

- 14 -**From 1762 to 1770****503. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY****[9 January 1762]***(Extract)*

Trade with Orinoco is going on pretty fairly, a number of mules and horses having lately come from there. It is a pity that the mutual jealousy causes the trade so much hindrance. A little while ago a barque and some other small vessels belonging to Mr. Persik being on their way there, they fell in with a canoe belonging to Dr. B. Struys; the barque opened fire upon the canoe, and compelled it to hang back. The canoe, arriving late, could not get a single mule, and had to take only eleven horses. This causes bad blood, and such behaviour may possibly lead to the ruin of the whole business. I fear that this event may give some trouble to the Court when the barque returns.

504. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO**[11 January 1762]***(Extract)*

Concerning the affairs of Cuyuni we shall shortly present a further Memorial to the States-General.

With reference to the fresh troubles with the Spaniards mentioned in your letter we cannot refrain from observing that it seems strange to us that you did not claim the captured salters' vessels, especially those belonging to the Company's plantation of Duijnenburg; we request you furnish us as speedily as possible with the reasons why you refrained from doing so, since a refusal from the Governor of Cumaná would give us a better right to complain about these acts of violence to the Court of Spain.

505. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**[9 February 1762]***(Extract)*

I was very glad to see that your Lordships were pleased with my copy of D'Anville's map.

That map is not only the best, but the only one in which this coast is exactly and truly given, wherefore I did not rest until I had it, having seen the same in the hands of His late Serene Highness, who was kind enough to show it me as soon as it was published in the year 1751. I trust that your Lordships will not lose sight of the outrage in Cuyuni. That matter, my Lords, is of the utmost importance for many very weighty reasons, and more than any one in Europe could imagine. Neither my true zeal nor the real interest I take in the welfare of the Company or Colony, nor yet my oath and duty will allow me to sit still or to neglect this matter, and even if there were no important reasons which compelled the Honourable Company to take a real interest in the possession of Cuyuni, I cannot see why we should permit the Spaniards to disturb and appropriate our lawful possessions. Have they not land enough of their own, the possession of which is not disputed? Yes, much more than they can or ever will be able to govern.

They are not yet quiet, but send detachments from time to time, which come down as far as the lowest fall, close to the dwelling of your Lordships' creoles, by which both the settlers and our Indians are continually being alarmed, and take refuge each time down stream. This is very annoying. They must have great and important reasons to make such attempts to obtain possession of this branch of our river, and I have not the least doubt that such is the case, but I hope, too, that your Lordships may find a means of stopping them. . .

As long as the Almighty gives me strength I shall not relax my efforts in looking for and bringing back the runaways. I am far too deeply convinced of the important consequences of this matter to let it rest. So long as we have the good fortune to stand well with the Indians (and I shall always try to remain so), and keep them under our protection, so long, I say, we need have no fear, for every possible precaution has been taken along the sea-coast, and no negroes can get away unless the Indians connive at their escape or unless they go over to the Spaniards, which, since the occurrence at Cuyuni, can scarcely be prevented. It is some consolation, however, that those who do not go to the Spaniards cannot do us any harm.

As it happens, about ten of those who were on their way to Cuyuni have been captured and brought back by the settler Crewitz, who lives below the fall, and who was asked and authorized by the Court to act in that way. . .

The settler, Jan Dudonjon, having been sent to Orinoco to claim some black slaves who had run away from here and had been apprehended there, was not only unsuccessful in his mission, but was not even allowed to set foot on shore, and was obliged to return immediately. This treatment seems very strange to me. The orders of His Catholic Majesty are that either the runaway slaves are to be returned to their owners or their value paid. These orders were obeyed at first, and several of our settlers received compensation for their slaves. What is in the wind now I cannot tell, unless it be that the Commander there, Don Juan Valdez (who I am told has three of the runaways in his house), has no desire to pay, and therefore drives our Envoys away. Meanwhile, if the Court of Spain were informed of this gentleman's behaviour in the forbidden trade, which he alone carries on, though forbidding it to all others, I fancy that he would fare badly. . .

Wherefore I have compiled a similar (but much more accurate) one of this Colony, which I have the honour to send to your Lordships by this occasion, hoping it will fulfil its aim.

From this register your Lordships will be able to see what a small number of slaves there are in this Colony, and that it is really a matter of wonder where all the produce comes from.

Whether the returns of the slaves are properly and truly made out by the settlers there is great reason to doubt, because there are many who have an elastic conscience, or probably none at all.

(Signed) L. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE

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Inclosure: Register of the Colony of Essequibo and Demerary (1762)

(Extract – Title page)

Register of the Colony of Essequibo, Demerary, and the dependent districts.

Situated on the north coast of South America, at about 7° latitude north and 42° longitude: from the Creek Abari on the east to the River Amacura on the north, and comprising the Rivers Demerary, Essequibo, Pomeroun, Weyne and the large Creeks Maykouny, Maheyka, Wacquepo, and Maroco, being a stretch of land along the sea-coast of about 120 [Dutch] miles, of 15 in 1°.

Belonging to the Honourable General Chartered West India Company of the United Netherlands, under the administration of the Chamber at Zeeland.

[Here follows a list of the Company's officers, plantations and of the colonists].

506. THE COURT OF POLICY OF ESSEQUIBO TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[18 March 1762]

(Extract)

We have given careful attention to the matters which your Lordships were good enough to submit to our consideration concerning the trade which is carried on between this Colony and the River Orinoco, asking us whether it would not be possible and more advantageous to the Honourable Company if such trade were so managed that the business would have to be contracted for by the Spaniards from Orinoco in this territory instead of our people going to Orinoco, as is now the case. In reply to this we take the liberty of respectfully answering that that trade is not nearly so profitable as appears to have been made out to your Lordships. It really consists of mere bagatelles, and is considered so risky and precarious that not more than two of our settlers (Persik and Struys) carry on trade with that Spanish river. Their boats are mostly manned by Spaniards, who are intrusted with the business both in cattle and tobacco. We also consider it inexpedient to take up this business, which, by the way, is forbidden by the Crown of Spain, seeing that none of our settlers are accorded a pass to Orinoco (as your Lordships know), but are only allowed to have one in St. Eustatius.

507. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[3 April 1762]

(Extract)

I hope their High Mightinesses will be pleased to arrive at a favourable Resolution respecting

the affairs of Cuyuni, and receive justice in this matter from the Court of Spain. . .

The reason why I did not claim the boats captured by the Spaniards is as follows:

The settler Jan Dudonjon having been sent by me to Orinoco with special authority to claim (in accordance with the orders of His Catholic Majesty) a few runaway slaves who were prisoners there, the Commandant there, Don Juan Diaz Valdez, not only refused to give him a hearing, but forbade him to set foot on shore, ordering him to depart at once, and sending him word that he might go to Cumaná, though he knew full well that if the man was not allowed to land he could not possibly get there.

Prior to this he had also returned to me unopened a letter which I had asked the Commandant to write to him. Of what use would it therefore be to take further steps? One cannot even get a refusal when the letters are thus sent back unopened, and the Envoys are driven away unheard.

(Signed) L. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE

508. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[17 May 1762]

(Extract)

From the reports received from the upper part of the river, I learn that the Spanish Indians of the Missions continue to send out daily patrols as far as the great fall (just below which your Lordships' creoles live); all the Caribs have also left that river, and gone to live above Essequibo.

I do not know how matters stand in Post Arinda; the Postholder ought to have come down the stream in October last, or should have sent his assistant. Up to the present I have seen nothing of them, which astonishes me greatly, and whatever inquiries I make I can get to hear nothing of them, so that I do not know whether they are alive or dead. It is my intention to send someone out as soon as possible to make inquiries into the reason of this long delay.

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

[23 August 1762]

(Extract)

Up to this time not the least answer has been received from the Court of Madrid to the Memorial about Cuyuni presented by us to the States-General. In view of this, it is our intention to shortly present a further Memorial upon that subject to the States-General, with addition of what has happened since, and especially of the matter of the colonist I. Dudonjon. This further Memorial will probably now be of more influence and effect, because of the war with England.

Notwithstanding all the reasons alleged in your letter, we could have wished that you had duly claimed the captured salters' vessels; a refusal from the Commander of the Orinoco would have given us a better right to complain to the Sovereign, and we recommend you to address the

Government in Orinoco directly and as speedily as possible concerning anything that might henceforth happen with the Spaniards.

510. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO COMMANDER, DEMERARY

[23 August 1762]

Middelburg, August 23, 1762.

To the Commander of Demerara, Laurens Lodewijk van Bercheyek.

Sir,

From your letter of the 31st March of this year we have seen that you would not be disinclined to make a map, based on actual surveys, of the river of Essequibo, provided we could resolve to aid you as to the expenses. However, before we take any final decision on this head, we must know:

First, how great would be the sum of money, to be paid once for all, which you would need, while taking upon yourself all the necessary expenses, to survey and make a map of the aforesaid river.

Second, whether on that map, or on a separate one, there might not on that occasion be brought in the coast from Essequibo as far as Orinoco, with an accurate location of the mouths of the Rivers Pomeroon, Waini, and Barima, and such others as empty into the sea between Essequibo and the Orinoco.

And, finally, *third*, how long a time you would need for all this.

As to all of which, we shall await your answer, and we, moreover, inform you herewith that we have taken the necessary measures for having the Demerara letters henceforth dispatched in a separate letter-bag.

(Signed) A. DUVELAAR
PS. RIBAUT

511. SECRETARY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[25 August 1762]

(Extract)

On the 16th of this month the Director-General returned to the fort from Demerara.

On the 17th, whilst I was attending the funeral of the late Surgeon-Major. Dijkman, the Director Pipersberg came and reported to me that his salter's canoe had been seized by the Spaniards near the River of Weyne, with 8½ hogsheads of salt-water fish, the creole messenger, Jan Broeck, belonging to the plantation of De Pelgrim, having fortunately escaped and come home. These occurrences do a deal of harm, and I immediately proceeded to the Director-General, and

requested him to claim this canoe without any delay in the name of their High Mightinesses and your Lordships, although it was not worth half as much as the boat that was last captured from Duynenburg. His Honour promised me to do so, and I trust that it will turn out well. Acting upon some reliable information I received, I have allowed no canoe belonging to your Lordships' plantations to go out salting to Orinoco this year; but if we may not go as far as Weyne, which is your Lordships' river as much as this one, I did not know what to do in future to get food for the slaves. If no English cod (which is now scarce, and runs to 4 pence and 5 pence per pound) or dried fish can be obtained, the slaves will have to go without provisions, and that can bring no good results.

I presume that this last canoe, as well as that of the colonist Buisson, was not taken by Spaniards from the Orinoco, but by pirates from Trinidad or Margarita.

(Signed) ADRIAAN SPOORS

P.S. – I have just heard that the canoe of De Pelgrim was captured by a boat from Trinidad, and was afterwards stranded and broken, and therefore useless.

512. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[28 August 1762]

(*Extract*)

On my return from Demerary, the news arrived at the fort that the canoe of your Lordship's plantation De Pelgrim (laden with salt fish) and that of the settler, Andries Heyse, had both been captured in the mouth of the River Wayni (indisputably the territory of the Honourable Company), by whom it is not known, since none of the Indians have come home. But the salter, a creole of De Pelgrim, who, on the approach of the attacking party, jumped overboard and swam to shore, has told us that the capture was made by the crew of a small schooner, well armed and well manned.

It was thought that this was again an act of the people of Guayana, but Don Rodriguez, who has lived in this Colony for about five years, and who has frequently performed the journey to Orinoco, coming home about four days after the tidings had reached us, assured us that no ship had left Orinoco, they being all kept in (except such as are lying on the watch) through fear of the English, and that this outrage could only have been committed by the French or by pirates from the Island of Trinidad.

Heer Vleeshouwer, who had been lying in Trinidad on board the "Willem Zeelandus," also told me that he saw a schooner of that kind lying ready to depart.

From all these circumstances it appears that it was the same ship of which I spoke in my last...

The Postholder of Maroco has come up stream, and has reported to me that he has been warned on three different occasions by the Warauws of Trinidad that it is the intention of the Spaniards to make a raid upon that Post, and has asked for reinforcements.

The garrison being extraordinarily weak, and finding myself compelled to send at least eight

men to Demerary, I was unable to give him any men, but instructed him to engage one or two mulattos for three months at soldiers' wages if he could get them, telling him that I would provide them with arms and ammunition; in such cases these people are better than soldiers, for they can make their way through the bush and speak the Indian languages.

The Indians around the Post are continually asking for guns and cutlasses; as it is impossible to spare these now I am compelled to ask your Lordships to send me a parcel of good guns and cutlasses. These will be urgently required, especially if the piracies continue, in which case we shall be obliged to employ the Carib nation, who cannot or will not fight without guns.

Having written thus far I receive a despatch from Maroco, in which I am informed that it is the people of Trinidad (as I thought) who commit the piracies. I have immediately written by express Indians to the Governor of Trinidad.

513. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[29 August 1762]

(Extract)

The Indians have also informed me that the Spaniards up in Cuyuni are engaged in building boats. What can all these things mean, my Lords? I fear that this may lead to the entire ruin of the Colony (which God forbid) unless rigorous measures are taken. Our forbearance in the matter of Cuyuni makes them bolder and bolder. At the time of that occurrence the Caribs were full of courage and ready for all kinds of undertaking; now they are all driven away from there and have retired right up into Essequibo.

514. DIRECTOR-GENERAL STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE TO THE GOVERNOR OF TRINIDAD,

[November 1762 – Exact date not shown, but believed to have been written in early November 1762]

Sir,

I have had the honour to write to your Excellency by Don Fernando Felipe Lopez, and to reply the letters with which it has pleased your Excellency to honour me.

These lines will be handed to your Excellency by Mr. Abraham Van der Cruysse, a member of the Court of Policy of this Colony, whom I take the liberty of sending as a flag-of-truce, with the commission and full power to demand justice from your Excellency, and to claim the goods seized, contrary to the law of nations, and contrary to the tenour of the Treaties existing between His Catholic Majesty and their High Mightinesses, by an armed vessel of your Excellency's Government at the mouth of the River Demerary, and also at that of the River Wayni, and also compensation for the damage caused by these deprivations.

In the commission given by your Excellency to Don Fernando Lopez I have seen that the corsair had alleged that the boat which he took at the mouth and even in the River Demerary had no passport – a very frivolous excuse and an ungrounded one, since passports are never given to

boats going from one plantation to another, and which are going to board vessels in the Colony itself, and since this is only done for boats which go from one country or from one Colony to another.

On the other hand, Sir, the Company's boat from which he took the salt fish at the mouth of the Wayni, and which he afterwards smashed, and that of our colonist Andries Heyse, which he pillaged, were both provided with passports in due form.

On the boat belonging to Mr. J. B. Struys, which he captured at Demerary, there were one white and four free Indians, and from that which was at Wayni he carried off a free Indian, saying that he had need of him to show him the way to Demerary. I therefore take the liberty to claim these six persons, one white and five Indians.

Mr. van der Cruysse will have the honour to set forth this affair more fully by word of mouth. I beg your Excellency to be good enough to have faith in his representations, and I flatter myself that your Excellency will have the kindness to do him full and prompt justice, assuring your Excellency that on all similar occasions your Excellency will find me ready to act in a reciprocal manner.

I have taken the liberty to give the bearer another letter for your Excellency concerning what you were good enough to write to me respecting the inhabitants of your Excellency's Government. . . .

Your Excellency's very humble and obedient Servant,

(Signed) L. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE

Rio Essequibo, November, 1762

(Original: French)

515. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[6 November 1762]

(Extract)

Its captain is named Onorato Ir, or, familiarly, Captain Daniel, being Captain of the coast-guard of Trinidad which was once here with tobacco at the time when the "William Zeelandus" was lying before the fort. His Lieutenant is named Juan Billigas.

One of the prisoners, a negro, has often waited upon Mr. Vleeshouwer in the Captain's house at Trinidad, and one of the other prisoners lived for some years with Mr. Persik, and was brought up by him.

When they came on shore to Mr. Persik, a Spaniard from Orinoco, who happened to be there with his wife, hid themselves in a dark place. These rogues spoke amongst themselves in the Waykier language, which they well know is not understood here. Taking a good look round, they said there would not be much difficulty in plundering the plantation, which, being understood by the Spanish woman, she immediately repeated to Mr. Pervik after their departure. As it is feared that the pirate may return, Mr. Zeager's vessel is kept in readiness, and eight to ten citizens keep

a look-out on Amwabiesjes by turns.

The Postholder of Maroco being here, as I had the honour to inform your Lordships in my last, I gave him a despatch to the Governor of Trinidad, with orders to send the same by Indians of that island as soon as possible.

Instead of executing that order, I understand from his assistant, who came here on the 14th September, that he has not even returned to the Post, but that he is staying up in the bush through fear of the Spaniards, and that he had sent to the Post for his belongings.

This reprehensible conduct made me very angry; and I have sent him orders to come here at once, it being my intention, should he not be able to exculpate himself, to give him a gun and make him serve the remainder of his time as a soldier.

I would like to give the Post to his assistant, a stout-hearted fellow, who was formerly the Postholder in Cuyuni, and unfortunate enough to be taken prisoner and sent to Cumaná, but he endured so much at that time that he is in a bad state of health, and only just able to walk.

It is also my intention to send an Envoy to Trinidad, but so long as I am not perfectly certain that the pirate has gone, I dare not do so; fearing that if he met my messenger he would murder him, in order that the complaint of his conduct should not reach the proper quarter.

On the 11th September the Carib nation unexpectedly sent messengers down the river, inquiring how matters stood with the Spaniards, saying that they would certainly not allow the latter to obtain a footing here, and that they were ready to aid us with all their might.

I answered them that there was no great danger yet, it being only one small pirate who was causing this commotion, but I requested them to be good enough to keep their arms and boats ready to come down at the least warning, and that in such an event we would provide them with powder and shot. This they accepted and promised. . .

My letter to the Governor of Trinidad is sent off; but I have not yet received any reply.

(Signed) L. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE

516. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WEST INDIA COMPANY

[25 November 1762]

(Extract)

Whilst I am writing I receive a letter from Mr. Persik, informing me that a flag-of-truce or cartel boat from Trinidad has arrived on the river with letters from the Government there to me, the bearer of which, who was a member of the Council there, he himself, together with Mr. Van der Cruysse, would bring to me on Monday the 15th.

These gentlemen having come to me, and the letters being opened, we understood, as far as we could make out from that of the Governor (who has only lately arrived from Spain) that he had had the goods that were captured by the pirate, and mentioned in my last letter, impounded, and that the same were lying at the disposal of the owner; he also requested that someone might be sent to claim them, together with the costs, etc.

The second, from the governor and Council, was to announce that they had unanimously resolved to declare the communications between this place and that island open and free.

This may prove of great advantage to this Colony. I immediately wrote to Mr. Courthial requesting him to come here to translate and copy the letters. Should he come before the departure of this vessel, I shall have the honour to inclose copies of the same, otherwise they will be sent by the next opportunity.

I shall send to Demerary this week for the prisoners who were put on board "De Hoop" by order of the Court (to be sent to Europe), and will let them depart with the Spanish Envoy. As things have turned out, it is a good thing that the ship has not yet gone. . .

Being on the point of concluding this, and thinking that the letter-bag would be closed to-day, according to arrangements, I hear by a side wind that Captain Minkevelt is staying fourteen days longer, though he did not let me know anything about it. I am therefore enabled to send your Lordships a copy of the translation of the Spanish letters from Trinidad, together with a copy of my first despatch to the Governor of that island, which the Commandant of Orinoco, Don Juan Valdez, was polite enough to return to me, refusing not only to deliver the same, but also compelling the bearers to depart at once. This is his usual mode of treatment. I sent off the aforesaid despatch with the flag-of-truce, and together with another letter containing, however, only compliments, and informing the Governor that the Councillor Abraham van der Cruysse would leave here in the middle of this month as a flag-of-truce, and in order to settle matters concerning the pirate and the further contents of the Spanish letters. The papers for Mr. van der Cruysse are ready. I have sent my letter for the Governor to Mr. Spoor this morning in order to have it entered.

(Signed) L. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE

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Inclosure: Director-General Storm Van 's Gravesande to the Governor of Trinidad, November 1762 [Document No. 514 above].

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

[29 November 1762]

(Extract)

The outrages of the Spanish pirate from Trinidad surprise us in the highest degree. You did very well in complaining about this by an express to the Governor of Trinidad. If you do not obtain complete satisfaction, we request you to collect the necessary attestations of everything, and to send them to us at the earliest moment, together with your letter to the Governor of Trinidad and his answer thereto, in order that we may be enabled to address ourselves upon this subject to the States-General. We approve of your having authorized the Postholder in Moruca to engage one or two mulattoes for two to four months at soldier's pay. We also send you herewith fifty muskets and cutlasses, so as if need be to arm therewith the natives for the defence of the Colony; moreover, you receive by this ship eight men for the reinforcement of the garrison. . .

We applaud the zeal you have shown for the defence of the Colony in the affair of the afore-

said Spanish pirate, and we ask you to transmit us as soon as possible the examinations of the four prisoners if they are of any consequence. The rumours concerning Cuyuni are too vague to base upon them a call for assistance from the sovereign authority, but you will do well to inform yourself about the matter with perfect certainty by sending out reliable persons, or even an express patrol. . .

518. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[22 February 1763]

(Extract)

But do your Lordships not think that we might, meanwhile, and without exercising the least violence, again take possession of the Post in Cuyuni, and place a subaltern officer there with ten or twelve men as a guard, against which I do not think the Spaniards would dare to undertake anything? I take the liberty of recommending this to your Lordships' serious consideration as a matter of great importance both for the Honourable Company and for the Colony, several slaves having already run away in that direction, and the Colony lying open on that side to all Spanish undertakings. . .

I was very pleased to hear that the Register of the Colony met with your Lordships' approval, and I have the honour to inclose herewith, according to your Lordships' instructions, a similar one made out on the 1st January of this year. . .

I shall not fail to address myself to the Spanish Government in future in case anything happens. But, my Lords, if letters are sent back unopened, and they are treated as my last one to the Governor of Trinidad was treated in Orinoco, I see no other advantage in doing so than that which your Lordships are pleased to mention – that it forms a better ground upon which further claims may be based. The gentlemen there are so ridiculously grand that they took it as an insult that I sent them a sergeant on the former occasion, and they asked whether no better qualified persons were to be found in this Colony.

Our Councillors and citizens are not at all inclined to undertake such commissions. Mr. van der Cruysse (whom I expect back shortly) was good enough to undertake the last commission to Trinidad, but he would certainly not have done so had he not had something else in view, which it is very easy to understand.

Everything is going on pretty well at Post Arinda, I having discharged the Postholder on the last day of December 1762, on account of his neglect and unpardonable laziness; and appointed the assistant, Hendrick Bakker, in his place; but I have as yet selected no fresh assistant, because I would like to have a competent and trustworthy person.

Whilst considering the importance of that Post and the meagre knowledge we have of it, I came to the resolve last year to send two persons, named Elias Lindgreen and Joseph la Chau, who appeared to me very competent to undertake such a matter, up the River Demerary and so to the Post and further up Essequibo for discovery. But as the best planned undertaking often miscarries, ill-luck willed that these two persons fell out, Joseph la Chau returning to me from the Post and the other proceeding on his journey alone, from which I promise myself but little good.

Joseph la Chau brought me one of the most exact accounts of his journey that I have ever

seen, and since both that and the list of necessities made out by him in view of such an undertaking have convinced me of his fitness, I resolved to immediately send the list to Mr. de Bruyn, with a request to furnish me with the things at the first opportunity. It is my intention to send the same person up river again as speedily as possible and well escorted, and to risk a little sum in this because I feel pretty certain that it will be of very great use, and bring us much profit, over and above the fact that an acquaintance with the interior and the course of our river is well worth the trouble expended; the only reason why such was not done much earlier is that I had no proper people to do it. . .

I was very pleased to hear that your Lordships were satisfied with the Map of Vlaggen Eyland, and I heartily wish that I could send your Lordships a correct map of this river. I have spoken about the matter to my son-in-law, and have strongly urged him to undertake the work. This he is quite ready and willing to do; but my Lords, this is an entirely different work from that of sketching Demerary. The breadth of the river, the many islands that are in it, some of which are, I believe, a third of the size of the Island of Walcheren, and which would all have to be separately measured, because the map must be precise if it is commenced at all; all this makes the work difficult and tedious. . .

The Postholder of Arinda has reported to me, and his report has been corroborated by Joseph la Chau, who came down from the Post about that time, that the nation of Manoaas (called here along the bank Magnouws), being dissatisfied with the treatment they received from the Portuguese of Brazil, had resolved to come to this Colony to make a Treaty of Commerce with us, and that a strong body had set out with that object. Also that the Carib nation, jealous of its trade, had a few years before my arrival in this Colony (as the old Protocols show), been the means, by bringing false information of getting the Envoys of that nation badly treated (several of them having been killed), and that, moved by the same spirit, it had now assembled on hearing this news, and had lain in ambush for the Manoaas in order to prevent their progress. This caused a sharp fight in which both sides lost heavily, but the Caribs were totally defeated and put to flight. The Manoaas, feeling themselves too weak after their losses, postponed their journey till this year, and sent word to the Postholder that they would come down in such numbers as to have no fear of the Caribs. On the other hand, the Caribs are assembling from all sides in order to oppose them, so that it is possible that we shall this year see one of the bloodiest and most obstinate fights that has probably taken place in these parts for 100 years or more. I hope the Caribs may get a good hiding, because I have always wished to see a few Manoaas here, being convinced that it would be of considerable advantage to this Colony. Mr. Bandeyra, who was the second voice in Brazil, and who had fled from there on account of some difference with the Bishop of Pernambuco, and had lodged with me here for some weeks, having given me full information concerning that nation and the great advantages the Portuguese derived from it.

I have informed the Chiefs of the Manoaas, through the Parhawaens, their friends, that we should welcome them and receive them well; that in order not to give umbrage they should, however, not come down stream in such great force, but that on arriving at the Post their Chiefs could come here under the escort of the Postholder or his assistant, whilst the others would wait there; and that the Caribs would not dare to do anything to them whilst they were under that escort. I am very anxious to hear the outcome of this matter.

Inclosure: A Register of the Colony of Essequibo and Demerary for 1763, similar to that for 1762. [No details given]

**519. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[9 March 1763]**

(Extract)

Mr. A. Van der Cruysse is to my great wonderment not yet back from Trinidad, so that I cannot have the honour to inform you of the outcome of his negotiation.

The preliminaries of the peace being signed, I have suspended the engagement of the mulattoes for the post of Moruca – I had not yet been able to obtain them.

I have just received information that a mutiny has broken out upon the principal plantation in Canje, that two whites have been murdered, and that all the slaves have run away. Desertion in Berbice is getting very common, and matters are daily becoming more dangerous. My garrison is very weak, and the citizens not very willing. I fear that I shall have to go to Demerary earlier than I intended.

I shall write to Post Arinda as soon as possible to instruct the Postholder to induce the Carib nation, by the promise of a recompense, to take up arms in this matter.

I shall not be remiss in carrying out as promptly as possible your Honours' orders regarding Cuyuni.

**520. COMMANDER OF DEMERARY, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[10 March 1763]**

(Extract)

Concerning the second Article I have the honour to say to you that the coast has been drawn so accurately and so well by M. D'Anville that I could not make an improvement upon it; nevertheless, I am willing, when making a Map of the River Essequibo, to put in the sea coast up to Barima, in order to make the map of more importance. I need three years in order to make it accurate and good. . .

**521. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[2 May 1763]**

[After a long description of the slave-rising in Berbice, he proceeds:]

At the beginning of these troubles I had sent to Upper Essequibo to warn the Indian nations, and, if possible, to get them to take up arms. They did, indeed, hold their arms in readiness, but

went no farther. It has therefore been resolved by the Court that Joseph de Meijer, a person who is well acquainted with all the inland roads, and has a perfect knowledge of the languages, is to go up the river and place himself at the head of the nations; that he is to closely besiege the upper part of Berbice, close all the passes, and capture, living or dead, all who take that road, the Post-holder having strict orders to accompany him, and to afford him aid in all matters.

The aforesaid Meijer has orders to send expresses from time to time informing us of all he learns, and to hold himself in readiness in case it should be necessary to attack the rebels from the side of Demerary (of which he should be immediately informed), to drop down stream with his men in order to assist in the attack.

I have written this week to the Governor of Surinam, and by a boat which I am dispatching in a few days' time to Berbice I shall write to the Governor there to acquaint him with these measures.

Mr. Van der Cruysse has at last (after we had already given him up for lost) returned from Trinidad, his journey having been of little use. He has, so he reports, gained the law-suit against the pirate, but as the latter has appealed to [the Court at] Margarita it is shelved for a time, and I fear that we shall receive but little justice. I have sent the letters which he has brought from the Governor of Trinidad to Mr. Courthial to be translated, their contents being still unknown to me. I hope that they may arrive in time to enable me to send them by this vessel.

522. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[20 June 1763]

(Extract)

I had sent one Joseph de Meijer (appointed for this purpose by the Court) to Upper Essequibo to unite the Caribs and other nations, who were already informed of his coming, to closely guard the upper portion of Berbice, and to await my orders there.

523. EXTRACT FROM A JOURNAL KEPT BY L. L. VAN BERCHEYCK, DEMERARY

[20 June 1763]

Erhard Attingh tells me that P. A. Scheuneman has written to him saying that Joseph Meijer, with the Caribs up in Demerary, had killed ten out of the twenty corrials full of inland Indians who had come to kill the Acuway Owl (or Chief) named Condo, that he had put the others to flight, and that he had already departed with his Caribs to Berbice in order to fight the rebellious negroes.

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

[7 July 1763]

(Extract)

You receive however, by this ship twenty soldiers, the expense of which we will bear. Our intention is that, so long as the present danger lasts, you employ them for increasing the garrison of Rio Demerary, or wherever you shall think they may be of use for the greater security of the Colony.

However, when the danger shall have entirely ceased, we should like you to employ ten or twelve of these men for manning the Post in Cuyuni; but it seems unadvisable to us to do it sooner, to avoid getting into hot water on two sides at the same time.

If before the departure of "De Hoop" we receive no further and more favourable news, we shall send you by that ship thirty men more, though (as you yourself request) at the expense of the Colony. . .

525. SECRETARY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[12 July 1763]

(Extract)

The uncertainty of how they would be treated by the Spanish is the reason why I have this year dared to send no boats belonging either to the Company or to myself out salting to the coast of Orinoco. The slaves are, therefore, obliged to make the best of what I can give them.

526. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[18 July 1763]

(Extract)

Having since received a report that our Envoy, Joseph de Meijer, had passed the upper part of Demerary with a considerable body of Caribs, and had posted himself in Upper Berbice, I immediately dispatched a boat to Berbice to inform the authorities of this fact.

527. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO
[20 July 1763]

(Extract)

We approve the explorations which you intend having made above the Post Arinda, and likewise we have no doubt that, if they are carefully done, they will be of no slight importance to

us. In view of this, we take upon ourselves the expenses occasioned thereby.

From your explanations we understand very clearly that an exact Map of Rio Essequibo cannot be made except at an outlay which we think it best to avoid at a time when, on account of the aid sent, the Colony will cost us such a notable sum above the usual budget.

We are sorry that the ex-Councillor van der Cruysse has not been more successful in his mission to Trinidad, especially with respect to the reclamation of the boats seized, or rather, taken by robbery; for of the proposed commerce we never had great expectations, neither do we believe that it would have suited the inhabitants of the Colony over much.

528. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[27 September 1763]

(Extract)

Beginning with Essequibo, I will first mention the Posts or so-called trading-places, four in number, of the Honourable Company.

The first is Maroco, situated between this river and Orinoco, under the direction of which are the Rivers of Pomeroun and Weyni, full of Indians of the Carib, Arawak and Warouw nations, whose help is always required both by the Company and by private salters and traders, and who have also to be kept in a continual sort of subjection in order to prevent the escape of runaway slaves, and to facilitate their capture.

The road to the Spaniards leads past this Post, so that no one can go that road without the knowledge of the Postholder, who therefore, if he wishes, can generally get to know what is going on in Orinoco. This Post was of very great importance when trade was still carried on there for the Honourable Company; it then furnished *oerane* dye and boats, and since the cessation of trade there is a great want of the latter.

On the other side of the river is the second, namely, Maycouni; between Demerary and Berbice. The chief use of this Post just now is really to keep possession of the country, for without it Maycouni would already have been inhabited some time from another side, concerning which matter I had the honour to write fully some years ago.

Formerly this Post used to furnish a considerable quantity of *oerane* dye and boats as is to be seen in the old business books.

The third is Post Arinda, above Essequibo, really intended for the trade in red slaves and dye and for the further exploration of the lands and nations of the interior, as well as to prevent the slaves making off in that direction.

The fourth, and last, is the still abandoned Post in Cuyuni, abandoned since the raids of the Spaniards, a Post of the very greatest importance, because the Spaniards, in order to get to this river, and the slaves in order to escape to them, have a free and open road, and also because the Spaniards have driven away the Caribs who lived there; and who could apprehend and bring back the runaways. . .

The Chief of the Acuway nation above Demerary has come down with two negro girls and three hands of negroes, bringing information that he had made a night attack upon the plantation De Savonnette, in Upper Berbice, and killed fifty-five negroes, men, women, and children, of the

rebels, that on the approach of the neighbouring rebels he had been obliged to desist, his party being only seventy-seven strong, and that he had therefore retired without having had one man killed or wounded; that on the journey back he had met a considerable number of Caribs making their way to Berbice, to whom he had given all the necessary information. He asked for nine rifles, powder and shot to return to Berbice immediately, and join the Caribs in attacking the rebels.

These were given him, together with some necessary instructions, which he promised to bear in mind.

Three canoes full of Caribs from Wayni passed this river on their way to Corentin, bent on the same errand.

529. COMMANDER, DEMERARY, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[5 October 1763]

(Extract)

On the 9th August I was informed by the oldest Captain of my civilian bands that the Acuways and the Caribs had attacked the plantation Savonnette and had killed a pretty large number. This report he had received from Indians, and on the 17th of the same month the Acuway and Carib brought me the proofs informing me at the same time that on their return journey they had met the Caribs from Essequibo who were on their way to attack the rebels.

I have charged the aforesaid Acuways and Caribs to return to Berbice, which they have agreed to do, and they will depart on the 4th September.

530. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[18 October 1763]

(Extract)

It is certain, your Lordships, that this is not the time to think of the re-establishment of the Post in Cuyuni. That matter will give us plenty of work to do when, with the blessing of God, all is at rest and in peace, because, the Spaniards having driven all the Indians out of the river, it will be no small matter to get all the necessary buildings in readiness there.

531. SUMMARY AND EXTRACTS OF THE REPORT OF DON JOSÉ DIGUJA, GOVERNOR OF CUMANÁ AND GUAYANA, FROM JANUARY 1759 TO 1763; 2 VOLS. MS, 1761, WITH VERY LARGE MAP OF THE PROVINCES COMPRISED IN HIS GOVERNMENT

[Undated – but believed to have been prepared in 1764]

Beginning with the introduction to the Report contained in six paragraphs, the writer says, in paragraph 2, referring to the transplanting of Guayana as commanded by His Majesty in 1762, that "it will cause irreparable injury to our holy religion, to your Majesty's dominions, the Royal Treasury, and the people of the country, . . . and finally expose all these provinces to the arbitrament of the enemies of the Royal Crown."

And in paragraph 4 he says: "In order the better to prove to your Majesty the danger there is of transplanting the site to Angostura; and for the better understanding of this representation, I shall divide this Report into three divisions: the first showing what the Government of Cumaná was in 1720, together with its progress to the present time, and the very little that can be undertaken with it in Guayana; what that province subordinate to the Island of Trinidad was in 1720, and its advancement during the past years; the various measures taken to fortify the Orinoco from the year 1694 to the 27th May, 1762; the wretched and abandoned condition of that province when united to this Government, and its progress to the present year."

Chapter I, paragraph 1: "In 1723, Don Joseph Carreño being Governor of Cumaná, this province and New Barcelona were unknown nearly altogether, the southern part owned and occupied by the Caribs, and other nations not reduced, and by the Dutch, English, and French who accompanied them. Its villages were reduced so Cumaná, its capital, with 100 small houses, constructed of wood and mud, covered with straw; and the inhabitants in the poorest condition possible . . ."

Paragraph 5: "The Missions here were constantly raided by the Caribs, and the Dutch, English, and French carried on all the trade, and had full control of it."

Paragraph 7: "The Missions of Piritu of the Franciscans of Barcelona were constantly raided by the Caribs, and by the Dutch and English, who overran the whole Province of Barcelona, a great part of that of Caracas, and penetrated to the interior by the Orinoco to the other provinces. Such was the condition of this Government in 1720, when Don Juan de la Tornera succeeded Carreño, who only continued giving orders and taking measures to sustain the Missions and restrain the Dutch, English, and French."

Chapter II, paragraph 1, refers to the progress of the Province of Cumaná from 1720 to 1762: "In January 1724 Don Juan de la Tornera recommended to your Majesty that Angostura of the Orinoco be fortified to prevent the Dutch and Caribs ascending the river. This had already been ordered by your Majesty in various Royal 'Cedulas', but never carried out.

"In this condition the Orinoco remained until 1728, when the Secretary of State, Don Joseph Patiño, commanded by your Majesty, again gave orders to have the Angostura of Orinoco fortified, but with like result, nothing was done."

At this time the Dutch had the entire Province of Guayana in their hands, and with the English had large factories in Barcelona united with the Caribs.

Paragraph 2: This state of affairs lasted without any notable change to the year 1733, "when Don Carlos Sucre, in August of that year, took command of the Government, although his appointment was announced since 1726, and with special instructions to fortify the Angostura of the Orinoco, or Island of Fajardo."

Paragraph 3: "To fulfil his commission Sucre crossed over to the Fort of Guayana in February 1734, where he remained nearly the whole time he was in command, leaving his son-in-law in charge of Cumaná."

Paragraph 7. "Sucre was succeeded in June 1740 by Don Gregorio Espinosa, who also came

charged with the fortifying of the Orinoco, not carried out by Sucre.”

Paragraph 8: “Very soon after Espinosa entered upon the duties of his Government, Guayana was taken, sacked, and burned by the English (1740), and the whole of the inhabitants put to flight.”

Paragraph 11: “In 1746 Don Diego Tabares succeeded Espinosa, who also received the special commission of fortifying the Orinoco.”

Don Mathias Gual succeeded this last-named in 1753, and he was disgraced for not having assisted Iturriaga, being supplanted by a provisional Governor, Don Nicholas de Castro, sent from Caracas in 1757, and this last-named handed over the Government to the writer of this Report in January 1759.

Paragraph 12: “All my predecessors, since Don Gregorio de Espinosa, had taken their particular measures for the security and advancement of these provinces, and as the result of my general official visit, I gave not a few, especially in regard to the good government and treatment of the Indians, and in order to avoid the misfortunes resulting from the drunken orgies of these in the Missions of the Caribs situated on the bank of the Orinoco.”

Chapter III, paragraph 3: He also states that he gave orders “to stop the Dutch from traffick- ing in all parts of the provinces of the Orinoco;” and referring to the Missions of Guayana, adds, “that, notwithstanding all the talk, . . . the Missions of Guayana had only begun the work of evangelizing in 1762.”

Paragraph 6: “If your Majesty will be pleased to grant my petition and help the missionaries, it is possible the Guaraunos, who inhabit the swampy lands of the delta, may be reduced and brought to live on *terra firma*, and by this means the Province of Guayana, to a great extent, may become known, and Spaniards might occupy the deserted and fertile lands of which the Indians make no use, and also people the banks and territory immediate to the Orinoco.”

Chapter IV, paragraph 2, treating of the advancements made in the Government of Cumaná: “I say, then, that, notwithstanding the above-mentioned enumerated known advancements made in this Government, these provinces are still in the most miserable condition; and Guayana is not in a condition to undertake projects quite beyond its own forces; they are but very little more than deserted.”

Paragraph 14 (treating of the various projects intrusted to Iturriaga some years before in reference to driving the Dutch out of Guayana, or hemming them in as much as possible): “It is quite clear and evident, from what has been said of the circumstances and present condition of these provinces, that, having no resource nor hope of any help from the Indians, they are not in a position to forward any enterprise in Guayana, for the only ones that could do so are those instructed, obedient to the officials and Justices; but as they are living so far apart, and separated from this part of the province, they are consequently too far distant to go to work in the deserts of Guayana.

Paragraph 16: “From the Missions of the Caribs in Barcelona, neither from those of the Capuchins of Catalonia in the very Province of Guayana, can any Indians be taken, nor must they be depended upon; for, as these last are only recently reduced, and do not understand Spanish, and are not obedient, besides not being strong enough for continual work, they simply abandon the Missions and go into the forests, if required to do more than what they themselves wish. Consequently the end would not be attained, and the only result would be the loss of those poor miserable Indians, with other and graver injuries.”

Chapter V: What the Province of Guayana was in 1723, and the advancements it has made in 141 years:

“The Province of Guayana in 1728 was under the jurisdiction of Trinidad, and without any other village than the Fort of Guayana or city of Santo Thomé, situated on the banks of the Usupamo, and with only twenty or twenty-five cabins occupied by so many neighbours, destitute of every human succour, in whom there was not even sufficient sense or force to clear [a little of] the thick forests which surrounded them, which made the place so unhealthy as to be insupportable, and also contributed to the great scarcity of provisions, depending exclusively on fish from the Orinoco, all injurious and provocative of fevers, some little game, and what the few wretched plantations produced. They never went any distance from the place on account of the great risk of falling into the hands of the Caribs, who occupied and wandered over all those territories . . .”

Paragraph 2. Referring to the fortifications, he says: “ They are reduced to the one defenceless fort of San Francisco, without any garrison or means to defend the place . . . This is the unhappy state of Guayana, according to three old men who at present, live there, and this is the progress of the city in 141 years, that it is established in that place, and transplanted from the site of its first foundation, 7 leagues higher up at the junction of the Caroni with the Orinoco . . .”

The Court of Spain responded to the Reports of the various Governors, by sending Resolutions, with Royal Warrants and “Cedulas”, all directed to the necessity of fortifying the Orinoco, either at the Island of Fajardo or Angostura of the Orinoco. All these documents are given in this Report, together with the papers referring to the several commissions intrusted to the various Governors. In dealing with the history of Guayana, the Report quotes the work of Padre Gumilla, and copies the error of 100 years and more which occurs in the work written by him with reference to the founding of the first Mission in Guayana.

Chapter VI, paragraph 1, referring to the village of Guayana, on the bank of the Orinoco:

“Notwithstanding all their sufferings, their solitude, their abandonment, misery, and the constant manner in which they were harassed by the Dutch and others, the said residents and their successors remained in that place of exile and solitude to the year 1720 with wonderful constancy; and to them it is due that the Dutch did not take the Orinoco, for, although they could not make any great resistance, they made sufficient so that they should not be driven out of the place they occupied strong and respectable against the enemy. But as there were no people, and the fort in bad condition, its artillery being very defective, they could not hinder the Dutch from freely going up and down the river, right in front of them, day and night, accompanied by the Caribs, and over on the unknown Provinces of Cumaná, Barcelona, and Caracas, and, by navigating the Orinoco, they ascended to those of Barinas and Santa Fé. They sacked and pillaged all parts, and burned the villages of the Missions that were being established in them. And this was done by the Dutch especially.”

(Archivo de Indias, Seville)

532. SUMMARY AND EXTRACTS OF “NOTES” APPENDED TO REPORT OF DON JOSÉ DIGUJA

[Undated – but believed to have been prepared in 1764]

Speaking of the limits of the Province of Cumaná, the writer describes them as follows:

On the east, the mouths of the Orinoco, River Guarapiche, and Point of Araya, and Gulf of Cariaco to the village of Pozuelos, situated on the high land of Guanipa, and then returning by the east to the Orinoco in front of Guayana, as shown on the map. The plains which extend from the table-land of Guanipa to the Orinoco being intransitable, it is necessary to make a long detour in going to the fortress of Guayana so as to come out by the Province of Barcelona . . . at a point in front of the fortress, where the passage of the Orinoco is situated.

The coast is nowhere populated, and the ports are deserted, so that all foreign ships go in and out of them whenever they require wood or water, without either let or hindrance, and of course all ships engaged in clandestine traffic.

Both the one and the other (i.e., the Spanish ships visiting those paces, as well as those of other nations) are guilty of many rogueries (“picardias”) on the coast, as well as the ships of the Pays which trade between this province and that of Barcelona and Caracas, where such practices are irremediable, as there are no ships to assist them; it being impossible to fortify all the coast...

All that is known of the Province of Cumaná and Barcelona is chiefly due to the knowledge acquired of their situation, territories, etc.; but of the very extensive Province of Guayana very little can be said, and even the greater part is only derived from the accounts of Indians and others, which merit little credit. . . For the present, however, we must abide by such accounts, as being the only information we possess of that province.

In this extensive province, completely unknown in the greater part, no intelligent person has ever penetrated the interior, with the sole exception of the Capuchin Fathers of Catalonia, and even those only in the very small part of the country, as shown on the map.

To the Spaniards only the banks of the Orinoco are known, or explored by them, and some 8 or 10 leagues in the interior from the place known as Maitaco and Missions of the Franciscans of Piritu. . . The limits of the Province of Guayana are: On the east, all the coast on which the Dutch Colonies of Essequibo, Berbice, and Demerari, Corentin, Surinama, and more to the windward, Cayenne, belonging to the French, are situated; on the north, the banks of the Orinoco, which, separating it from the Provinces of Cumaná, Barcelona, Caracas, Barinas, Santa Fé, and Popayan, forms a half-circle, returning to the east in the direction of the head waters of the Orinoco in the lake of Parima, as will be seen in the general map of the said provinces and river: on the south, the dominions of our Most Faithful King in Brazil, the limits of which, however, are entirely unknown, and the said Province of Guayana, as much of it as is contained in the interior.

Speaking of the River Caura and its sources:

The sources of this river are at a distance of 70 leagues from where it discharges itself into the Orinoco, and its head-waters flow from some elevated mountains which are inhabited by numerous tribes of Indians, who are constantly persecuted by the Caribs. The women and children are captured and sold to the Dutch, and the able-bodied are cruelly massacred.

The whole of this extensive province does not contain more towns of the Spaniards than the fortress known by the name of “Ciudad de Santo Thomé de la Guayana”, for although the Chief of the Squadron, Don Joseph de Iturriaga attempted to found ‘La Ciudad de Real Corona’, and that of ‘Ciudad Real’, neither the one nor the other has had any life.

The fortress of Guayana, or City of Santo Thomé, is situated on the bank the River Orinoco. It is the capital and only town or city of all this unknown province. Its climate is very unhealthy, extremely hot, and very damp, and its soil very poor owing to its sandy nature.

Here follows a description of the two forts, San Francisco and San Diego, which, in no wise merit the name of forts or fortifications, although the position is very advantageous, it is to be observed, and the only one besides Angostura on the whole river that can be securely fortified: those two points being the principal ones on the river, by properly fortifying them it would be rendered impassable.

Besides these two forts, another is mentioned in the creek called "Limonas", opposite to the fortress named "San Bernardo", but owing to the reasons of which His Majesty was informed, it is still in an unfinished condition.

His Majesty there maintains 100 officers and men, among whom are very few whites, being mostly mulattos, half-breeds, and negroes, the only human beings who withstand this very unhealthy climate.

The Report afterwards deals with the Spanish settlements on the Higher Orinoco:

Don Joseph Iturriaga, Chief of the Squadron, in virtue of the powers with which he was invested, undertook to found two places under the name of "Royal", for which purpose he brought together some wandering and dispersed vagabonds from the banks of the Orinoco, and from the Provinces of Caracas and Barcelona, and others from the Island of Margarita, who were maintained for some time at the expense of the Royal Treasury, but the help having been withdrawn they re-crossed the river, and returned to their old homes. Although the said Chief still subsists in "Ciudad Real", with a few families and dependents of the expedition, the place will fall away altogether, or cease to exist, as soon as the head dies or departs. . . The insuperable difficulties existing in places so distant alone, and without help, and no interests whatever to attract people, such towns cannot subsist, even when the continual raids of the Indians do not drive away the people, for which reasons settlements or cities are not to be counted on in this province.

In this province the Gospel is preached by three bodies of missionaries, of distinct religious Orders, namely, the Capuchins of Catalonia, the Jesuits of the Province of Santa Fé and the Observantes, or Franciscans, of Piritu, Barcelona.

The Capuchins of Catalonia maintain a community of their missionaries in this province, who, supported by the Royal Treasury, are brought from their province to be incorporated in this Mission. Those residing here appoint their own Superior every three years, but neither the one nor the other are subordinate to the Provincial of Catalonia, though they recognize, and are subject to, the Provincial of Andalucia, their only prelate.

The community exercise their spiritual labours with great zeal, good order, and equal tact, and in which object they refuse no work of any kind, . . . and by such means they arrive at happy results.

These Missions they began to establish in 1724 . . . by means of some devout persons. They got 100 head of cattle from the Franciscans of Piritu, who facilitated their transport to Guayana. The cattle having increased in sufficient numbers have been to now, and are still, the chief supply of the Missions in their nearly extreme necessities.

With this beginning the foundation of the first Mission was begun in 1724, under the name of "La Concepcion de Suay", 2 leagues distant in the interior from the fortress of Guayana. At present (1761) they have planted sixteen, extending towards the south for a distance of 40 leagues from the said fortress, at which distance the Mission of "Avechiva" is situated, as shown on the map.

Besides the sixteen Missions they have lost eight already established, through various misfor-

tunes, such as small-pox, measles, invasions of Caribs, and the hostility of the English and Dutch in 1740, in which misfortunes more than 1,000 Indians died, besides the loss of villages and valuables that has caused considerable drawbacks, to which also has contributed the insufficiency of the stipends assigned by His Majesty to these Missions; the little help they have had and have from a guard, sufficient only to protect the village and fortress of Guayana from the invasions of the Caribs, and to restrain its inhabitants in their drunken orgies and disorders; for, although they facilitate to us a guard from the fortress, it is not by any means sufficient for the protection of the Missions. But it is not at all times they can spare men from the small number they have, barely sufficient for their own protection. And what is of no less consideration is the solitude and complete isolation of all the Missions, where nothing whatever of the comforts of life are to be procured, nor any one to proportion them but at the most outrageous cost, on which account the missionaries themselves, with the little help of the Indians, are their own masons, carpenters, and other such like trades for the building of the villages, etc.

The sixteen villages or Missions are as follows:

Capui (Capapui ?), San Joseph de Leonisa, Alta Gracia, Guarimana, Suay, Carapo, Amaruca, Caroni, Palmar, Aripuco, Miamo, Guascipati, Aguacagua, Avechica, Murucuri, Placea (Piacoa?).

These Missions are, the greater number of them, situated on very fertile lands, cool, healthy, with abundance of water, an equally provided with all the fruits necessary to the maintenance of the Indians, except those of Suay, Aripuco, Caroni, and Piacoa, which are neither healthy, salubrious, nor abundant in food products, owing to their proximity to the Orinoco, and being situated on sandy soil." "These Missions are most important to the service of God and His Majesty besides the spiritual good they (the Indians) obtain, they also serve as a defence to the fortress of Guayana, which they supply with provisions, and, what is still more important, as an antemural to the Dutch, who by every possible means are trying to plant themselves in the interior of this province and in the mouths of the Orinoco – key of these vast possessions – on which subjects the necessary Reports are being prepared for your Majesty.

Those who frequent, and extract the whole produce of this province – hides, tallow, cocoa, coffee, and all other effects, even to the money sent from Mexico for the castle of "Araya", and that from Bogotá, for the fortress of Guayana – are the Dutch who have the whole of the trade of all these coasts and places in their hands. Also the Jews in the Island of Curazao. The crews and captains of the ships who regularly navigate all these places are Spaniards or natives of all these provinces, among which are included negroes, mulattos, half-breeds, and very many of those classes are fugitive slaves.

Not to make this note too long, it may be said in one word that the Dutch have the whole commerce of this province in their control, and that the residents receive and treat them well, for really they have no other means of living but in trading with them. And this is not only the condition of this province, but also in those of Barcelona, Caracas, etc., – the people trade entirely with the Dutch.

(Archivo de Indias, Seville; British Museum; King's Library, Spanish MS)

533. LETTER OF THE PREFECT OF THE CAPUCHIN MISSIONS OF THE LOWER ORINOCO TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF SPAIN, EXCULPATING HIMSELF FOR

HAVING SENT TWO OF THE MISSIONARIES UNDER HIS CHARGE TO TAKE INDIANS FROM POINT BARIMA AND THE RIVERS WAYNE AND MORUCA.

[July 6, 1769]

(Extracts)

Alta Graca (Guayana), July 6, 1769.

Sir,

Fray Benito de la Garriga, Prefect of the Missions of the Capuchins of Catalonia, of the Province of Guayana, most humbly and reverently, and with profound respect represents and makes known to your Majesty that some Aruaca and Guarauno Indians, having fled from our Missions of Piacoa and San Joaquin, I sent two missionaries of our religious to collect them; and they went, with an escort of soldiers and a launch, together with some other assistance, which your Commandant-General, Don Manuel Centurion, gave me, as he is accustomed to do.

They entered from the Orinoco by Barima to the savannah which extends between the Rivers Wayne and Moruca, and which, as I understand, is territory of the jurisdiction of this province.

The missionaries there collected 140 Indians, besides some wild men of the said villages, and other Gentiles. And they found in the power of the Dutchman, living in the post of Moruca, three Indians with their children, who he had enslaved and taken from the mouths of the Orinoco, as they explained to us, and from the River Maseruni. These the religious took away, together with others above mentioned, without violence or causing any injury to the Dutch.

And now the Governor of Essequibo finds in this a motive for complaining of you Commandant-General, charging him with the infraction of Treaties, outrages, and offences, being indignant because the same Commandant-General should have dislodged the people which he had surreptitiously in Barima last-year.

The Commandant has replied to him, and among other things has said that the religious did not go by his orders, but by those of their Prefect, as is quite true, although they (the religious) did not act well in mistakenly giving to 'the Dutchman the post a certificate ("papelito"), in which they stated that they were sent by order of the above-named Commandant, when it was by my order.

I am sure that I would not have complied with my obligations and the duty of my office if I had not sent the said religious on that commission, and as to what they have done in bringing the Indians to the Mission, I consider it is very lawful in my judgment.

And if the said Governor, without any reason, complains, I declare, for the reasons that I here give, that during the twenty-two years of my missionary office I have seen, and long beforehand, and in all the three chapters of the prefecture I hold, that the Dutch always have compelled me to be very vigilant, like my predecessors, to prevent the injuries they cause to our Missions.

The practice of those foreigners is now, as always, to penetrate to the interior of this province in order to kidnap and enslave Indians, your Majesty's vassals, and take them to their Colony; their practice is as common as it is authorized. by the Governor of Essequibo; and thus I understand it from the licences and passports which the said Governor gives, under his own hand, to the persons leaving the Colony for this traffic of enslaving Indians, until, without respect, they enter our Missions.

This is shown by the many times my predecessor informed your Majesty in 1751. In like manner the Commissioners of the Royal Commission reported, and I am sure that Don Joseph de Iturriaga did the same, on account of a letter I wrote him in the year [17]56 requesting some means for the purpose of exterminating that common abuse; and, from a letter of Don Riccardo Wall of the year [17]57, it appears that my representation reached your Ministers, but it had no effect.

In the year [17]48 two white men from Essequibo came to our Mission of the Miamo with a passport from the Governor for the purpose of buying Indians, and as the Father Missionary was new to the place, having only recently arrived from Spain, he did not know the gravity of that business, and he did no more than dispatch them, without giving them time to collect some old debts from the Caribs. The same year a mulatto woman from Essequibo was on the savannahs of Carumo buying slaves from the Caribs, and in the year [17]49 a soldier of our detachment chased one of these traffickers very near our Mission of Miamo, who had a licence of the Governor of Essequibo for the purpose of coming there to buy slaves, and in that patent he styled himself Governor of Essequibo and mouths of the Orinoco. This and other like patents of the same Governor it appears my predecessor above mentioned sent to your Majesty's Ministers in the said year of [17]51.

In the River Aguirre there was a Dutchman domiciled with the Caribs more than eight years, buying slaves from them. There were also others in the same traffic in Puruey, Caura, and Paragua, from where they used to send to Essequibo and Surinam parties of from twenty to fifty slaves, and they discontinued through fear on the arrival of the Royal Commission in the Orinoco.

After the rebellion of all the Caribs in the year 1750 in our five Missions of Miamo, Cunuri, Tupuquen, Curumo, and Mutanambo, in which four of our escort were killed and eight Spaniards, and many other outrages committed at the end of the same year, we began to collect some of the scattered flock. We then discovered, what we had already surmised, that the outbreak was the result of the bad feeling of the Dutch towards the Missions, who had instigated the Caribs. . .

In the year [17]62 the Father President of the Mission of Supama had advised me that a Guayca Chief of this Mission had kidnapped some young Indians from the same village, and had sold them to the Dutch and the traffickers. To take him away from such a business, he was placed with his followers in another Mission, and that village was ruined and lost to us through the persecution of the Caribs.

On the 20th June, 1766, there arrived at our Mission of Cavallapi a negro and an Indian slave-buyers, each with a licence from the Governor of Essequibo, to whom they said they belonged, although in their patents it was stated that they were going to the River Apanoni to collect old debts, according to the interpreter, but which must be understood for slave-buying. They were detained and their canoes taken by the Father of the Mission, and he then sent them to me to the Mission of Guascipati, in which I was President at the time. I took the licences from them, which are precisely the same, in Dutch, as those I now inclose*, marked (A) and (B). They were taken prisoners to the Governor of Guayana, Don Joaquin Moreno, from where the Indian was sent to the Mission of Caroni. . .

Naturally the Essequibians would very much increase their properties by the service of so many Indians; and in proportion to the great number of English attracted to that Colony, the estates are multiplying so much that it appears there is a want of agricultural lands, for, on the pre-

text of maintaining advanced posts, they endeavour to extend their plantations and territories. According to the information we receive from the Indians, they have already occupied all the River Essequibo from its mouth to that of the Cuyuni, which is said to be 60 leagues of navigation. From the said mouth of the Cuyuni, upstream from Essequibo, at a distance of eight days' navigation, they have a guard of six soldiers. Further, that in the tract included, in the eight days' journey there are no plantations, owing to the land being sandy.

In the year 17[58] I informed the Commandant of the fort of Guayana that in the River Cuyuni, under the guise of a post, there were two Dutch families settled, with a house and plantations. He sent a detachment to apprehend them. And among other papers he found upon them a document or patent of the Governor containing instructions for the post-holder. . .

There were in like manner other Dutch families settled very high up in the Cuyuni, close to the mouth of the Curumo, not far distant from the Mission of Cavallapi.

From this I infer how much they are endeavouring to procure new sites, and thereby allege possession, and cause a row in time, if a stop be not put to them, for they now imagine that they hold as theirs the River Cuyuni, as is proved by the patent of orders issued to the post-holder of the Cuyuni, when before their guards did not go beyond its mouth. And even the Governor defends it as territory of the Colony, as shown by the protest he sent to the Commandant of the fort. And in like manner he defends and maintains as theirs the Rivers Moruca and Barima, upon which he now establishes his complaint against the said Commandant-General with the addition of charging him with insults, offences, and outrages, because he dislodged them from there, as already noted.

In their territories the multitude of allied Indians is very considerable, and which they possess from the three nations of the Caribs, Aruacas, and Guaraunos, without mentioning the Indian slaves; and as they do not reprehend them, nor correct their bad customs, nor speak to them of Christian doctrine, they live happily, and bring more to them. The chief Caribs they have are fugitives from our villages and those of the Franciscans, and they are always trying to attract more and as they, the Dutch and Caribs, are thoroughly acquainted with the province, and very energetic and adventurous, they go all over in search of Indians among the other Indian tribes for the purpose of buying and enslaving them.

The territory of this Mission of the Capuchins, above referred to, for the reduction of the Indians, is indicated in the "Cedula" of your Majesty of the year 1736, and it is from Angostura of the Orinoco to the Grand Mouth, in a right line, on both sides, to the Marañon or Amazons.

This, together with the protest, above mentioned, of the Governor of Essequibo makes me doubt if it be permitted to us to penetrate to interior in future for he purpose of reducing Indians of the before-mentioned parts, Barima, Moruca, Cuyuni, and even of the coast; and as it is a matter so necessary to the practice of the reductions, it appears to me well to lay before your Majesty my doubt.

May God long preserve your Majesty's Royal Catholic person, so necessary for the welfare of Christianity. . . .

(Signed) FRAY BENITO DE LA GARRIGA , Prefect

(Seal)

[*Note: * The inclosures mentioned in this document are not included here.*]

**534. TRANSLATION OF INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
ESSEQUIBO, TO THE POSTHOLDER AT CUYUNI
[29 November 1769]**

Translation which I, Constable Juan Andres de la Rivera, made, in virtue of the office of interpreter and translator, conferred on me by Señor Commandant *ad interim* of this place, of a document of instructions for the post or guard in the River Cuyuni, under the jurisdiction of the States-General, written in the Dutch language, and the which was delivered to me by the aforementioned notary:*

Article 1. That the official in charge of the said post or guard, by our express and positive orders, will treat the neighbouring Indians with the greatest consideration and friendship, without distinction or favour of any kind, and be careful not to injure them in any way; and if, perchance, the said Indians should request his help against any of the savage nations, he is bound to assist them with the guard as far as possible.

Art. 2. That the official of the said post will be very careful not to cause any injury to be done to the Spaniards, who are our good neighbours, and in all he will maintain good friendship and correspondence with them. But at the same time he will be most careful not to permit the said Spaniards to pass to the River Cuyuni if by any chance they are desirous of so doing, or in any part of the territory of our Colony; and in case they attempt to molest the official of the said post or guard, he will immediately dispatch a man to the Governor's castle to advise him promptly of the same.

Art. 3. That the official of the said post or guard will on no account permit any one to traffic, unless it be in the river or in his district, or unless the party be provided with a proper passport, when he will grant the necessary permit to do so. But should any Indians pass the post who may be going from the River Essequibo down the river, or returning in that direction, bringing with them slaves, goats, or other merchandize for the purpose of buying the same, and that the slaves or merchandize be intended for the inhabitants of the River Essequibo, we then command by this our said Order absolutely to the said Indians to permit the above-mentioned tribe to pass freely, and without let or hindrance in any way.

Art. 4. That the said official of the post will take the greatest care in apprehending all fugitive slaves from the Colony, whosoever they may be; that, if necessary, he will pursue the same until he apprehends them, and, on so doing, delivers them to their respective owners, in conformity with the orders of the States-General; and that for every slave so captured he will receive a gratification of 10 fl. for the trouble thereby imposed upon him.

Art. 5. That, in case any slaves belonging to the residents of the said River Essequibo should attempt to escape, and should be pursued by their owners – who, owing to the necessity of the case, had no time to provide themselves with the necessary passports – he will permit them to pass the said post; and we likewise command him expressly that whenever a case of this nature occurs, and that he be assured of the same by any inhabitant of this Colony, he will lend them every means in his power to apprehend them, always provided they be slaves.

Art 6. That the official of the said post be granted liberty to trade by the Noble Company for his own account, on condition that whatever fruits or produce or other articles he may so acquire, the Company shall have the privilege of purchasing at the same price as others, in good merchandize and for good prices.

Art. 7. That the official is obliged to collect all outstanding debts remaining due to his predecessor, the former official of that post, for as 10 fl. will be paid for every fugitive slave, and 1 fl. for every hammock, the Governor must be informed of all the sales and purchases.

Art. 8. That in like manner the official of the post is bound to make a Report twice a year of all matters of interest relating to his district, and, as a good and loyal officer, he should always reside at his post.

(Signed) LAURENS STORM DE GRAVESANDE
River Essequibo, November 29, 1757.

[*Note: * The notary's name is not shown on the original document. The translation was done in the Province of Guayana by order of the Spanish Governor.*]

535. REMONSTRANCE OF THEIR HIGH MIGHTINESSES THE STATES-GENERAL OF THE UNITED PROVINCES OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE COURT OF SPAIN IN REFERENCE TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPANIARDS OF THE ORINOCO AGAINST THE DUTCH COLONIES IN GUAYANA
[2 August 1769]

Extract from the Register of Resolutions of their High Mightinesses the States-General of the United Provinces, of Wednesday, August 2, 1769.

Read to the [States-General in] Session the remonstrance of the Representatives of His Serene Highness the Prince of Orange and Nassau, and Directors of the Chartered West Indian Company in the Presidial Chamber of Zealand, on behalf of the Company in general, as having the particular direction and care of the Colony of Essequibo, and of the rivers which belong to it, declaring that they the remonstrants in this capacity had from time almost immemorial been in possession not only of the aforesaid River Essequibo and of several rivers and creeks which flow into the sea along the coast, but also of all branches and streams which fall into the same River Essequibo; and more particularly of the most northerly arm of the same river, called the Cayoeny [Cuyuni]; that from time immemorial, also on the banks of the same River Cayoeny [Cuyuni], which is considered as a domain of the State, there had been built a so-called post, consisting of a wooden lodge, which, on behalf of the Company, like several others in this Colony, is possessed, and was guarded by a post-bolder, an outpost or settler with some slaves and Indians.

That accordingly the remonstrants, especially after what had happened in 1759, had been extremely surprised to learn by a letter from Laurens Storm van S. Gravesande, Director-General of the Colony of Essequibo, written the 9th February last, that a Spanish detachment coming from the Orinoco had come above this station and had carried off several Indians, threatening to return at the first following dry season and visit Masseroeny, another arm of the Essequibo which flows

between this river and the Cayoeny [Cuyuni] River, and which also unquestionably forms part of the territory of the Republic, in order there in like manner to carry off from it a body of Caribs (an Indian tribe allied to the Dutch, and also belonging to them, as subordinate), and then to descend the River Masseroeny, ascend the Cayoeny [Cuyuni], and visit the Company's said post in Cayoeny [Cuyuni], as their High Mightinesses could see from an extract of the said letter annexed as Addendum A, containing also a report of the provisional measures which the aforesaid Director-General had taken there against.

That they the remonstrants had taken all that as a pure threat which, as on many other occasions, had had no effect, except (?) that the Director-General aforesaid had also informed them by a letter of the 21st February, 1769, of which they produced an extract (Addendum B), of the beginning of two Spanish Missions, which are held by a strong force, one not far above the Company's said post aforesaid on Cayoeny [Cuyuni] (apparently, however, on Spanish territory), and the other a little higher up on the banks of a creek which flows into the aforesaid Cuyuni River.

That if they could have expected an attack from the Spaniards in time of peace, or that such might come to happen, it must certainly therefore have been by a side wind especially from observation of all that the Director-General had yet mentioned in his letter of the 3rd March last, and of which an extract (Addendum C) accompanied the above-mentioned protest.

It was then with the greatest astonishment that the remonstrants had learned from a letter written by the Director-General, dated the 10th March last, to his son-in-law, the Commander of Demerara, which the latter had sent them in original, (and of which a copy forms Addendum D), that the Spaniards had begun to carry off the Indians from, and had made themselves masters of the Company's post at Maroco, situated near a small river or creek south of the Weyne River, between it and the Pomaron River, where from time immemorial the Company had had a trading depot and a station, which also incontestably belonged to the territory of the Republic.

That the remonstrants had received confirmation of this news by the receipt of a triplicate of a letter from the Director-General, dated the 15th March last (the original of which he had sent by way of the Island of Barbados, and the duplicate by way of Surinam, but which had not yet arrived) whereof the remonstrants had the honour to produce an extract (Addendum E, in which their High Mightinesses would find an abridged account of the proceedings of the aforesaid Spaniards, of the way in which the post-holder had behaved, and of the measures which the said Director-General had provisionally taken; all of which may be further confirmed and receive more light by the Addenda (F) and (G), one being a copy of the Report by the post-holder at Maroco sent to the Director-General on the 7th March, 1769, and the other a copy of a document in Spanish which the two Capuchin Fathers, who had taken part in this expedition, had themselves given to the post-holder, and which had not yet been translated from lack of opportunity, which documents His Serene Highness the Prince of Orange and Nassau had been good enough to communicate to the remonstrants, they, the remonstrants themselves having not yet received a copy of them direct as yet, seeing that they had apparently been sent together with the said original and duplicate.

That they (the remonstrants) had further learnt from this said triplicate that the Spaniards of the Orinoco River had murdered, or had at all events caused to be murdered by a subject tribe, both the post-holder of the post at Arinda belonging to the Company, high up in the River Essequibo, not far from the little river or creek Rupununi, and also all the Caribes he had with him,

upon which the Uil or Chief of the Caribes had gone to the Director-General and had obtained permission from him to avenge the death of his compatriots by attacking the murderers, as their High Mightinesses would see by Addendum (H), which is a second extract of the same letter from the Director, dated the 15th March last.

That very much at the same time as the above-mentioned triplicate of the letter of the 19th March the remonstrants had received a letter from the said Director-General, dated the 4th April last, which made mention of no further enterprise on the part of the Spaniards, and only on all sides a general suspicion existed.

To check such undertakings they the remonstrants, however, thought that should keep silent about this affair, but should lay it in its full details before their High Mightinesses, not doubting that their High Mightinesses would be extremely sensible to these attempts, and would not permit to be passed over unnoticed, without at least making the most energetic remonstrance there against so manifest a violation of the territory of the State.

That they the remonstrants could not refrain from further reporting to their High Mightinesses on this occasion that the people of the Orinoco had some time ago not only begun to dispute with the people of the Essequibo about the fishing rights in the mouth of the Orinoco, and thereupon immediately to prevent them, notwithstanding that the people of Essequibo had been for long in peaceful and quiet possession of this fishing, which was of great value to them on account of the abundance of fish in it; but that, further, the people of Orinoco were beginning to prevent their fishing by force upon the territory of the State itself, extending from the River Marowayne to beyond the River Wayne, very near the mouth of the Orinoco, as could be seen by the maps of these regions, particularly that of M. d'Anville, which was one of the most highly thought of on account of its correctness, grievances of which their High Mightinesses would find the proofs in the document, Addendum (J), 1, 2, and 3, which are extracts of the said Director's despatches dated the 15th September, 1768, an 22nd February and 4th April, 1769.

That, lastly, the remonstrants could not refrain from informing their High Mightinesses of proceedings of the people of Orinoco, which were contrary not only to all Treaties but also to rights of nations, in taking away and retaining, to the great detriment of certain planters and of the whole Colony, the slaves which desert from it and took refuge with the Spaniards, notwithstanding that the owners demanded their return formally and with all diligence, to check which all attempts on the spot until now, and even missions have been useless; that in the meantime this desertion, unless checked, would in time cause the complete ruin of Essequibo, and that now by placing the two above-mentioned Spanish missions so near the territory of the Republic, and also through attacking the Company's posts, and by killing the post-holders, it will be not a little encouraged and rendered easy, as their High Mightinesses could see from the two Addenda (K), 1 and 2, and B, these documents being extracts of the above-mentioned letters from the Director-General, dated the 9th and 21st February, and 3rd March last.

The remonstrants pray that, on account of all the prejudices which must necessarily result from these proceedings and actions, it may please their High Mightinesses to send on the same terms, as they did on the 31st July, 1759, copy of this protest and these Annexes to M. Doublet van Groenvelt, Envoy Extraordinary of their High Mightinesses to His Catholic Majesty, and to instruct this Minister to make the requisite representations on this subject to the Court of Spain.

Whereupon deliberation being had, it has been found good and decreed that a copy of the aforesaid remonstrance and Annexes be sent to M. Doublet van Groenvelt, Envoy Extraordinary

of their High Mightinesses to the Court of Spain, that he be at the same time instructed to give notice of these events and outrages in that quarter which he shall judge of use, to represent the impropriety thereof, also to insist upon a prompt reparation of the acts of hostility committed, and upon the reinstatement of that remonstrants in the peaceful possession of the above-mentioned posts and other rights, such as the fishing of the above-mentioned places; that, finally, he may be instructed to insist upon the necessary measures being taken to prevent such causes of complaint in future; and that, accordingly, the Court of Spain may give orders as soon as possible to restore, without fail or delay, on the first requisition, on payment of the expenses incurred, all slaves who have deserted out of the Colony, who are still forthcoming, or who may desert hereafter.

In which case their High Mightinesses will issue like orders to the Colonies of the State.

And an extract of this Resolution of their High Mightinesses shall be communicated to the Marques de Puentefuerte, Erivoy Extraordinary of His Catholic Majesty, with a request to be so good as to support with his good offices as much as possible these representations of their High Mightinesses.

(Archivo de Indias, Seville)

536. REPLY OF THE GOVERNOR OF CUMANÁ TO THE ROYAL “CEDULA” OF SEPTEMBER 23, 1769, COMMANDING A REPORT TO BE TRANSMITTED, AT ONCE, IN REFERENCE TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPANIARDS ESTABLISHED IN THE ORINOCO AGAINST THE DUTCH COLONIES

[30 March 1770]

Cumaná, March 30, 1770.

Excellency,

With your Excellency's despatch of the 23rd September, 1769, I received the document therewith transmitted in reference to the representation made by the Ambassador of Holland, complaining of the proceedings of the Spaniards of the Orinoco against the Colony of Essequibo; and your Excellency directs me, in view of the same, by command of His Majesty, to report upon the events referred to therein as quickly as possible, with all necessary proofs of whatever may have really occurred, together with my observations thereon that may be necessary, for the information of His Majesty.

And having carefully informed myself of the contents of the document referred to, I have now to communicate to your Excellency for the present profiting by a prompt and favourable opportunity in so far as it may concern the best service of His Majesty) that from the first time I entered upon the duties of this Government I found that by Royal “Cedulas” the “Commandancia” of the Province of Guayana with which the Colony of Essequibo and the other Dutch Colonies are confined, was separated from and entirely independent of it in every respect.

During my Governorship I have not given any orders or instructions in regard to the events complained of in the said document, nor have any such been given by the various others who have occupied this post, nor by their subalterns.

And consequently the said occurrences correspond to the period during which the separation of Guayana from this Government has existed, and which, if true, will have emanated from the Commandant of the Province of Guayana.

I am informing myself and obtaining information of the events that may have occurred in this Government previous to the separation above mentioned, and by the first opportunity I shall transmit a Report thereon to His Majesty of the result of my investigations. . . I am unable to do so at this moment owing to the short time since the receipt of the despatch.

(Signed) PEDRO J. DE URRUTIA
Governor of Cumaná

To his Excellency Señor Bailio Don Julian de Arriaga

(Archivo de Indias, Seville)

537. MINUTE ON THE FOREGOING DESPATCH (THE REPLY OF THE GOVERNOR OF CUMANÁ)

[22 September 1770]

The Governor of Cumaná, under date of the 10th May, 1770, also complies with the Royal "Cedula" of the 23rd September, 1769, concerning this affair.

He says that with the separation of the province of Guayana from that Government he has no information of any kind in reference to the events to which the Dutch refer.

That he is only aware that in the year 1758 the Prefect of the Missions of the Capuchins of Catalonia having requested help to restrain the Caribs in their raids and put a stop to their excesses and murders, which they, dwelling in the forests, influenced by the Dutch, had committed upon a new Mission of the Guayaca Indians, an expedition was dispatched to the River Cuyuni with instructions to dislodge the Dutch from that place and seize the Indian slaves and others that might there be found, as was accordingly done, notwithstanding the resistance of the Dutch, with the loss of one soldier and the wounding of another.

Concerning which affair, "autos" were drawn up of all that had taken place and transmitted to the Governor of Cumaná; with the two Dutchmen that were apprehended while resisting, but without, however, it appearing that those documents referring to the judicial proceedings were ever transmitted to the Council of the Indies, in accordance with the judgment of the Counsellor to whom these said documents were submitted for report and instructions thereon. Nor was any information given as to the place where these were taken, as all fully testifies and proofs from the testimony with which they are accompanied.

These Reports to be sent to the Council, as commanded, dated the 22nd September, 1770.

(Archivo de Indias, Seville)

538. REPORT OF COMMANDANT CENTURION, GUAYANA, TO HIS MAJESTY

THE KING OF SPAIN, ON THE COMPLAINTS PRESENTED ON THE PART OF THE STATES-GENERAL OF THE UNITED PROVINCES, AGAINST THE OUTRAGES OF THE SPANIARDS IN ORINOCO AGAINST THE DUTCH COLONIES

[5 April 1770]

(Extract)

Guayana, April 5, 1770.

Excellency,

From the two judicial documents inclosed your Excellency will see proved that the Director of the Colony of Essequibo, Laurence Storm van Gravesande, has wished to alarm the States-General with false charges, on which the Republic of Holland has founded doubtful complaints, through their Minister in Madrid, in reference to the proceedings of the Spaniards of Orinoco against the Colony. For, as it appears from Document No. 1 of the "Autos", the Dutch are not, nor have they ever been in possession of the rivers nor the creeks which flow into the sea from Essequibo to the Orinoco. . . Nor have they any other settlement there than a guard in a thatch-covered house, on the east bank of the River Maruca which they established there, and has been tolerated since about forty years, for the purpose of preventing the desertion of their slaves. The which pretext immediately originated the most iniquitous traffic of buying from the cruel and barbarous Caribs, who may carry it on the Indians of other tribes they entrap in their raids, who live free and peacefully in the dominions of the King our Sovereign.

In the Cuyuni they have no other possession than a settlement at its mouth where it flows into the Essequibo. For, in 1747, when they wished to establish themselves higher up, some 15 or 20 league with a post and guard, for the purpose of enslaving the Indians of our territory by means of the Caribs, as soon as our missionaries had assured themselves of the truth of this news, they informed the Commandant of Guayana, and he caused them to be dislodged from there the following year, 1757, by a detachment of soldiers, who burned the post and took the two Dutchmen prisoners, and a negro and some Caribs, on whom were found the instructions and original accounts which proved the infamous traffic carried on by order of the Director of Essequibo, and for his vile interest in that post, as well as in the other advanced posts of the Colony, by which they bled us to the heart or centre of the Province of Guayana.

Document No. 2 justifies the details of that expedition, and it shows therein that there was no more blood shed than that of two of our soldiers, one of whom was killed, and the other wounded.

It is also shown in Document No. 1 that the Dutch are not in possession of the Maseruni, nor of the other rivers that flow into the Essequibo on the south-west side. And it would be well to undeceive them of this error, from which their unfounded complaints arise. For, as the Essequibo runs nearly parallel to the sea-coast, from the vicinity of the Corentyne to where it flows out into the sea, 45 leagues to the east of the mouth of the Orinoco, all the rivers which take their rise in the very centre of our Guayana, and flow towards the coast extending between the mouths of the Corentyne and Essequibo, actually meet this, which crosses and absorbs them.

So that if, as the Dutch suppose, the territory which is comprised by the rivers flowing into the Essequibo, and are the Cuyuni, Maseruni, Mao, Apanoni, Patara, and other smaller ones,

with their arms and streams, were territory of the Republic, the foreigners would have a greater part of the Province of Guayana than the King, our Sovereign, as shown on the inclosed map, which, with all possible exactitude, I have designed for this Report, indicating thereon, by a yellow line, what, in my opinion, the Dutch may pretend in right to claim in virtue of any right of possession acquired up to the present day.

The Spanish detachment which, Gravesande states, advanced last year from the Orinoco to the post in the Cuyuni and seized many Indians, threatening to return and go to the Maseruni to take a party of Caribs, and descend that river, and attack the post of the Company there, is without doubt some story of the slave-agents which the Dutch have in that part, and they feel to the quick whenever they see any savage Indians, Caribs, or Guaicas, of those dwelling in that neighbourhood, being brought to settle in our Missions. For from here no detachment has been sent to those rivers. And I know that some Indians from the forests between the Cuyuni and Maseruni have, in these recent years, come into the Missions of the Catalonian Capuchins, induced by the same Caribs, who have settled to the number of 6,000. But, besides, there are persons in our Missions for twenty years without knowing until now that this numerous tribe belongs to the Dutch, as Gravesande says, nor still less that these forests are a part of the territory of the Republic, for they have always been the nursery for the reductions of the Catalonian Capuchins missionaries of Guayana.

The two fortified houses with a large force, your Excellency will see from Document No. 1 are only two villages of Indians, founded by the Catalonian Capuchins on the bank of the Yururari, united to the other Missions, and without any other garrison than one soldier in each, as an escort to the missionary; their supposed proximity to the post of the Company being equally false, for they are distant from it more than 70 leagues by bad roads.

The seizure of the Indians of Moruca by the Spaniards consists in this: that two Catalonian Capuchins, escorted as is the custom by soldiers, entered in a launch from the Orinoco the River Barima, its affluent, in search of fugitive Indians from the Missions under their charge, and having found them dispersed though those creeks between the Wayne and Moruca (territory contiguous to the Orinoco, and never occupied by the Dutch); while engaged in collecting the Indians, they arrived at the post or strong-house of Moruca, where there was a Dutch guard, who had three Indians with their children enslaved, and whom they had taken from the mouths of the Orinoco, as they thus declared to the religious, and these they brought back to the Missions, without doing more injury to the Dutch. On the contrary, believing that they would render a service to the guard of the post who, to be able to clear himself to the Governor of Essequibo, requested them to give him a certificate of what had taken place, they complied, and gave him one through pity. But they exceeded their duty in saying that they had my licence to enter that place, which was not true, it being quite contrary to the fact, for the passport I gave to the master of the launch in which they went did not extend further than the mouth of the Orinoco, as is proved by Document No. 1.

The post which Gravesande states the Spaniards took near the creek to the south of the River Wayne between this and the River Pomeron, where he states the Company has had from time immemorial a place of trade or commercial depot, and which also depended, without contradiction, on the territory of the Republic, I imagine will be the one the Dutch abandoned, when they intruded in the River of Barima in 1768, as soon as they learned from their friends the Caribs that our privateers were visiting that river, as one of the most considerable which flows into the Ori-

noco, although he wishes to make little of it by calling it a creek, and the Director of Essequibo does not dare name it, lest he thereby declare himself an usurper; and in the same strain he shows himself of very weak memory by stating that this settlement was there from time immemorial, when it is scarcely two years old. (See Document No. 3 in proof of this.)

The murder of the guard of the Post Arinda and of the friendly Caribs of the neighbourhood, which the Director of Essequibo attributes to the Spaniards, is false and without any foundation, for that post is out of our reach, and even of our knowledge, as shown in Document No. 1 and by the inclosed map.

The fishery in the mouths of the Orinoco was never less disputed by the Spaniards to the Dutch than at present, for they do not fish there, and in the three years that the privateers for this river have been in service by my orders, they have taken twenty-three foreign vessels, but no fishing-boat, nor have even seen any, nor has it come to my knowledge that the Dutch have had such fishery, as shown by Document No. 1. And I have only been able to find one case in which the Spaniards had met with and taken in the year 1762 a small schooner and two Dutch fishing-boats in the mouth of the Orinoco and River Barima, for justification of which see Document No. 4.

But I am of opinion this pretended fishery should be denied to them and prohibited, for that would soon degenerate into illicit trade, very difficult to root out, and pernicious to the interests of the provinces of the Spaniards.

In Orinoco only Indian slaves, deserters from Essequibo, have been retained, and even the negroes who came in search of the faith and desire to become Catholics. For, as appears from Document No. 5, this has been the resolution of His Majesty; but the other negro slaves, who, owing to bad treatment or other motives, have deserted and come from Essequibo, have been returned to their owners when reclaimed, or their value in money has been paid to them, for they have agreed in the sale of such fugitives, as is shown in Document No. 6, and others in the archives of this Government of the like nature.

And now that your Excellency is pleased to command me to report upon this affair and give my opinion of it, for the information of His Majesty, I shall do so. In every country the most precious part is that of the coasts, and in those beyond sea much more, because without them the interior productions are rendered in a measure useless. In the vast Province of Guayana, so fertile and advantageously situated, all the coast is occupied by foreigners, and there only remains to us Spaniards, in an extreme [limit], the embouchure of the Orinoco as an outlet to the sea. The Dutch possess the best and most useful part of the coasts of this extensive territory, for thereon many of the navigable rivers which traverse the most fruitful and best parts of the far interior of Guayana flow into the sea.

On that account we ought to direct our political views to the destruction of the Dutch Colonies, beginning with Essequibo, and continuing on to Demerari, Verviz [Berbice], Coentien, to Surinam, for which purpose there occurs to me two effective ways by which it may be accomplished. The first is, let us give liberty and protection to all the fugitive slaves from the said Colonies, as is practised in Caracas with those from the Island of Curazao, who really do not so much need it on account of the free use of the Catholic religion, as those of these Colonies, where nothing in this important matter is ever taught them, and where they compel the slaves to live as Gentiles.

And the second is that this province be made a garrison, with the headquarters of a battalion

of infantry permanently stationed here, for the purpose of guarding the frontiers and rivers which flow into the Essequibo, and keeping a vigilant watch on the posts and strong-houses, which, as appears, have frightened the Dutch before they were even projected, for by their means the usurpation of more territory than what they now occupy, and the considerable extraction of Indian "poitos", or slaves, with which they, leaving our territory deserted, cultivate and populate theirs in a prodigious manner would be put an end to.

Among the forts suggested, one must be built on Point Barima, to the' windward of the Ships' Mouth, fronting the north, with a wooden habitation, of good height, similar to the light-houses of the Mississippi, as the ground there is very low and marshy, with which foundation and effective possession we will be able to watch the Dutch closer, we will check them by every way on that side; we will have an important look-out tower on the sea, a sentinel in the Rive Barima, the principal avenue of the Colony of Essequibo to the Orinoco, a necessary lighthouse to show our vessels the entrance to the Grand Mouth of the Orinoco, hidden from their view when out at sea. . .

And, finally, by means of this fort, we will render the post of Moruca useless to the Dutch by depriving them of the means of preventing their slaves to escape, and taking away from them the pretext of pursuing them, as they frequently do, within the Orinoco, being well aware that we are now 49 leagues from the mouth.

The means I have proposed, or others similar, for the purpose of making this province populous, and consequently opulent and formidable, and if well employed, as is explained in Document No, 8, wherein is shown in a clear manner the favourable opportunity which the present time offers for carrying them out, and thereby succeed in doing in a few years what it has not been possible to realize in more than two centuries.

May God preserve the precious life of your Excellency. . .

(Signed) DON MANUEL CENTURION
Commandant of Guayana

(Seal)

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Inclosure 1: Letter of the Prefect of the Capuchin Missions of the Lower Orinoco to His Majesty the King of Spain, exculpating himself for having sent two of the missionaries under his charge to take Indians from Point Barima and the Rivers Wayne and Moruca, 6 July 1769 [Document No. 533 above].

Inclosure 2: Translation of instructions given by the Director-General, Essequibo, to the Postholder at Cuyuni, 29 November 1769 [Document No. 534 above].

(Archivo de Indias, Seville)
