berbis, and the said enemy having said pub-

licly that since on that occasion they had been unable to destroy all, they must return to consume, destroy, and burn them, they came to this island to seek help, and the said Governor and the Corporation of this town are arranging assistance for them, having collected many subscriptions among the inhabitants, in order to help them with clothes and other necessaries for themselves and for divine worship in the Holy Church, which was burned and plundered by the said enemy.

Now the state of the said settlements is such that if His Majesty does not order people to be sent there to populate both the settlements, and means of sustenance for them, there is no doubt that those who are now there, if they remain, will perish by the hand of the enemy, who will take possession of the land, and settle it, and give great trouble to all those coasts and to the new Kingdom of Granada, by going up the Orinoco, and to the Government of Caracas, for an Indian named Andres, who was captured in the said Island of Trinidad when the enemy withdrew, and who was in the service of Captain Cristoval de Vera, an inhabitant of Guayana, said that in those three settlements of Amacuro, Essequibo and Berbis the enemy have many people, and especially in those of Essequibo and Berbis; he could not say what was the number of their force beyond that it was large, and that all the Aruacas and Caribs were allied with them, and that every year two or three or four ships come there from Holland bringing aid, and take back timber, cotton, hammocks, and some tobacco; this is what he knows, and it is the truth as he has sworn, and he signed it with his name, saying that he was 30 years of age, and that he had no interest in saying anything but the truth.

DON JUAN DE EULATE  
MIGUEL DE MORILLAS

Before me:  
FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO, Clerk

#### **68. DECLARATION OF JACINTO DE MENDOCA** **[4 December 1637]**

Next, for the purpose of the same investigation the said Governor and Captain-General ordered to appear before him the Lieutenant Jacinto de Mendoza, Councillor ("Regidor") of the said Island of Trinidad, who made oath according to law, and having done so, promised to speak the truth, and being asked as to the subject of the said Decree, said: —

That what he knows is that in July of this year, on St. Mary Magdalene's Day, early in the morning, news came to the said Island of Trinidad that on the said day, at the said hour, the Dutch enemy had arrived with a large force of Carib Indians and assaulted the town of St. Thomé de la Guayana, where at the time was the Governor, Don Diego Lopez Descobar and some few inhabitants; the rest, although but few, were in a new settlement, to which they were being transferred, as this other settlement was unhealthy, and the enemy's force, with the numbers which they brought with them, was so large that the said Governor and inhabitants were obliged to withdraw: and the said enemy burned the houses and plundered their contents and carried them off; and also plundered the principal church and the Convent of San Francisco: and this witness

also knows that on 14th October, being St. Calixtus' Day, early in the morning, the enemy came with twenty *pirogues*, and coming up the River Caroni, assaulted the town of San Joseph de Oruna, a settlement of the Spaniards on the said Island of Trinidad, with a great number of Carib Indians and Aruacas and Nepuyos, who are natives of the same island, and although the inhabitants of the said island, who might number twenty-eight or thirty, tried to resist the attempts of the said enemy, they were unable to do so, owing to their force being so large, and so they burned and plundered the houses of the said town and the great church, and on that occasion one of the inhabitants, named Juan Gallardo, died, and they wounded the Captain Augustin de Santiago and Don Juan Lopez de Albarran, cousin of the Governor, Don Diego Descobar, and others; and when the enemy withdrew, they did them all the injury they could, destroying many Indians and five Dutchmen, all of which witness saw, and witness and another soldier and some Indians in their service captured from the enemy fifteen slaves belonging to the inhabitants, who were being carried off in the pillage, as well as an Indian whom they brought as guide, named Andres, whom they had taken in the assault on the town of Santo Thomé de la Guayana; this Indian declared and stated that the said enemy were settled in Amacuro, Esquibo, and Berbis, and that they have many people there, and that they say that they will not stop till they settle in Guayana and in the Island of Trinidad, and from there take this Island of Margarita, and by way of the Orinoco enter the Kingdom; and so this witness, with the Captain Miguel de Morillas, Provost Ordinary of the said island, came to this with a letter from the Corporation asking for help both in soldiers and clothes and other necessaries, as they had been stripped of everything. The inhabitants of this Island assisted them with great charity. And as to the state of these settlements he says what he has already said, and that if His Majesty does not give orders for help in men to be sent to the said two settlements of Trinidad and Guayana, he has no doubt that the enemy will carry out what has been said and what the Indian stated, and that they will settle on the Island of Trinidad in the Orinoco, and this will occasion great injury to those coasts and the New kingdom of Granada. And this is the truth on faith of the said oath; and he signed it, and said he was 34 years of age, and that he has no interest in saying anything but the truth.

DON JUAN DE EULATE.  
JACINTO DE MENDOCA

Before me:  
FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO  
Clerk

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## 69. DECLARATION OF LORENCO MANUEL [4 December 1637]

Next, for the purposes of the investigation, the said Governor and Captain-General ordered to appear before him Lorenzo Manuel, inhabitant of the said Island of Trinidad, who made oath according to law, and having done so, promised to speak the truth, and being asked as to the subject of this paper, said, that what he knows is that some time ago, about four months, news came

from Santo Thomé de la Guayana to the Island of Trinidad, stating that when transferring the settlement of the said town of Santo Thomé to another site which was more healthy, the Governor, Don Diego Lopez Descobar, having remained with some few inhabitants in the said town, for the others, with the women, were in the new settlement to which they were transferring their goods, and it being in the month of July, on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, at dawn, the enemy had assaulted the said place of Santo Thomé de la Guayana with a large force of Carib Indians, and plundered the contents and burned the houses and churches; and the said Governor, Don Diego Descobar, could make no resistance, owing to the great strength of the enemy, and the said Governor being alone with six or eight inhabitants, and he had difficulty in retiring with them to the other settlement. He also knows that on the 14th October of this year, early in the morning, the said Dutch enemy came up the River Caroni to the Island of Trinidad with twenty pirogues and attacked the town of San Joseph de Oruna, a settlement of the Spaniards of about twenty-eight or thirty inhabitants, bringing with them a great number of Indian bowmen, Caribs, Aruacas, and Nepuyos, which latter are natives of the Island of Trinidad; and they plundered and burned the town and the principal church, and although the inhabitants tried to make all the resistance they could, being few in number, and the enemy having a large force with them, they could not prevent the above-mentioned loss, although when they left they killed many of the Indians and five Dutch, and one of the inhabitants was killed and others wounded.

Having taken an Indian named Andres, whom they brought as guide, which Indian they had captured at the assault on Guayana, he said in Spanish that the enemy had their settlements at Amacuro, Esquibo, and Belbis, and that they had many men and many tribes of Indians who assisted them, and that they said that they would not atop till they had settled in Guayana and the Island of Trinidad, and had done all the injury they could until they reached the Kingdom; and in consequence of these events, witness came with Captain Miguel de Morillas and Jacinto de Mendoza, with a letter from the Corporation of Trinidad, to ask for help in clothes, for they were all stripped, as well as without men or ammunition. The Governor and the inhabitants of this town gave willing assistance, as they always do, and have done on other occasions.

As to the state of the said settlements, the witness thinks that if His Majesty does not send people here to populate it, the enemy will take possession both of Santo Thomé de la Guayana and the whole River Orinoco and the said Island of Trinidad, from which all these coasts and the New Kingdom of Granada will suffer much injury. This is what he knows, and it is the truth on the faith of the said oath, and he signed it with his name, stating that he is 27 years of age, and that he has no interest in speaking other than the truth.

DON JUAN DE EULATE  
LORENCO MANUEL

Before me:  
FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO  
Clerk

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## 70. DECREE ISSUED FROM MARGARITA ISLAND

**[12 December 1637]**

In the town of the Assumption, in this Island of Margarita, on the 12th day of December, 1637, the said Governor and Captain-General said that in order that the contents of these papers might be made more clear, a concise Report should be placed at their heading, and so ordered, directed, and signed.

DON JUAN DE EULATE.

Before me:  
FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO

**71. LETTER FROM THE CORPORATION OF TRINIDAD**  
**[27 December 1637]**

General Don Juan de Eulate,

Gold, Senor General, is easily seen, and shines forth wherever it is, and, like gold, shines forth in you the efficiency with which you serve His Majesty, as is seen by the marks of favour daily received by this town from your generous hands, for which we give the gratitude merited by such great favours, both those which you confer upon us and those which, through you, your town has conferred upon us; for the help has been of such importance, in that poor men were relieved in dire need; for at least many who could not leave their hut for their great nakedness have no clothes in which to be present to hear the Word of God; and we are grateful not only for this, but for the favour you do us in sending the Reports which you have sent and will send to His Majesty. And that you may do so more clearly we annex a copy of the declaration of the Indian guide who was captured from the enemy, and we confidently assert that with the aid which you promised this island will receive great help from His Majesty; for it is in great need and in danger of ruin although our courage is great since we have you, as they say, on our side, and in your shelter we trust in our Lord that we are much favoured, and the holy church has been specially favoured, which was in so miserable a state that it had not even a purificatory, nor had we the means of supplying it. Neither you nor your town have thrown away your money, nor will you fail to be repaid a hundredfold, since you have done it for One who knows so well how to repay you.

We, too, are grateful on behalf of the Church, and for what you offer us; would that Senor Don Juan Alvarez de Eulate were there, whose life and yours may our Lord prosper with the prosperity which you deserve for your good work in the service of God and the King.

AUGUSTIN SANTHIAGO  
MIGUEL DE MORILLAS  
GASPAR SANCHEZ  
FRANCISCO RUIZ MONJE  
AUGUSTIN DE CANAS

JACINTO DE MENDOCA

From the Island of Trinidad,  
December 27, 1637.

By order of the Chapter,  
JUAN DE PENALVER,  
Clerk of the Chapter

Witness:

FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO  
Clerk

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**72. JACQUES OUSIEL, LATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE AND SECRETARY OF TOBAGO,  
TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY, 1637**

[December 1637]

*[This document (according to its docket) was submitted to the Amsterdam Chamber in December 1637].*

To the Directors of the Chartered West India Company at Amsterdam:

Jacques Ousiel, late Public Advocate and Secretary of the Island of Tobago, respectfully makes known that on his return voyage to the Fatherland on board a Flemish ship, which, on the 7th September last, was captured by your Commander, Cornelis Corn. Jol, and brought to this city as a prize, he was requested and charged on your behalf by your agent (Kuffelaer) to remain here for some length of time, in order to give you information concerning some matters that you were to submit to him. The writer having cheerfully received this request and order, and being ready to obey it, has, nevertheless, on account of your manifold grave occupation, been until this time prevented from carrying it into effect, not without considerable prejudice to his own private affairs.

In consideration whereof, the writer has thought it advisable to communicate and submit in writing to you what he judged necessary that you should know, to the service of the Company and of the Fatherland. He urgently requests and beseeches you that this paper, written in compliance with the above-mentioned request, and in token of his good intention and his wish to be of service to you and to the welfare of the Commonwealth, may be graciously accepted and favourably received, in order that, having obtained your leave, he may at once hand in his due report and account of his administration to his lords and masters, the Directors of the aforesaid island.

Firstly, the writer shows how the Governor of Trinidad, aided by those of Margarita and Guayana and guided by an Irish deserter, formerly a Lieutenant in our service, on the 1st De-

ember of last year, in the darkness of night, attacked a certain small fort or stockaded house in Tobago (an island under your jurisdiction), capturing it without resistance, and taking prisoner five or six men who were in it. With these and with all his men he marched on the next day to the great fort, which is likewise a stockade, built only as a defence against the Caribs, and having closely besieged it, and some shots having been fired by those in the fort upon the enemy, he finally brought matters so far that the privates, by the persuasion and inducements held out by the aforesaid Irishman, who was not thought to be a deserter but a prisoner, and who had been deputed thereto by the aforesaid Governor, resolved to parley and to enter into negotiations with him, and at last it was determined and agreed and confirmed with solemn oaths that the officers, with their arms and baggage, and the others, without these, but with the clothes they had on, and, generally, each one, of whatever nation, rank, or condition he should be, were to be sent by the aforesaid Governor, free and at the expense of the King, to St. Christopher, or to any other place where they should wish to be. Whereupon the Governor brought all these colonists of Tobago together to the Bocas de Drago, and not having any means of conveying them in ships to St. Christopher, he judged best to send them (in all forty-five linen and twenty boys) to Margarita, and let them take ship there for any destination they should choose, and, meanwhile, he kept with him the present writer, the agent, and Cornelis de Moor, son of Mr. Jan de Moor, together with sixteen other boys, until, as he said, he should have a better opportunity for embarking them.

Whereupon it followed, after the aforesaid forty-five men had been landed at Margarita, and the Governor of that island had received letters from the one of Trinidad requesting him to grant the Dutchmen a free passage to St. Christopher, in conformity with the Capitulations which he had made with them in the name of His Majesty, that the aforesaid Governor immediately gave orders for all of them, both great and small, to be hanged, which was at once carried out and put into execution, there being only kept back one ship's carpenter and the boys who were under 16 years, who were spared through the repeated intercession of the Franciscans.

All these boys, together with those of Trinidad, all Hollanders and Zeelanders, and the son of Mr. de Moor, are even now held there. They have been distributed among the Spaniards, are forced to adopt their religion, and compelled to work continually upon their plantations, most of them going stark naked like the negroes and Indian slaves, and getting more blows than food (with the exception of the said De Moor alone). The Spaniards intend to keep them there, and eventually increase the population of their islands with this number of new colonists. All of this in direct violation of the aforesaid written and sworn Capitulations, which the writer would have submitted herewith, had they not been lost with his clothes and effects in the unwarrantable plundering of his trunk by the seamen after the capture of the ship.

Furthermore, the writer shows how the aforesaid Governor of Trinidad has determined to set out about next March with 400 Spaniards and 3,000 Indians to besiege the fort Essequibo, and try to take it by starvation. To this end he has decided to occupy all passages for supplies, both by water and by land, with 200 Spaniards and the aforesaid Indians, and to employ the remaining 200 to attack and destroy the Indians around there, and in this way cut off all means and hope of deliverance for those of the fort. This siege would have been undertaken last March if the writer had not induced him to desist, giving him to understand (in order to meanwhile to inform you of the matter) that it was a Royal fort with eight bronze guns and several iron ones, provided, moreover, with a donjon and 200 soldiers, and that, in addition, a ship of twenty-four guns was always

stationed there. All of which you may more fully see from the contents of a letter written in this connection by the aforesaid Governor to the King, and read in transit by the present writer (the packet, becoming wet in a certain shipwreck, having been opened and dried by him, which shall be subjoined hereafter.

Furthermore, the writer says that in the preceding year a very rich quicksilver mine was discovered, 40 miles up the River Orinoco, not far from the town of Santo Thomé, a place inhabited by a few Spaniards. He has seen and held in his hands, a considerable quantity of ore and 1 lb. of extracted quicksilver, sent to the King, by the Governor of Trinidad as a specimen, which, however, together with a letter pertaining thereto, was lost at sea through the burning of the patache of Margarita.

In conclusion, the writer shows how he sailed from Cartagena to Havana with the silver fleet of Terra Firma, consisting of eight galleons and the rest merchant-men, in all twenty-eight in number, carrying (according to the principal men) 12 millions in silver for the King and 16 millions for the merchants. Of the galleons only the flag-ship was armed with twenty-eight guns, and the seven others with twenty-four; of the merchant-men only four could have offered any resistance to speak of. It is incredible with what presumption and arrogance the Spaniards unanimously maintain that all Holland would not dare to attack such a fleet at sea, much less be able to take it. And yet it would be far from impossible for sixteen of the Company's well-armed and well-manned ships and three or four yachts, under such an Admiral as your Commander Corn. Cornelissen Jol, to attack such a fleet, destroy it, and with God's help capture it.

It could not be believed how irresolute, scared, and dumbfounded the Spaniards are when it comes to fighting, unless the writer himself had experienced and seen it on a recent occasion, when more than 200 caballeros and soldiers, the pick of the whole fleet, fled to the land in the most shameful confusion and disorder, and set fire to the precious patache of Margarita (the writer has ere this sent you, through your agent Kuffelaer, a written list of most of the goods she carried), abundantly provided with all sorts of material of war, and then extolled this feat to each other as a Roman deed, quite as if they had thereby manfully and victoriously beaten their enemy.

**73. LETTER TO THE KING OF SPAIN FROM THE CORPORATION OF TRINIDAD CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE TOWN OF SANTO THOME OF GUIANA, TAKEN, PLUNDERED, AND BURNT BY THE DUTCH, AND THE INDIAN CARIBS, WHO ALSO THREATENED THE SAID ISLAND OF TRINIDAD WITH A POWERFUL FLEET — REPORT ON THE SAID EVENTS.**

[27 December 1637]

Sire,

We are advised from the town of Santo Thomé of Guiana, by the Governor of these provinces, Don Diego de Escobar, that the said town has been taken, burnt, and plundered by the enemy, the Dutch and Indian Caribs from the River Berbis, and other tribes from Orinoco, Amacura, and the Essequibo.

The Dutch threaten this Island of Trinidad with a powerful fleet, and are in league with the

numerous Indian tribes, and with the very natives of this island, who are all risen, the Dutch being so mixed with the Indians that they marry with the Indian Carib women, as well as with those of other tribes.

This is a most efficacious and important means of attaining their end, which is to make themselves masters of all these parts, both of all Orinoco and of this island, putting us all to the sword; and they have always wished to found settlements in all these parts, to extend their dominions, if possible, to the confines of the new Kingdom of Granada.

We must advise your Majesty that every measure was taken to put the town in a state of defence with the small number of soldiers at our command; but on the 14th October of this year, 1687, the Governor, Don Diego de Escobar, being in Guiana, the Dutch and the Indian tribes of Aruacas, Caribs, Tibetibes, and Nepuyos came in great numbers to this Island of Trinidad, making their entrance by the Port and River of Caroni, having taking prisoner the watchman we kept at the mouth of the river.

This they effected by the stratagem of carrying with them two guides, taken prisoner in the assault on Guiana, when they sacked that town; everything being thus in their favour, they commenced their attack on us three-quarters of an hour before daybreak.

They were resisted by the guard stationed at the church door, assisted by all those who had taken the alarm, care being taken to carry away the Blessed Sacrament; but we were powerless to prevent them burning the church, as also all the ornaments and articles of the Divine Service to be found in it, nothing escaping them. In the same way they burnt all the houses in the town.

The enemy employed every means of attracting the negro slaves of the inhabitants, as also the few natives in our employ, being about fifty in number, but in their retreat we pursued them to the port, where they embarked with much loss, both of Flemings and Indians, and they succeeded in carrying off some of the negro slaves, who assisted them in the burning and sacking of the town, and made known to them the small force at our command, but it pleased God to help us and prevent them establishing themselves here, and so it happened that they retreated with the loss of life referred to.

At present we have recent information, dispatched by our Governor, Don Diego de Escobar, from the said town of Guiana, that the enemy, not content with what they have accomplished in that town and this, have the intention of returning to complete the work of our destruction. This news is confirmed by the declaration of an Indian, whom they took prisoner at the sacking of Guiana, and who was captured from them in the aforesaid retreat. This man advises that the Dutch have the intention of settling in this island, as also in Guiana.

The enemy are aware of our powerlessness to resist them, and that being so few we must necessarily fall into their hands. We have therefore decided to beseech your Majesty to come to our assistance by sending soldiers, arms, ammunition, and clothes, to bring relief to our destitution, and that of our wives and children, and particularly the destruction of the Holy Church, which we have already referred to.

We beseech your Majesty that this relief may be dispatched as speedily as possible, taking pity on the serious and harassed state of this poor community, destitute of all help but that of God and your Majesty; and if relief does not speedily arrive, there is no doubt that the enemy will possess themselves of the two places aforesaid. This would be to your Majesty's great disadvantage, this island being situated to windward of all the mainland of Cumaná, Caracas, and

Margarita. As to ourselves, should we escape, we should migrate to other places to serve your Majesty, where we should be more able to defend ourselves, and where there are more fortifications.

All this trouble is caused by the enemy having heard of the quicksilver mines of Guiana, as also of the benefit to be derived from the fertility of the island and the commerce of Indians and woods for dyeing, which they could carry on here, and of which they make great profits.

May God grant the Catholic person of your Majesty, so necessary to the Christian world, many years of life.

(Signed) AUGUSTIN SANTIAGO.

(Seal)

MIGUEL DE MORILLA.

(Seal.)

AUGUSTIN DE CANAS.

(Seal.)

GASPAR SANCHEZ.

(Seal.)

FRANCISCO RUIZ MONS.

(Seal.)

JACINTO DE MENDOZA.

(Seal.)

*Island of Trinidad, December 27, 1637.*

By Order of the "Cabildo,"

(Signed) JUAN DE PENALBER,  
*Secretary of the Corporation.* (Seal.)

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**Inclosure**

[*No date on this extract*]

(Extract)

An Indian named Andres, who was in the service of a resident of Guayana, stated that in the said three Settlements of Amacuro, Esquibo (Essequibo), and Berbis (Berbice), the enemy has a large force, and in particular in those of Esquibo (Essequibo) and Berbis (Berbice); that the said Indian did not know the exact strength of the forces, but that they were very considerable, and well armed, and had besides, all the Aruacas and Caribs; that every year three or four ships came from Holland, bringing with them men and money and provisions, and returned with logwood, cotton hammocks, and tobacco; and that is what he knows, and it is the truth, in virtue of his oath; that he is 30 years of age, and has no other object in view than to speak the truth; and this

he signed, Miguel de Morillas, in presence of Don Juan Eulate, Governor, before Francisco Gonzalez de Barrio Nuevo, Notary.

*[Archivo General de Indias, Seville]*

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**74. LETTER TO THE KING OF SAPIN FROM THE “CABILDO” OF TRINIDAD (1687), RESPECTING THE SACKING OF THE CITY OF SANTO THOMÉ DE GUAYANA**

**[27 December 1637]**

*(Extract)*

December 27, 1637

Being informed by the Governor of that province, Don Diego de Escobar, who sent a special courier from the city of Santo Tomé de la Guayana, that the Dutch, united with Carib Indians, had taken that place, and sacked and burned it, by the enemy who came from Amacuro, Essequibo, and Berbis, we hasten to inform your Majesty of that sad event. They also threatened us in this Island of Trinidad with a powerful “Armada” united with their confederates the Indian nations, who are very numerous, and even with the natives of this island, as both have risen against us. The Dutch are married to women of the Carib tribes, as well to those of other nations, and this is a very powerful aid to them in their designs, which is to make themselves masters of all these parts, the whole of the Orinoco, as well as this island, and put us all to death. Their intention and desire have always been to take and populate both the one and the other, so as to bring themselves to the confines of the new Kingdom of Granada. We took all the measures possible with the little force at our command, but on account of the defenceless state of the place, we were unable to oppose their ravages.

*(Archivo General de Indias, Seville)*

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**75. TESTIMONY OF JUAN DE PENALVER**

**[28 December 1637]**

I, Juan de Penalver, Notary Public and Clerk of the Corporation of this town of San Joseph de Oruna, in the Island of Trinidad, certify that at the taking of this town by the enemy on the 14th October of this present year, when they withdrew, an Indian was taken belonging to Christobal de Vera, speaking Spanish, and a Christian, called Andres, otherwise Cabeza de Bagre (Fish Head), whose declaration was taken by Captain Augustin de Santhiago, Provost Ordinary of this town, before me. And among other things which he declared in that declaration, which is in my office, he said that when the enemy entered Guayana, they took him and Juan Gonzalez and carried them off to Amacuro and Macaruni, where the enemy have a fort on an island, and that they

carried off the property which they took in Guayana, and the Most Holy Sacrament of the said town, which they keep in a house in the said fort of Macaruni, and from what he heard said by those Dutch and Caribs, they intend to settle in this Island of Trinidad and in Guayana, and they said that they will not stop till they obtain possession of these two towns, and settle them with their people, and as to the Virgin of the Rock, which they took from the church of Guayana, they threw it into the River Orinoco, and they said that they would not spare the lives of the Christians whom they took in those two towns, and as already said, they said they would settle there, because of their knowledge of the quicksilver mines, and the profit they would gain from the produce and fertility of this island, and they said that when they came to this island they intended to return to Guayana, and he said he quite understood this from the said Flemings and Caribs, all of which appears from the said declaration of the said Indian, among other things which he declared, and which declaration is in my office, and that it may appear, at the request of the member of the Corporation of this town, I gave these presents.

Signed and rubricated with my usual signature and Seal in this town of San Joseph de Oruna, in the Island of Trinidad, the 28th day of December, 1637.

Witness my hand:

JUAN DE PENALVER

Notary Public and Clerk of the Corporation

A true copy of the original testimony, by which I corrected it and compared it, by order of the Governor and Captain-General, Don Juan de Eulate, and in faith thereof I signed my name.

Witness my hand:

FRANCISCO GONCALEZ DE BARRIONUEVO

Clerk

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