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## 1757 to 1758

**420. MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF AN ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE****[3 January 1757]***(Extract)**Fort Zeelandia, Rio Essequibo, January 3, 1757.*

Mr. Councillor Piepersberg having communicated both to his Excellency and to the meeting that he had been requested by Johannes Neuman, the Postholder in the Cuyuni, to say that the Caribs there had determined to make a raid upon and devastate the Spanish Mission situated up in that river, that to that end they would first come down in order to ask his Excellency for powder and shot.

It was hereupon resolved, after mature deliberation, to strictly refuse the Caribs the powder and shot in the event of their coming down, and to request his Excellency to give information of this rumour as speedily as possible to the Commandant of Guayana in order to avert all suspicions which the Spaniards might form with regard to this Colony.

**421. THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO****[3 January 1757]***(Extract)*

. . . We have also asked the aforesaid Court for a detailed report upon the petitions, which you transmitted to us, of Jacques de Salignac and Isaac Knott *cum suis*, inasmuch as both the aforesaid petitions impressed as being worthy of attention and possibly fruitful of results.

And considering that in our action upon the latter petition regard must be paid to the throwing open, or not throwing open, of the River of Pomeroon, we have taken this opportunity to requisition the aforesaid Court for an ample detail of the reasons for, and against, the opening of the aforesaid river. We did so, in order that we might thereby also be enabled to take speedy action if, in course of time, petitions on that subject were made to us; as you will see more fully from the letter which we have written to you and to the Court of Policy.

**422. THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO THE SECRETARY, ESSEQUIBO**

**[3 January 1757]**

*(Extract)*

. . . We have likewise approved the changes projected by you concerning the Postholder; we have, moreover, asked the Court of Policy for their considerations with respect to the throwing open of the River of Pomeroon, in order that, when we shall have been duly informed from all sides, we may be enabled to take such action in answer to the petitions which may be made to us on that subject, as after an examination of the facts we shall judge to be for the best interests of the Colony. This is likewise the case with the various petitions by Jacques de Salignac and Isaac Knott *cum suis*, final action upon which has been deferred until the aforesaid Council's report upon them shall have reached us.

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

**[14 February 1757]**

*(Extract)*

Among the Acuways it remains quiet; we hear nothing more of them, but their Chiefs have not yet come to me, so that we must still be on our guard.

Complaints having been repeatedly made by the Commandant of Orinoco concerning the evil conduct in Barima of the traders, or wanderers, as well from Surinam as from here. I have written circumstantially to the *ad interim* Governor there, Mr. I. Nepven, whose reply is awaited daily.

**424. COPY OF THE MINUTES OF A LETTER UPON THE SUBJECT OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL IN AMERICA**

**[19 June 1757]**

In order to establish the frontier between the dominions of Spain and Portugal according to the provisions of the Boundary Treaty with this Crown, there were formed two divisions of Commissioners on both sides, one for the district south of the line, and the other for that of the north. Those of the south were the Marquis Valdelirios and his people, who started in the year 1751, going earlier than the others because their task was a more difficult and delicate one, as has been seen. Those of the north started at the beginning of 1754, and reached Cumaná on the 9th April of the same year.

The labours of these two bodies were divided into six parts as required by the size of the territory, and for this purpose four Commissioners from each nation were sent for the two districts.

Those of the north were Don Joseph Iturriaga, Don Eugenio Alvarado, Don Antonio Orrutia, and Don Joseph Solano, in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place, in the order in which they are written here.

There is no other road by which to reach one's destination except that of Cumaná, and for

that reason Iturriaga was ordered to make certain investigations and surveys whilst he remained there, and on his road to the Rio Negro, which flows into the Amazon by its north bank, where the Portuguese were awaiting them.

The investigations which had been recommended to him on his journey were these: –

To take the most precise notice of all that could conduce to the good government of this province of the Islands of Trinidad and Margarita.

To verify the communications of the Orinoco and the state of the Missions which your Majesty maintains there and in the Province of Guayana.

To ascertain, by means of Spanish interpreters, the condition of mind of a large number of fugitive negroes from the Dutch colonies on the coast, to see if they could be brought over to the faith and service of your Majesty.

To take notice of all that concerned the natural history of the great territory situated between the Rivers Marañon and Orinoco belonging to your Majesty, for which object he took with him Pedro Leofling, a famous Swedish botanist, with four Spanish pupils, who went principally to improve a defect in the cinnamon, which is produced in the Provinces of Quejos and Macar, which in itself is more aromatic than that of Ceylon, for which task they received special separate instructions, considering it very much more important than the principal one.

Those Commissioners reached Cumaná, and Iturriaga immediately presented the Governor with a Cedula, in which the latter was ordered that there being no other place nearer than his district for preparing an expedition so advantageous to the Royal service, he should aid them with all the means at his command and especially with troops, Indians, boats, stores, utensils, and the provisions that were necessary, ending with the expression that he should assist the Commissioners as far as they required and he was able.

At the same time he presented him with another order, in which it was said that the ship which had brought them having to return to this kingdom a register should be opened for those private persons who wished to send something as freight, and for those materials belonging to His Majesty which were not required for the expedition, and in respect of this order and of that Cedula two disputes were raised.

Iturriaga asked for boats, Indians, rowers, and troops, cassava for two months, and for some salt meat.

The Governor excused himself in both cases on the ground that he had only eighty-six boats employed in supplying his settlement with food and for the defence of the coast, and that he could not spare any; that the Indians were wanted in the field, and that if he gave any troops he would have to replace them with other neighbouring ones who were also wanted for agriculture elsewhere, and that the Indians would not pay tribute whilst they served.

Nevertheless he exhorted Iturriaga to submit to the inevitable, and that he could get the boats, provisions, and the other things which were to be found there by buying them with his money, since in Cumaná there was no one who could supply them.

Iturriaga replied that the Cedula ordered him to be aided with all that he required and that there was in the district, and that in the Treasury there was money enough.

The Governor replied that the Cedula did not order him to spend money, and cited various

laws in support of his refusal, and although the other made him see that they had nothing to do with the case he adhered to his decision.

At the same time another dispute is going on concerning the meaning of the order. The Governor said that he was not ordered to open a register for the goods that were there, but for the remainder of those which were brought thither and which were not saleable or of use to the expedition, which controversy terminated with the utterance of the Governor that there were no goods there to go to Spain.

Finally, Iturriaga wrote a letter to the Governor telling him that he had understood that he was to give him everything that he had in his district, as the Cedula expressly stated, and that, on the contrary, the Governor understanding that by virtue of the same he was not bound to give anything, he had resolved not to say another word and to seek the means of furthering his commission as well as he could although not as he could wish.

And, indeed, he sent Don Joseph Blanco to the Isle of Trinidad to get thirty rowing-boats made, to find Indians who dwell on the River Orinoco, and to bring the provisions and stores that he could get, all of which was known through other private information, as well, as that Don Eugenio Alvarado went to the Province of Guayana for the same purpose and for other things conducive to his commissions.

He afterwards sent the ship to Caracas with another Cedula to the Governor of that province, of the same tenour as that addressed to the Governor of Cumaná, in virtue of which he asked him for 100,000 pesos; Ricardo gave him 80,000 pesos.

Iturriaga left Cumaná for the town of Cabruta, situated on the west bank of the Orinoco, without any letters having been received from him except the first of his arrival, in which he makes no mention of the disputes that he had in that province; but the Governor, in a letter of the 22nd May, 1754, gave an official account to the Marquis de la Eusenada of all that had occurred as mentioned above, which papers arrived after his retirement.

It was afterwards known that in the year 1755 Iturriaga made use of the Governor of Trinidad to get provisions from the French from Martinique, and that in that year and in 1756 the whole of the expedition suffered very great misery and want, half its members having died and amongst them the naval Captain Don Antonio Orrutia, the Lieutenant-Colonel Don Juan Galan; the botanist Pedro Leofling, and Father Aller, a Jesuit, who went as cosmographer, and many others of lower rank, and Iturriaga himself also suffered much injury to his health.

All the unofficial information that has been received condemns his conduct as that of a lazy man and one of harsh manners, but no report has come to hand in his defence nor any official letter, nor any letter for his friends or family.

There has also come to hand a description of the Province of Guayana which Colonel Alvarado wrote to Don Ricardo Wall, and a narrative of how he sailed along the coast and cleared it of some foreigners.

Finally, it is known of Iturriaga that he passed to the other eastern side of the river, which movement makes it clear that he went to follow up his destination; but at the same time Alvarado writes from Cabruta, which is the Post that he left, and says, among other things, that then (30th September, 1756) he had not yet any notice of when they would march, and, since the proper time for those voyages is in the beginning of November, it is doubtful whether they will have undertaken the voyage.

Amongst many of these particulars which the Governor of Cumaná communicated there is

one in which he says that the boats made by Solano in Trinidad could not be of any service because green cane had been used in them and the joints split.

On the other hand it is known that they entered the Orinoco, and Alvarado does not touch upon this fact in his private letters.

*Note:* — It is proved by the letters sent by the Governor that of the 212 men destined for the service of the expedition, and as substitutes for those at Guayana, there were only little more than 80 remaining in the expedition and 10 in that fortress, through the desertion, sickness, and death of the others.

Madrid, June 19, 1757.

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

[27 June 1757]

(*Extract*)

*Rio Essequibo, June 27, 1757.*

In the matter of I. Kuott's request my feelings were quite different from theirs (the Court of Policy), and since I was outvoted in this affair I consider it my bounden duty to respectfully lay before your Lordships my views and the grounds upon which they are based. Your Lordships are pleased to say that the question of opening or not opening the River Pomeroon is bound up with the consideration of I. Knott's request. In reply to this, I beg to observe with all due deference that this does not appear to be so. Because it is a certainty and as clear as the light of Heaven that the opening of the Pomeroon would be most injurious to this river and to the Demerary. It is a matter — and I say so with all respect — that ought not to be thought of until Essequibo and Demerary are so thickly populated that not a foot of unappropriated land is to be found.

The opening up of the Pomeroon is really, my Lords, what has been desired and aimed at for some time past, although the Court of Policy will propose no such measure because the arguments with which I have always opposed it have been found to be so unanswerable and so convincing that nothing in the world could upset them. I ask your Lordships to consider what advantage it would be if some of our well-to-do planters were to ask for a piece of land there to be laid out as a plantation, and employing their best slaves to cut down timber in Pomeroon, raised no produce here except as a blind, and so much less in proportion as they employed slaves in Pomeroon. Would that not be considerably to the disadvantage both of the Company and of the shipping interests? to say nothing of the less wealthy planters both here and in Demerary breaking up their establishments and going to live in Pomeroon. They would then share in the profits of the timber, plant nothing of importance, and draw the inhabitants away from these parts.

A few strangers might possibly establish themselves there, but would there not also be some who only sought to profit by the timber business? since the soil in Demerary, being as good as any in America, no one, *coeteris paribus*, will choose to settle on an uninhabited river when he can enjoy the same advantages on an inhabited one, especially since there is usually a lack of

everything in an uninhabited one. In proof of this, I may mention that I have been obliged to have the landing-stage in front of Mr. Van Rye's plantation removed from here to Demerary.

The following is a striking proof of what strangers do when they are granted the privilege of the timber: – Mr. Croydon, of Barbados, has a plantation here in Suppiname on which he keeps about forty able-bodied slaves, whom he already had some time before my departure for Europe. He has, however, to my knowledge, not yet sent a single pound of cultivated produce by any ship, and has raised nothing but timber. Had there been more like him here, we should have been compelled to stop this kind of thing.

In this matter I am entirely impartial, since neither I nor any of my people have ever cut or sold a single foot of timber. I have therefore not the least interest in the grant or refusal of I. Knott's request, and he being a stranger,

I have not the slightest reason for being either for or against him. The only thing that I have in view is the interest of the Honourable Company, according to my oath and duty.

I regard the River of Pomeroon as a district bringing no earthly profit to the Honourable Company, and I am, moreover, convinced that if we should at any time be so fortunate as to see this river and Demerary fully inhabited (which is not to be expected for the next fifty years); since quite 200 plantations, and possibly more with a little trouble, can still be laid out, no one would then be kept from settling in Pomeroon by the fact that there is no bouerway wood left there. For in Demerara it does not grow at all; yet this does not keep people from establishing themselves there. This is why I thought is best that the Company should derive therefrom as much profit as possible. Not that I think that the request of I. Knott should be granted just as it is; far from it, for more persons would certainly follow his example, and we could not well demand the same taxes for 20 slaves at work there as for forty, more or less. But if we made a contract for a percentage of the value of the timber, besides tonnage dues on barques and poll-taxes on the slaves, this would, it seems to me, bring in a pretty penny every year, and greatly diminish the yearly burdens of the Company. Had I been able to induce myself to favour the proposal that cutting timber be allowed gratuitously (as you formerly granted regarding Berbice), and had I not always opposed the throwing open of Pomeroon, the greater part of the timber in that river would long have been gone. But I consider it my bounden duty never to lose sight of the interest of my masters, and I hope to persist therein with the help of the Lord until my end.

#### 426. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DUTCH POSTHOLDER IN CUYUNI

[29 November 1758]

**Article 1.** That the Chief 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 Chief of the said Post will be very careful not to cause any injury to be done to the Spaniards, who are our good friends, and in all he will maintain good friendship and correspondence with them. But at the same time, he will be most careful about the said Spaniards, and if by chance they are desirous of passing to the River Cuyuni or into any territories of our Col-

ony, and cause any inconveniences, the Chief of the said Post or guard shall thereupon dispatch a man to the Governor's Castle to advise him thereof.

**Art. 3.** That the Chief of the said Post or guard will on no account allow any one to carry on trade except 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, coming to the Post from the Essequibo, down the river, or going in the opposite direction, bringing with them Chinese slaves, or any other merchandise, for the purpose of making purchases, and that the Chinese slaves or merchandise be intended for the inhabitants of the River Essequibo, we then command absolutely by this our order that the above-mentioned tribes be permitted to pass freely without let or hindrance in any way.

**Art. 4.** That the Chief of the Post will take the greatest care in apprehending all fugitive slaves from the Colony, whoever they may be, and pursue them until he apprehends them, and when caught he will deliver 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 florins for his trouble.

**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 necessary passports – he will permit them to pass the said Post; and we likewise command him expressly that whenever he be informed of a case of this nature by any inhabitant of this Colony, he will lend them every assistance in his power in order to re-take them, always provided they be slaves.

**Art. 6.** That the Chief of the said Post is granted liberty to trade by the Noble Company on his own account, on condition that whatever fruits or produce or other articles he may so acquire, the Company shall have the refusal of the goods at the same price as others, in good merchandise and for good prices.

**Art. 7.** That the Chief of the Post is obliged to collect all outstanding debts remaining due to his predecessor, the former Chief of that Post, for which duty 10 florins will be paid for every fugitive slave, and 1 florin for every hammock, the Governor being 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

**427. DON JUAN VALDEZ TO DON JOSEPH DE ITURRIAGA  
[2 December 1757]**

*Guayana, December 2, 1757.*

My dear Sir,

I beg to inform your Excellency that I have fulfilled the commission with which you charged me of surveying the waters of the Creek Moruca and of reconnoitring the fortification of which you were informed. The result has been show that such report is unfounded, for in the whole of that and the other creeks in communication with it there is no fortification of any kind; and the only thing which appears to have given cause for this rumour is that the Dutch of the Colony of Essequibo are changing the guard, which, under the name of Post, they maintain in the Creek of Moruca, lower down to the mouth where it flows into the sea, a distance of about 6 leagues, for which purpose they have made great clearances and preparations for planting that part, and built the houses which are necessary for the Aruaca Indians and Dutch, but I regret I have not been able to ascertain anything about the reason of these proceedings, and the only thing referring thereto that I have heard is that the object the Dutch have in view is to prevent the negro slaves of the Company and residents of the said Colonies from deserting so easily as heretofore to these dominions, for the said Post being placed at the mouth of the Moruca, they will be able to notice therefrom the vessels which, without entering the river, pass along the coast in search of the Grand Mouth of this river.

The depth of water in the greater part of the said creek is about 2½ to 8 fathoms at full tide, and by no means difficult of navigation for schooners and barges of moderate size, with the help of the tides.

They cannot tell at that Post, whether the Frenchman Ignacio passed or not, as he was able to do so by going along the sea-coast without entering the Creek of Moruca; and the small schooners and also the canoes of the fugitive negroes and soldiers do the same.

All which I now communicate to your Excellency for whatever ends may be necessary, in fulfilment of the commission with which you charged me.

God preserve your Excellency, etc.

(Signed) JUAN (DE DIOS) VALDEZ

Señor Don Joseph de Iturriaga

Note. – This is a true copy of the original in my possession.

(Signed) DON JOSEPH DR ITURRIAGA

**428. DON JOSÉ DE ITURRIAGA, CHIEF SPANISH COMMISSIONER OF THE SPANISH-PORTUGUESE BOUNDARY COMMISSION, TO DON RICARDO WALL, PRINCIPAL SPANISH SECRETARY OF STATE, IN REFERENCE TO THE BUILDING OF A FORT BY THE DUTCH IN THE RIVER MORUCA, AND TO THE TITLES OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE DUTCH COLONIES, ETC.**

[15 December 1757]

*Cabruta de Orinoco, December 15, 1757.*

Excellent Sir,

Having been informed by the Capuchin Fathers of Guayana that the Dutch were building a

new fort on the River Moruca, to the windward and at a short distance from the Ships' Mouth of the Orinoco, and well knowing that the Commandant of Guayana would take no step of himself for the purpose of ascertaining this fact or intention, I requested him to send there, on my account, a launch with pilots, to proceed to the place and take soundings in the river, and reconnoitre the state of the building, its materials, size, artillery, and garrison. And he replied to me, under date of the 2nd December, in a letter, copy of which I inclose for your Excellency's information.

What I understand from the Report is, that it is intended to make some plantations for sugar-cane growing, and unite for that purpose, with their owners and slaves, a number of Aruaca Indians, who are most in their confidence, to assist in preventing soldiers deserting, as well as Indian slaves and negroes in that district.

It may be that, for that purpose, and to protect the sugar estates from any outbreak of the slaves, both negroes and Indians, they may construct a small fort with a few small cannon, and guarded by some four or six soldiers.

In regard to this matter, I desire to make known to your Excellency that about fourteen years ago I saw a passport, or patent, in Latin, granted by the Governor of Essequibo of that date to a Carib Chief who lived within the River Orinoco.

On making inquiries conceding this, and the grounds on which the Governor of Essequibo issued such protection, I came to learn, and I was afterwards assured that the States-General in their commissions to the Governors of Essequibo also give them the title of Governors of the Orinoco.

What is quite certain is that these Governors style themselves of Essequibo and of the Orinoco in the licences they issue.

If they be permitted today in Moruca, they will pass some other day to Barima, which flows into the mouth itself, and later they will come to the River Aguirre, whose mouth is in the Orinoco itself, some leagues distant from the sea. By this river the immediate vicinity of the Mission of Palmar is reached, and by its means they will obtain free communication with the other Missions of the interior of the country, as they have already done, owing to the indifference of Father Bruno de Barcelona, although for that very reason he was removed from there by his Prefect and reduced to serve as a companion in another Mission, deprived of all voice, whether active or passive, in the Chapters of the Order.

The request they make in writing to the Commandant of Guayana, that he may permit their Aruacas to pass higher up the river when they come for the turtle-fishing, though necessary to their interests, is hardly in conformity with the title of Governors of Essequibo and Orinoco; and I am positively assured that not only does the Commandant condescend to grant it, but he goes so far as to protect with his licences the vessels going up for that purpose.

On these occasions Aruacas, Caribs, and Dutchmen come disguised, so as not to be detected. These last-named are accustomed to go ashore at the River Caura and elsewhere, and whilst the others are engaged in fishing for turtle, they occupy themselves in buying from the Caribs Indian slaves. The fishermen also engage in the same traffic, and buy from our Caribs other Indian slaves, and both the one and the other take a large number with them on their return journey.

God preserve your Excellency, etc.

(Signed) JOSEPH DE ITURRIAGA

(Seal)

His Excellency Señor Don Ricardo Wall

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*Inclosure: Don Juan Valdez to Don Joseph de Iturriaga, 2 December 1757* [Document No. 427 above].

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**429. THE SECRETARY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY  
[6 January 1758]**

The canoe about which I had the honour to report to you in my last letter that on the 16th September it had been sent to the Orinoco for the mules, of which you know, did not get back here on account of the terrible drought, until the 22nd November, but arrived in safety; . . .

. . . [B]ecause those animals would have had to stand rather uncomfortably in the canoe, six of them were kept in the Orinoco until further opportunity, and only fourteen were sent off, of which fourteen, to my sorrow, two died through the great drought, the lack of fresh water, and, above all, the getting grounded in a certain canal, called Itaboe, and situated under the Company's Post Moruca; while Mr. Persik at the same time lost five head. . .

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**430. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY  
[6 March 1758]**

*(Extract)*

Ignatius Courthial, having undertaken another voyage to the Spanish coast, in which he was very successful, was watched for by the Spaniards as he came down the Orinoco, and deprived of all he had. He and his crew (with the exception of two, who are prisoners) managed to escape overland, and have now arrived here. The man is almost entirely ruined.

I have sent I. Neuman, the Postholder in Cuyuni who was recently discharged on account of his bad behaviour, back to Europe by this ship in order to prevent him from doing mischief amongst the Indians – behaviour of which his insolence makes him fully capable.

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**431. THE COMMANDANT OF GUAYANA, DON JUAN VALDES, TO DON JOSÉ ITURRIAGA  
[30 March 1758]**

*Guayana, March 30, 1758.*

My dear Sir,

In reference to yours of the 20th ultimo, concerning the commission with which you charged me for the purpose of investigating and reporting upon the settlement, fortification, and other matters of interest in the River Moruca, I have now to state to you that the change of the guard, under the name of Post, which the Dutch of the Colony of Essequibo have at a distance of 20 leagues, more or less, from there, situated in the said River Moruca, has not been made; and that there was only a house of 15 yards long, which they built where the said river flows into the sea, with a stockade and gates. This they say is for the use of those engaged in the trade of the before-mentioned Colony, and for the purpose of serving as a rest house, in the intervals between the rise and fall of the river. On this account the old guard or Post is still maintained without increase of the force, nor of artillery, there being only three cannon, unmounted, of the calibre of three-pounders, and a corporal with two soldiers, so that the Aruaca Indians, dwelling there for the purposes of trade, are divided into three settlements or villages, each of ten or twelve small houses, for an Indian family. And the villages are separated the one from the other by a distance of more than a league, and are situated on the banks of the said River Moruca.

I believe I have now fully carried out your commission and instructions, but well understood, however, that your Excellency is already aware that the site is 7 leagues distant from the sea, more or less, and that there are 12 or 18 leagues of coast between it and the Colony.

God preserve your Excellency, etc.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES

Señor Don Joseph de Iturriaga.

**432. REPORT GIVEN BY DON JOSÉ SOLANO TO HIS EXCELLENCY DON RICARDO WALL, SECRETARY OF STATE OF SPAIN**

**[16 April 1758]**

*Raudal, April 16, 1758.*

*(Extract)*

The fort of San Francisco de La Guyana is situated 40 leagues from the sea on the east bank of the Orinoco, 8 leagues above the place where the river divides into various branches which inundate from 60 to 80 leagues of territory, and render it uninhabitable save for the peaceable Indians called Guaraunos. Its artillery does not block the passage owing to the great breadth of the river, and for this reason, another fort is being built on the opposite bank, which is to have a garrison of fifty as soon as it is completed. The former protects the Missions of the Catalonian Capuchins, but it does not hinder the entrance of foreigners, nor will the other, when finished, improve matters, but rather this position is a free gift to them.

Further, the good luck of a capture made by the garrison of Guayana a few years ago taught them to keep it armed, and to make good use of it when required; but even in this case the King loses the powder and shot and a certain number of men without any advantage to His Royal

Treasury; nor could any other result be expected, for, though the captured position may change owners, its practical value does not alter. This position and the banks of the river from the sea to the Angostura, a distance in of 50 leagues westward, are in the highest degree unhealthy, and many of the wretched soldiers, attracted by the pay of that Company, perish. Even with these incursions and the many families who have gone thither at various times and altered the position of the settlement, but have not removed it from the immediate shelter of the fort, the garrison is scarcely kept up, and, with part of it, the name of town.

Further, the Indians of the villages which have been established in the vicinity to provide bread and vegetables, and also labourers to build and repair the houses, perish continually in such a manner that it is necessary to replace their loss from time to time from the villages further inland to their very sensible loss, and this would not happen if the former enjoyed the same climate as the latter. And although the bad name given to Guayana includes the whole of the Orinoco as commonly understood, it is not so, as the Catalonian Capuchin missionaries of the interior and the Observants of Barcelona, who are on the Orinoco above the Angostura, and the Jesuits who come next, find out, and as we do also, who find health directly we leave that city and its surrounding villages.

These being devoid of Spaniards do not hinder the traffic of foreigners to the territory they have settled in the Governments of Cumaná, Caracas, Maracaybo, and Santa Fé, seeing that the routes are so open which are offered to them by the Orinoco and the great rivers which fall into it on its western side. For by these they enter and exploit the interior and the rear of these provinces to the great detriment of the Royal Treasury and the injury of so many heathen. This harm is chiefly done by the Dutch of Essequibo, who incite the Caribs to make raids and hunt for slaves, and they are the cause of the repeated risings in the Missions of the Orinoco, and of the constant desertions of Indians already reduced, through the deceitful freedom of the woods which they recall to their minds and offer to secure for them in order to capture them therein when they are divided and helpless, by means of the Caribs, their inhuman agents. Among those of this nation who are already reduced, they have less difficulty, as they are more ready to change.

With these beginnings, to which is to be added that the people of the plains of Barcelona and Caracas, and even of Barinas, no longer remain in their own territory through lack of lands to feed their flocks and to establish arms, and are appearing on the Orinoco in search of them, I therefore propose the expedient which seems to me most suitable. As there is no object in maintaining the Fortress of Araya, its men and artillery would close the entrance of the Orinoco to foreigners, and would greatly help its settlement, for the territory is extensive, and there is no communication with foreigners.

The Orinoco should be put in charge of a Governor with the garrison of Araya, the 100 men now in the garrison of Guayana, and the soldiers forming the escort of the Missions of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers; while the escort of the Reverend Dominican Fathers of Barinas and San Christoval, being nearer, would look after the prevention of illicit trade and the encouragement of settlers in those fertile countries, by collecting the scattered people and by the reduction and conversion of the numerous heathen inhabiting these woods, and their defence. The same should be done with the Island of Trinidad, which is 25 leagues in length from east to west, and somewhat less in breadth from north to south; it is very fertile, with excellent land for tobacco, canes, and exquisite coffee; it abounds in great cedars and fine timber; its coasts are inaccessible on the north and the east and still more on the south, where it faces the northern mouths of the Orinoco,

and it has very safe harbours on the west coast, which, in the shape of a half moon, like the opposite coast of Paria, incloses the Triste Gulf forming the narrow Boca del Drago, through which the waters of the Orinoco issue violently.

Joined to this Government, and defended with part of the artillery of Araya and a detachment of troops from here, it would deprive foreigners of all hope of holding it and of entering by the Orinoco. Its garrison would protect the rear of the Province of Cumaná along the Rivers Guarapiche and Pilar, and it would join hands with the garrison of the Fort of Guayana.

For the latter and its Padrastro a detachment of forty men is sufficient, and from these a cruiser can be manned to be constantly on guard wherever most desirable, and another, in the same manner, to be ready to respond to a summons or signal from the former. If to this arrangement were added, by favour of His Majesty, the cession to the troops of the very small part he receives from prizes, forbidding the Governor and Royal officers to take any portion, I do not doubt but that illicit trade would be stamped out.

This same Company protects the Missions of the Reverend Catalanian Capuchin Fathers.

At the Angostura, which is the place where the river narrows so much that a shot from a gun reaches the opposite bank, it is desirable to place a fort mounting four guns, and garrisoned with twenty men, who should have a launch ready for any occasion that may arise. These troops would serve as escort to the Carib Missions of the Reverend Franciscan Fathers of Barcelona, which are in the neighbourhood, and fifteen others should be placed in a fort to be erected at the mouth of the River Santo Domingo, which falls into the Apure, to guard the Province of Barinas and San Cristoval, and escort its Missions.

**433. DON JOSÉ DE ITURRIAGA TO SEÑOR DON RICARDO WALL, SECRETARY OF STATE OF SPAIN**

[19 April 1758]

*Cabruta, April 19, 1758.*

Excellent Sir,

Under date of the 15th December last I informed your Excellency of the information transmitted to me by the missionaries of Guayana concerning the River Moruca, together with the result of the commission with which the Commandant of Guayana was charged by me, and I now forward to your Excellency copy of his answer of the 30th March to the additional questions I put to him. Those of Essequibo publish and sustain that the dominion of the States-General extends to the Ships' Mouth or Great Mouth of the Orinoco, and they even enter well inside that river to enjoy its fishery, with such considerable benefit that one is persuaded there is an absolute want of meat in their country, and great scarcity of fish in the river.

God preserve your Excellency, etc.

(Signed) DON JOSEPH DE ITURRIAGA

(Seal)

To Don Ricardo Wall

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***Inclosure: The Commandant of Guayana, Don Juan Valdes, to Don José Iturriaga, 30 March 1758*** [Document No. 431 above].

**434. ABSTRACT WITH EXTRACTS OF PART OF A REPORT OF THE GOVERNOR OF CARACAS, DON JOSÉ SOLANO, IN REFERENCE GUAYANA (1758)  
[20 April 1758]**

“There is no hope whatever of finding the ‘Dorado’ in these inhospitable deserts, where one has to be extremely careful that, in trying to keep one’s health, one does not lose one’s judgment altogether from the great suffering one has to undergo in such bad climates.”

Treating of the intrigue to dislodge the Dutch or hem them in, he remarks that “our neighbours will not go away from the Orinoco.”

Speaking of the Fort of San Francisco of Guayana, he says: “It is situated 40 leagues from the sea, on the east bank of the Orinoco, 3 leagues higher up than the point where the river divide itself into various branches, which water from 70 to 80 leagues of uninhabitable territory, at least for any other men than the quiet Indians of the Guaraunos nation. The fort does not protect the river, nor does it hinder the Dutch and Caribs from ascending it, although it does protect in some manner the Missions of the Capuchins.”

Referring to the climate of Guayana, he says: “The banks of the river from the sea to Angostura, a distance of 50 leagues, are extremely unhealthy; and great numbers of people die there. And, notwithstanding that the village [of Santo Thomé] has been changed frequently from one site to another, always, however, quite close to the fort, the people have found no change whatever in the climate.

“. . . The fort is not garrisoned, nor are there people sufficient to form as a small village; . . . besides, the very Indians of the Missions, who are kept near the fort and village to provide the people with water and other necessaries, and help in building houses, die there from the ‘malaria’ which prevails in all parts of the district.

“And although the high-sounding name of Guayana comprises the whole of the Orinoco, as commonly understood, it is not so, as the Capuchin missionaries in the interior, and the Franciscans of Barcelona, and the Jesuits in that part following them, well know, and as we ourselves find out as soon as we leave that village and its neighbourhood.

“These territories unpeopled by Spaniards offer no embarrassment to the foreigners in going to those parts they have settled in the Governments of Cumaná, Caracas, Maracaibo, and Santa Fé. For the ways of communication by the River Orinoco, and the other large rivers which flow into it on the western side, are quite open, giving them free access to the interior, where they enjoy and hold the whole trade of these provinces to the great detriment of His Majesty’s Royal Treasury, and prejudice of so many Indians.

“This injury is principally caused by the Dutch of Essequibo, who incite the Caribs to make raids upon the peaceful Indians, and bring them slaves for their Colony.

“It is they who are the cause of the repeated outbreaks of the Indians of the Missions; and the

constant desertion of those already reduced, by the deceitful offer of liberty in their forests, where they may be more easily captured by their inhuman contractors, etc.”

“There being no object in maintaining any longer the Castle of ‘Araya’,” he says, “it would be better to have the soldiers, artillery, etc., there existing transferred to Guayana, so that the village might be increased, and the fort put in better defence to stop the Dutch from ascending the river; that a Governor be specially appointed for that province, to look after its interests, and take steps to develop its great resources; that a strong fort be built at Angostura to protect the Missions and prevent the Dutch and Caribs ascending to the Higher Orinoco; and, lastly, that a Company be formed to carry on the trade of the Orinoco. . .”

*(Archivo de Simancas)*

**435. BRIEF SUMMARY OF A MEMORANDUM DRAWN UP BY THE COUNCIL OF THE INDIES FOR HIS MAJESTY ON THE PROVINCE OF GUAYANA, CHIEFLY COMPILED FROM THE LETTERS AND DESPACHES OF ITURRIAGA**

**[No date shown – but believed to have been prepared in May 1758]**

The first part deals with the Castle of “Araya,” the decadence of the Province of Barinas, on the north bank, and the complete ruin of the territory of the Orinoco, “abandoned” to the Dutch, who have all the trade in their hands.

The third and fourth letters of Iturriaga, dated from Cabruta, the 15th December, 1757, and the 19th April, 1758, treat of the pretensions which the Governors of the Colony of the Dutch, on the Rivet Essequibo manifest of exercising jurisdiction over the Orinoco, and founding their title thereto in the Commissions granted the by the States-General. “I am not aware, however,” writes Solano, “that they have made any claims against the Trinitarians and Guayanos for the prizes they have taken from them in the course of this River Cuyuni. . . Nor do I know in what they found their titles. For, although by Article V of the Treaty of Münster it was stipulated that the Low Countries should keep the places, factories, etc., which they then possessed in America, in the Orinoco neither they nor any others but the Spaniards possessed, held, or have had, up to that time and afterwards, places, castles, forts, nor custom-houses, fisheries, hunting nor the enjoyment and use of its territories; and they cannot found their right in the tacit or even express consent of the Commandants of Guayana sometimes granted them to fish at the Grand Mouth of the Orinoco and Rivers Barima and Aguirre which flow into it; nor in the huts for soldiers or fishermen they have built there to cure and dry their fish; nor in the navigation which furtively was granted them to Guayana or higher up; nor can they establish their right to the post-guard which they have in the River Moruca, of which Don Joseph Iturriaga also treats in the same manner, being prohibited by the said Treaty from erecting any new fortress under any pretext whatever. And they can only allege the passiveness with which the Commandants of Guayana have regarded this usurpation.”

“Meanwhile, the Dutch are approaching nearer the Grand Mouth of the Orinoco, and by it and the Rivers Apure ad Meta and others, they are introducing themselves in the Provinces of Barcelona, Caracas, and Barinas, to the great injury of the Royal Treasury and the progress of the Spanish village;”

“The Dutch disputed the navigation of the Orinoco with the Spaniards.”

And speaking of the population of Guayana, it is stated that in 1758 “the whole number of residents of both sexes, including soldiers in the fort, was only 450.”

**436. LETTER OF THE PREFECT OF THE MISSIONS, FRAY BENITO DE LA GARRIGA, TO THE COMMANDANT OF GUAYANA, WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE SECRET EXPEDITION AGAINST THE DUTCH**

[9 June 1758]

Señor Don Felix Ferreras,

*Suay, June 9, 1758*

Dear Sir,

The Caribs of the forest having murdered the Captain of the Indians of the Guaica nation, with his comrade, who were engaged in establishing with their people a village, with good beginnings and hopes of very great fruit, on the banks of the River Supama in the place called Avechica, that “Pueblo” is now completely lost. For on account of that murder the said Guaicas are returned again to the forests. There are also Indians of that nation in the Missions near the Yuruary, and they frequently demand to be allowed to go to revenge the murder of their people. But the priest of the said Mission, with his accustomed prudence, informed me of these events, and that by his counsels he detained them. And unfortunately fearing the worst, and with the object of obviating it, I requested the Señor Commandant, Don Juan Valdes, that he would be pleased to instruct you, in order that you, who are so practical and intelligent, with sufficient experience of the Indians, being furnished with the necessary orders, might proceed to the interior for the purpose of investigating and learning the motive of those murders, and, if possible, even to obtain the names of the aggressors.

You carried out the orders of the Señor Commandant, by proceeding to the interior and making the necessary inquiry, and you investigated the affair according to the account you were good enough to give me of your journey, etc. That having been as far as the Missions of Miamo, Carapo, and Yuruary, about the middle of May of the past year, you had well informed yourself that his wife had been seized and taken to Essequibo; that the murderers were some Caribs, who, in the year [17]50 had rebelled in the “Pueblo” of Tupuquen, commanded by the Indian Caicari-vare, the Alcalde of the said “Pueblo” of Tupuquen, and Chief of the principal instigators of the rebellion; and that the said aggressors were living in the interior in the River Cuyuni and in the very mouth of the River Corumo, which flows into the said river; that they were living with some Dutchmen from the Colony of Essequibo, engaged in slave traffic, for the said Colony, and that the principal reason for their murdering the said Captain was because he was founding a “Pueblo” in the neighbourhood of Avechica, and thereby was inclosing the pass of the River Usupama, and hindering them from passing without being discovered; and you now have learned from the Religious, both by word of mouth and by letters, that the said Dutch, with these very same Caribs, are still living at the mouth of the River Corumo, buying slaves.

Now, in a letter of the 30th May last, you are pleased to request me to furnish you with an

exact account as to whether the Dutch are still living in the above-mentioned place, or in any other parts about there; and if they maintain constant traffic in clothes, hatchets, cutlasses, etc.; and in what state of defence they are, and whether they have any artillery, and of what calibre the cannon are, so that, being now in charge as Provisional Commandant, you may be able to report upon these matters to the Superior Government whenever occasion may demand.

And, in reply, I answer the same as all the Religious of our Missions, who are acquainted with these affairs, particularly the Presidents of Miamo, Carapo, and Yuruary, on account of their immediate proximity to the frontiers. In a manner, then, the Caribs of Miamo have very often told the Father that he should allow them to go and seize or kill the Dutch at the mouth of the Corumo, who had a large quantity, of articles for the purchase of slaves. The Bariragotos of the Yuruary say the very same; and these have frequently mentioned that the Dutch have threatened to burn their Mission, because they obstructed the pass of the Yuruari. The Caribs of the Carapo informed the Father, that the negro who is in the Cuyuni was going to the said Mission, but, through fear, returned back.

The Caribs have given news sufficient, that three white Dutchmen and ten negroes, with a large number of Caribs, are building houses and clearing the forest for the forming of a "Pueblo" in the Cuyuni, They are unable to say, however, whether they have any cannon, but they do affirm that they have very large blunderbusses, and a great quantity of musket; and that, at the same time, they have numbers of Aruaca Indians from Essequibo with them. They also stated that the Caribs are deserting them, because they compel them to fell large forest trees with great labour. Of this, however, we have no other news than what the Indians tell us. Thus, to me personally, some have told it, and others in like manner have given the same information to the other Fathers.

It is by no means incredible that the Dutch are in the Cuyuni buying slaves, for they do not care to carry on that illicit traffic nearer the Missions, for, as you know very well, that Captain Bonalde encountered a Dutchman, about a day's journey from the Mission of Miamo, buying slaves or Indians which the Caribs were selling him; and although he did not actually find him in the house of the Caribs, it was, nevertheless, observed that three Indian slaves, some cutlasses, and other articles of value were concealed, which were found in their "rancho", and which were distributed among the Indians of Miamo.

Apart from this, we know well how frequently the Dutch go to the Paragua, Caura, and headwaters of the Caroni, so that these continue to live there every year.

Although it should not be necessary to specify these things, as you yourself are well aware of them from the frequent journeys you have made to the interior, still I say that, in view of the multitude of young Indians which the Caribs, with the Dutch, daily carry to the foreign Colonies, and taking into consideration that it is more on account of slaves than for any other object that every Carib is maintained in the interior with hardware, clothes, knives, articles of estimation, such as looking-glasses, fire-arms, and many other articles in use among them, it will not be too much to say that the Caribs sell yearly more than 300 children, leaving murdered in their houses more than 400 adults, for the Dutch do not like to buy these last, as they well know that they will not remain with them. Indeed, we know that the grown-up Indians, fly from them, as some fugitives from there were seen in the Missions, and we recognize them from the brands of their masters which many of them have on their bodies. Then it is the custom of the Essequibo Company to brand the Indian slaves for fear of losing them.

I am unable to name all the nations which the Caribs pursue with the object of enslaving them. But these are the tribes dwelling on our frontiers, and the most generally known are the Barinagotos, Maos, Macos, Amarucotos, Camaracotos, and Añaos, Paravinas, Guaicas, etc. The Dutch and Caribs, to go to those nations, ascend the River Essequibo, navigating it well for twenty days up stream to where they have a post; and on account of a very great fall they have to drag the boat for a long distance, and then continue their navigation communicating if they like with the Rio Negro, ascending the river from the Essequibo by the right bank to the River Aripamuri some lagoons are met with; the Aripamuri is navigated as far as possible, when a portorage of about half-a-league is to be overcome to the River Mauhajan, which is formed by these lagoons, and by this last the Rio Negro is reached; descending this by the left bank to the Amazons, and ascending the same river by the right, they enter the Orinoco.

I have entered into this specific detail of the territories covered by the Dutch, so that it may be known that they, by means of the navigation of the Essequibo, are enabled to communicate with Barinas, as well as with Paragua, the head-waters of the Caroni, etc.

But as this navigation is both difficult and very long, they enter the Caroni from the Essequibo, as also the Paragua, for all these rivers are communicable with the Essequibo, and into it flow the Cuyuni, Yuruario, Supama, Yuruari; this Youruario has many falls and "Morichales", which communicate with the Caroni.

We also know that numbers of Dutch, besides those who go to the Paragua, remain in the places of Tucupo, Capi and Paraman to buy slaves. These places are in the interior, some three or four days journey from the outermost Missions, and are situated in the forests which extend to the plantations of Essequibo, without any more savannahs intervening. There are generally slave dealers in those places; for the Caribs, besides the slaves, also carry horses, etc., as happened in [17]49, when a large number of mules were taken there. This, however, is not of frequent occurrence, owing to the great distance and want of pastures in these forests for the animals, so that they perish or are lost in these places about Tucupo and Paraman. Or, again, the Dutch come overland from Essequibo, accompanied by Indian porters carrying large baskets filled with articles of barter for slave traffic; or by water by the Essequibo, Cuyuni, and Curumo. This last is a river which, before entering Cuyuni, collects the waters of the Tucupo and Mutanambo; both the one and the other is navigable in the rainy season; and although not long rivers, four or five days' navigation being sufficient to reach their head-waters, they, nevertheless, serve the purpose of the enemy, who are thereby easily enabled to reach our Missions.

But, besides this route, the slave-buyers are also enabled to communicate with the Tucupo by means of the River Morroco, where the post of Essequibo is situated, or by the River Waini, all which rivers flow out near the mouth of the Orinoco. By these rivers they ascend, navigating until they reach the Paraman, where the Caribs dwell in great numbers.

From Morroco and Waini the said slave dealers also come; and by the Orinoco they enter the Aguirre and Carapo. Although they have no fixed time for their journeys, for they go and come whenever they like, it is, nevertheless, well known that they live there for the greater part of the year. Indeed, numbers of them have lived there for more than ten years permanently among the Caribs carrying on their slave traffic; and these without moving send the slaves to their agents in Essequibo) and receive in return, merchandise and other articles by which they are enabled to purchase more from the Caribs. The least time they remain in these places is a year, but more generally they reside there of two or three years.

This slave trade has so completely changed the Caribs that they give themselves no other occupation than a constant going to and returning from war, selling and killing the Indians of those nations already mentioned.

And not only the Caribs of the forests, but even those of the Missions, particularly in these wars, without we being able to control them in any way whenever, we make any effort to do so, they immediately desert us in great numbers.

It is very easy to close the port to the enemy, so that neither the Dutch nor Caribs may be able to communicate by the Essequibo, Cuyuni, Yuruary, and Caroni with the above-mentioned nations. By establishing a village, if not exclusively of Spaniards at least of chosen Indians, with an escort of ten soldiers to permanently reside there within a fort sufficiently strong and well protected by swivel guns; this to be situated at the mouth of the Corumo or on one of the islands in the Cuyuni. By this means the pass would be closed, and the entrance, to the Rivers Yuruana and Yuruary impeded, and in like manner the Corumo would also be closed thereby. This village would equally insure respect and greatly hinder the Dutch from carrying on their slave traffic in Tucupo, on account of its close proximity. And it would be of great advantage also that the village should be built in such a manner as to stop the enemy from ever ascending by those rivers, and the Caribs of Miamo, Carapo, and Cunuri from descending by them to Essequibo with slaves. And I believe they would then remain more secure in the Missions as they would thereby be prevented from communicating with the Caribs of the Cuyuni and Essequibo. But if efforts be not made to close the pass, the tribes already reduced will be completely exterminated.

It is very sad to see the Indians settling about the Yuruary carried off for slaves. Indeed, it appears to me that the Dutch were never so eager in their pursuit after slaves as they are at present, and it is precisely on that account that so little fruit is obtained in the efforts made to reduce them and the Caribs, for being counselled by the Dutch not to allow themselves to be drawn into the Missions, they do not like the villages, and, consequently, retire to the forests.

It was precisely owing to these bad counsels that the Indians of the four Missions rebelled in the year [17]50, for they were told at the time that they would be made the slaves of the Spaniards if they allowed themselves to be drawn into the villages, and, consequently, would not be permitted to go to war or have any intercourse with the Flemings.

I also give you the news which I myself received from Moyo, etc., on coming from Essequibo for the purpose of becoming a Christian. When he was baptized he told me he had brought many papers from Essequibo, and among them an official document in which the jurisdictions of the Governors were marked down. The jurisdiction of his Governor, according to what he said, and confirmed by this document, extends to the mouth of the Aguirre, and from that mouth, drawing a line due south, shows the division between his jurisdiction and the others. So it appears that the said line comes to pass or extends to the margins of the outermost savannahs of our Missions of Miamo. The said line passes by Tucupo and Corumo, and passing these, reaches to the before-mentioned Aripamuri.

I really believe, if this news be true which the said party gave me, that they have cut the stolen cloth to suit their taste. And it must be true, for the knowledge we have that the Governors do give passports and permits not unfrequently in which these boundaries are marked conclusively proves it to be so. All this, however, is as well known as it is notoriously public. But the pity is, the slave-traders never learn by experience.

And now that His Majesty charges the Magistrates so strongly to endeavour by every means

to treat the reduced Indians well who maintain peace with the Spaniards, and equally recommends the Indians to keep well with the Spaniards, who defend and protect them from those who make war upon them, it behoves that the best and most effective measures be taken to carry out His Majesty's commands.

All those nations which I have mentioned above belong to this category, and the only thing required is more workers to go and invite the other Indians to come and live in the villages like the Barinagotos. And so great is the spite of the Caribs against them on this account, that they call them by no other names than the Guaica slaves, the Barinagotos slaves, Amurucatos slaves, etc., and they say they are slaves even before they are seized.

These nations would be glad to know how the Spaniards are to defend them – by apprehending their slave buyers. It is quite certain it would be very convenient to apprehend them, so that the new converts may not suffer much. And if you do this, I am convinced you will render a great service to God and to His Majesty.

God preserve you many years. I kiss your hand.

(Signed) FRAY BENITO DE LA GARRIGA

*(Archivo de Simancas)*

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

**[15 June 1758]**

*(Extract)*

Proceeding now to answer what you are pleased to ask with respect to cutting timber in the River Pomeroon, I have the honour to say that, in the aforesaid river, about ten or twelve years ago, the Court of Policy granted permission to one Erasmus Felderman to live in that river and plant his necessary bread, without, however, possessing any land in property. Which concession caused some contention after the decease of the aforesaid Felderman, because one Jan La Riviere, as testamentary heir, wanted to own this land, which claim was denied him by the Council as unfounded; about this (as I have been informed) he has complained to your Honours; whether this is true I do not know, because your Honours have never been pleased to mention anything about it to me.

Whether the aforesaid Felderman cut any timber there I do not know, but I believe that, if so, it must be very little.

In the year 1758 one Edward Ling, at that time an inhabitant of this river, obtained permission from the aforesaid Council to cut timber there and sell it to the English, subject to such dues and conditions as are recorded in the Minutes of that Council of the aforesaid year, which are now in your Chamber, and cannot be precisely recalled to my memory, and, Mr. Spoons being at his plantation, I can neither consult him about it now.

This E. Ling has taken away from there two ship-loads of timber, after which, he having again left this Colony and having gone to Barbados, this concession was withdrawn, and it was resolved to grant none further; but the making of timber in the River Waini was left free to those

who should apply for it. Of this no use was made, neither could it be made, for, on account of the sand-banks lying before it, that river, where, it is true, an infinite number of bourey trees is found, is unnavigable for all craft larger than our buoy-canoes, at least so far as is known to us at present, for, as for me, I greatly doubt if so great a river, far surpassing Demerara and Pomeroun in width and depth as well as in length of course, can be without a channel where barques could navigate in and out, especially at spring tide.

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**438. DECREE OF THE PROVISIONAL COMMANDANT OF GUAYANA, ORDERING A SECRET EXPEDITION AGAINST THE POST OF THE DUTCH COLONY IN THE RIVER CUYUNI**

[27 July 1758]

Don Felix Ferreras, Lieutenant in His Majesty's Service and Provisional Commandant of this Fortress and Province of Guiana.

Whereas I am informed that the Island of Curamucuru in the River Cuyuni, in the interior of this province, there is a Dutchman named Jacobs, with a negro of the same nationality, living, with houses there established, and carrying on the inhuman trade of enslaving Indians, whom they purchase from the Caribs by means of hatchets, cutlasses, fire-arms, and other articles; and such being their business, and that traffic being prohibited by law and various "Cedulas", under the authority and prohibition of which forts have been and are established and protected by a guard, for the benefit of the Missions of the Rev. Capuchin Fathers, as they have shown, and being always apprehensive of the ruin of their "Pueblos" owing to this dangerous traffic, which, in order to insure and maintain it firm and solid, the Dutch and other foreigners influence the gentle Indians against the establishment of "Pueblos", from which it results that the spread of the Gospel is not more extended in this province.

Therefore, for the purpose of putting a stop to these troubles so prejudicial, and that the good intentions of His Majesty may be attained, by depriving them also of the extension which the Dutch from day to day are more and more acquiring in this part of his dominions, I ordain and command Don Santiago Bonalde, in the first place, and, in the second; Don Luis Lopez de la Puente, to proceed this day to the interior, and to the "Pueblo" of the Yuruary, and there embarking in the boats they will find in that river, provided with bargemen, provisions, munitions of war, and soldiers, as described in the list that is to be given them, and with the most able and trustworthy guides, they will go to the said Island of Curamucuru for the purpose of apprehending the said Dutchmen, and any other person that may there be found, well as Caribs, or Indians of any other nation, and bringing them prisoners and well guarded, to this fortress, delivering up to the Reverend Father Prefect all the Indians that may be taken under the name of slaves. And that the object of the expedition may be attained, which is in the name His Majesty the King our Sovereign, I request and charge the Reverend Father Prefect and the other Fathers, that they give and lend, and command to be given and lent, all and every help which the said Don Santiago Bonalde and Don Luis Lopez de la Puente may require, as they have been accustomed with holy zeal on other occasions. And I ordain and command the soldiers and other persons who may go in the said boats, to be under the orders and at the command of the said two principal officers

respectively. And in like manner will be all the Indians of the "Pueblos" through which they pass with this provision, that anyone who neglects to obey their orders will be accordingly punished. And for the better success of this expedition, the said Don Santiago Bonalde and Don Luis Lopez de la Puente will conform to the instructions which will be delivered to them, from whose interest in the Royal service I hope this commission will be well and faithfully carried out, for which purpose I hereby give them all necessary power and authority to that end.

(Signed) FELIX FERRERAS

Fortress of Guiana, July 27, 1758

**439. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE CHIEF OF THE EXPEDITION BY THE  
COMMANDANT OF GUAYANA  
[27 July 1758]**

Instructions to be observed by Don Santiago Bonalde, Chief, and Don Luis Santos de la Puente, second in command, in the entry to the Island of Curamucuru for the apprehension of the Dutch there established and trafficking for Indians whom they enslave: —

1. They will depart today for the settlement of Yuruary. There they will find boats already manned and supplied with provisions, munitions of war, and soldiers, and without delay they will inspect all, and if they observe that anything be wanting, they will request the Reverend Father Prefect of the settlement to supply it, and will then proceed to the said island altogether, without any of the boats either advancing or remaining behind, but implicitly obeying the commands of the Chiefs as to what they will have to execute.

2. If during the journey they should meet with any boats with Indians in them, they will apprehend and take them along with them, questioning them meanwhile, as exactly as possible, about all matters in relation to the commission with which they are charged, and in order also that they may serve as guides, being careful that they do not escape, lest they should give news of the motive of the expedition in going to those parts.

3. They must use every endeavour to ascertain the following points: how the said Dutch are there established, and whether the houses are built on a height or low down; if they have cannon or swivel-guns, or both; with what force; if the Indians who accompany them are armed; by what roads, paths, or foot-ways they may enter the place without being heard, so as to take them by surprise; if they are stockaded, and if the points of their weapons are poisoned; if there be any concealed pits under false floors in the approaches; if they have sentinels, and, if so, in what places, and how these may be surprised.

4. When all this is settled, the expedition will advance to the houses of the said Dutch at break of day, but not at night, on account of the risk of wounding each other in the attack, and of the danger that the delinquents, being protected by the darkness and knowing well the ground, might escape. But if the case requires that the attack be made at night, then it will be well that the men should wear white badge on their heads, so that, they may be known.

5. When the prisoners are apprehended, if it is ascertained (as it is reported) that any other Dutch settlement exists higher up or lower down in the said River Cuyuni, and with the certainty

that they can be taken, they will be attacked, and with the same precautions as in the preceding case brought to the fortress, as well as any Caribs that may be found living with them. And the slaves will be treated with love and kindness, and placed at the disposition of the Reverend Father Fray Benito de la Garriga.

6. As it was from the said Reverend Father Prefect that the first reports concerning this affair were received, he being deeply grieved at the grave danger that threatened the holy object of his Ministry, he will be consulted in order that what is attempted may be the better carried out; but the military measures will be as described above and as the said Bonalde and Puente may command, in order to meet the necessities of the moment.

7. If the Indian Carib called Bumutu should be met with they will apprehend him, as I am informed he is persecuting the settled Indians of his nation, and that he captures those of other nations for the purpose of selling them to the Dutch. And all other Indians engaged in this traffic should be treated in like manner, the slaves being taken from them and placed at the disposition of the Reverend Father Prefect, as already indicated above, for the purpose of being instructed in the Christian religion and settled.

8. If it should happen that while engaged in passing the falls of the river, or navigating that part of it inclosed by forests, they should be attacked by any enemy and hindered from continuing the expedition, or that from the position of the boats they could not well fire upon the party attacking, they will then leave their boats, advance upon the enemy, and fire upon them until they are all taken.

9. All which will be faithfully observed in its place by the said Don Santiago Bonalde and Don Luis Lopez de la Puente, from whose courage and zeal in the Royal service I expect that the instructions given for their guidance will be successfully carried out, and that in all other matters not expressed in this instruction they will dispose and order according to the best of their judgment, in virtue of the commission with which they are intrusted.

(Signed) FELIX FERRERAS.

*Guayana*, July 27, 1758.

And in like manner they will be careful to assure the merchandise, and all other articles they may seize, by taking an exact inventory of all effects, and they will also take care that none of the vessels engaged in the trade about that part may get lost.

(Signed) FERRERAS

July 27, 1758.

**440. DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[9 September 1758]**

*(Extract)*

Having had the honour of writing to your Lordships but a short time ago respecting the state of affairs in Essequibo, I should have very little to say in this letter were I not obliged to inform your Lordships at the earliest opportunity of an occurrence that caused me not only great surprise but also great embarrassment. Nearly all the Carib Indians living on the River Cuyuni came down the stream last week, and informed the creoles of your Lordships, living just below the great fall of that river that the Spaniards of Orinoco, according to their computation about 100 strong, had come down the stream, and made a successful raid upon your Lordship's Post; that they had carried off as prisoners the Postholder and his assistant, and a creole belonging to your Lordships, together with his wife and children; that they had laid waste the Post and all round it, and had threatened to come down stream again and serve the whole Colony in the same way.

I immediately sent two trusty creoles up the river with Manna, the old negro who buys our turtles for us, and told them to find out all that they possibly could. They cannot get back before the departure of the ship which is to take this letter, but I will not fail to inform your Lordships of the result of their mission as soon as they return.

The deed I have described appears to me to be not only a violation of international law, but also entirely contrary to the usual mode of procedure followed by nations who are at peace with each other. Had Don de Iturriaga, who has recently been appointed Viceroy of this portion of America, and who resides in Orinoco, been of opinion that the Post of your Lordships' Company was on Spanish ground which is utterly and indisputably untrue, it would have been his duty to draw my attention to the matter in a friendly manner, to demand the removal of the Post, and in case of refusal to abstain from any act of violence until he had first reported the case to his Sovereign.

They have had their eye on the river for some time, and I have always had to defend it most vigorously. All these attempts of theirs furnish convincing proof that the stream must be of much greater importance than we are aware of. It is my opinion that this river is of the greatest importance to your Lordships, much more so than any one of the others, and also that it is perfectly certain and indisputable that they have not the slightest claim to it. If your Lordships will be pleased to look at the map of this country, drawn by Mr. D'Anville with the utmost care, your Lordships will clearly see that this is so. Our boundaries, too, are defined in a way which proves that the compiler was very well informed.

As soon as my people have returned, and I am in receipt of reliable information, I will send someone to Orinoco to ask for the reason of this behaviour and to demand satisfaction. It would not be very difficult for me, by making use of the Caribs, to pay them back in their own coin and drive them from their present position. But since the Indians are unwilling to go without hailing some white men at their head, and since the arms and supplies of such an expedition would cost a great deal, I shall not think of it without having received express authority. I trust that this may not be necessary, and that every thing will be satisfactorily settled without proceeding to such extremities. My only fear is that this man will devise some fresh attack before orders come from Europe, in which case we shall have to return blow for blow.

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**441. LETTER OF THE DUTCH DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE COMMANDANT OF GUAYANA, PROTESTING AGAINST THE OUTRAGE COMMITTED BY THE SECRET EXPEDITION SENT TO DESTROY THE DUTCH POST IN THE RIVER**

**CUYUNI****[30 September 1758]***(Translation from the original French text)**River Essequibo, September 30, 1758.*

Sir,

It is with the greatest surprise that I learned from some Indians a few days ago that our post in the River Cuyuni had been attacked by Spaniards, the chief of the said post, his second in command, a creole slave of the Company, and a creole woman with her children taken prisoners, and the house burned down, etc.

This news, which I find it difficult to credit, appeared to me incredible, and a thing impossible. It is on that account that I did not wish to take the least step without first sending proper persons to make a visual inspection.

These persons, on their return, confirm to me not only the truth of the fact, but from another report I learn that the foregoing mentioned are actually prisoners of war in Guayana.

What, Sir, am I to inter from an offence so directly opposed to the law of nations, and to the Treaties of Peace and Alliance subsisting so happily and for such a length of time between His Catholic Majesty and Their High Mightinesses the States-General of the United Provinces?

How is it possible that one dare act in a manner so violent without any antecedent cause for such proceeding?

I am thoroughly convinced that His Catholic Majesty, far from approving an offence of this nature, will not be remiss in rendering the fullest justice to my Sovereigns, and inflicting an exemplary punishment upon those who thus dare to abuse their authority.

That great King has given such signal proofs of his affection and friendship for our Republic that, as far as that is concerned, I should be content to transmit a Report to my Sovereigns of the affair, leaving it to their prudence to obtain the satisfaction which the case demands; but the post I have the honour to hold obliges me to make the first advance, and, in their name, to address myself to you, Sir, for the purpose of demanding, not only the release of the prisoners, but a proper satisfaction for an outrage so opposed to Treaties and the law of nations. So long as I have had the honour of being at the head of this Colony I have always tried to cultivate the friendship of the Spanish nation, our nearest neighbour. I have always employed every means in my power to prevent the savage Caribs of doing the least injury, and if those who have been employed in this irresponsible action have taken care to seize the papers that were at the post, you will see that one of the principal articles of the instructions contains an express order not to give the least cause of complaint to our neighbours the Spaniards.

It would be by no means difficult to me to make reprisals, having the necessary resources at hand to do so, but I find no reason to make use of them, considering that contrary to the character of a Christian, and which it is not permitted to employ only in extreme cases, and when all other means are found unavailable.

By a vessel leaving here this week for Europe I have made a full report of this outrage to my masters. I have not the least doubt of the great surprise it will cause them by quickly presenting a complaint concerning the same at the Court of His Catholic Majesty.

Now, Sir, I demand, in the name of Their High Mightinesses my Sovereigns and Directors of

the Company my masters, the release and immediate return of the prisoners, together with an indemnity for the losses and damages suffered.

Protesting in the most formal manner, in case of refusal, of holding you responsible for whatever may naturally result from an affair of such gravity, that there never has been occasion of reproaching me, having always been disposed to cultivate the friendship and good correspondence of our neighbours; and I shall persist in the same feelings so long as I shall not be forced to act contrary thereto.

Awaiting with impatience your reply to this, I have, etc.

(Signed) L. STORM VAN GRAVESANDE

**442. DECREE ISSUED BY DON JUAN VALDES**  
**[27 October 1758]**

In the City of Santo Thomé de la Guayana on the 27th day of October, 1758, I, Don Juan de Dios Valdes, Captain Warden for His Majesty and Chief Commandant, decree, for the purpose of drawing up the report called for by his Excellency the Governor and Captain-General of these provinces, concerning the secret expedition, and the results arising from the apprehension of the two Dutchmen, with their wives and a negro slave, in the River Cuyuni, and with regard to the fact that one of the Chiefs who commanded the said expedition is the Notary Public of this city, Don Luis Lopez de la Puente, who, consequently, is not a fit person to take part in the present proceedings, and that it is therefore necessary to appoint two safe and trustworthy persons to serve as witnesses, before whom all the necessary measures taken on the strength of these documents may be placed; and the necessary conditions for this appointment being found in Don Luis de Aleman, Ensign in His Majesty's service, and Don Francisco Xavier Filgueira, Cadet, I do hereby appoint them for such witnesses, and command that they be duly notified of the same, and sworn beforehand to observe the greatest fidelity as to all that may be laid before them.

And this being done, any other measures which may be necessary will be proceeded with.

And by these presents I thus decree, command and sign.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES

**443. DECREE RESPECTING ARRIVAL OF DUTCH OFFICIALS FROM THE COLONY OF ESSEQUIBO**  
**[28 October 1758]**

*Decree:* In the City of Santo Tome de la Guayana, on this 28th day of October, 1758, Señor Don Juan Valdes, Captain-Commandant, representing His Majesty, of the infantry, in the forts of this province, and Supreme Judge of the Court of Contraband, said that whereas a pirogue manned by six men and a pilot of the Aruaca Indian tribe had just arrived at the principal port of this city, bringing two Dutch officials with a passport from their [*word missing*] in the Dutch language, and a document addressed to the Señor Commandant in French, his Excellency was

obliged to command, and did command, that the two said Dutchmen should be placed in the guard-house of this city to be there lodged, and not permitted to leave it until the two passports and the document had been translated, and he had become acquainted with their contents and the object of their coming, etc., for which purpose he appointed Pedro de Gos, a Frenchman, surgeon of the garrison, to translate the said document, and Juan Andres de la Rivera, a German, for the same purpose in respect of the two passports. And in the first instance, before all other matters, the said two translators should be bound on oath to make a good and faithful translation, according to their knowledge and understanding, of the several documents intrusted for that purpose to each respectively. And that being done, the necessary measures would be taken about the matter.

The present Notary Public will inform the translators of this Resolution, and administer to them the necessary oaths in conformity with this Decree at the hour of 8 a.m. tomorrow.

And in regard to the pirogue, the Lieutenant of the Royal officials will, in his own presence, cause her to be examined and searched with the greatest care and exactitude in every part, and a complete inventory made of all her effects; and this will be carried out in the presence of, and by the assistance of, the said Notary Public.

And by these presents I thus provide, command, and confirm.

(Signed) JUAN VALDES

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE

Notary Public

#### 444. TRANSLATION OF PASSPORT AND COMMISSION

[29 October 1758]

Translation which I, Constable Juan Andres de la Rivera, make and sign, in virtue of the appointment given me by the Captain Commandant Don Juan Valdes, of the passport and commission written in the Dutch language, which were delivered to me by the present Notary, and both of which are literally as follows: –

##### *Passport*

We, Laurence Storm van 's Gravesande, Director-General of this Colony and of the rivers of the district of Essequibo, Colonel of Militia, and Residents of the States-General of Holland in the commission of the Noble Lords of the India Company and a Member of the “Camara de Dios”, etc., grant this passport to the person of Andres Verviert, Special Courier of this Colony. The said person is employed in a very important commission, and is travelling to the River Orinoco by our order, and furnished with this special passport for the Fort of San Francisco de Asis of Guayana, and we grant to the said courier a companion named Abraham Luis Matille to accompany him on his journey to and from the said place; and all officials and functionaries are commanded not to hinder or molest our said courier and his companion, but to allow them to

pass freely and to afford them any assistance and protection of which they may stand in need.

(Signed) LORENZO STOREM DE GRAVESANDE

*River Essequibo, in the Fortress of Zeelandia  
October 13, 1758*

By order of his Excellency,  
(Signed) ADRIAN SPORT [sic].

*Commission*

Sergeant Andrew Verviert has been appointed from our garrison, and we specially command him and his companion, Abraham Luis Matille, to proceed without delay direct to Guayana in the River Orinoco, and when they arrive at the Royal port of the fort they will go without loss of time to the house of the Señor Comandante, or whoever be carrying on the Government of Guayana, whether provisionally or otherwise, and deliver to the said Comandante the letter and order sent by us for the said Señor Comandante.

We command the said two persons to observe, each respectively, the best conduct and respect in the said Orinoco, and in case the prisoners be delivered to them it is necessary that they be well guarded and conducted as quickly as possible to this River Essequibo.

(Signed) LORENZO STOREM DE GRAVESANDE

*River Essequibo, in the Fort of Zeeland, October 13, 1758.*

By order of his Excellency,  
(Signed) ADRIAN SPOR [sic]

This translation is conformable to the text of the passport and commission in the Dutch language, and is true and faithfully translated into Spanish according to my knowledge and understanding, in testimony whereof I hereunto affix my signature, in this town of Santo Thomé de la Guayana, the 29th day of October, 1758.

(Signed) JUAN ANDRES DE LA RIVERA

**445. DECREE OF REMISSION**  
**[30 October 1758]**

The translations of the document and two passports that were brought by the two Government officers who came in the vessel from the Colony of Essequibo having been seen by the Señor Comandante, Don Juan Valdes, and his Excellency having studied their contents, taken note of the demand made by the Governor of the said Colony with regard to giving satisfaction for certain injuries done, and the remission of the two Dutch subjects seized in the River Cuyuni by the secret expedition, together with the various other events resulting therefrom, appear from the said letter which it was the duty of his Excellency to resolve, and he did resolve that the said passports and document, together with their respective translations, and the report of the inspection made by the Lieutenant of the Royal officials be added to these papers, and that as this was a matter which solely concerned the Captaincy-General of these provinces, the two Dutchmen should be sent to the Captaincy-General, together with a copy of the various reports of steps taken in connection with their visit and of all the remaining documents which have been drawn up so far in regard to the matter, leaving the instruments in the hands of his Excellency the Governor and Captain-General, for his superior judgment, so that he may come to any decision which he may consider best. For this purpose I hereby decree and command it to be done, and I sign the same.

Witness my hand,

(Signed) JUAN VALDES

October 30, 1758

Before me:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE,  
Notary Public

#### **446. DECREE TO TAKE THE DECLARATIONS**

**[30 October 1758]**

In the city of Guayana, on the 30th day of the month [October], in the same month and year [1758], Señor Don Juan Valdes, Captain and Governor of this fortress, on behalf of His Majesty, and Commandant-in-chief of this province, stated that for the purpose of substantiating these decrees in accordance with law, he should command, and did command, that the letter of the Very Rev. Father Prefect of these Missions, which gave rise to the fitting out and carrying into effect of the aforementioned expedition, be placed at the head of these judicial proceedings, and immediately afterwards the instructions and appointments of the officers to command it, issued and made by Ensign Don Felix Ferreras, who, in my temporary absence, was commanding this place. That when this was done, the above-named witnesses should summon Don Santiago Bonaldes and Don Luis Lopez de la Puente, the Chiefs of the secret expedition, to appear before his Excellency the said Señor Comandante at 8 o'clock the next morning, and to make their sworn declarations of all that happened, and of the resistance that was made on the part of the said Dutchman, and produce the papers that were found upon them, and to state which of them it was that killed one of the soldiers of the expedition, and wounded another severely in the arm. That the

witnesses should then answer fully all the questions put by his Excellency relative to the occurrences which took place up to the return of the expedition to this city, and for which object they will examine any of the soldiers engaged in the secret expedition whom they may think fit.

That when these declarations were concluded, the declarations of the two Dutch prisoners should be taken, they being brought under guard before his Excellency, so that they might declare for what purpose they were in these places, and by whose authority they were placed there, and for what object. And this being done, whatever other measures might be found necessary would be carried out. Therefore thus decreed, commanded, and signed, as hereby we certify.

(Signed)  
 JUAN VALDES  
 LUIS DE ALEMAN  
 FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BACIA

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#### **447. SUMMONS OF THE WITNESSES**

**[30 October 1758]**

Thereupon, we, Don Luis de Aleman and Don Francisco Xavier Filgueira, the duly appointed witnesses to substantiate this affair, proceeded to the residences of Don Santiago Bonaldes and Don Luis Lopez de la Pueute, and as commanded in the preceding Edict, cited them to appear personally at 8 o'clock the following morning, as we hereby certify.

(Signed)  
 LUIS DE ALEMAN.  
 FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA.

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#### **448. DECLARATION OF DON SANTIAGO BONALDES**

**[31 October 1758]**

In this said City of Guayana, on the 31st day of October, 1758, Don Santiago Bonaldes appeared before his Excellency Señor Don Juan Valdes and witnesses, for the purpose of making the declaration decreed by the preceding Edict, as one of the appointed Chiefs of the secret expedition to the River Cuyuni, and having been duly sworn, by God Our Lord and a Sign of the Cross, he promised to declare the truth as far as he knew, and was asked.

He was then interrogated according to the different points in the instructions issued to him. He declared as follows: –

1. That having left this city in conformity with the orders and instructions given to him, as herein shown, he set out for the settlement of Yuruary, where he met the soldiers, who were already prepared, and immediately reviewed them, and examined the arms, boats, and provisions, which he found all in good order, and sufficient for the expedition. He then appointed a certain number of men with a commander to each boat, and in good order proceeded on their journey,

following in each other's wake.

2. That in regard to the second point of his instructions, he did not observe the order to apprehend and take with him the Indians whom he met with on the way; for it appeared to him more politic to treat them with kindness and friendship so that they should not rise against them; and thus effectively gained his object, for they helped and assisted them in every way. Had he acted otherwise, treated them badly, or seized any of them, he was of opinion that they would have conspired and caused them trouble, as they were very numerous, and the district was by no means a suitable one for making a defence.

3 That, in regard to the third point, he observed with tact and skill all that was therein laid down, and he did not meet with any houses, posts, or stockades, nor any other kind of ambush.

4. That, in respect to the fourth point, in order to make the more progress, he made use of the Caribs who infest those parts, and they conducted them in a friendly manner, taking all care that they should neither be observed nor heard to a certain place (which he does not remember), where they met a white Dutchman about noon; and. that he, without any attempt at flight, or making any resistance, allowed himself to be taken; that from there they marched in company with the said Indians to the hut covered with palm branches and without side walls, where the Dutchman lived, and which they reached after two days' navigation down stream; that, being then quite near the above-mentioned hut, he waited for night, as it appeared to him that darkness would be more favourable to their advance. All being arranged in good order (in which disposition he took the opinion and judgment of the Caribs themselves), and it then being about 7 or 8 o'clock at night, he commanded the said hut to be attacked. He found there a Dutchman who appeared to have been asleep in a hammock, and who, having been awakened by the barking of a dog, heard them approaching, and arose, and all together seized him, under the impression that he was armed and might attack them. At this moment he heard, it might be [*here word omitted*] or five gun-shots, without being able to ascertain or distinguish, in the midst of so much confusion, by whom they were fired, but was only able to recognize the direction from which they came. He verified that a shot was fired by a soldier at a negro who was in company with the Dutchman, and was trying to escape from the house, but could not ascertain who fired the others. He is sure, however, he heard the voice of one of the soldiers, struggling with the said Dutchman when trying to bind him, crying out on the report of a pistol, "This rascal has killed me." He did not ascertain who it was at the time, as the men were trying to secure the said Dutchman, and having succeeded in doing so, he then found, on calling his men together, that one of the soldiers was killed and another badly wounded in the arm. He thereupon demanded that the arms should be given up, and found two pistols that had been discharged, and a gun in the hands of one of the Caribs; and having charged the Dutchman with firing, the latter replied that it was not he but that possibly it might have been the negro who accompanied him.

5. That, in regard to the fifth point of the instructions, he made the inquiries commanded therein, and that he was assured no other houses existed either above or below.

6. That the sixth point was observed as laid down.

7. That, in regard to the seventh point, he considered it better to allow the aforementioned Caribs to return freely of their own accord, as they promised him they would, and as they accordingly did. Had he done otherwise he certainly would not have succeeded, as their number had increased; and the proof of what he here states is to be found in the fact that today a great part of those Caribs are to be found in the Missions of the Reverend Capuchins; that as regards the In-

dian Famuto, he heard nothing whatever about him.

8. That, in respect to the eighth point, he met with no impediment whatever to necessitate his carrying out the instruction.

9. That, in regard to the ninth point of the said instructions, all was observed as therein laid down.

And that with regard to the merchandise, he only found twelve dozen knives, seven hatchets, and some pieces of linen, which he distributed among the Caribs who accompanied him, for the purpose of making them more grateful and friendly; that he handed over to the Reverend Father Fray Thomas de San Pedro ten dozen of the said knives and the seven hatchets, as he was unable to bring them to this city, owing to the length of the journey and their great fatigue, as well as five guns and a pistol that belonged to the said Dutch; that the declarant asked by whose authority they were in those parts, and for what purpose, and they replied that they were placed there by the Governor of Essequibo, without giving any other reply to the questions he was asked; that inclosed in a small box he found certain papers which appeared to be instructions, which, on his return to this city, he immediately placed in the hands of Ensign Don Felix Ferreras: that from the said place where they had their hut in the River Cuyuni to the Mission from which the expedition set out, they spent twenty-two days rowing up stream, the remainder by land; that this is all he knows of the events concerning the secret expedition, which is true in every respect in accordance with his oath, and that he ratifies and affirms the same, and is ready, if necessary, to repeat the same; that he is 34 years of age, and signs this, his declaration, together with his Excellency, as we hereby certify.

(Signed)

JUAN VALDES.

FRANCISCO SANTIAGO BONALDE.

LUIS DE ALEMAN.

FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA.

#### **449. DECLARATION BY DON LUIS DE LA PUENTE**

**[31 October 1758]**

On the same day, month, and year there appeared before his Excellency the Señor Comandante Don Juan Valdes, and us the said witnesses, with whom he is drawing up these judicial proceedings, Don Luis Lopez de la Puente, an appointed Chief of the secret expedition, and being duly sworn he promised to state faithfully and truly all he knew of the said affair; and being interrogated according to the different points of the instructions issued to him, he declared as follows:

1. That having left this city under the orders and instructions herein mentioned, he set out for the settlement of Yuruary, where he met the soldiers ready for the expedition; that en at once examined the arms, and that they embarked in the boats provided, and proceeded on their journey in good order.

2. With regard to the second point of the said instructions, he stated that his companion had informed him that it did not appear to him well to seize or cause any injury to be done to the

Caribs whom they should meet on the way, but rather to treat them with kindness, so that being inspired with confidence they would favour them, as they accordingly did, and that for this reason he failed to carry out the second point.

3. That, in regard to this point, the greatest care was taken to get information as he was commanded on the points therein mentioned, and that he could not obtain any, nor was he able to find any ambushes about those parts.

4. That, in respect to this point, after eight days' navigation, they arrived at an Indian Carib settlement, and there acquired the news of a Dutchman named Juan Baptista, who was accustomed to visit occasionally another settlement of Caribs; that the pilot of the boat was dispatched thence with instructions that in case he should find this Dutchman in the said settlement, he should send back word, which he did, as he found the Dutchman there. On the following day he was apprehended, without making any resistance, and taken under strict guard with the party, until they reached the hut covered with palm-branches, in which he lived. Here they remained awaiting night, and between 7 and 8 o'clock attacked it.; and being heard through the barking of a dog, they all rushed suddenly into the house for the purpose of securing a Dutchman who appeared to be sleeping in a hammock, and they found him arisen; that when one of the soldiers named Francisco Robles was in the act of seizing him, he fired a pistol, which caused the said soldier to cry out, "This dog has killed me," and, at the same time, he heard three more shots, of which he knows that one was fired by a man named Pedro at a negro who was trying to escape; another he believes by Don Santiago Bonaldes, though on this point he is not quite sure, as he only heard so from the others; and he never knew who fired the third; that he learned from the interpreter that the said Dutchman believed they were Caribs, and fired on that account; and that of the one who fled he can give no information.

5. That, in regard to this point, they made every inquiry as to whether they had any slaves, or whether any more huts existed, but that they did not find any, either higher up or lower down the stream, and did not hear that any existed.

6. That this point was carried out as ordered in every respect.

7. That with regard to the seventh point, the Indian Carib, named Famuto, was not found, nor did they meet any other Caribs engaged in kidnapping other Indians for the purposes of slavery.

8. That with respect to this point there was no occasion to protect themselves against any enemy, as they met no one.

9. That, to the last point, he declared that all was carried out as therein commanded, the greatest zeal being displayed in the service of God and the King.

That with regard to the merchandise, they only found twelve dozen of knives, seven hatchets, three short swords, one boiler, five guns, three pistols – one of them large – and some pieces of linen, which were divided among the Caribs who accompanied them, and that he left the distribution to his companion, who was acting as first corporal, as well as some papers, which he knows were delivered to Ensign Don Felix Ferreras; that they employed twenty-two days in returning to the Mission from where they set out; and having nothing more to add in reference to this affair, he concluded his declaration; all of which he ratifies and affirms, and, if necessary, will repeat, in accordance with his oath; that he is 33 years of age; that he signs this his declaration, together with his Excellency and the said witnesses, as we hereby testify.

(Signed)

JUAN VALDES  
 LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE  
 LUIS DE ALEMAN  
 FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA

**450. DECLARATION BY JUAN JOSÉ FRAGAS**  
**[31 October 1758]**

On the said day, month, and year, in accordance with the preceding Edict, there appeared before his Excellency the Commandant, and us, the witnesses, with whom he is drawing up these proceedings, Juan José Fragas, a soldier belonging to these forts, who on being duly sworn by his Excellency, and promising to declare truthfully all he knew concerning this secret expedition, was interrogated by his Excellency. He was asked from whence the said expedition departed, what place they reached, and what events took place whilst he was engaged therein, to which he replied that he departed from the village of Yuruary under the command of Don Santiago Bonalde and Don Luis Lope de la Puente with the other men, whom he followed to a certain place (the name of which he is ignorant of), where a white Dutchman was found, who made no attempt at resistance nor flight, but allowed himself to be apprehended; that from thence they departed, in company with some Carib Indians, and continued their journey until they reached the hut which they had in the River Cuyuni; and before they arrived there the Chiefs who commanded the expedition reconnoitred the place, and made a halt in a place close by the said hut, and there remained until about 7 or 8 o'clock at night, when they then attacked the hut; in which a white Dutchman and a negro were found, the former being asleep in a hammock; that "the Dutchman, being awakened from sleep by the barking of a dog that heard them approaching, they all suddenly rushed forward with the object of securing him, at which moment he heard four shots, without however, being able to say by whom they were fired; that he could only say (as he had seen it) that one shot was fired by a soldier, named Pedro de Rojas, outside the hut, at a negro who was with the said Dutchman and was trying to escape; that when all was quiet, after the first onset, he heard Don Santiago Bonalde say that when in the act of jumping on land from the boat he had cocked both triggers of his gun, which was a double-barrelled one, and that one of them went off while in the act of seizing the said Dutchman; that he could not say whether it was that shot that caused the death of the deceased or not: that he did not know whether any other huts existed; that they returned from the River Cuyuni to the Mission whence they had set out, and took twenty-two days in doing so; that this is all he knows in reference to the affair, and is true, in accordance with his oath; and that he is ready whenever it may be necessary to state the same again; that he is 24 years of age and signs this, his declaration, together with his Excellency and witnesses, as we hereby certify.

(Signed)  
 JUAN VALDES  
 JUAN JOSEPH DE FRAGAS  
 LUIS DE ALEMAN  
 FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA

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**451. DECLARATION BY SEGUNDO DE LA CRUZ****[2 November 1758]**

In the City of Guayana, on the 2nd day of the month November, 1758, in conformity with what is expressed in the foregoing Edict, there appeared personally before his Excellency the Señor Comandante Don Juan Valdes, and before the said witnesses, the soldier Segundo de la Cruz, who was duly sworn by his Excellency to declare truthfully all that he knew of the said secret expedition. He was asked from whence the said expedition departed, what place they reached, whom they met, whether any one was imprisoned, and what events took place during the said journey; to which he made answer that he departed from the village of Yuruary in company with the other troops, commanded by Don Santiago Bonalde, as chief, and Don Luis Lopez de la Puente as second in command, and these he accompanied to a certain place (the name of which he does not know), where a white Dutchman was apprehended without the least resistance, and he was taken in their company until they reached the hut where another one dwelt, and whom they found therein, having attacked the place suddenly and with great confusion, as their approach was made known by the barking of a dog therein; while so engaged three shots were fired, one of which, the said declarant stated, killed a companion, and another wounded himself badly in the arm, which limb was now in a useless condition; that he did not know who fired the shots on account of the darkness; that whilst suffering acutely he heard Don Santiago Bonalde say that one of the barrels of his double-barrelled gun had gone off; but that he did not know whether it had caused any injury; that he could affirm that the said Dutchman did not fire, and had no weapons, as he, the declarant, was the first man who seized him; that he was unable to give any information about the other shots, nor about the return journey, on account of the wound he received; that he knows nothing more of the affair; that what lie has declared is the truth, in accordance with his oath, and if necessary he is ready to repeat his declaration; that he is 25 years of age, but as he does not know how to write he is unable to sign his declaration. And his Excellency signed it, together with the witnesses.

(Signed)

JUAN VALDES

LUIS DE ALEMAN

FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA

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**452. DECLARATION BY PEDRO AROCHA****[2 November 1758]**

In the said City of Guayana, on the same day, month, and year, Don Juan Valdes, Captain and Governor of this fortress, on behalf of His Majesty, for the purposes of the judicial declarations he is drawing up, caused to appear before him and the said witnesses, the soldier, Pedro Arocha, who, on being duly sworn, promised to state faithfully all he knew and might be asked.

And being; asked what was the point of departure, what people composed the expedition, in virtue of what orders, for what purposes, which way the said expedition went, whom they met, what houses they came across, and what incidents occurred, he replied that he left the settlement of Yuruary in company with other soldiers (the number of which he does not, know), under orders from Ensign Don Felix Ferreras: that Don Santiago Bonalde was in command, and Don Luis Lopez de la Puente second; that he learned the expedition was to apprehend some Dutch; that he descended by the River Cuyuni with the company, and that a Dutchman was seized without any resistance, being taken with them until they reached a place near the small hut, where they halted until night time; that under the orders of the Chiefs they attacked the hut between 7 and 8 o'clock at night, from which resulted that some shots were fired owing to the great disorder with which they rushed upon the place; that he was ignorant who fired them, nor did he know who it was who killed the deceased, and still less who wounded the other; but that he heard Don Santiago Bonalde say that his gun had gone off accidentally and might have done some damage; and he also heard that another soldier had discharged his blunderbuss in the air outside the hut; that he knows well that the said Dutchman had no arms, and consequently did not fire; and that he did not hear there were any other huts either above or below that place; that he returned to the Mission whence he set out, having employed twenty-two days in reaching it, after enduring great hardships, that he has nothing more to say concerning the affair, and that this declaration is true in accordance with his oath; and that, if necessary, he is ready to repeat the same before any other Tribunal; that he is 28 years of age, and not knowing how to write he cannot sign this his declaration. And his Excellency signed it together with the two witnesses, as we hereby certify.

(Signed)

JUAN VALDEZ

LUIS DE ALEMAN

FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA

*[Here various formal instructions intervene leading up to the examination of the Dutch prisoners.]*

#### **453. DECLARATION OF STEPHEN HIZ**

**[3 November 1858]**

In this City of Guayana, on the 3rd day of November, 1758, Señor Don Juan de Dios Valdes, Captain and Governor of this fortress on behalf of His Majesty, caused to appear before him, and witnesses, one of the two Dutchmen at present confined in the Fort of San Francisco d'Assis, and being duly sworn according to the rites of his religion (which he declared to be Lutheran), by raising two fingers of the right hand, he was examined as follows: –

1. On being asked of what nationality he was, his name, and profession, he replied that he was a native of the States of Holland, his name Stephen Hiz, and his profession that of a miner.
2. Asked what he was doing in these places, he answered that he was placed by the Governor of Essequibo in command of the guard, which was permanently maintained there.
3. Asked how many men formed that guard, and what was the object of occupying that Post,

he answered that the guard was composed of a corporal and four men, two white Dutchmen, and two Indians; and that they were stationed there to apprehend negro slaves who escaped from Essequibo; and to obstruct and restrain the Carib tribe, so that they might not do any injury, by way of that river, either to those of the said Colony or to the neighbouring Spaniards and domesticated Indians, as shown by a paragraph of his instructions which the officer of the Spaniards seized when he apprehended him.

4. Asked with what motive he took up arms against the Spaniards, and fired upon them, he answered that he did neither the one nor the other, nor could he do so, being all alone, and the Spaniards being very numerous; that when they attacked the hut, he was then actually sleeping in a hammock, and was awakened by the noise and rush they made in the hut; that he wished to rise in order to escape, being under the impression they were Caribs, but being overcome with fear he did not do so; nor did they, the Spaniards, give him time, for they at once fell upon him and bound him.

5. Asked how it was that, if he did not fire, one Spaniard was shot and another badly wounded, he answered that he was persuaded the Spaniards shot their own comrade, and in like manner wounded the other; for, in the act of entering and binding him, they began firing inside the hut itself.

6. Asked what arms of defence he had in that place, and how the place was named, and in what river basin it lay, he answered that the arms he had were five guns, three sabres, three pistols, a flask of powder, and a piece of lead for ammunition; that only two of those guns belonged to himself, and the other arms were the Company's; that the Post was called Cuiba, and was situated on the banks of the Cuyuni River.

7. Asked what effects or articles of barter the Spaniards took when they apprehended him, and whether he had them for purposes of commerce or for purchases, he answered that they took fourteen dozen of knives, eighteen pieces of hardware, consisting of hatchets and cutlasses, two pieces of coarse striped linen, nine bundles of beads, one dozen of middle-sized looking-glasses, 24 yards of shirting, and 20 yards of blue nankeen, all which were intended for the purchase of provisions.

8. Asked how long he had been in that place, and if he had made any plantations, or had exercised his profession as a miner, he answered that it was eight months since he was appointed to the command, and that he began to make a small clearing with the object of planting some yucas, and that he had not exercised his profession in any way.

9. Asked if he had received any merchandise for the purpose of buying slaves, and how many of these he had forwarded to the Colony of Essequibo, he answered that during the short time he had been in that quarter he had nothing whatever to do with such purchases, nor was any merchandise given to him for such purchases; that his sole charge in that respect was to collect some articles that remained due to his predecessor, as might be seen from the said papers.

10. Asked what the distance was from that place to the Colony of Essequibo, he answered that it was very short, although three whole days were necessary for the journey; as the navigation is only possible at high water, and then only in the *canons* [channels].

11. Asked if he was aware whether those places where he was posted belonged to the jurisdiction of Essequibo, and what length of time this post had been maintained, he answered that he did not know whether it be or not in the jurisdiction of Essequibo, but that the Post had been maintained in that place for many years.

12. Asked whether the said place was good for planting sugar-cane or other cultivation, he answered that the lands were not very good, being liable to inundation, but higher up than the Post there was land fit for agriculture; but that he had express orders from his Governor not to allow any one to pass higher up under any circumstances.

13. Asked whether the negro who was found with him, now in prison, was a slave or not, he answered that he was not, but was bound to perform certain work for the Company, by whose authority he was there.

14. Asked what other orders he had, what other duties he performed, and generally to furnish all other information he might have, he answered that he had no other information to give; that all his statements were true in accordance with his oath; that he affirms and ratifies them, and, if necessary, will repeat them; that he is 48 years of age; and signed this his declaration, together with his Excellency, as we hereby certify.

(Signed)

JUAN VALDES

ESTEVAN HIZ

LUIS DE ALEMAN

FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA

#### **454. DECLARATION OF JUAN BAUTISTA BRUM**

**[3 November 1758]**

On the said day, in the same month and year, in the above-mentioned City of Santo Thomé de la Guayana, his Excellency the Señor Comandante caused to appear before him and the witnesses, Juan Bautista Brum, under a proper guard; and being duly sworn by his Excellency according to the rites of his religion, by raising two finger of his right hand, and having promised to declare truthfully all he knew, he was interrogated by the said Señor Comandante, through the medium of the interpreter, and answered as follows to the questions put to him: –

1. Asked what his name was, of what country, his present residence, and his occupation, he answered that his name was Juan Bautista Brum, a native of Flanders, resident in the Colony of Essequibo, and by profession a tailor.

2. Asked what he was doing in these parts, he answered that he was a soldier of the Post, placed there by the Governor of Essequibo, under the orders of Esteban Hiz, the Chief of the said Post.

3. Asked with what object the said Governor of Essequibo maintained the guard there, he answered that it was maintained for the purpose of apprehending fugitive negro slaves from the said Colony, and to prevent the Caribs from injuring the Indians already domesticated.

4. Asked how it was that he came to be so far distant as two days' journey from the Post, as the Spaniards who apprehended him declared, he answered that, by orders of his superior, he had gone to that place to seek some Indians for help in making a clearing they had begun, and that soon after his arrival there the Spaniards came and seized him and bound him, without any resistance or defence on his part, and he was then taken by the said Spaniards to a place quite close to the hut in which he lived.

5. Asked if he knew or had any information concerning the party who wounded one of the soldiers and killed another, he answered that he knew nothing what ever about it; nor could he know, for he was left at a distance of a gun-shot from the hut, bound, when the Spaniards attacked the place, and from there he was taken to this city by the said Spaniards.

6. Asked what arms he had, he answered, only five guns, belonging to the Company of Essequibo.

7. Asked the name of the place where they had their huts, and on what river it is situated, he answered that the name of the place was Cuiba, situated on the River Cuyuni.

8. Asked how long he had been in that place, and whether he had made any purchases of slaves, he answered that he had been there eighteen months, and that he never had any thing to do with this matter.

9. Asked what the distance was from Cuiba to the Colony of Essequibo, he answered that the distance was three days, more or less, as the navigation could only be carried on when the rivers were high, and the channels full of water.

10. Asked if he knew that place to be in the jurisdiction of Essequibo, and what length of time his Governor had maintained a guard there, he answered that he did not know, but that the guard had been maintained for many years.

11. Asked if the lands about there were adapted for cultivation, he answered that they were not, as they were subject to inundations; but higher up than the Post there were good patches, but that his Governor does not allow them to be occupied, nor any one to be suffered therein.

12. Asked if the negro was a slave, he answered that he was not, but that he was under obligation to work for the Company, from whom he had received payment.

13. Asked generally in what other duties he was occupied, and what orders, verbal or written, he had, and that he should tell the truth in everything, he answered that he knew no more, and has no other information than the above. That the above declaration is true, and that he affirms and ratifies the same, and, if necessary, will repeat it; that he is 48 years of age, and, not knowing how to write, is unable to sign his declaration. And his Excellency signed it with the witnesses, as we certify.

(Signed)

JUAN VALDES

LUIS DE ALEMAN

FRANCISCO XAVIER FILGUEIRA Y BARCIA

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**455. COPY OF LETTER FROM DON NICHOLAS CASTRO, PROVISIONAL GOVERNOR OF CUMANÁ TO GOVERNOR OF ESSEQUIBO**

**[9 November 1758]**

*Cumaná, November 9, 1758*

Sir,

The Commandant of Guayana has forwarded to me, among other documents, a letter which you sent him claiming the two Dutch prisoners, a negro slave, and a half-breed woman with her

children, whom the guard dispatched from that fort seized in an island of the River Cuyuni, established there in a house, and carrying on the unjust traffic of slavery among the Indians, in the dominions of the King my Sovereign. As this same River Cuyuni and all its territory is included in those dominions, it is incredible that their High Mightinesses the States-General should have authorized you to penetrate into those dominions, and still less to carry on a traffic in the persons of the Indians belonging to the settlements and territories of the Spaniards. I therefore consider myself justified in approving the conduct of this expedition.

For these reasons I do not consider myself at liberty to allow the restitution of the prisoners which you demand until the question is decided by my Sovereign, to whom I am rendering full account of all that has happened, supported by all the necessary documents.

I have the honour to assure you, with high consideration, that I shall always be ready to obey your just command.

May God preserve you many years.

I kiss your hand.

Your Servant,

(

Signed) DON NICOLAS DE CASTRO

M. Gravesande

**456. DON NICOLAS DE CASTRO TO M. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE,  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE COLONY OF ESSEQUIBO**

**[10 November 1758]**

*Cumaná, November 10, 1758*

Sir,

The Commandant of Guayana has sent me, with other papers, a letter which you have written to him, demanding the delivery of the two Dutch prisoners, a negro, and a creole, with their children, and of all that was found by the guard in command there on an island in the River Cuyuni, which is, with its dependencies, a part of the domains of the King, my master, and on which these prisoners publicly kept up an illicit trade in Indian *poitos*, although it is incredible that their High Mightinesses should have authorized you to enter the said domains, and still less to purchase Indians from his villages and territories, in order to make slaves of them. This being so, and our action being a justifiable one, I cannot consent to the restitution of the prisoners whom you demand until I know the will of my master, to whom I have made a report of all that has passed, with papers in justification of my action.

I remain at your service, and may God preserve you many years.

(Signed) DON NICOLAS DE CASTRO

To the Dutch Commandant Resident at Essequibo, from the Governor of Cumaná.

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**457. MILITARY COMMANDANT, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE SPANISH COMMANDANT, ORINOCO****[8 December 1758]***Rio Essequibo, December 8, 1758.*

Sir,

I duly received the letter which was written to me by Mr. Don Nicolas de Castro, whose person or quality I do not have the honour to know, in answer to the letter which our Governor had written to you on the subject of the outrage committed in our River of Cuyuni. I have communicated that letter to his Excellency, who was extremely surprised to see that you did not even deign to give him an answer.

Having read the contents of the aforesaid letter, and seeing the frivolous pretexts which are alleged in order to justify a proceeding so directly contrary to the law of nations (for, Sir, even if the allegations were true, which we in no way admit, usage among neighbouring, friendly, and even allied, nations demands previous complaints before having recourse to violence), his Excellency has ordered me to write to you.

That in the name of the States-General, his Sovereigns, he persists, and now for the second time demands the liberation of the prisoners, and a suitable satisfaction for this violation and insult done to the territory of his Sovereigns, and that, since it seems to him, according to the letter in question, that in Guayana and at Cumaná, there is ignorance of the boundaries of the territory of His Catholic Majesty and those of the States-General according to the Treaties at present subsisting, he has ordered me to send you the inclosed map, on which you will be able to see them very distinctly, and these in accordance with the inviolable duty of his office, he hopes to maintain.

Our Governor has always striven to keep up good relations and friendship with his neighbours: you yourself, Sir, have had a convincing proof of this when he took the trouble to write to you in order to warn you, as soon as he had received advice that the Caribs had formed the plan to attack your Missions; which warning, and his repeated interdictions to the Caribs, even accompanied with threats, have prevented the execution.

His Excellency was under no obligation to act in that manner but he thought that as among allies and good neighbours it was his duty as a gentleman to warn you, and to prevent to the utmost of his power a savage and brutal nation from doing any harm to your nation.

Great is the gratitude which is shown for this, as it seems to me, rather important service.

The letter which I have received shall be sent next week to Europe, and his Excellency has no doubt but the States-General will be able to obtain from His Catholic Majesty, of [whose] great justice and Royal equity we are convinced, a full and ample satisfaction.

This, Sir, is what I have orders to write to you. This letter will be handed to you by Indians sent for that purpose, since the manner in which the messengers were dealt with who were sent with the preceding does not permit us to send white people again.

For the rest, Sir, as for myself, I have the honour to be, with great esteem, your very humble and very obedient servant,

(Signed) L. L. VAN BERCHEYCK

*(Original: French)*

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**458. EXTRACTS FROM TESTIMONY OF THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS WHICH WERE INSTITUTED CONCERNING THE SECRET EXPEDITION, AND APPREHENSION OF TWO DUTCHMEN, WITH THEIR WIVES AND A NEGRO SLAVE, IN THE RIVER CUYUNI, AND THE WOUNDING OF TWO SOLDIERS BY THESE IN THE INVASION WHICH TOOK PLACE**  
**[28 December 1758]**

*[The following documents are in this collection]:*

**1. Letter of the Prefect of the Missions to the Commandant of Guayana, which gave rise to the secret expedition against the Dutch, 9 June 1758** [Document No. 436 above].

*[Appended to this document is the following statement]:*

I certify that this agrees with the contents of the original letter sent to the Señor Commandant, from which I caused it to be taken, and made this true and faithful copy with my own hand, in nine pages, on ordinary paper, there being no stamped paper in this fortress, on the 31st day of October, 1758.

Witness my hand:

(Signed) LUIS LOPEZ DE LA PUENTE  
Notary Public

**2. Decree of the provisional Commandant of Guayana, ordering a secret expedition against the post of the Dutch colony in the River Cuyuni, 27 July 1758** [Document No. 438 above].

**3. Instructions given to the chief of the expedition by the Commandant of Guayana, 27 July 1758** [Document No. 439 above].

**4. Decree issued by Don Juan Valdes, 27 October 1758** [Document No. 442 above].

**5. Decree respecting arrival of Dutch officials from Colony of Essequibo, 28 October 1758** [Document No. 443 above].

**6. Letter of the Dutch Director-General to the Commandant of Guayana, protesting against the outrage committed by the secret expedition sent to destroy the Dutch post in the River Cuyuni, 30 September 1758** [Document No. 441 above].

7. **Translation of passport and commission, 29 October 1758** [Document No. 444 above].
8. **Decree of Remission, 30 October 1758** [Document No. 445 above].
9. **Decree to take the declarations, 30 October 1758** [Document No. 446 above].
10. **Summons of the witnesses 30 October 1758** [Document No. 447 above].
11. **Declaration of Don Santiago Bonaldes, 31 October 1758** [Document No. 448 above].
12. **Declaration by Don Luis de la Puente 31 October 1758** [Document No. 449 above].
13. **Declaration by Juan José Fragas, 31 October 1758** [Document No. 450 above].
14. **Declaration by Segundo de la Cruz, 2 November 1758** [Document No. 451 above].
15. **Declaration by Pedro Arocha, 2 November 1858** [Document No. 452 above].
16. **Declaration of Stephen Hiz, 3 November 1858** [Document No. 453 above].
17. **Declaration of Juan Bautista Brum, 3 November 1858** [Document No. 454 above].
18. **Translation of the Instructions for the Dutch Postholder in Cuyuni** [Document No. 426 above].
19. **Copy of Letter from Don Nicholas Castro, Provisional Governor of Cumaná to Governor of Essequibo, 9 November 1758** [Document No. 455 above].
20. **Don Nicolas de Castro to M. Storm van 's Gravesande, Director-General of the Colony of Essequibo, 10 November 1758** [Document No. 456 above].

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**21. Report of the Counsellor on the above documents relating to the secret expedition**

The Counsellor has seen these documents, and says that whereas the foreigners to which the above documents refer were apprehended, whilst acting as a guard, by order of the Governor of the Colony of Essequibo, within the limits of the jurisdiction of this Government for the purpose of apprehending fugitive negro slaves deserting from their masters who may pass by those places, committing the impious act of purchasing many Indians to work on their farms, and subjecting them to perpetual slavery, as is shown by the account which the aforementioned foreigners presented for the recover of certain slaves, and also by the instructions issued by the Governor of that Colony, by which the said guard is charged to procure the Indians; and whereas by the said account it is further shown that the soldiers of the guard did carry on that traffic, thereby de-

prising the natives of their natural liberty, which they should be allowed to enjoy, without instructing them in our holy Catholic faith; in opposition to His Majesty's commands, as ordered and decreed in various Royal Decrees, in which His Majesty (whom God preserve) expressly recommends that the Indians be well treated; not deprived of their liberty, and receive proper instruction in our holy faith, therefore, as this is an affair of the greatest importance, and worthy of the Royal consideration, and in order that His Majesty may determine and make known his Royal pleasure in regard to it, so as to put a stop to the perpetual enslavements to which the said foreigners subject the said Indians, and that henceforth they may not suffer the grave injury of being slaves, is of opinion that the said documents be forwarded to His Majesty in original, and accompanied with a legalized copy of the same for the King in his Supreme Council of the Indies, in order that His Majesty may issue his Royal command as to the matter.

(Signed) Licenciado JULIAN PADILLA Y MORON  
Cumaná, December 28, 1758

*(Archivo de Simancas)*

**459. SEÑOR ITURRIAGA TO SEÑOR DON RICARDO WALL, SECRETARY OF STATE OF SPAIN**

**[28 December 1758]**

*Cabruta, (on the Orinoco), December 28, 1758.*

Excellent Sir,

As the chief Posts of the Higher Orinoco, and the greater number of criminals, require a larger force to guard, I requested the Governor of Cumaná to increase the number to thirty-five instead of twenty-five. He has carried out the request I made, and they arrived here on the 24th instant.

Meanwhile, it was discovered that the Dutch of Essequibo were continuing their usurpations on the River Cuyuni, and although they were dislodged, and some of them taken by a small guard from here, with militia and Indians, dispatched by Lieutenant Don Felix Ferreras, Acting Commandant of Guayana at the time, we fear they now intend to recover the lost Posts.

On this account it appears to me well that the guard of twenty-five men of its garrison that was in the Higher Orinoco should be withdrawn to Guayana, and so I have advised the Governor of Cumaná, in case he liked to make the change with men from Cumaná, and in order that the number here might be increased to thirty-five men for the reasons explained.

God preserve your Excellency . . .

(Signed) JOSÉ DE ITURRIAGA

Señor Don Ricardo Wall, etc.