

## - 13 -

## From 1759 to 1761

**460. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

[24 January 1759]

*(Extract)*

The Governor of Berbice having acquainted me that a clipper there is to depart for Europe in the beginning of next month, I profit by the opportunity to inform your Honours that my Emisary to Orinoco has returned from thence with a very unsatisfactory reply from the Governor of Cumaná, to my letter to the Commandant of Orinoco, wherein he maintains, *inter alia*, that the River Cuyuni is Spanish territory, and refuses to give back the imprisoned Postholder, settler, and creoles.

I have the honour to send your Honours herewith copy of my letter and of the reply.

Also, the address of the Governor of Cumaná's letter is, "To the Dutch Commandant residing in Essequibo," which sounds very haughty and contemptuous, so that I have caused the same to be replied to by the Commanding Officer here, of which reply a copy also goes herewith.

This treatment, against all justice, and contrary to the right of nations, and these so far-reaching pretensions, being of the most extreme importance for this Colony, I do hope, and doubt not, that your Honours will employ all due means, through their High Mightinesses, to obtain proper satisfaction therefor.

On closing this letter, I take the liberty earnestly to recommend to your Honours attention the case in Cuyuni as being of the greatest importance to this Colony, that river forming one of the three arms of this river, and in which your Honours' indigo and coffee plantations, and a great portion of Duynenburg, are situated.

If the Spaniards hold possession thereof we have them in the heart of the Colony, and no one is for one hour certain of his possessions, the mouth of the said river being only a cannon shot from the old Fort Kijkoveral.

**461. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

[No date – but was written in 1759]

My Lords,

The fact of Captain G. E. Boers having changed his mind and put into Rio Demerary for another fortnight, in order to avoid all cause for complaint, affords me the opportunity of writing your Lordships the present letter, my last being already on the way to Essequibo, and of informing my Lords that the men I sent to the Upper Cuyuni to inquire into the reports of the Indians have returned. They said reports turn out to be only too true, the Post-house being burnt down to

the ground, the Postholder and his assistant, together with the creole Ariaen, and his wife and children, carried off to Guayana as prisoners, and all that the Post contained taken away.

There not being the slightest difficulty or doubt concerning the ownership of this portion of Essequibo, most undoubtedly belonging, it does, to the West India Company, this unexpected and unheard-of act is a violation of all existing Treaties – a violation even of the universal law of nations, and as a matter of the greatest importance it demands your Lordships' attention and vigilance.

Yesterday I sent Mr. Spors a letter addressed by me to the Commandant of Guiana, to be communicated to the Council, and then to be sent per express to Orinoco. In this I spoke of the raid in the most serious terms, and demanded full satisfaction and compensation. As there will be no meeting of the Council until after the departure of the "Peter and David," I cannot have the honour of sending your Lordships a copy of the above-mentioned letter, not knowing whether the Council might not consider some alterations or additions necessary. I shall not fail to send your Lordships a copy of the letter at the earliest opportunity, together with whatever answer I may receive. I have explained to them amongst other things how easy it would be for me to exercise the right of reprisal, but have added that I have not the slightest intention of doing so unless I receive express orders to that effect, or my hand is forced by extreme measures on the other side, being convinced that their High Mightinesses would be able to obtain full satisfaction from His Catholic Majesty.

(Signed) L. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE

\*

**Annex: Military Commandant, Essequibo, to the Spanish Commandant, Orinoco, 8 December 1758** [Document No. 457 in *From 1757 to 1758*].

#### **462. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

[29 May 1759]

(Extract)

The letter from the Commandant here to the Commandant in Orinoco of which I had the honour to speak in my letter via Berbice, has been sent back unopened, there being joined to it two letters, the contents of which are as yet unknown to me, as I do not know the Spanish language and await the arrival here of Mr. Persik to have them translated.

#### **463. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO**

[31 May 1759]

(Extract)

To the Director-General Storm van 's Gravesande

*Middelburg, May 31, 1759.*

We have not yet received the originals of your letters per the "Pieter en David", but our correspondent at Cork has furnished us with a faithful copy of two letters written by you, the first in Rio Demerara, the 9th September, 1758, and the second without mention of place or date. We defer answering these until we shall have received the originals, or at least until the sailing of "Essequibo's Welvaren"; but we cannot help remarking, as to the raid upon the Post of Cuyuni by the Spaniards, that not only does it exceedingly astonish us, but also seems to us of the gravest consequence for the Colony. For that reason we shall not fail, as soon as we shall have received fuller information from you, to make, upon that subject the necessary representations to the States-General. Meanwhile we should like on this occasion to be exactly informed where the aforesaid Post on the River of Cuyuni was situated; for in the latest map made by you of the Colony we have found indeed that river, but have not yet succeeded in finding the Post itself. Furthermore, what grounds you might be able to give us to further support our right to the possession of the aforesaid Post – perhaps a declaration by the oldest inhabitants of the Colony could in this connection be handed in, which might be of service. We should also like to have a more specific description of the Map of America by M. D'Anville, to which you appeal; for that gentleman has issued many maps dealing with that continent, and in none of these which have come to our notice have we been able to discover any traces [of what you mention].

---

**464. PROCEEDINGS OF WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER)**  
**[2 July 1759]**

*(Extract)*

Read a letter from the Presidial Chamber of Amsterdam, written there the 26th of last June, and addressed to this Chamber, containing, in answer to this Chamber's letter of the 18th of the same month, that their Honours considered that it was not for them to present to the States-General a Remonstrance regarding the raid of the Spaniards upon the Company's Post in Rio Cuyuni, because neither they nor any other Chamber had concerned themselves about the River Essequibo since the well-known differences in regard to the said Colony had arise between them and the Chief Participants of this Chamber. For this reason they returned the documents which had been sent them, together with a translation of the Spanish appendix, that we might make such use of them as we should see fit.

Whereupon, after discussion and taking the sense of the meeting, it was resolved to file for reference to the aforesaid letter with its appendices, and this notwithstanding, to request the Committee on Commerce to consider more fully the documents bearing upon the said raid, and also to instruct the Advocate to formulate their views thereupon in a remonstrance to the States-General, and submit it for approval to this Chamber.

---

**465. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY  
[20 July 1759]**

*(Extract)*

The despatches received from Orinoco having been translated by Mr. Persik, I found one to be from the Commandant Don Juan Valdes, in which he informs me that, being forbidden to enter into any correspondence concerning the matter of Cuyuni, he is obliged to send back in my letter unopened; he adds that he has brought the matter to the notice of the King of Spain, and that he has no doubt that I, too, have informed their High Mightinesses of the same, and that, therefore, the case would have to be decided not by ourselves but by our respective Sovereigns. This matter is of very great importance to the Colony, because if the Spaniards remain in possession of Cuyuni, which is one of the arms of this river, and in which there are coffee and indigo plantations belonging to your Lordships, as well as the estates of Old Duynenburg (now allotted to private holders), there will be no safety at all in this Colony. A way for all evil-doers, deserters, and bankrupts will be quite open and free, and the Colony will be ruined immediately there is the least misunderstanding with Spain. Your Lordships will therefore see that this matter is fully deserving of your attention. The Spaniards continue to stay where they are, and to entrap and drive away all the Caribs living there. The latter, on their part, are not taking matters quietly, but are beginning to make a vigorous resistance, and to do much mischief in Orinoco itself. Two well-armed boats have been kept cruising up and down the river, and the Spanish commerce has suffered a good deal.

The second despatch is written by order of the Government, and signed by the Commandant and the Contador. I am informed in this that the measure providing for the apprehension and restitution to the owners (on payment of costs) of all fugitive negroes from this Colony and Berbice has been approved.

---

**466. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER)  
[23 July 1759]**

*(Extract)*

Mr. De Chuy, in the name of the Committee on Commerce, reported that in fulfilment of the instructions of the 2nd of this month they had examined the letters of Director-General 's Gravesande, and the appendices concerning the raid of the Spaniards upon the Company's Post in Rio Cuyuni, and that the Advocate had formulated their views in a Remonstrance to the States-General, which they submitted for approval to this Chamber. Whereupon, the Remonstrance aforesaid having been read and the question put, it was, after discussion, resolved to approve said Remonstrance as it stands, and, moreover, the Committee on Commerce were thanked for the pains they had taken, and Mr. de Chuy for the report he had made.

---

**467. EXTRACT FROM THE REGISTER OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THEIR**

**MIGHTINESSES, THE LORDS OF THE STATES-GENERAL OF THE UNITED PROVINCES OF THE NETHERLANDS****[31 July 1759]***Tuesday, July 31, 1759.*

Read to the [States-General in] Session the Remonstrance of the Directors of the West India Company of the Chamber of Zeeland, acting on account of the general Company as having the special direction and care of the Colony of the River Essequibo and the rivers thereto subject, setting forth that they, in the aforesaid capacity, have been from time immemorial in undisturbed possession, not alone of the aforesaid River Essequibo, but also of all the branches and tributaries which belonged to the river aforesaid, and flow into it, and especially of the northernmost arm of the same river, called the Cuyuni.

That they, the remonstrants, in virtue of that possession, have always considered the said River Cuyuni as a domain of this State, and have, in consequence, built on its banks a so-called Post, being a wooden habitation, which, like several others in the aforesaid Colony, they have guarded by a Postholder and outpost man with some slaves.

That, accordingly, it is only with the most extreme astonishment that the remonstrants have learnt from the Director-General of the said Colony, Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande, that a troop of Spaniards, reckoned at 100 men, had come from Orinoco towards the end of August of the last year (1758), had attacked, overcome, and burned the said Post; and, further, had carried off to Guayana as prisoners the Postholder and assistant, as well as a creole man and woman, with their children.

That the said Director-General, Storm van 's Gravesande, suspecting that the said outrage was committed by a troop of violent people, without the knowledge or orders of the Spanish Government, addressed a letter, in the first instance, dated the last day of September, 1758, to Don Juan Valdes, Commandant of Guayana, requesting, in language which, though earnest, was not the less discreet, reparation for the said outrage, as may be seen from the copy of the Director's letter, which forms Inclosure No. 1 to the above-mentioned Remonstrance.

But that he, the aforesaid Commandant of Guayana, instead of satisfying this just demand, had simply ordered to be written by one Nicolas de Castro, from Cumaná, an in every respect haughty and unsatisfactory despatch, addressed curtly to the Dutch Commandant at Essequibo, as is shown by the copy of this letter, which forms Inclosure No. 2 to the Remonstrance aforesaid.

The remonstrants therefore pray, for the reasons alleged, that their High Mightinesses may be pleased to cause such representations to be made to the Court of His Catholic Majesty that reparation may be made for the said hostilities, and that the remonstrants may be reinstated in the quiet possession of the said Post situated on the banks of the River Cuyuni, and also that, through their High Mightinesses and the Court of Madrid, a proper delimitation between the Colony of Essequibo and the River Orinoco may be laid down by authority, so as to prevent any future dispute.

Whereupon, the above question having been deliberated upon, and the Deputies of the Province of South and West Friesland having taken copies of the aforesaid Remonstrance and agenda in order to communicate them more fully to their own Assembly,

It was moreover approved and agreed,

“That a, copy of the said letter and the documents annexed shall be sent to Heer van Wasenaar, Ambassador of their High Mightinesses to the Court of Spain, and that he shall at the same time be instructed to make this incident known in such quarters as he shall judge useful, to represent the injustice of the aforesaid conduct of the Governor of Guayana on this occasion, and to insist on prompt reparation for these said hostilities and on the reinstatement of the said Directors in the undisturbed possession of the aforesaid Post, as well as to demand that the necessary measures be taken to obviate such causes of complaint in the future.”

Extract of this their High Mightinesses' Resolution to be transmitted to Señor de la Quadra, His Catholic Majesty's Charge d'Affaires, with a request that he will be so good as to second to the best of his ability the representation of their High Mightinesses at his Court.

**468. DON ANTONIO DE LA QUADRA TO DON RICARDO WALL, THE SPANISH SECRETARY OF STATE**

[9 August 1759]

*The Hague, August 9, 1759.*

Sir,

I have just received from the hands of the States-General the annexed Resolution, and, as nothing occurs to me which I may properly say to your Excellency on the subject, I content myself merely with placing it in your hands, and praying.

(Signed) ANTONIO DE LA QUADRA

*(Inclosure in French: An account of the Spanish raid on the Cuyuni Post)*

**469. THE AMBASSADOR OF THE STATES-GENERAL TO THE SPANISH SECRETARY OF STATE**

[26 August 1759]

*(Translation – Original: French)*

*Madrid, August 26, 1759.*

Sir,

Before the undersigned Ambassador can set before your Excellency the acts which form the subject of the present communication, and with respect to which he is directed by his masters to demand due satisfaction of this Crown, he must first call your Excellency's attention to the fact that his masters have been from time immemorial in undisturbed possession of the River Esse-quiibo, and all the little rivers which flow into it, and especially of the right arm of the said river,

which flows northwards, and is called the Cuyuni; that in virtue of the said possession, his masters have for a very long time considered the whole of the said river as a domain belonging to them, and have consequently caused to be constructed, as they have in many other places in the Colony a wooden station, to serve as an outpost, as to which the Spanish Governors have never raised any objection, or made the least complaint, understanding that such outposts are absolutely necessary to us for the maintenance of the peace of the Colony against the raids of savages, and are constructed with no other object.

After this your Excellency will learn with surprise that a troop of Spaniards numbering about 100 men, came down from the Orinoco towards the end of August 1758, attacked the said station, and at once took and burned it, and carried off with them to Guiana [Guayana] the master of the said post, his second in command, and a creole man and woman with their children.

Such an act of hostility appeared surprising to the Director-General of the Colony, and as it seemed to him impossible that it could have been done by superior orders, he first gave notice of it by a letter (of which a copy is inclosed . . . ) to Don Juan de Valdez, Commandant of Guiana [Guayana]; he was persuaded as soon as the latter was informed, he would obtain full reparation from him; but so far from that being the case, the said Commandant, instead of complying with the just demands of our Director, instructed a certain Dr. Nicolas de Castro, at Cumaná to answer by the letter of which a translation is inclosed.

Therefore, Sir, since the said Commandant wishes to support, without any good reason, an invasion and hostilities committed upon territories properly belonging to my masters, and since their Director has not been able to obtain from the Spanish Commandant the reparation due for this act, and the demand for which is based not only on international law, but upon the good friendship and harmony reigning between my masters and His Catholic Majesty. They have directed the undersigned to communicate the above to your Excellency for the information of His Catholic Majesty, and they are confident of obtaining from His Majesty a sense of justice and through your Excellency's good offices, satisfactory reparation for the past and orders for the future, so that they may see themselves in undisturbed possession as before of the said post on the river called Cuyuni.

(Signed) J. L. H. DE WASSENSAAR

\*

***Inclosure 1: Letter of the Dutch Director-General to the Commandant Of Guayana, protesting against the outrage committed by the secret expedition sent to destroy the Dutch Post in the River Cuyuni, 30 September 1758*** [Document No. 441 in *From 1757 to 1758*].

***Inclosure 2: Don Nicolas de Castro to M. Storm Van 's Gravesande, Director-General of the Colony of Essequibo, 10 November 1758*** [Document No. 456 in *From 1857 to 1858*]

**470. NETHERLANDS' ENVOY, MADRID, TO STATES-GENERAL**  
[27 August 1759]

(Extract)

I had the honour to receive by last post your High Mightinesses' Resolution of the 31st July; and, pursuant to your august orders, I gave information orally of the matter to Senor Wall, and yesterday I repeated my complaint against the Commander of Guayana by a written Memorandum thereof, and pressed for prompt reparation for the hostilities complained of. I must now await reply to the said Memorandum, but think that, meanwhile, I have fulfilled your High Mightinesses' orders; and I shall, further, not neglect to keep the Minister alive to the matter, and thereby as soon as possible seek to obtain a satisfactory answer.

#### 471. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[1 September 1759]

*(Extract)*

The time is too short to enable me to send what your Lordships require concerning Cuyuni, and in this despatch I shall have to content myself with informing your Lordships that Cuyuni being one of the three arms which constitute this river, and your Lordships, having had for very many years the coffee and indigo plantation there, also that the mining master with his men, having worked on the Blue Mountain in that river without the least opposition, the possession of that river, as far, too, as this side of the Wayne, which is pretended to be the boundary-line (although I think the latter ought to be extended as far as Barima), cannot be questioned in the least possible way, and your Lordships' right of ownership is indisputable, and beyond all doubt.

The Post, which was attacked and ruined in a manner so contrary to the law of nations was situated about fifteen hours above the place where Cuyuni unites with Massaruni, but this has little to do with the matter, even if the Post had been situated fifty hours further up, it was a matter which did not concern the Spaniards, and in the same way as they are masters upon their territory to do what pleases them, so your Lordships are also masters upon yours.

And I have once more the honour to assure your Lordships that the whole security and peace of this Colony depends upon the possession of that river, and that without it no one can be in the least way certain of his property, and therefore more than doubly worthy the attention of their High Mightinesses and your Lordships. I await with impatience your Lordships' orders, to which I shall conform strictly, and to the letter, and however aged and weak I may be, I shall be quite capable of finding means, if I am honoured with your Lordships' orders, and, provided too with some reinforcements, both of militia and of powder and arms, of obtaining proper satisfaction, and of securing that place, even if it should cost me my life, which I am ready and willing, with all my heart, to sacrifice for the commonweal.

The Map of South America by M. D'Anville, to which I referred, was sent to me last year, at my request, by the Professor, now Rector Magnificus Allamand at Leyden, by the "Essequibo Welvaeren", and was at that time the last by that man. The boundaries of the different nations upon this coast of Guiana, are there distinctly marked. I had received two of them, but have, for the second time, sent one to Orinoco by Burgher Captain Niels Andries Schutz, who has gone thither in commission for regulating the restitution of the fugitive slaves, as I had the honour of informing your Lordships in my former despatch, the other gentlemen proposed having, some for



one reason, and some for another, declined to perform the journey.

---

**472. PROCEEDINGS OF WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER)**

**[27 November 1759]**

*(Extract)*

An extraordinary Session having been convened for the opening of the Company's letter-bags, arrived to-day. . . from Essequibo and Demerara, there were found on opening them the following letters for this Chamber:

First, a letter from the Director-General L. Storm van 's Gravesande, written in Essequibo on the 1st September of this current year, containing an account of the events in the said river; furthermore, elucidation regarding the Company's Post in Rio Cuyuni and regarding the possession of the said river. . .

---

**473. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO**

**[3 December 1759]**

*Middelburg, December 3, 1759.*

To the Director-General, Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande:

Sir, etc. – Although we have not as yet received in the original your letter by the “Pieter en David,” which ship is still lying in Ireland, we shall nevertheless, according to our preceding letter of the 31st May of this year, proceed to answer it, according to the copies thereof received through our correspondent in Cork. As to your first letter of the 9th September of last year, 1758, we reply that, as soon as we had received your letter of the 24th January of this year, via Berbice, we immediately presented to the States-General a lengthy Remonstrance concerning the raid upon the Company's Post in Rio Cuyuni by the Spaniards. And, although the aforesaid Memorial was sent by the States-General to the Ambassador at the Court of Spain, with orders to make the necessary representations concerning the matter to His Catholic Majesty, and to insist, upon due satisfaction, still we fear that hardly anything decisive can be expected from it for some time, in view of the change which has taken place in the aforesaid kingdom. Wherefore we still request you to lay before us everything which might in any way be of service in proof of our right of ownership to, or possession of, the aforesaid river, because after receiving it we might perhaps present to the States-General a fuller Remonstrance on this head, with a statement of facts joined thereto. For this purpose there might especially be of use to us a small map of the River of Cuyuni, with indication of the places where the Company's Post, and also the grounds of “Old Duinenburg” and of the Company's coffee and indigo plantations were situated, and, finally, of the so-called Blue Mountain in which the miners carried on their work for our account. We ask for this especially because in your Map of Essequibo, exact though it otherwise be, we can find

nothing of all this. You see then from this that we are not less convinced than you of the value and importance of the aforesaid river, and that we are consequently doing everything that can be done for keeping possession thereof. . .

Coming now to your aforesaid letter of the 24th January of this year, received by us via Berbice, we praise the correspondence which you have carried on with the Spanish Government on the subject of the raiding of Cuyuni. It is not a bad thing to let it be seen in such a correspondence what one might actually be able to do; but formal reprisal, however justifiable, must never be resorted to without express orders from the sovereign authority. We approve your prudence in stopping the rumour of a breach of the peace between the States-General and the Crown of Great Britain. You may safely rely that, as soon as we foresaw anything of that kind (which God forefend we should be prompt, not only in warning you of it as soon as possible, but also in providing you with the promised reinforcement at the expense of the Colony. . .

We see from your letter that you extend the boundary of the Colony in the direction of Orinoco not only as far as Waini, but even as far as Barima. We should like to be informed of the grounds upon which you base this contention, and especially your inference that, Cuyuni being situate on this side of Waini, it must therefore necessarily belong to the Colony; for, so far as we know, there exist no Conventions that the boundary-lines in South America run in a straight line from the sea-coast inland, as do most of the frontier-lines of the English Colonies in North America.

**474. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[12 December 1759]**

*(Extract)*

The burgher Captain N. A. Schutz has returned from his voyage to Orinoco. He was received there very politely and well; and has brought with him the money in payment for a few runaway slaves; but the Commandant has declined to hear anything about the affair of Cuyuni, saying that this occurred in his absence, that he has no responsibility whatever about it, and that he has been forbidden to enter into any negotiations concerning that matter, inasmuch as they have reported it to His Catholic Majesty; and have no doubt that I have likewise done so to my Sovereigns; wherefore, that affair being out of our hands, it must be settled in Europe. The letters and documents received through Mr. Schutz I have handed to Mr. Ignace Courthial, with the request that he be so good as to translate them. I hope I shall receive them before closing this letter, in which case I shall have the honour to inclose them herein.

**475. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[8 April 1760]**

*(Extract)*

His Excellency the Director-General brings to the knowledge of the Court that certain com-

plaints have reached him concerning a certain wanderer named Nicolas Stedevelt, who, without giving any notice, had gone to the Upper Cuyuni, and, making a frivolous use of his Excellency's name, had not only ill-used the free Caribs, but also bound and put them in irons, and taken a woman away.

His Excellency, being very much surprised at such proceedings, had caused the said Nicolas Stedevelt to be arrested and placed in the fortress in order to be this day judicially dealt with.

The accused and the complaining Indians being heard, it was stated by the plaintiff through Stephanus Geardus van der Heyden as interpreter, that defendant had put a Carib in fetters and taken his wife away, saying that he had orders from his Excellency to act in this manner.

Defendant denies having made use of the name of his Excellency, saying that he was prompted to do what he had done to recoup himself for the robberies committed by the Caribs, who had stolen all his goods.

Defendant calls upon one Bastiaan Christiaansen as his witness.

This witness states that defendant had bound a Carib, of the name of Arinopo, which Caribs confessed that certain goods been stolen from Stedevelt, and that he himself had received three pieces of iron-work.

After due deliberation it is resolved:

That as Nicolas Stedevelt never had any authority to act in such a manner, and as only lately a Law was published, prohibiting such proceedings, the Court hereby condemns Nicolas Stedevelt to pay a fine of 250 guilders, cautioning him at the same time that, should he not be more prudent for the future, he will be banished from the land.

#### **476. DON JOSÉ DE ITURRIAGA, TO RICARDO WALL, SPANISH SECRETARY OF STATE**

**[18 April 1760]**

*Cabruta, April 18, 1760.*

Dear Sir,

Since my arrival in Guayana I have treated the Caribs with kindness and presents, in order that leaving their dwellings on the hills, they might come to settle in the Missions; but they, far from giving ear to my persuasions, have gone higher up beyond the falls of the Rivers Paragua, Aroi and Caura, considering them insurmountable to the efforts of the Spanish. Thence they made war upon other nations, took slaves and sent them to Essequibo, depopulating in this way the dominions of the King, whilst peopling the territories which the Dutch enjoy, and increasing their possessions.

The Caribs in the settlements made repeated journeys to the dwellings in the woods, obtaining permission from their missionary fathers on the pretext of bringing to the settlement some of their relatives, and occupied themselves in the same work as those in the woods. Some remained there and others returned to their settlements. Others threatened, after the expedition had left, to take vengeance on the Spaniards who had subjected them to the Missions, and there were not wanting some who declared themselves King of the Caribs and King of the Orinoco. The new settlements Real Corona and Ciudad Real might be the object of their vengeance, and were in a

bad position with such rascally neighbours.

To prevent so many evils I dispatched the Lieutenants of Infantry Don Antonio Mayhew to the Aroi with twelve men of the troops and with twelve Indian Cabres of this settlement. The naval Sub-Lieutenant Vicente Doz left with an equal number of troops and Cabres for Caura, arranging the time so that both surprises should be executed at the same moment. This was done and so successfully that without firing a gun or striking a blow all those of Caura and all those of the Aroi were seized with the exception of those who were on expeditions for capturing slaves from other nations, and word was sent from the Missions of Piritu to the settlement of Pilar, in order that those dispersed among the other ancient Missions might be hindered in returning to their old dwellings.

The Caribs from the Paragua had proceeded to the River Parime; some from Caura had likewise gone to the neighbourhood of Essequibo, and the rest were moved to follow them.

Both officers overcame with much labour the difficulties of the country and of the fall, and proceeded with the greatest prudence.

On the road to Pilar as many as eighty took flight, and sought refuge in the neighbourhood of the settlements of Mucura and Tapiriri, according to what their missionary fathers have written me, and I have sent this information to the Governor of Cumaná. God keep your Excellency many years.

(Signed) DON JOSÉ DE ITURRIAGA

Señor Don Ricardo Wall.

**477. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
[2 May 1760]

(Extract)

*Rio Essequibo, 2 May 1760.*

My Lords,

I am in receipt of your Lordships' letter of the 3rd December last, and since there has been no opportunity of writing you prior to the departure of the "Essequibo Welvaeren", I have now the honour to discharge that duty, and will speak of the matter of Cuyuni.

I trust and doubt not that their High Mightinesses will obtain proper satisfaction for an act that is so entirely contrary to the law of nations, and I can very well understand that the death of the King of Spain must delay the settlement of the matter.

I have very little to add to what I have already had the honour of submitting to your Lordships in several of my despatches, and although I am aware, as your Lordships are pleased to inform me, that no Treaties have been made which decided that the dividing boundary in South America should run inland in a direct line from the sea-coast, as is the case with the English in North America, it still appears to me (*salvo meliori*) to be an irrefutable fact that the rivers themselves which have been in the possession of your Lordships for such a large number of years, and

have been inhabited by subjects of the State without any or the least opposition on the part of the Spanish, are most certainly the property of your Lordships. I am strengthened in my view of this matter by the fact that Cuyuni is not a separate river like Weyne and Pomeroun (which last has been occupied by us, and still contains the foundations of your Lordships' fortresses), but an actual part of the River Essequibo itself, which is divided into three arms about 8 to 10 miles above Fort Zeelandia, and about one long cannon shot below Fort Kijkoveral, and to each of which the Indians give a separate name – the first Cuyuni, the second Massaruni (in which is Kijkoveral), and the third Essequibo – the principal stream below this division being called not Essequibo but Araunama by the Arawaks, the real aborigines of this country.

Although I do not doubt that your Lordships will now have received the map compiled by Mr. D'Anville, I have, in order to make the matter clear to your Lordships, copied that part of the map which relates to our possessions, and filled in with as much precision as possible the sites of your Lordships' plantation of Duynenburg, situated partly in Massaruni and partly in Cuyuni. In Cuyuni I have marked your Lordships' coffee plantation, indigo plantation, the dwelling-place of the half-free creoles (to which the Spaniards came very close), and Blauwenberg, and [the] Post which was sacked, together with the sites of your Lordships' three other Posts in Maroco, Maykouny, and Arinda, up in Essequibo.

This copy I have the honour to inclose.

I am well aware, my Lords, that to undertake measures of reprisal a distinct order from the Sovereign is necessary, and I should be very careful not to take upon myself anything of the kind. Although the appearance of some such threat is contained in my letter to the Commandant of Orinoco, it has never entered my head to proceed to such extremities, because even in a case of the utmost emergency I should shudder to employ the cruelties indulged in by the Carib nation. I only wished to show the Commandant what we could do if we were forced to it, and his Honour is well aware that what I told him is the truth. . .

In my former letter sent by the "Loo" I had the honour to inform your Lordships' that the matter concerning the slaves who had run away to the Orinoco was almost settled, and I doubt not that soon all will again be at rest.

Trade on that river is at present (as far as such trade can be) fairly open and free.

**478. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO**

**[1 September 1760]**

*(Extract)*

It gave us pleasure to read in your aforesaid letter your further remarks about Rio Cuyuni, but we could have wished that we had found among the documents the extract from the Map of M. D'Anville, enriched by you with the indication of so many noteworthy places and Posts. But to our sorrow we have searched for it in vain, and shall therefore expect it at the first opportunity.

Relying upon your prudence as to not resorting to reprisals (except in case of utmost need) without especial order, and seeing with pleasure that the trade to the Orinoco is practically open...

**479. "AUTOS" (DECREEES) FORMED UPON THE SEIZURE OF A SCHOONER, TWO LAUNCHES, AND TWO CANOES, OF ESSEQUIBO, BY INFANTRY LIEUTENANT DON JUAN DE FLORES**

**[7 September 1760]**

Don Juan de Dios Valdes, Captain Warden of this fort on behalf of His Majesty, Judge General of Confiscations in this Province of Guayana, and Commandant of the forces therein, etc.

Having received from the Very Reverend Father Prefect of the Missions in this Province the information communicated to him by four Indian *poitos*, fugitives from the tyrannical power of the Dutch settlers in the adjoining Colonies of Essequibo and Surinam, that at the mouth of the Creek Barima, which runs from the great mouth of that river, five Dutchmen from the said Colonies are established in huts and carrying on their usual inhuman and lucrative traffic with the nations of wild Indians who dwell and trade on the Orinoco, purchasing from them the infidels captured in their wars and raids, in exchange for ironware, clothing, and munitions of war; and that the said Dutch are waiting for a batch of Indians, whom they have ordered to be purchased through their allies, the Caribs, who can go more freely up this river; after which they are going back at once to their Colony with the product of this illicit transaction and the human beings they have up till now obtained, to which number belonged the four Indians who escaped from their tyranny and came to claim the protection of the said Missions.

And since it conduces to the service of God our Lord and of His Catholic Majesty to prevent such a cruel and unlawful traffic, to keep the Dutch of the said Colonies by chastisement within their own possessions (if so be that they hold them lawfully), and to deter them from pressing into these dominions of the King through the intersecting rivers; by these presents, in virtue of the powers of my offices and those which have been conferred upon me for such emergencies, I order and command Don Juan de Dios Gonzales de Flores, Lieutenant of Infantry, and second officer of this fortress, that forthwith, and without the slightest delay, he is to go on board the King's vessel which is lying in the Puerto Real, manned with ten soldiers of the line, and armed in the usual manner with two swivel guns, and supplied with provisions for twenty days, and Spanish pilots for the river and some of the fugitive Indians, for the place or hut where the said Dutch are to be found.

That the said Lieutenant is to proceed direct thither, sailing day and night, in order to gain every moment of time, and upon arriving he shall attack the said hut, first of all surrounding it, and shall hold prisoners therein all the Dutch, French, or Spaniards he may find, calling upon them in the King's name to surrender, and if they will not do so, or have recourse to arms, using his forces until he has chastised them and made them prisoners, and shall do the same in respect to any Carib Indians who may be aiding and assisting in this inhuman traffic. And he shall likewise seize all and any vessels he may meet going up or coming down the river, whether foreign or Spanish, which are sailing without proper papers, and the said Lieutenant shall bring their captains and crews well secured to this fortress, and also their entire cargoes, without allowing the least fraud or irregularity on the part of the soldiers under his charge, for which, and all else appertaining to the exact fulfilment of this order, he is to be answerable as an honourable officer, and as such it is expected that he will proceed with the greatest possible zeal and disinterested-

ness in the Royal service. That for everything expressed herein, and for whatsoever else his judgment and experience may dictate, I give him all such power as I can and ought, and as required in such cases for their Majesties' service.

Done in Guayana on the 7th day of September, 1760.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES

**480. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY, RIO ESSEQUIBO**

**[8 September 1760]**

*(Extract)*

*Rio Essequibo, September 8, 1760.*

I have the honour to send your Lordships these few lines informing you of the arrival of Captain Robberts and his ship the "Jongen Abraham," and also of my intense grief that we shall be unable to ship anything from your Lordships' plantations in that vessel, and that it will be as much as we can do to get the required 150 hogsheads of sugar ready for the "Loo." All this on account of the unfortunate affair that has taken place upon your Lordships' plantation Aechterkerke, where a young creole has hanged himself, and fifteen of the best young creoles have deserted on account of dissatisfaction against the Director. The occurrence has placed Mr. Spoors and myself in a state of great embarrassment; we are at our wits' end, fearing the total ruin of the plantation, the more so since, one misfortune seldom coming alone, both the water-mill and the horse-mill have caught fire at the same time, and the roofs of both have been burnt off. The works were saved with the greatest difficulty, and it will be quite six weeks before they are in order again. I immediately sent the adjutant, a sergeant, and eight of the best soldiers to the plantation, which probably prevented a great many more slaves from deserting, and took measures to have the whole sea-coast guarded by Caribs, so that it was impossible for the slaves to get to Orinoco. What I most feared was that they might take the road through Cuyuni where, since the raid upon the Post by the Spaniards there are no more Indians, and there was therefore no means of stopping them. Against my expectations, and with the help of Mr. van Rode, and under a solemn promise that they should not be punished this time, they came home again. I had strong reasons for making this promise. Twelve have returned to the plantation. I have kept the three ring-leaders at the fort until everything is again quiet.

**481. RESOLUTION**

**[27 September 1760]**

In the City of Santo Thomé de Guayana, on the 27th day of September, 1760, Senores Don Juan de Dios Valdes, Captain Warden of this fort on behalf of His Majesty, and Don Lorenzo Coronado, Lieutenant of Royal Officers, declared that, inasmuch as Lieutenant of Infantry Don

Juan de Dios de Flores had just arrived at the principal port of this city with the armed schooner which left this port for the purpose of hindering the inhuman traffic of the Dutch with the Carib Indians, which the latter carry on by the sale of infidels of other tribes, whom they capture in wars or by raids, and sell as slaves to the said Dutch for small prices; whereof notice was given to the said Commandant by the Very Reverend Father Prefect of these Missions, who heard it from four Indian *poitos*, fugitives from the Dutch who were engaged in this traffic at the mouth of the Creek Barima, as appears more clearly from the foregoing order; the result of which expedition has been that the said Lieutenant Don Juan de Flores has brought as prizes a schooner and two launches, which have likewise cast anchor under the cannon of the Castle of Saint Francis of Assisi, which is the chief harbour of this city, and inasmuch as it is necessary to duly inspect them all, their Honours had to order, and did order, that these duties should be carried out, in the presence of the undersigned Notary, the vessels and the cases or trunks they might have on board, and any other goods that might be found in them, being surveyed, and all being set down in a formal inventory, which will be made at the same time; in order that when this duty has been performed a summary report may be drawn up showing the exact particulars of the seizure of the said vessels, and for this purpose their Honours thus decreed, ordered, and signed, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES LORENZO CORONADO

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

#### 482. REPORT OF SURVEY

[27 September 1760]

On the same day, month, and year, as ordered in the foregoing Resolution, their Honours, together with me, the Notary, went on board the vessels which are lying at anchor in the harbour of the Castle of Saint Francis of Assisi, in order to carry out the proposed inspection of the vessels which had been seized; and, upon arriving on board, they inspected them and made an inventory in the following form and manner:

Firstly, a schooner with its mainmast, foremast, and shrouds, but without sails. Item, a kedge anchor with its hempen cable; item, five barrels of salt fish; item, a launch with its mast and hempen shrouds, and its round sail of coarse canvas; item, four barrels of ground salt; item, a curved canoe, serving as boat to the said launch, six axes, ten canvas *guayucos*, eight knives, six bunches of beads in an old case; item, another launch with its mast and hempen shroud, and its round sail; item, a small anchor with its hemp cable; item, a canoe which serves as ship's boat; with which, there being nothing else, this inventory was concluded, and their Honours directed that everything should be landed and secured in the Royal "Contaduria"; and that in respect to the fish, it should at once be put up for sale under charge of the Lieutenant of the Royal Officers, who should deal with it and keep account of its sale, for which he should be paid according to his trouble, delivering it for legal money, and selling it according to the practice of the country, and



for this their Honours provided, ordered and signed, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES  
LORENZO CORONADO

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

---

**483. DECLARATION OF DON JUAN DE FLORES**  
**[29 September 1760]**

In the City of Santo Thomé of Guayana, on the 29th day of the said month and year, in order to carry out the report in hand respecting the seizure of the vessels, their Honours being in the Royal "Contaduria", by order and command of the Commandant, there appeared therein the Lieutenant of infantry Don Juan de Dios de Flores, to whom their Honours administered an oath, which he made by God our Lord and a sign of the Cross, under obligation whereof he promised to tell the truth concerning what he might know and might be asked, and having been questioned respecting the seizure of the said vessels, as to where and how he took them, whether they made resistance with fire-arms, and as to the whereabouts of the crews, he declared: That having gone from this port, by order of the Commandant, bound for the Creek Barima, when he was tacking round its mouth on the eleventh day, at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, he saw a ship coming from the Point of Guani, and trying to find the mouth of the Orinoco; that he went in pursuit of her, and having overtaken her and fired one shot, she surrendered immediately; and going on board he only found ten Aruac Indians who came frozen the Colony of Essequibo to fish in this river, three of whom escaped by jumping into the river; and on the day following he continued his course, and entering the mouth of the Barima, and going about 3 leagues up the creek, they saw a vessel which, owing to low water, was lying aground at a considerable distance; and they could not board her until the rise of the tide allowed them to approach during which time the crew of the said schooner, having seen and recognized them, took to flight and carried off the sails with them and cut to pieces the greater portion of the tackle, and although the declarant tried various expedients to capture them, he could not do so, but ascertained from the Aruac Indiana, whom they had previously captured, that the schooner came from the Colony of Essequibo for the same purpose of fishing; and that finding himself with these two vessels and without sufficient men to pursue his course to the end, for he had put from his own vessel two men on board the first and two more on the second, and had only six soldiers left; and being informed that it took five days to go up to the place in which the traffickers in *poitos* were; for this reason, and also because the said Dutch would be already informed by those who escaped from the schooner, that the declarant was coming up, and considering that his orders only extended to the mouth itself, he resolved to turn back, which he did, going up the river, and finding the other launch, in consequence of information he had received as to its whereabouts; and he ordered Pedro de Salas to go on board in a canoe and seize it, without allowing any of the crew to escape; and having done so and seized it he brought it back, saving that they had all fled into the woods, for they

were on shore safely in a hut from which they saw them; and that from there he pursued his voyage to the chief port of this city, where he cast anchor with the three vessels that were seized. That this is the truth under obligation of the oath which he made, which is affirmed and ratified therein, and that if necessary he will repeat it; and that he is 39 years of age, and has signed it together with their Honours, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES  
LORENZO CORONADO  
JUAN DE DIOS GONZALES DE FLORES

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

**484. DECLARATION OF PEDRO DE SALAS**  
**[29 September 1760]**

On the said day, month, and year, in order to draw up the report which is in hand, their Honours caused to appear before themselves and before me, Pedro de Salas, a soldier of these forts, to whom their Honours administered an oath which he made by God our Lord, and a sign of the Cross, under obligation whereof he promised to tell the truth in what he might know and might be asked, and having been questioned by their Honours he declared: That having sailed from this port in the armed schooner they reached the front of the mouth of Barima, and while tacking therein, they saw a vessel which they approached and fired a shot at, whereupon she surrendered at once, and having boarded her they only found a few Aruac Indians, who said that they came from the Dutch Colony of Essequibo to fish; that on the following day they entered the mouth of the Barima, and going about three leagues up the creek they saw a schooner, which, owing to low water, was aground at a very long distance, and so they could not go on board until the tide came up, when they approached it and did not find a single person, for during the time that they could not go on board, the crew succeeded in escaping into the woods, carrying off the sails and some of the tackle and cutting up some of that which remained on board; that they were informed by the pilot that it took five days to go up to the place where the traders were, for which reason, and because a large portion of the crew was engaged in the captured vessels, and likewise because they were informed that in going up to the place where the said Dutch were, the creek narrowed considerably, and no ship of any size could pass, his Lieutenant resolved to turn back up the river, which he did, and hearing that there was a launch at anchor in a creek with a hut on shore, his Lieutenant dispatched him with four men in a canoe to seize it and arrest its crew; that having gone on board and found nobody, he proceeded to examine the hut, and not finding any one there either, he concluded that they had fled to the woods, and came back and delivered up the said launch to his Lieutenant; and from there they continued to go up stream until they reached the chief port of this city where they cast anchor.

That this is the truth under obligation of the oath which he made, which is affirmed and ratified therein, and that if necessary he will repeat it; and that he is 44 years of age, and has signed

it jointly with their Honours, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES  
LORENZO CORONADO  
PEDRO DE SALAS

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public, and of the Treasury

---

**485. DECLARATION OF JOSEPH DE SOSA**  
**[29 September 1760]**

In this fortress of Guayana, on the said day, month and year, in execution of the report which is being drawn up, their Honours caused to appear in this Royal "Contaduria" before themselves and before me, the Notary, Joseph de Sosa, a soldier from these forts, whom they admitted upon oath which he made by God our Lord and a sign of the Cross, under obligation whereof he promised to tell the truth concerning what he might know and might be asked, and having been questioned by their Honours, declared: That he went from this port in the armed launch under Infantry Lieutenant Don Juan de Flores, and arrived at the mouth of the Barima, where, in order to make it they began to tack, and, while doing so, saw a vessel come into the river and followed it at once and made it heave to by firing a shot, and upon going on board they only found ten Aruac Indians, of whom three escaped; who, being examined by his Lieutenant, said that they came from the Dutch Colony of Essequibo to fish in the River Orinoco; and directly they had secured the vessel by putting two soldiers on board, they continued their course, and on the following day entered the said mouth of Barima, and went up the creek for about 3 leagues, where they saw a schooner which the ebb had left stranded at a very considerable distance from the stream, for which reason they could not board it until the tide rose, when they approached and went on board but found nobody, because while they were waiting for the tide to come up the crew of the said schooner, took the opportunity to escape, carrying off the sails and a portion of the tackle and cutting up some of the remainder; and that notwithstanding all the efforts which his said Lieutenant made to capture the crew he was unable to do so, and that the Aruacs (whom they had previously captured) at once said that the schooner had come from the Colony of Essequibo with the same object of fishing, and that upon asking the pilot whereabouts the Dutch traders in *poitos* were camping, he said they were at five days' distance from that spot, and that the vessel they were navigating could not enter the creek where the traders were, because it was extremely narrow and only navigable by canoes; that for this reason, and because some of the soldiers they brought were divided among the vessels captured, and likewise because the said Dutch would be warned of their approach by the crew which had escaped from the schooner, his Lieutenant determined to withdraw, which they did, and in going up the river they received information that a launch was lying at anchor in a creek, and his Lieutenant forthwith dispatched Pedro de Salas in a canoe, to seize it, ordering him to let none of its crew escape, and accordingly he seized it and brought it back, saying that he had found no one therein, nor in the hut on the shore, and that he

thought they had fled directly they perceived them; and that they continued their voyage thence to the chief port of this city, where they cast anchor. That this is the truth, under obligation of the oath which he made, which is affirmed and ratified therein, and that if necessary he will repeat it; and that he is 27 years of age, and has signed it together with his Honour, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES.  
LORENZO CORONADO.  
JOSEPH MIGUEL DE SOSA.

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

#### 486. DECLARATION OF ANTONIO RAVELO

[29 September 1760]

On the said day, month, and year, for the purpose of the Report which is being drawn up respecting the seizure of three vessels, their Honours caused to appear before themselves and before me, the present Notary, Antonio Ravelo, a soldier from these forts, whom their Honours admitted upon oath by God our Lord, and a sign of the Cross, under obligation whereof he promised to tell the truth in what he might know and might be asked, and having been questioned by their Honours, he declared:

That having gone from this port in the armed launch under the orders of his Lieutenant, Don Juan de Flores, they descended to the front of the mouth of the Barima, where, in order to make it, they began to tack, and then perceived a vessel coming into the River Orinoco, which they followed, and, having come up with it and fired a shot, she surrendered at once; that they boarded her and only found ten Aruac Indians, whom his Lieutenant examined, and who said that they came to fish in the said river; that from there they went again in search of the mouth of Barima, and on the following day they entered it and went about 3 leagues up the creek, where they saw a vessel which the ebb had left stranded at a considerable distance from the stream, for which reason they could not board it until the tide came up, when they approached it and went on board, but found no one, because while they were waiting for the tide to rise, the people of the schooner took the opportunity to escape and to carry off its sails and part of the tackle; and that while there his Lieutenant inquired from the pilot who was with them whether the Dutch traders in *poitos* were very far off; and he replied that it would require five days' sailing to reach them, but that with the vessels they were navigating they could not enter the creek, because it was very narrow, and only canoes could pass; for which reason, and for want of men, because the greater part of the crew had been distributed in the captured vessels, and likewise seeing that the said Dutch would be told by those who escaped from the schooner; his Lieutenant determined to withdraw, and going up the river they were informed that a launch was lying at anchor in a creek along which they were passing, whereupon his Lieutenant dispatched Pedro de Salas in a canoe with four men, under orders to seize and bring it together, with all its crew, without letting one escape; and having succeeded in capturing it, he returned, saying that he had found no one therein,

nor in the hut which was on the shore, and that he concluded they had gone into the woods as soon as they saw them; that they continued their voyage from there until they arrived and cast anchor in the chief harbour of this city. That this is the truth under obligation of the oath which he has made, which is affirmed and ratified therein, and that, if necessary, he will repeat it; that he is 42 years of age, and has signed it, together with his Honour, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES.  
LORENZO CORONADO.  
ANTONIO RAVELO.

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury.

#### **487. DECREE**

**[30 September 1760]**

Having seen the foregoing declarations, their Honours said that, in order to draw up these Reports more adequately, they would summon the half-breed whom Infantry Lieutenant Don Juan de Flores captured with the Aruac Indians, in order that he and the other Aruac Indians should give evidence respecting the particulars about which their Honours should consider it desirable to question them, and hereby their Honours have thus provided, ordered, and signed on the 30th September of the said year, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES.  
LORENZO CORONADO.

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

#### **488. CONFESSION OF YANA, THE HALF-BREED**

**[30 September 1760]**

In this City of Santo Thomé de Guayana, on the said day, month, and year, their Honours, in order to draw up more adequately the foregoing Report, caused to appear before them and before me, the Notary, one of the prisoners brought by Lieutenant Don Juan de Flores, who was asked by their Honours if he was a half-breed, what religion he professed, where he was born, what was his name, for what purposes he came to the River Orinoco, and by whom he was sent; and he replied that he was an Aruac Indian, and that his father and mother were the same; that they neither had nor knew any religion; that he was born in Guacapoo, near the Post of Essequibo; that his name was Yana; that the object with which he came to the River Orinoco was to fish,

and that he was sent by a Dutchman named Fordull. Being asked what cargo the captured schooner and launch carried, and whether he knew to whom they belonged, and for what purpose they came to that river, he said that their cargo only consisted of a small quantity of "*barbasco*" and a barrel of salt, and that the schooner also was from the Colony of Essequibo, and belonged to a Dutchman named Monk, and that likewise the launch was from the same Colony, and sent by a Dutchman named Bobre, and that both came for the same object of fishing; and being asked if he knew that there were Dutchmen in the Creek Barima buying *poitos*, and if they were very far away from the place where the schooner was seized, he replied that he knew that there were four Dutchmen in the said Creek Barima buying *poitos*, and that they had many Carib Indians with them; that from the spot where the schooner was seized to where they were was five or six days' sail; that the creek where the said Dutchmen are was very narrow, as he had been informed by Indians of his own nation, and that large vessels could not enter it, and that the Dutch buyers of *poitos* were not from the Colony of Essequibo, but from that of Surinam, because the Governor of Essequibo did not allow any Dutchman to go and conduct this trade. Herewith this declaration was concluded, and he could not tell his age, nor sign the declaration, because, he said, he did not know how to do so, so their Honours signed it, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES.  
LORENZO CORONADO.

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

**489. DECLARATION OF SIMARACURI, AN ARUAC [ARAWAK] INDIAN  
[30 September 1760]**

In the said City of Santo Thomé de Guayana, on the said day, month, and year, for the purpose of the Report which is being drawn up, their Honours caused to appear before them and before me, the present Notary, one of the Indians, sufficiently conversant with Spanish, from among those seized by Lieutenant Don Juan de Flores, and he was asked by their Honours where he was born, what was his name, for what purpose he came to the River Orinoco, and by whom he was sent; and he replied that he was a native of Muruca, a place where the Post of Essequibo is situated; that his name was Simaracuri, an Indian of the Aruac nation; that the purpose for which he came to the River Orinoco was to fish; that he was sent by a Dutchman called Fardull, and that the cargo consisted of a small quantity of salt. Being asked if he knew to whom the other vessels which were seized belonged, he replied that the schooner belonged to a Dutchman called Monk, and the launch to another called Bobre, and that they also came for the purpose of fishing. Being asked if he knew whether there were any Dutchmen buying *poitos*, and in what places they were to be found, he replied that he knew there were four Dutchmen in the Creek of Barima, with a number of Carib Indians, carrying on the traffic; that they were from the Colony of Surinam, and that it was impossible for a large vessel to enter the part of the said creek where these traders were, as it was much higher up and very narrow, and that this is what he knows in reply

to the questions; that he does not know how to give any account of his age or to sign, so their Honours signed it, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES  
LORENZO CORONADO

Before me

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

**490. DECREE**  
**[1 October 1760]**

In the City of Santo Thomé de Guayana on the 1st October, 1760, Don Suan Valdes, Captain Warden of this fortress on behalf of His Majesty, and Don Lorenzo Coronado, Lieutenant of Royal Officers, declared: That considering the declarations made to be adequate for the report which is being drawn up respecting the seizure of the Dutch schooner and two launches from the Colony of Essequibo which had entered this River Orinoco under pretext of fishing, but came for other objects of illicit trade, and for purchases of *poitos* from the Caribs, it was their duty to order, and did order, that the present Notary should draw up a copy of these documents, to be deposited in this Royal "Contaduria", and that the originals should be sent to the Superior Tribunal of Government and Finance; and in regard to the half-breed, Jan Batiste, who was well known, although in his confession he refused to give his name, and denied that he was a half-breed, saying that he was an Indian of the Aruak nation, and having maliciously stained himself with annatto, in order not to be recognized, his Honour the Commandant ordered that he should be put in irons in the fortress, to await the decision of his Lordship the Governor and Captain-General, and that he should be allowed one real daily for his maintenance, seeing that the Reverend Father Prefect is unwilling to admit him because of the serious mischief done by other half-breeds in the villages to which they have been sent, by taking to flight and carrying away others already settled and civilized. And in respect to the Indians, he arranged to send them to the said Reverend Father Prefect, to be distributed among the villages under his charge, agreeably to orders. And in respect to the cargo of fish, his Honour the Lieutenant of Royal Officers has been charged with its disposal for the benefit of the Royal Treasury, seeing that it is a class of goods which becomes stale and loses weight, and consequently decreases in value; and hereby their Honours have thus provided, ordered, and signed, whereunto I certify.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES  
LORENZO CORONADO

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury

**491. JUDICIAL REPORT OF THE ATTACK MADE BY THE SPANIARDS UPON THE DUTCH SETTLED IN BARIMA (1760)**

**[3 October 1790]**

*[Copies of the following documents are included in this Judicial Report sent to the Spanish Secretary of State.]*

1. "Autos" (decrees) formed upon the seizure of a schooner, two launches, and two canoes of Essequibo, by Infantry Lieutenant Don Juan De Flores, 7 September 1760 [Document No. 479 above].

2. Resolution, 27 September 1760 [Document No. 481 above].

3. Report of Survey, 27 September 1760 [Document No. 482 above].

4. Declaration of Don Juan de Flores, 29 September 1760 [Document No. 483 above].

5. Declaration of Pedro de Salas, 29 September 1760 [Document No. 484 above].

6. Declaration of Joseph de Sosa, 29 September 1760 [Document No. 485 above].

7. Declaration of Antonio Ravelo, 29 September 1760 [Document No. 486 above].

8. Decree, 30 September 1760 [Document No. 487 above].

9. Confession of Yana, the half-breed, 30 September 1760 [Document No. 488 above].

10. Declaration of Simaracuri, an Aruac [Arawak] Indian, 30 September 1760 [Document No. 489 above].

11. Decree, 1 October 1760 [Document No. 490 above].

\*

**12. Declaration by the Notary Public regarding the documents sent in the Judicial Report, 3 October 1760**

This copy agrees in its contents with the originals to which I refer, and which remain in this Royal "Contaduria" to be sent to the Governor and Captain-General and officers of the Royal Treasury of the City of Cumaná; it is accurately, truly, and legally written in one and the same handwriting, on twenty-three leaves, including this one, of ordinary paper, because stamp paper is not current. This I sign and seal on the 3rd October, 1760.

In testimony of the truth. (Seal)



(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE  
Notary Public, and of the Royal Treasury. (Rubric)

**492. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, WEST INDIA COMPANY, DATED DEMERARY**

**[24 October 1760]**

*(Extract)*

On the 1st September I received information that the fifteen fugitives were on the other side of the plantation Nieuw Walcheren, where it was impossible to take them with a few men, that being but four hours' distant from Cuyuni and the Blauwenberg. I immediately wrote to the Secretary to call a special meeting of the Court for the 4th, in order to deliberate upon the measures to be taken to put an end to this matter.

Meanwhile, I had sent warning to all the Posts, and had the coast guarded by the Carib nation, so that it should be impossible for the slaves to make off in that direction. The road to Cuyuni was open to them, because since the raid upon the Post there by the Spaniards the river has not been occupied, and the road to Orinoco is an open and easy one. . .

I have been obliged to send a detachment of four of the best soldiers to the Post of Maroco as quickly as possible because the Spaniards are beginning to put their horns out again. Besides a fine boat belonging to Mr. Persik, and used only for trade (to which, therefore, no blame attaches), they have also taken five canoes belonging to this Colony which were engaged in salting; on their way back they also took some canoes on this side of Barima, and thus within the Honourable Company's territory. Amongst these was the canoe of Aechtekerke and that of Duynenburg – a brand new one out on its first journey. They also threatened to deal with the Post in Maroco ere long in the same way as they had done with that in Cuyuni. I have given the Postholder instructions that in case such a thing should happen he was to defend the Post with his subordinate Indians to the last man, and I also made the necessary arrangements for an effectual defence.

To what will this lead, your Lordships? If such acts of violence are not stopped, what will the results be? The River Cuyuni is still unguarded, and presents an easy road to fugitive slaves. I have not yet re-established the Post there, always hoping that the matter might receive redress in Europe. I could not act in the matter without using violence, and this I would not do without special orders.

It being presumed that the taking of the boats was really the work of the Spaniards who came up this river with tobacco and other commodities, I have, at the request of Mr. Spoons, supported by the principal inhabitants, sent an order to the Post to let no Spaniards pass this way on any account whatever, except a single one who might be the bearer of letters from the Government. To say nothing of the annoyance occasioned by the loss of two such necessary boats, your Lordships' two plantations are now without provisions for the slaves, and without any means of obtaining them, the river being as good as closed by the French privateers, one of which, called "La Minerve", Captain Bernard L'Escaupeau, was last week in Demerary for fresh water; she had ten

pieces of artillery and ninety men on board, who behaved themselves in a proper and polite way. The second Captain, who came to me with the commission, told me that, having been informed by the capture of a vessel that old Mr. Clarke was coming here at the beginning of this month, sixteen of them had left Martinique together to catch him, and that five of them, of which his vessel was one, were cruising in the neighbourhood. About four days after his departure Mr. Buisson, who lives on the plantation De Goede Uytsigt, from which there is a full view of the sea, told me that he had counted more than 100 shots fired out at sea not far from the coast; it is very probable, therefore, that they met the afore-mentioned gentleman.

Under these circumstances, no English can enter the river with provisions, and I very much fear that two barques which we are expecting about this time from Rhode Island have fallen into their hands. This would land us in terrible straits.

**493. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO**

[16 March 1761]

*(Extract)*

The new outrages of the Spaniards in seizing the boat of Mr. Persik and the five canoes, which were busy salting, have greatly surprised us; but we could have wished that you had transmitted to us circumstantial and sworn declarations of all this, so that, acting upon these, we might have made the necessary remonstrances to the States-General about that matter. We shall still hope to receive these, and the earlier the better, together with the reasons why you deem that everything which has happened on this side of Barima must be deemed to have occurred on territory of the Company; in order that, when we shall have examined all this, we may take further resolution as to what it behoves us to do in this matter.

**494. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

[18 March 1761]

*(Extract)*

I am thus frequently coerced into talking a course which I really believe to be disadvantageous, and into which I am forced because I do not want to have seven-eighths of the Colony against me.

This is the case with the order I gave, last year to allow no more Spaniards to come up the river, for this measure really appears to me to be injurious to our interests.

I have always imagined that it was best for our inhabitants to send few or no boats to Orinoco, and so compel the Spaniards to come here with their merchandise; in this way our people would not be exposed to the least danger, and the arrangement began to work very well. But the jealousy of those who had been accustomed to have that trade in their own hands caused many remarks to be made concerning the permission given the Spaniards, and brought me many re-

monstrances. Seeing that I took no notice of all this, and merely answered that the trade was free, and that it was only right that all the colonists should be able to profit by it, they brought things to such a pass that, just before the arrival of R. Robberts, a Petition was laid before the Court in the name of the colonists, asking, amongst other things, that the permission should be withdrawn from the Spaniards, and that they should be forbidden to come here.

Finally, on the receipt of a despatch from Mr. Spoors in Demerary, which I have the honour to inclose, I was obliged to bring myself to issue the desired orders, which still hold good. From that despatch your Lordships will see how Mr. Spoors is also deceived. The report of the negro (who was, no doubt, put up to this) contains a most evident falsehood. The Spaniards whom he accuses, and who had come here with a large quantity of tobacco, could not have got so far on their return journey, and it has also been ascertained that they were in reality still at the Honourable Company's Post at Maroco when the event occurred; and I am also informed on very good authority that the canoes were taken by an armed boat, commanded by Captain D. Flores, who was sent out expressly to catch the Surinam rovers in Barima, and who captured everything that came in his way, which, so I am informed, did not bring him too much credit.

That trade is now at an absolute standstill, because everything in Orinoco being in disorder, the Commandant having been summoned to Cumaná, to answer several charges brought against him, no boats dare to go to that place, and none being allowed to come here the people who have always devoted themselves to this trade are left with their stocks in a state of great embarrassment.

#### 495. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[28 May 1761]

*(Extract)*

My Lords,

On the 18th March last I had the honour to write your Honours per the brigantine "Demerary Welvaeren", which I trust arrived safely. With the same vessel I had the honour to send your Lordships a copy of the map of this coast, which I had forgotten to inclose in my previous letter. I hope the matter concerning Cuyuni will be brought to a happy issue, because it is really of the greatest importance for the Honourable Company. As the case appears to me, there can be no dispute about it with the Court of Spain, it being only too clear and evident that the Post not only stood upon the Honourable Company's territory, but that that territory extends much farther.

I am informed by the Indians that messengers are still constantly being sent to that river evidently to ascertain whether we are reestablishing the Post, in which case they would probably again make a raid upon the same. . .

In Demerary everything is, thank God, going on prosperously, and the plantations in that river are doing well.

Whilst I am speaking of that river, I feel it my duty to suggest to your Lordships that since the coffee plantations there are beginning to make good yields, and the cocoa crop is also very good, it will soon be time for your Lordships to recall the permission kindly given some years ago to sell these products to strangers (on payment of certain dues). There is a great difference

between those times and now. At the time of the concession these products were merely extras and of no importance, but enabled the poor to buy what they required from the English. Your Lordships favour was then of very great service, but since these things are now in a fair way to become some of our chief products, and apparently of very great importance, it would not be at all reasonable to allow strangers to profit by them, and so damage the shaping of Zeeland.

As soon as there is a big fall in sugar it will also be necessary to impose a duty upon *kiltum*, because the English planters are sure to take that in hand at once. It will, however, be impossible to carry out this measure in a proper manner in Demerary unless your Lordships be pleased to increase the number of the garrison there to about a dozen soldiers, so that the captains may be compelled to show their passports to the harbour-master in order that we may know whether they have paid their dues. At the present time they treat the matter as a joke; not long ago an English captain named Metcalfe, after having concluded his business, left the river without a passport and without having paid a penny of the dues, letting the sentinels shoot as much as they liked. The two soldiers there could not prevent him from going, and I could not send more; because I have only seventeen more privates here, of whom but very few remain when there is some patrol to be sent out, as has frequently been the case lately. At the present moment I have sent one out to Wayni in search of a party of fugitives.

**496. SECRETARY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
[5 August 1761]

*(Extract)*

In compliance with these, your orders, I respectfully reply that the aforesaid boats, having been seized by those pirates between the rivers of Barima and Waini, were absolutely on the Company's coast, for this is certain (not to enter upon the various opinions which exist about the limits of the Company's domains) that the river of Waini indisputably belongs to the Company.

**497. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
[12 August 1761]

*(Extract)*

The Postholder of Maykouny has sent me word by his assistant that at 6 o'clock on the evening of Tuesday, the 28th July, he heard three cannon shots in Berbices and another at 7 o'clock, and a shot every minute right through the night. It is impossible to form any idea of what this means.

I have requested Mr. Secretary Spoons not to forget to send your Lordships a copy of the form of surety of the vessels departing from here, great care being taken that none depart without it, excepting those whose home is Zeeland.

The sworn depositions for which your Lordships ask concerning the canoes captured by the Spaniards cannot possibly be made out, especially those relating to the canoes which were out

salting, and which were consequently seized contrary to all right and reason. On those canoes there were no whites; there was only one negro, and the rest were free Indians. With regard to the others, the whites that were captured in them are prisoners in Orinoco, and are in the fortress there, and it will possibly be some time before they are released.

After taking everything out of the Company's canoe of Aechtekerke they let it go, and it came home, but they have kept the fine new canoe belonging to the plantation Duynenburg. The latter having been captured this side of Barima, I am of opinion that it was captured upon the Honourable Company's territory, for, although there are no positive proofs to be found here, such has always been so considered by the oldest settlers, as also by all the free Indians. Amongst the latter I have spoken with some very old Caribs, who told me that they remember the time when the Honourable Company had a Post in Barima, for the re-establishment of which they had often asked, in order that they might be relieved from the annoyance of the Surinam pirates; and then, lastly, because the boundaries are always thus defined by foreigners, as may be seen on the map prepared by D'Anville, the Frenchman, a small extract of which I have sent by the "Demerary Welvaeren".

These are the only reasons, your Lordships, upon which I base my opinions, because there are no old papers here out of which any information could be obtained. It appears to me that the Spaniards are not ignorant of this, else they would not have made so many complaints concerning the behaviour of the depredators in Barima. I believe that had they considered it to be their territory they would have found some means for stopping it, especially since they dared to do so in such a violent manner in Cuyuni, when they were perfectly convinced that that place was beyond their own jurisdiction. I hope this business will not be shelved, as it is of too great an importance for the Colony.

#### **498. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[28 August 1761]**

*(Extract)*

Everything in the upper part of the river is in a state of upset, the people who live there bringing their best goods down the stream. This is because a party of Spaniards and Spanish Indians in Cuyuni have been down to the lowest fall, where your Lordships' indigo plantation is situated, driving all the Indians thence, and even, it is said, having killed several. The Indians sent in complaint upon complaint. I fear that bloodshed and murder will come of this, because, if they come below the fall, the inhabitants will surely shoot upon them, and not allow them to approach, and what will the consequences of that be? We leave those people in peace. So long as I have had the honour of holding the command here I have embraced every opportunity of preventing the Indians from annoying them, and in this I have been fairly successful. Why cannot they leave us in peace? It is really insupportable how, contrary to the law of nature and the right of nations, they first come and attack our Post, make prisoner, and ill-treat the people in such a way that the Potholder's assistant has died from it, burned down the house and all it contained, and now still constantly come and disturb us.

It is no use complaining because the Commandant, Don Juan Valdez, in Orinoco, whilst

sending back the letter unopened which I had requested the Commandant to write to him, has written me to say that he is forbidden to enter into any written correspondence concerning the matter, and that we must address ourselves to the Court at Madrid.

If I were permitted, my Lords, to do as they are doing, I would risk my old head once more, and make them pay doubly for the annoyance they are causing us.

**499. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[5 October 1761]**

*(Extract)*

*October 5, 1761.*

Considering that a great deal of contraband trade is now carried on in the Cuyuni River, which must, of course, be very injurious to the free Indians.

It has been resolved, in order to put a stop to this as far as possible, to order every one trading or going up that river to provide himself with a proper pass, which must be shown to C. Crewitz, at whose residence they are to make a halt.

This C. Crewitz is in duty bound to investigate what kinds of articles are brought down from the Cuyuni, and especially by slaves. He is to send a report of the result of his investigation to the Director-General. He is to watch such slaves as might be inclined to run away, to follow them, take them, and bring them back, and receive payment for all his expenses.

**500. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[9 November 1761]**

*(Extract)*

Furthermore, there have occurred to us various considerations concerning the trade which is carried on from the Colony to Rio Orinoco. We beg you to consider whether it might not be possible, and more profitable for the Company, to direct this trade into such channels that it must be carried on from Orinoco to Essequibo, by the Spaniards; whereas it now, on the contrary, takes place from Essequibo to the Orinoco. On this point we shall await a detailed answer from you.

**501. REPORT BY DON JOSEPH SOLANO TO THE KING OF SPAIN ON GUAYANA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION, DON JOSÉ ITURRIAGA**  
**[15 December 1761]**

December 15, 1761.

Sire,

The Commodore, Don Joseph Iturriaga, makes known in his letter, written in Cabruta, of Orinoco, 16th June, 1757, that he sees no advantage in maintaining the Castle of Araya, there having been found other undefended salt mines. I am of the same opinion, as for many years it has been useless, because, permission having been conceded to the English [*sic*], by the third Article of the Treaty of Munster, concluded in 1648, permission to provide themselves with salt in the Isla de la Tortuga\*, this fort does not cover any essential part, nor will it prevent foreign vessels having access to Cumaná, and the coast of that province; nor can it defend it if the enemy should attack it, tempted by its strong position and the important commerce which they would (without hindrance) carry on from it with that province, that of Barcelona, the Island of Margarita, and the east part of Caracas, by their being so near to its coasts.

The description of the course of the River Apure made by the Lieutenants Don Vizente Doz and Don Nicolas Guerrero, and the report of the state of the villages of the Indians in the jurisdiction of Barinas, who were brought together and instructed by the Mission of the Rev. Dominicans, closely agrees with my information.

Besides what is explained by this report which Don Joseph Iturriaga incloses in his letter, dated in Cabruta, the 12th June, 1757, I find that the Barines, having learnt by experience that the value of their tobaccos in the neighbouring maritime Provinces of Caracas and Maracaybo declined in proportion as the crops increased, and that the price of the same in the seaports was scarcely equivalent to the expenses of the long and difficult transport, they opened to foreigners the navigation of the River Apure, which flows into the Orinoco, in order to divide the coast with them; but the introduction of these into the province caused loss to the landed proprietors and others concerned. The abandonment of the estates and depopulation would have followed had not the surplus population of the new Kingdom of Granada filled the place which the natives left; but a similar immigration was wanting in the villages of Indians, and in them the decadence continued, the conversion of the infidels being hindered at the instigation of those who needed them in the woods to carry on their illicit trade.

The third and fourth letter of Don Joseph Iturriaga, dated from Cabruta, the 15th December, 1757, and the 19th April, 1758, treat of the pretensions on the Orinoco openly put forward by the Governors of the Dutch Colony of the River Esquivo, on the ground that the titles which they have from the States-General give them this jurisdiction; notwithstanding I do not know that they have reclaimed the vessels which the Trinitarios and Guyanos took from them in the course of this river . . .\*\* Cuyuni in order to protect the districts where they were penetrating by the centre of Guayana to buy Indian slaves of the Carib nation; nor do I know on what they could found their claims; for though, by the Vth Article of the Treaty of Munster, the dominion of the countries, fortified places, factories, etc., were conceded to them which they at that time possessed in America, on the Orinoco neither they nor any others but the Spaniards alone ever held, or have since held, castles, or forts; nor customs duties, fishing, hunting, or use of the soil; nor can they found their right on the tacit or even express consent which the Commandants of Guayana and Orinoco have sometimes given them, to fish in the Boca de Navios and the Rivers Barima and Aguirre, which run into it; nor on the huts which they have built to sun and dry their fish, nor on the navigation which has been furtively allowed them as far as Guayana, or still further; nor can

they prove the legality of the armed Post they hold in the Rio Moruca, of which in like manner Don Joseph Iturriaga treats; it being prohibited them by the said Treaty to erect new fortifications under any pretext, and they can only allege the indifference with which this usurpation has been viewed by the Commandants of Guayana.

While, Sire, the Dutch are advancing their dominion to the great mouth of the Orinoco, and with easy navigation introduce themselves by it and by the Rivers Apure, Meta, and others, into the Provinces of Barcelona, Caracas, and Barinas, to the prejudice of the Royal Exchequer and the progress of the Spanish settlement, the Indian population, which had too largely increased in the neighbourhood of the chief towns and of the sea, penetrated further and further [inland], and made their way as far as the Orinoco, guided by, and sometimes united with, the missionaries; protected by this great river, and the assistance which the Dutch profit rendered to the Carib savages, the latter shut their ears to peace, disputed the navigation with the Spaniards, and the road with the missionaries; they caused the death of some holy men, of many faithful Indians, and burnt many of their new villages, suspended the progress of the propagation of our holy faith and the effective dominion of your Majesty, and the religious would not have been able to remain if the glorious predecessors of your Majesty had not supported their constancy with an escort of troops, and the shelter, such as it was, of the garrison and Castle of Guayana.

The situation of this fort, named San Francisco de Assisi, and that of the smaller forts, San Diego and Limones, though the only fortifications of Guayana and Orinoco, is advantageous for the protection of that province, defended in rear by the desert; and by being the key to that great river and defending the rear of Cumaná, Caracas, and Barinas, outflanked as they are by its well-known and easy navigation; but the gathering of these forces into one place seems to me, Sire, to waste the best part of their value in their own and mutual defence; on which account I lay what occurs to me at the feet of your Majesty, as your Majesty has had the goodness to command me.

Guayana is the most eastern province of the dominions of your Majesty in the northern part of South America; its boundaries are the western ocean on the east, on the coasts of which [are the Colonies of the French] at the mouth of the Amazon and those of the Dutch of Surinam and Esquivo, near the Orinoco; on the south, the Portuguese established on that famous river and the Rio Negro; and on the west and north the Casiquiari, branches to the Rio Negro from the Orinoco, and this great river, which are the eastern and northern boundaries of the unknown Ayrico (*sic*), and the extensive plains of San Juan Barinas Caracas, Barcelona, and Cumaná.

In the northern part of the said province, and at 40 leagues from the sea and 4 leagues above where the Orinoco divides itself into several branches, which inundate all the land they embrace, and fall into the sea to the east, west, and opposite the coast, of the Island of Trinidad to Windward, on the south bank of that river a Castle is raised on a rock at the eastern foot of a high and sloping hill; its form is a quadrilateral trapezium of 120 feet long, and 70 feet broad; on its western corners it has two bastions and in its curtain, the door above the cordon; in the north-east corner stand out two fronts which flank that of the south-west bastion, and the flank of a demi-bastion, which projects on the shorter side, so as to take in a rocky hill, which is 6 feet higher than the *place d'armes* of the Castle; and although they piled up the earth so as to cover it, and correspondingly raised the wall, the deficiency is still prominent over the cordon, and facilitates attack; the structure offers small resistance, and is neither defended by ditch nor stockade; a captain of the Castle and Commandant of the Province, a lieutenant, two ensigns, and 100 men form its garrison; it is armed with 18 cannons of from 16 to 24, and the eastern bastion or cavalier



surmounted with swivel-guns; it has a powder magazine, with a low roof, and very scantily supplied; sufficient shot for the mounted cannon, plain and cramped quarters for 40 men, a storehouse for a month's provisions, and river water from the conduit on the north front.

The small fort, named San Diego, which is on that hill or elevation, is a square of 37 feet on a side, in the interior, with four bastions, armed with four small cannons of the calibre of three, which point from the angles of the flanks. On the southern curtain, which faces towards the city, are two of four, other two on the eastern, which flank the rear of the Castle; four swivel-guns on the northern, which faces towards the river; on the western one of six with two of three, mounted on carriages and *en barbette*. Its fire extends to the defences of the Castle, of whose garrison there is a detachment for this fort. This company is lodged in a small tower in the middle, and their storehouse for provisions is there; it has neither ditch nor stockade, and its wall is of is of no strength, and 9 feet high towards the cordon.

In the rear of these forts and within musket shot are two lagoons which the overflow of the river enlarges by a channel which enters the west or that of the Baratillo by the west foot of the hill, connects them by the passage which they leave on the declivity, and discharge into the Orinoco itself on the east side, two musket shots from the Castle. The whole of this islet is covered with very thick wood, and in the vicinity of the fort there are several rocks, each of which can shelter 20 or 25 men; half a musket shot from the western fort of the Castle there is a break in the land, which serves as a harbour for the small boats, when the river is high, and when it is low 50 men can lie hid there, covered from the fire of either force. Between this cleft and the passage of communication between the lagoons there is a spur running from the hill of the Padras to, which without declivity, runs to the base of the Castle; behind this, and a musket shot from this fort, 200 men can be posted at the foot of the hill covered from the fire of either force, without other inconvenience than that which the small garrison of the Padrasto can sally forth and inflict on them. On this side and the south the small fort is inaccessible; on the north it is not so much so, but it is flanked by the western fire of the Castle; on the western slope or that of the Baratillo, the enemy can approach under cover to within pistol shot of its wall; and if it were necessary; bring artillery there sufficient to destroy it.

The city is to the south of the lagoon of the Baratillo, with no other defence than that which reaches it from the artillery of both forts; it is built on an open plain bounded by rocky and wooded hills a quarter of a league distant on the east, and at two and four leagues on the 'south and west; its climate is very hot and extremely unhealthy for Spaniards and Indians, not so much so for negroes. Its population, including the garrison of the forts, is 450 persons of both sexes, notwithstanding the antiquity of its foundation, the support which it receives by the payment for the troops which come to it annually, the many poor and unfortunate people who try to benefit by it, notwithstanding families from the Canary Isles who have come in to people it at different times, and notwithstanding that it has changed its position, without however going farther from the fort; its houses are of wood and clay, covered with palms, and the church is of the same materials. On the south are scattered eighteen villages of Indians, converted by the venerable Catalan Capuchin Mission, and though in those near the city there is sickness, in the more distant they enjoy good health; these Missions are guarded by eighteen men detached from the garrison of the Castle.

The small fortress which is being built on the eastern point of the mouth of the Limones branch is on the north bank of the Orinoco, opposite to the Castle, on low and wooded land,

which is flooded at the rise of the waters; it is oval, and its greatest diameter of 70 feet is parallel to the river; its fire with that of the Castle will close the passage for ships, but they will not mutually defend each other.

The Castle is inaccessible to the attack of ships, from the necessity of engaging it at anchor, and principally because those ships that draw 15 feet of water, which the great mouth of the Orinoco has, cannot resist the heavy fire of its artillery; but the situation of the fortifications and the disposition of their forces favour an attack by land, as also the fact that the enemy from their ships can cover a landing in the wood of the island of the Castle; in it they could form their attack on the cavalier bastion, but it would be easier and of more advantageous consequences for them to take possession of the city, which they will find already deserted by the few and feeble militia, who will retire, those who may remain being taken for the defence of the forts, and posting themselves in the passage of the lagoons, under shelter of the hill, and at the foot of the Padrasto, joining with those who may attack the small fort by the Baratillo; and with the people of the ships who, without quitting them, can harass the garrison of the Castle, threatening assault by the hill of the cavalier bastion, and preventing the succour to the Padrasto, can carry it by a *coup de main*, since a soldier can reach the foot of the wall without further difficulty, and the shoulder of his comrade will be sufficient assistance to mount upon the terreplein.

The Padrasto being lost, the Castle cannot defend itself, nor the small Fort of Limones, nor even that province; they would open the Orinoco and would uncover the rear of Cumaná, Barinas, and even Santa Fé, nor would there be forces left in that part to delay the advance of the enemy; nor could those from the neighbouring provinces on the banks of that river assemble for the recovery of so important a post, or find ships and provisions to pass to it; but if the city was situated 34 leagues higher than the Castle in the Angostura, where the Orinoco is narrowed to 800 yards, the troops would have a second post where they could recover themselves, and the advance of the enemy would be delayed; and larger forces being assembled there, they would soon find what was necessary to enable them to descend and dislodge the enemy without giving them time to fortify themselves. The militia would be sufficient to protect the population, and they would be increased, and could support the troops of the Castles, and these latter would fulfil the duty of soldiers without being embarrassed by that of citizens, husbands and fathers, to which they attended in the year 1740, abandoning the Castle to an English trader, who, in a small merchant-ship with seventy men, came to recover some sums of money from the Guayanos, by pillaging the city. The number of the troops could there be kept complete, owing to the ease of recruiting from the people of the Provinces of Barcelona and Caracas, who already begin to come to the river in that part from experience of its healthy climate. The foreigner doing illicit trade would encounter this second and difficult obstacle in the way of his entering the country, and injury caused by his coming in would be avoided; the guards of the Missions would be carefully provided, and, with this advantage, detachments of disciplined troops could be joined to the hundred men of Guayana, the guards of the Jesuits of the Orinoco and the Dominicans of Barinas; and the Chief who has charge of the key, and maintenance of your Majesty's dominions, would have these troops better prepared for their work, and in case of need could collect their detachments and increase their forces with those of the Indians, which each could bring from their respective districts.

The seventy-three men of those escorts being added to the hundred of the garrison of Guayana, and twenty-five of the small Fort of Limones, I do not see that for the present a more

numerous troop is necessary in order to hold that Post and protect the Missions; but it is necessary to have an honourable official, zealous and diligent, in the service of your Majesty, and of some skill in fortification, so that without delay he may fortify the two flat spaces before the east and west forts of the small fort of the Padrasto, with a stockaded fort, and parapet of fascines (*fagina*) and earth, and from the eastern platform flank the north front of the small fort and the passage between the lagoons with four great guns, and with smaller guns defend the ascent of the Baratillo to the small fort; cover this westerly front with a second stockade, raising the parapet of its curtain, and place on it three guns of six; and in order that there should be sufficient space to retreat into, pull down the tower which is in the middle of the fort and on its parapet raise pillars 4 feet in height, and on them a roof which will cover the *place d'armes* in order that it may protect the troops.

These defences of the Padrasto also defend the Castle, and the passage of the river with the fire of the Fort of Limones, and I am of opinion that they are sufficient, so long as the principal fort is built of lasting materials, leaving in the old Castle some cannon as a *batteric rasante*. Your Majesty will strengthen these measures by raising the Commandantship of the Orinoco into a Government; it is also important that the town should be removed to Angostura, and the Indian villages near its present site to a better climate; that those and the inhabitants of Guayana should remove all their herds, so that the hunger of the enemy should help our forces, and that the provision of fresh meat to the Dutch Colony of Esquivo may be made impossible or very difficult, and especially the provision of mules for its sugar mills; forbidding also that the cattle-farms of the Capuchin Mission of Guayana should leave the river unguarded, which is between them and that Colony; nor should there be any asses nor horses bred there, except what is necessary for taking the flocks to pasture. La Guayana being at Angostura, the illicit trade would cease, because of the obstacle of the fire of the Castle and the Fort of Limones, and its introduction would be rendered impossible if the garrison had two armed launches, which would relieve each other in reconnoitring, and would mutually assist each other; but in order to carry it on where the town is now, it is not necessary to come in sight of the forts, and without risk the smuggler can obtain the assistance of some one who will give it without witnesses. This obstacle will benefit Spanish commerce, which would be assisted by the pay of the troops of Guayana, the guards and missionaries, which would cease to support the foreign colonies.

They would collect skins on the banks of the Orinoco, which their masters do not carry to the sea-ports, as the profit of the barter does not equal the costs of the carriage, and also the tobaccos and cacaos of Barinas, and not a little from the Province of Caracas. The loss of many persons caused by the unhealthy climate of the present site of the City of Guayana would be avoided by removing it to Angostura; from that post the Governor can at any time promptly visit any part of his province, that of Caracas and Cumaná, and with his foresight protect the provinces of those Governors. With six small cannon he can defend the city, close that narrow pass, and hinder the Dutch from coming up to the Caura to buy slaves from the Caribs and to furnish them with arms and cultivate the hatred of the Spaniards, which have introduced among the Indians in order that there should be no failure of this harvest, which so much benefits their own neighbouring colonies; and as they derive no little advantage from the attitude of conquerors which the guards of the Missions adopt, and from their independence of the Governor-Commandant of Guayana, these should be united to the troops forming the garrison of the forts, and the Missions should be provided with detachments from this corps; the conduct of these disciplined troops would be

pleasing to the settled Indian, and feared by the savages; and one and the other would respect it as belonging to a respectable corps governed by a Chief; the obedience to him of the troops that have charge of the converted Indians would teach them to recognize him as a superior and to obey him.

The Commandant would have knowledge of those dominions of your Majesty owing to the [constant] movement of the Mission guards and the custom of visiting them; the journey of the detachment to the Missions of Barinas and the withdrawal of the relieved party would be another obstacle in the way of the illicit trade in the River Apure, and would move the savages to settle themselves; the escort of the officer in charge of silver, which could relieve the detachment at the Missions of Meta, would produce the same effect; the villages of the Lower Orinoco of the Jesuit and Franciscan Mission that do not need one permanently, because they have the troops in Angostura close to them [and] would be encouraged by being protected from the Carib invaders, and an officer with thirty men would keep the fortified towns of San Fernando de Atabapu safe-guard of the Casiquiari and San Carlos on the Rio Negro; and with these can be maintained the Guypunavis, Manetibitannas, Thosannas, Manaos, and others, that I had the good fortune to reduce to peaceful subjection to your Majesty, and I do not doubt the Indians of the frontier, who of themselves have managed to restrain the progress of the Portuguese rule, and who have asked for the protection of your Majesty, will be kept faithful by the protection of those few Spaniards, and will all embrace our holy Law.

For this end the Capuchin monks of the Province of Caracas are suitable, for they have converted, settled, and civilized those Indians, and they have no infidels on whom to employ themselves; for, though the Jesuits are contiguous to the Guypunavis, they have the numerous Guahiva nation in the western part of Orinoco between the Rivers Meta and Apure, and in the eastern part between Cuchivero and Zapariapu la Quagua, Mapoye, and Piaroa, on whom they can worthily employ their fervent preaching.

The Padrasto of the Castle of San Francisco de Asis de la Guayana being fortified and the Fort of Limones being armed, the city being moved to Augostura, and the villages near its present site being done away with, the troops that are in Orinoco, Apure, and Meta being brought together, a Governor of the Province of Guayana being appointed, the injurious introduction of foreigners will be made impossible, and the pious objects of your Majesty will be made easier of accomplishment.

This, Sire, is all that occurs to me to lay at the feet of your Majesty.

(Signed) DON JOSEPH SOLANO

(Seal)

*Notes:*

\* *There is evidently an error here. The third Article of the Treaty of Munster makes no such reference as mentioned in the text of this document.*

\*\* *Clearly something has dropped out here. It is evident that the passage intends to refer to the raid on the Dutch Post in the Cuyuni in 1758.*

---

**502. TABLE OF THE CAPUCHIN MISSIONS IN GUAYANA IN 1761**  
[1761]

*(Extract)*

*Notes Relating to the Map of the Viceroyalty of Santa Fé by Don Antonio*

[The statistical particulars that are on the margin of the map of the Government of Cumaná, drawn by Juan Aparicio in 1762.] The said statistics show the actual position of the cities, towns, posts, and other places of the Spaniards, learned foundations, Missions of the Indians, number of men capable of bearing arms, families, individuals, houses, farms, churches, contributions of the Indians . . .

[The said map is to accompany “the Reports of the visit made by the present Governor, Colonel Don Joseph [Diguja] Villagomez”]. . .

Missions in the Charge of the Reverend Fathers the Catalonian Capuchins of Guayana	Men capable of bearing arms	Families	Souls	Houses	Plantations	Churches
Of Capapui	159	159	634	97	..	1
„ Alta Gracia	122	122	499	86		1
„ Suay	72	72	224	51		1
„ Amaruca	65	65	230	..		
„ Caroni	60	60	225	34		
„ Aripuco	..	..	42	2		
„ Aguacaua	21	19	87	12		
„ Murucuri	70	70	329			
„ S. Jph. De Leonisa	103	66	271	20		
„ Guarimna	60	60	219			
„ Carapu	71	62	291			
„ Miamo	147	146	517	64		
„ Guaseipati	..	..	210	24		
„ Palmar	99	98	350	..		
„ Ave-Chica	..	..	191	18		
„ Piacoa	32	32	73	..		

*Note* – Column of reference to folios omitted.

The foregoing Tables are taken from the respective part of the folios and Reports that are mentioned, and are transmitted to His Majesty the King [of Spain] in Royal and Supreme Council of the Indies.

---

(C) Copyright 2001, by Odeen Ishmael