

**- 8 -****From 1715 to 1737****217. MEMORIAL TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY OF THE ZEELAND CHAMBER****[24 May 1717]**

Pressing difficulties compel those who are distressed to look out for proper remedies in order to prevent them; in this condition the undersigned free settlers of the Colony Essequibo in America find themselves compelled to take the freedom to trouble your Honours with the following representation, trusting that you will favourably consider the same, and will grant its requests.

It is now nearly five years since we have been prohibited by the Commander Pieter van der Heijden, acting under the orders of Your Highnesses, from trading, as well within as without this Colony in Red Indian slaves, balsam, etc.; through which prohibition we find ourselves deprived not only of the advantages the said business, however small, would have been able to bring to us, but further must see the profits, which were to be expected therefrom, accrue before our eyes to our neighbours, to wit, the colonists of Surinam and Berbice, and seeing that it has pleased Your Honours to make a prohibition of such a character take effect, we trusted that it, through the serious recommendation of our aforesaid Heer Commander, would have been suspended, so we take the liberty, Your Honours, to show, in a simple manner, how little advantage it is for the Noble Company that the aforesaid prohibition continues to remain in force, how much prejudice we suffer therefrom, and how it favours the inhabitants of Surinam and Berbice, and also encourages them to push on that business more and more to their profit.

Your Honours are well aware that it is permitted to those of the said provinces to traffic in everything they can get, and that nothing else is left for us than the bartering for Indian vessels, canoes, and corials, and occasionally some hammocks or cocoa from the Spaniards in Orinoco; so that we are restricted in a river, which is outside the territory of the Noble Company, where the same has no more power than a private merchant, which is in Spanish possession, and where the meanest person of our neighbours is allowed to carry on trade in anything that he pleases, as well as the Noble Company, without exception from what place they come.

Your Honours are also aware (or at present we suppose so) that Orinoco is a river which is actually under the King or Crown of Spain, which nation is consequently master there, and whenever a vessel from Essequibo (we represent the matter truthfully) be now come in Orinoco, whether it be for trading in vessels or otherwise, and likewise a canoe out of Surinam or Berbice find itself there, and that according to the fashion of the Indian traffic one of these Indians with some of his wares (whether it be slaves, balsam, or anything that for us is contraband, and is, nevertheless, allowed), to those of our aforesaid neighbours be come alongside of the Essequibo canoe (to which be it said without flattery they also sell with pleasure, partly because they have better goods, partly because they are able to come to an agreement with us more peaceably), then our settlers are obliged to answer the Indians that such merchandise cannot be traded in by them,

thus sending them back to the Surinam canoe; they are consequently obliged to contribute, against their will to the profits of the latter, whilst the French and English barques are not behindhand. Yet, further, whenever a canoe, be it of Surinam or Berbice, is under way, and in the neighbourhood of this river or elsewhere, meets any free Indians who have red slaves for sale, they buy the latter, and even bring the purchased slaves within the river, deposit them with one or another of our inhabitants, proceed on their voyage, traffic in the Rivers Marocco, Weijne, Barima, Pomeroon, Orinoco, Trinidad, and, wherever it is convenient to them, aim at the greatest profit, and when they have got everything they can, call, in repassing, for the slaves that they had left here, and push on their journey to Surinam, the Essequibo inhabitants, being well pleased that they are oppressed by those who ought to protect them, and that their gains (from which the Noble Company can make no profit) are taken away and driven into the Surinam purse. This presents itself to us business people very painfully, seeing that the Indians, as long as they get good payment in goods, do not care with whom they deal; yet they of Essequibo are much the best supplied, and, being the nearest situated, have always before the prohibition been on the most friendly terms with them.

We cannot so far comprehend what is the object of Your Honours in prohibiting the business to us, seeing that you cannot hinder those from Surinam and Berbice – yea, not even French, English, and other foreign nations – it appearing to us as if Your Honours wished to place the yoke on our neck alone, because, so long as Essequibo has been in European hands, there cannot be any instance shown that the inhabitants of this Colony alone were restrained from carrying on this traffic, etc. . .

Your Honours' very obedient servants, the free settlers of the Colony of Essequibo in America,

(Signed) A. HOLLANDER (and others)

In River Essequibo, May 24, 1717

**218. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY  
[9 July 1717]**

(Extract)

So is it also with a certain gum, named *ajouwe*, to be found in the River Essequibo, a cask full of which I am likewise sending as a specimen. This is possibly the same gum whereof Your Honours were pleased to make mention. I have most strongly recommended the Postholders of Wacquebo, of Demerary, and of Maycoene to learn among the Indians with whom they traffic, whether there be any other gums to be got whereof to make future essay.

**219. WEST INDIA COMPANY (THE TEN) TO COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO  
[30 November 1717]**

(Extract)

In answer to the petition presented to us by the inhabitants of the Colony of Essequibo, and by those interested in that Colony who live in Zeeland, we have decided to permit the said inhabitants of Essequibo, provisionally and until our further orders, to barter for *copaiba* alone, but not for annatto dye, since we desire to preserve the latter trade for the Company itself.

We have likewise granted and permitted the aforesaid inhabitants of Essequibo to buy or get by barter in the Orinoco six red slaves only and no more, for their own service and use; and for each of such red slaves they will be required to pay to the Company for the importation of the same 6 guilders once, and, moreover, the poll-tax for each red slave, to the amount of 1 rix-dollar per year. And the said inhabitants shall not be allowed to export from there any red slave, or to sell him to any one whosoever, except to inhabitants of Essequibo. . .

**220. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[22 September 1718]**

On the 1st and 4th August there have by my orders been seized by Herman Winkler (the sergeant), from a certain Surinam trader, named Hans Pieter Widdringh, thirty-one red slaves, both great and small, two cases, a cask, and twenty-four calabashes of balsam oil, brought here by the same out of Orinoco, pretending distress for the purpose of supplying himself with water and bread for pursuing his journey to Surinam, being the old trick which they use in order to dispose of a part of their slaves here, and then to their principals in Surinam, with an account a yard long. He was properly provided with a pass on Orinoco, but not longer than for a period of ten to twelve months at the outside, but he has spent there fully twenty-one months, so as to play his part the better. When in Orinoco he had the hardihood to wound a free Indian badly in the head with an axe, to bind him hand and foot, and so to fling him into his canoe; but fearing that for this he might be attacked by the other Indians, he let him loose again; the Surinam guests performing such pranks would be the cause of serious hostilities breaking out with the natives there.

**221. PROCLAMATION BY THE COMMANDER OF ESSEQUIBO**  
**[3 October 1718]**

We, Pieter van der Heijden Rezen, Commander of the Colony and adjacent rivers of Essequibo. . .

Being further informed that, by the continual felling of timber on the part of the free inhabitants of this Colony these rivers are stripped of their timber to such an extent, that it would in time lead to the utter ruin of the Honourable Company, and further tend greatly to the detriment of those free inhabitants who are (for the present) unable to do so upon their own grounds, we, the Commander, strictly prohibit the cutting down or felling in any manner whatsoever of any timber, of whatever kind, name, or use it may be in the district, Colony, or adjacent Rivers of Essequibo, except upon those grounds which have been granted them by the Honourable Company; but if any inhabitants are unable to find therein what they require for their plantation or dwelling-place, they shall, nevertheless, not be allowed to fell timber without first having obtained written permission therefor from me, the Commander, be they the Honourable Company's

servants, free inhabitants, or others dwelling in the Colony, under pain of the offenders being proceeded against according as I, the Undersigned, shall think fit.

PIETER VAN DER HEYDEN REZEN  
Rio Essequibo, October 3, 1718

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**222. SPANISH COMMANDANT IN GUAYANA TO THE COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO  
[21 February 1719]**

Señor Commandant of the Colony of Essequibo,

I inform you that there arrived below this Castle three *pirogues*, the one in charge of Pieter Schouten, and in the other Jan Paris, and in the other Pieter de Jongh, of which I was notified; for which reason I went to see them and speak with them. We did all we could for them, and they were treated in every way with affection, as good friends and peaceful people and allies. They asked permission of me to go up to trade with the Caribs. I responded that I could not give it to them, because my Governor had given me orders not to allow any stranger to pass beyond the Castle on the way to the dwellings of the aforesaid Caribs; that they should think well what they did; that they should turn back and go down; that if they went on I must stop them. They answered that it was well; that they would go back to Essequibo, and they did go on that day down the river, but on the following night all three pirogues passed along the other side of the river, and a negro who was fishing saw them and hailed them, and told them that they must not pass to where they were going without permission; that if the Lieutenant knew it he would send after them; and thereupon they told him to hold his tongue, and they continued their voyage. And having received these public news, I was obliged to send a boat with twelve men and a corporal, in order to bring them to this Royal port, and having gone they brought Pieter de Jongh with his boat. They told me that they broke the boat of Jan Paris; that they set his slaves free in the forest; the other, Pieter Schouten, was up stream with his boat and what he had in it.

Dear Sir, I could not do otherwise in this matter but execute the orders of my King and my superiors; to the prisoners I have given all possible good treatment, and I send them with the same Indians who brought them. I beseech you not to allow your soldiers to come to trade with the Indians of this river, because it is contrary to what has been stipulated, and a thing which must not be permitted: since so great has been the trouble which has occurred about this subject for some years past that the news has reached Santa Fé and even Spain; and you know well that we, the subjects, must execute the orders of the superiors.

I remain, begging you to accept my services for anything in this province, as to which I can serve you, who God keep for as many years as you can wish.

Your faithful servant, etc.

PEDRO DIONISIO RUANO  
Guayana, February 21, 1719

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**223. MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COURT (OF POLICY OF THE COLONY OF ESSEQUIBO)**

[1 May 1719]

A letter having been received from the Governor of the River Orinoco, complaining that some free inhabitants of this Colony had passed the fortress there, contrary to his orders, he was written to in reply, and requested to send an explicit account or relation how the matter occurred, in order that we might be enabled to give his Honour satisfaction therefor, and thus live in peace with our neighbours, and punish the offenders according to the circumstances of the case.

**224. COURT OF POLICY IN ESSEQUIBO TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

[3 May 1719]

*(Extract)*

We have received a letter from the Governor in Rio Orinoco, which we inclosed, together with a copy of the answer. Your Honours will not fail to see from this in what danger those free people might bring us; for this reason, it has been resolved to grant no passes to Orinoco before and ere we shall have received circumstantial information of everything, so as to give satisfaction to the aforesaid Governor, and maintain friendship with our neighbour.

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***Inclosure: Spanish Commandant in Guayana to the Commander, Essequibo, 21 February 1719*** [Document No. 222 above].

**225. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**

[2 June 1719]

Ordinary meeting of the Court. Present: Commander Pieter van der Heyden Rezen, Councilors, Joan Castel, Jan Coudron, and Daniel Hendersone:

Cited before the Council and appeared Jan Parys, Pieter Schouten, and Pieter de Jongh, who have transgressed the order of the Governor in Orinoco not to pass the fort, as appears from the letter received from the aforesaid Governor, dated May 23, 1719; they, the accused, however, claim that they had permission on the quiet; whereupon it was, nevertheless, resolved to grant the passes in the following manner, namely:

We, Pieter van der Heyden Rezen, Commander of the Colony and adjacent Rivers of Essequibo, in the name of the Directors of the General Chartered West India Company, in the Assembly of Ten,

Do give full permission to one N., a free inhabitant of this Colony, to depart from this Colony with his canoe and accompanying men to Rio Orinoco, and from there again hither; on condition that he is bounden to remain below the fort, unless the Governor should grant a pass; and that on his return here he hand in this pass at the office, and give notice of the slaves acquired by him;

which if he complies with, we request all Governors, Commanders, and other persons in command, to be pleased to let the aforesaid person pass and repass unimpeded, and, if need be, lend him a helping hand, which will, upon all occasions that may offer themselves, be cheerfully done likewise by me toward their subjects.

Done in Rio Essequibo, at Fort Kykoveral, June 3, 1719.

Thus resolved in our ordinary meeting of the Court of Policy in Rio Essequibo, this 3rd June, 1719.

(Signed)

Commander PIETER VAN DER HEYDEN REZEN

JOAN CASTEL

JAN C'OUUDRON

DANIEL HENDERSONE

**226. WEST INDIA COMPANY TO COMMANDER AND THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**

**[26 September 1719]**

*(Extract)*

We understand it to be necessary and just that satisfaction be given the Governor of Orinoco, but that, one free planter having wronged him, the trade to Orinoco should therefore be forbidden to all others, cannot receive our approval; on the contrary, we charge you to grant passes to all others, withholding them from the offender or offenders until the necessary satisfaction has been given, always mindful, however, that they are your charges, whom it, is your duty to defend and protect against any one; and that, for the same reason you should not be too credulous as to the imputations and complaints that are brought against one of them by a stranger, but having investigated everything with circumspection, you should pronounce thereupon with the greatest moderation and wisdom, and try to arrange and remove all differences.

**227. E. D. MAURAIN-SAINCTERRE, ENGINEER, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[19 March 1722]**

*A concise report upon the Colony of Rio Essequibo, with a few considerations upon the same subject, submitted to the Directors of the Chartered West India Company in the Chamber Zealand.*

*(Extract)*

23. The ground is even better above in the Rivers Essequibo, Mazaruni, and Cuyuni, than below; but because they are full of rocks, falls, and islands, and much danger is to be feared for

large sugar canoes, this is the reason why up to this time the Europeans have not been willing to establish sugar plantations there.

24. But since the soil is good, coffee plantations could be established there everywhere, and [the produce] brought with small boats to Cartabo or further.

25. Many plantations might also be established in the Rivers Demerara, Pomeroon, Waini, Barima, and in all the creeks thereabout.

**228. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY HELD IN ESSEQUIBO  
[September-October 1723]**

*(Extracts)*

*September 5-6, 1723.*

The Councillor and assistant, Johannes Keyts, has petitioned the Court, in the name and on behalf of Mr. Henriques van Genee, Councillor of the town of Axel, also receiver of taxes in the Province of Zeeland, for permission to enjoy, without prejudice to the Honourable Company, 300 roods of land in Cajoeny, reckoned along the river before the opening, and to be allowed to clear the ground for that distance in an inland direction as far as it may be possible; which permission was unanimously granted him.

The head surgeon, Laman, has asked for permission to lay out a cassava plantation right opposite Dronkeman's Eyland, for his own use; 1,000 paces bushwards, and not along the river, was granted him.

Jan Batiste, Postholder in Wacquebo, asked for an increase in his wages; and it having been stated that he was a faithful servant and that his Post, being of great advantage to the Company, could not be without a good superintendent, it was unanimously decided that from the 1st of this month his wages should be raised from 14 to 16 guilders, subject to the approval of your Lordships.

*October 19, 1723*

It, having been proposed by the Commmandeur in Court that it was highly necessary to send two equipped boats up in the falls of Essequibo for a month, with three or four Christians, in order to keep an eye upon the Maganouts, since evil reports were daily heard from that nation, and they caused continual disturbance and trouble in this river, it was today resolved to send thither four Christians, with two equipped boats, with strict orders to keep a sharp look-out, and to give information immediately they detected any treason.

**229. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO  
[9 January 1724]**

*(Extract)*

The Commander subsequently proposed to lay out another coffee plantation for the Honourable Company (above the cassava plantation already laid out in Cuyuni), and to make each of the Company's plantations send two male slaves for that purpose, which was fully approved by the Court.

**230. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[23 March 1724]**

*(Extract)*

There are at present on the cassava and coffee plantation in Cuyuni under the management of Jan ver Eyke more than 7,000 coffee shrubs, which are all thriving well, and at the corner of Bartica there are about 2000. A new coffee plantation has also been laid out in Cuyuni, half-an-hour above that of your Lordships'; if, will be properly burnt out, cleared, and planted with coffee shrubs.

**231. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[26 March 1724]**

*(Extract)*

With the consent of the Court, I have this season also had a new clearing made for a coffee plantation in the River Cuyuni, about half-an-hour above the cassava plantation, where the ground had been found to be very good.

**232. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[15 June 1724]**

*(Extract)*

The plantations belonging to your Lordships are all in very fair state, and the growth of coffee is, thank God, flourishing well. It is computed that both the Cuyuni and at Bartica there are about 15,000 coffee shrubs, which are all in very fine condition, and that we have fully an equal number, which will be transplanted thither as soon as they are ready.

**233. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**

**[16 August 1724]**

*(Extract)*

The Court received a Report from the Indian Jackannarie that the Maganouts aviation had killed all the Caribs and Akawois they could get hold of, and that those whom they captured alive they sold at other places, he having himself been wounded, and having escaped with great difficulty out of their hands; he further reported that that nation intended to come and kill the Christians and ruin this river at the first opportunity, he (Jackannarie) believing that the Maganouts would remain in the cassava plantations of the Caribs until a fit opportunity presented itself for carrying out their undertaking. It being impossible to place any reliance upon such reports, it was resolved, upon the advice of four of the principal colonists, to send the following men, with proper slaves and boats, up the river to investigate the matter. . .

The said Frederick Pool was commanded to proceed with the aforesaid men and slaves as far as the old place of the Indian Commare, of which, and other cassava plantations, the Maganouts have, according to report, taken possession, and, on finding the same, to shoot them all down, and to destroy all the cassava which might be there, which having been done, he (Frederick Pool) was to come back to this river with his people, and take good care that no disorder was anywhere done, the Court finding it necessary to draw up these instructions since the Akawois and Caribs who have been killed, and are under the protection of this river, are a source of great advantage to the same, being frequently sent up above, salting, by the Honourable Company and by the colonists, it being, moreover, a great and insufferable insult for Christians to be told by heathens that they were coming to kill them.

**234. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[3 September 1724]**

After invoking the name of God, Commander Laurens d'Heere informed the Court that, according to reports received, the Maganout nation were killing all whom they could lay hands on up in Essequibo, and that they were driving away all other nations who were our friends. His Honour maintained that it was very necessary for the protection of the whole Colony to extirpate and annihilate these rebels if possible. This having been taken into consideration, it was unanimously agreed to order Jan Batiste, the Postholder at the Company's trading-place, Wacquipo, to come up the river about the beginning of next month (December) with as great a force of Indians, well armed with bows and arrows and the necessary ammunition of war, as he shall be able to collect, and that he shall be ordered by the Commander and Court to proceed against the said Maganouts, and to kill or capture all he can find, on the condition that for each head which he and his men take they shall receive two large axes, and for every slave taken and brought here as much in cash as such slaves are worth in public sale.

Resolved and concluded in our Court.

**235. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[31 January 1725]**

(Extract)

The Commander declared that diverse and doubtful reports are daily received concerning the Maganout nation, and that attention should be paid to the matter, whereupon it was resolved to send two proper soldiers to the Plantation Nieuw Cortrijk on behalf of the Company, with orders to keep a good look-out, together with the other soldiers, and to be careful with their arms, which have been abundantly given them for defence; and in case of treason they are ordered to give immediate information to Mr. van der Kaay, as well as to the nearest plantation, which is Oosterbeek, and which shall further be obliged to send immediate warning to the Commander, and to give these soldiers a 3-pr. and ammunition, this being considered necessary, since the Maganouts must first pass there if they wish to come by water and injure this river.

**236. EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO  
[3 March 1726]**

The Court having taken into consideration the fact that, Jan Batiste had up to the present been prevented from going to Orinoco for want of bread, and that this was now ready, it was resolved to send him off tomorrow to see whether he could obtain permission from the Governor to proceed up the said river to buy *maroen* (balsam) and slaves, to facilitate which permission the Commander was to write to the aforesaid Governor of Orinoco, and send as a present by Jan Batiste a barrel containing 200 lbs. of sugar, fifteen bottles of kiltum, two old cheeses, 10 dozen knives, and ten branches of coral; and Jan Batiste, together with Hendrik van der Win, were ordered to follow their written instructions exactly.

**237. INSTRUCTIONS FOR JAN BATISTE AND HENDRIK VAN DER WIN  
[3 March 1726]**

(Extract)

ARTICLE 2. The said Governor having read the letter, and the contents of the same having been interpreted to him, Jan Batiste shall ask his Honour permission to go up the river for the purpose of buying slaves and balsam for the Honourable Company.

ARTICLE 3. Permission for this business having been granted by the Governor, Jan Batiste shall present the Governor of Orinoco with a barrel of sugar, fifteen bottles of kiltum, two old cheeses, 10 dozen knives, and ten branches of coral, in the name of the Commander of this Colony.

ARTICLE 4. But in case the Governor shall refuse his permission for the business aforesaid, and shall ask for the presents, Jan Batiste shall make a polite excuse, and inform him in the most civil manner that his orders are not to hand over the presents before he has obtained permission to go up the river and buy the said slaves and balsam.

ARTICLE 5. If the Governor persists in his refusal, Jan Batiste shall tell his Honour that he has orders to return, and to buy boats on the way back for the Honourable Company.

ARTICLE 6. After which he shall betake himself into Aguirre and inquire whether there is opportunity to get slaves and balsam by barter there, and, if so, they shall he leave Hendrick van der Win there with the necessary stores for the traffic, and meanwhile purchase as many horses as can with convenience be got into his vessel, and bring the same as quickly as possible to this river.

ARTICLE 7. Before his departure from Orinoco, Jan Batiste shall take care that the thirty pieces of eight which are still owing there to the Honourable Company shall be paid in kind.

### **238. COPY OF A LETTER SENT BY THE COMMANDER TO THE GOVERNOR OF ORINOCO**

**[4 March 1726]**

To the High and Mighty Governor of Orinoco, etc.

Our lords and masters, the Directors of the Chartered West India Company, having ordered us to purchase in Orinoco some slaves and balsam for their service here, we send two of their servants, named Jan Batiste and Hendrik van der Win, with some merchandise to buy the aforesaid slaves and balsam oil, but with special orders that they shall not enter upon such business without your Lordship's permission.

### **239. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[4 August 1726]**

*(Extract)*

On the 22nd September, 1725, we sent two creoles up the River Essequibo for the purpose of buying balsam, and they having brought down a small quantity on the 25th February of this year, and the greater part of the goods remaining outstanding, they again departed up the river on the 18th March to obtain payment for the same, but up to the present they have not returned, and are daily expected.

On the 14th March, Jan Batiste, and Hendrik van der Win were sent to Orinoco for the aforesaid purpose, and also to buy red slaves, and were given a letter to the Governor of that river; as your Lordships will see from the Minutes of that date and their instructions sent herewith; up to the present, however, we have received no tidings from them. . .

The coffee plantation in Cuyuni bearing at present 2,000 shrubs, your Lordships can well imagine of what dimensions the ground must be to hold such a quantity. . .

The grounds in Cuyuni being better for this culture than any in the Colony, we shall, on the receipt of fresh slaves, be compelled to transplant thither all the coffee from the corner of Bartica (which will not grow there, and is much damaged by ants).

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***Inclosure 1: Extract from the Minutes of the Court of Policy, Essequibo, 3 March 1726***  
[Document No. 236 above].

***Inclosure 2: Copy of a letter sent by the Commander to the Governor of Orinoco, 4 March 1726*** [Document No. 237 above].

***Inclosure 3: Instructions for Jan Batiste and Hendrik Van Der Win, 3 March 1726*** [Document No. 238 above].

**240. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[5 September 1726]**

*(Extract)*

We have received news today that Jan Batiste has arrived in Moruka from the Orinoco, and that he is about to proceed hither, but we are not yet informed how his journey has turned out, and trust that it may have been to the advantage of your Lordships.

**241. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[12 December 1726]**

*(Extract)*

In October last the Commander informed the Court of his intention to proceed to the Post of Wacquepo, lying between Orinoco and this river, at the end of the aforesaid month, and to inspect the same in company with the Councillor and Secretary; knowing that the said Post lies far out of the ordinary course of boats which come hither through the inland waters, it was his intention to choose a fit place in the River of Moruka to which he might transplant the house and Post, since all vessels which come through the inland waters must that way. Everything having been closely examined by the said gentlemen, they decided that the fittest place was where the horse dealers from Orinoco generally moor their boats in the River of Moruka, called in the Indian language Accouiere, it being possible to build a house there so close to the riverside that a hand grenade can be thrown into the boats, the river being at its narrowest there. The unfortunate state of affairs in Europe having been taken into consideration, it was resolved to establish the house and Post at Wacquepo upon the aforementioned site as soon as possible, and thus have an opportunity of being kept well informed of the hostile boats that has any intention of coming to disturb this river, and so enable us to place ourselves in a position to resist the same.

**242. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[1 March 1727]**

*(Extract)*

On the 16th September last Jan Batiste arrived here from Orinoco, and brought with him 200 stoops of balsam, two female slaves, and one child. The journey would have been more profitable if the expenses had not been so high, consequent upon the length of time it took.

We are sorry to be obliged to inform your Lordships that we find the coffee in Cuyuni will not yield a sixteenth part of that which it did last year, and that the shrubs at the corner of Bartica bearing no fruit at all, we fear that our expectations in this matter will not be fulfilled by a long way. . .

At the end of August of last year twenty-three red slaves ran away from the plantation belonging to Pieter la Riviere to Orinoco, and he having sent his son there to claim them, but without any results, resolved to go there in person, but, on arriving at the usual mooring place in that river he was attacked by a vessel flying the Spanish flag, and was unfortunate enough to be killed. Those with him begged for quarter, whereupon the Spaniards took all their merchandise, and told them that they had orders from the Governor of Trinidad to stop the trade in that river.

**243. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[26 September 1727]**

*(Extract)*

Turning, now, my Lords, to the matter of the River Essequibo, it is now about two years since I myself with Mr. van der Kaey proceeded up the river to find out whether it was not in any way possible to successfully set on foot some enterprise up above the falls, but we found the river very dangerous so that in some places we were obliged to be drawn up in a corrial through the falls, with great danger to our lives. It is absolutely impossible to navigate the river with large boats, such as canoes, and it is equally impossible with barques, because above the plantation Nieuw Cortrijk there is fall upon fall. With regard to the land out there, it seems to me very good, but having inquired how high the water rose in those parts, it was pointed out to me in different places that it rose in the rainy season between 25 and 30 feet, so that nearly all the land is then under water, and there are also many great hills there which are nearly all rocky and very steep at the river side.

I have also carefully inquired, my Lords, what kind of trade might be done there with the Indians, and have up to the present not been able to discover any other trade but a little balsam which is brought thence, and sometimes a few red slaves. To this end two creoles went up the river only last year, who, having been out for seven or eight months, brought very little home. The only profit that this Colony derives from the River Essequibo is that the latter is very rich in fish, and is therefore visited annually both by the Company and by the private colonists for the purpose of salting, to which end two boats have again been prepared for your Lordships, which will be ready to depart in the month of October. I see no profit for your Lordships in sending any man up the river, because I can discover nothing of the savage nation.

**244. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE GOVERNOR OF TRINIDAD AND ORINOCO**

**[27 February 1728]**

Having learnt that your Excellency is at present at the Fort of Orinoco, I am very desirous of assuring your Excellency of my most humble respects and of taking the liberty to inform you that several slaves belonging to the inhabitants of this Colony have dared to run away and to remain under your protection in the River Orinoco, refusing to return to their duty; and since amongst these deserters there are also some slaves belonging to my lords and masters the Honourable West India Company, and since the good understanding which reigns between His Catholic Majesty and their High Mightinesses the States-General requires to be kept reciprocally in the interests of their subjects, I beg most earnestly, Sir, that you may be pleased to return by the bearer of this all the slaves who deserted from this Colony. For this we shall be deeply obliged to your Excellency, and will seek by every possible means to assure you of our gratitude. If your Excellency is so kind as to do this you will save us the trouble of making our complaints to our lords and masters, who will certainly find means of laying them, through the medium of their Ambassador in Madrid, before His Spanish Majesty, who, with his usual goodness, will certainly have justice done us.

If there be anything that can serve your Excellency in this Colony you may fully dispose of him who has the honour to be, very respectfully, etc.

(Signed) LAURENS D'HEERE

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**245. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**

**[12 May 1728]**

*(Extract)*

The Secretary, H. Gelskerke, having communicated to us a certain letter written by Jan Batiste from the Post in Wacquepo, and opened by him in the absence of the Commander, in which information was given that the Spaniards of the Orinoco had with armed force taken possession of a Surinam vessel fishing in the neighbourhood of the aforesaid river, and having also received information from Barbadoes that there was great probability of a war:

It was resolved to reinforce the aforesaid Post of Wacquepo with two soldiers, and to direct Jan Batiste to have the necessary coast-guards posted, so that we may receive the earliest information in case the Spaniards should send any armed vessels to the Colony in accordance with the rumours afloat. And in case the Post of Wacquepo should be attacked, the aforesaid Jan Batiste shall defend it to the utmost and immediately inform the Commander of such hostilities, the Secretary Gelskerke being hereby authorised, in the absence of the Commander, to give all the necessary orders for the accomplishment of the aforesaid.

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**246. SECRETARY GELSKERKE TO JAN BATISTE, POSTHOLDER AT WACQUEPO**

**[13 May 1728]**

Having received your letter of the 7th of this month, in the absence of the Commander, I consider it necessary to communicate the same to his Honour and the other members of the Court, who resolved to reinforce your Post with two soldiers who are sent herewith.

In the name of the aforesaid Commander you are ordered to have proper coast-guards posted, where such are necessary, so that we may be informed betimes should the Spaniards wish to send any vessels to this Colony to molest the same; and you are further ordered to give us immediate information by express of such matter. And in case the aforesaid nation might come and attack your Post unexpectedly, you shall defend the same to the utmost, and immediately inform us thereof by every means at your disposal, so that we may send you as much necessary assistance as is possible. You are expressly forbidden to meddle in the least in the matters of Maroze, or other similar occurrences, and still less are you to enter into any agreement with other nations to cause the Spaniards any annoyance, but, being attacked, it is always excusable to return blow for blow. These orders must be strictly observed, and you can regulate your conduct accordingly, and especially take care that we are informed of all occurrences as speedily as possible.

**247. SECRETARY GELSKERKE, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[26 April 1729]**

*(Extract)*

Referring to the documents and papers sent your Lordships by this vessel, showing the state of your Lordships' property here, and referring also to the letter of the Court of Policy in this matter, I shall now proceed to inform your Lordships that for some years past your Lordships' slaves, as well as those belonging to the colonists, run away to Orinoco as soon as they think they have any grievance. There the Spaniards keep them, and will not give hem up when we have claimed them. This makes them so insolent that measures have been devised to provide against this, and having been informed that the Governor of Trinidad was acquainted with the French language, the late Commander sent the accompanying letter to his Honour, but having up to the present received no reply, we shall see whether, presents or by setting a price upon each slave, we shall not get them returned.

\*

***Inclosure: Commander, Essequibo, to the Governor of Trinidad and Orinoco, 27 February 1728*** [Document No. 244 above].

**248. PROCLAMATION MADE BY THE COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[4 July 1729]**

Whereas the Commander has received divers complaints from the free Indians dwelling in the lower portion of this Colony concerning the great tyranny to which they are subjected by some inhabitants, from which it is to be feared that if those vexations are not prevented and put a stop to, the Indians, following the example of others, will also leave their dwellings and proceed

elsewhere, thus occasioning great embarrassment here. The Commander and Councillors have, therefore, deemed it necessary to take serious measures in this matter, and to hereby expressly forbid all servants of the Honourable Company, as well as the respective inhabitants of this Colony, to exercise any or the least tyranny over the free Indians dwelling in or around this river or further, under the jurisdiction of the Honourable Company, or to employ force in compelling them to work, under a penalty of 50 Caroly guilders for the first time that they come and complain about it, and 100 guilders for the second time, and if it should occur for the third time, such offender against our orders shall be proceeded against according to law.

Thus done in the River Essequibo, the 4th July, 1729

(Signed) H. GELSKERKE

**249. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF MARTINIQUE**

**[2 March 1730]**

To His Excellency the Governor-General of Martinique.

Although I have not the honour of being known to your Excellency, a very sad mishap which has near Orinoco befallen a person distinguished by his merits and by the rank which he held in the Roman Church, makes me take the liberty to inform your Excellency that about nine months ago I had the honour of receiving in this Colony M. Nicolas Gervais, Bishop of Orran. After having rested here for a few days, he communicated to me that his intention was to go to Surinam; in order to facilitate this voyage, I gave him one of my yachts, with the necessary folk and provision, to enable him to go comfortably to the River of Berbice, and I requested the Commander of that Colony by a letter to be pleased to have the kindness to have the Bishop transported as far as the Corentyn, where is the first post of Surinam; and he had the kindness to see to it.

At the beginning of the month of September of last year, I learned by a letter from that prelate of his return to this river, and that it was his intention to go to Orinoco, requesting me to furnish him with a good guide and four or five Indians to conduct him, and I took care to send them the same day. But, Sir, I was greatly mortified when I learned that the Indians of Aguire (a creek in Orinoco) had at the end of the month of November killed the aforesaid Bishop of Orran and two persons of his retinue. An inhabitant of this Colony, named Jan Ravensbergh, who was going to carry on trade in that creek, found the dead body of the prelate, and had it buried as well as he could; but, according to the report of the Indians, they had thrown the other bodies into the river.

I was greatly affected by this sad fate, and I have the honour to send to your Excellency, through M. de la Earge, in a box, certain books and church ornaments, which the aforesaid inhabitant found in the house; but all his plate and other effects have been carried off by the Indians.

The Commandant of the Post which I have between the Orinoco and this river has made a careful search to discover the most important effects, but without result. If in this Colony there is anything which may be pleasing to your Excellency, I beseech you to command him who has the honour to be very respectfully your Excellency's very humble and obedient servant,

(Signed) H. GELSKERKE  
 River Essequibo, at Fort Kijkoveral, March 2, 1730

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**250. EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF POLICY, HELD AT THEIR ORDINARY SESSION AT THE HOUSE NABY, IN RIO ESSEQUIBO**

**[2 April 1730]**

*(After Prayers)*

The Commandant stated that he was informed that several inhabitants of this Colony had returned to carry on trade in the Rivers of Massaruni and Cuyuni, in bartering for red slaves, and whereas the said two rivers have for a long period been exclusively open to the commerce of the Company, the said trade was prohibited by a publication, and regular notice thereof given through the Colony.

A true extract:  
 (Signed) CHARLES WILDAY  
 Joint Deputy Secretary

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**251. PROCLAMATION MADE BY THE COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO**

**[2 April 1730]**

It having been found by the Commander that divers inhabitants of this Colony allow trade to be carried on in the rivers of Massaruni and Cuyuni through the medium of their slaves or free Indians whom they send out for that purpose both for the exchange of red slaves and other things; and whereas those two rivers had for years past been kept, for the private trade of the Honourable Company, each and every one is hereby expressly forbidden to carry on any trade in them under the penalty of confiscation of the vessels, slaves, and other goods, and the imposition of an additional fine of 50 Caroly guilders.

(Signed) H. GELSKERKE  
 (Signed) DANIEL USNER  
 Secretary

Rio Essequibo, Cartabo, April 2, 1730

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**252. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[30 May 1730]**

*(Extract)*

On the 29th and 30th September [i.e., 1729] I inspected the coffee plantations in Cuyuni both above and below the fall; and found many of the oldest trees withered, and most of them in a bad state, wherefore I ordered the Director Saigne to go and inspect the surrounding lands, and to have a new coffee and cocoa plantation laid out towards the next season in order to see whether it would not be possible to grow the last-mentioned product in Cuyuni (where the ground is best fitted for it). . .

On the 18th April last I engaged for your Lordships' service one Jan van der Meers of Ostend, as foreman at the coffee plantation in Cuyuni, at a salary of 12 guilders per month. He has been in all the French and Spanish islands, and coming into this Colony about a few years ago he served as foreman with the ex-Councillor Tierens, and he assures me that he can make indigo as well as it is made anywhere on these islands, and I having expressed a desire to see a sample of this, a small piece of land in Cuyuni has already been cleared and sown with indigo, which is growing very prettily: he has been promised that if he succeeds to such an extent that the sample is approved by your Lordships, he shall be appointed Director of an indigo plantation at a fair salary.

The Director Saigne is at present engaged in laying out a new coffee plantation upon the Island Batavia, in Cuyuni, which, according to computation, will hold 4,000 or 5,000 coffee and 2,000 cocoa trees, about 200 bundles of plants of the latter having been furnished by me. The ground seems to be very good, and I shall do everything in my power to cultivate the cocoa, even were it only sufficient to send your Lordships some for your own consumption.

On the 26th May of last year I received an unexpected visit from a French gentleman named Nicolas Gervais, Bishop of Orran, coming from the Orinoco, accompanied by three servants. After he had rested for the night, he expressed to me his intention of awaking a stay in or about this Colony and seeing whether there might not be some means of converting the Indians of these lands to Christianity, if I would grant him permission to do so. Having first given him manifold praise for such a noble project, I demonstrated to him the impossibility thereof, and, furthermore, that it was not in my power to grant him such permission; and, being satisfied with the reasons I had alleged, he asked on the 28th to set out, for Mr. Buisson's and thence for Berbice. . .

Furthermore, you will see from the inclosed letter written by me to the Governor-General of Martinique, how that prelate has unhappily been murdered by the Indians in Aguirre.

\*

**Inclosure: Commander, Essequibo, to the Governor-General of Martinique, 2 March 1730.** (Document No. 249 above)

**253. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY  
[15 February 1731]**

*(Extract)*

I sent your Lordships by Captain Daniel Bellein in a small box covered with linen . . . a sample of the indigo made by Jan van der Meers. If your Lordships approve of the same, and are pleased to appoint him Director, he has asked for a salary of 30 guilders a month, adding that he will not serve for less, and that he must then also have all the provisions to which the other Directors have a right. I wish from the bottom of my heart that heaven might be pleased to bless this plant (as being the surest means of further populating this Colony).

(Signed) H. GELSKERKE

**254. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO**

**[14 March 1731]**

*(Extract)*

That the explanation which you furnish by the same letter as regards the buying of provisions from the English cannot appear satisfactory to us, you can probably deduce from what we wrote about the matter in our missive of the 29th December, 1729, to which we hereby refer you, and we continue to hold the same opinion. We have little fear that the English would bring no horses if you did not also buy from them what they had intended to sell in the river; moreover, you are well aware that it is far more advisable for the Company to foster the trade to Orinoco with the Spaniards than to favour this dealing with the English. We also wish to have exact information where those English get the horses which you say they bring to the river, so that we may be able to give this matter further consideration. . .

What has been the outcome of your plan of the Proclamation of a pardon for the deserters to Orinoco and of the negotiations with the Governor of Trinidad at the same time projected, as voted by resolution of the Court of Policy on the 4th July, 1729, we shall hope to learn.

That by Resolution of the 2nd April, 1730, you have forbidden to private colonists the trade in the Rivers Massaruni and Cuyuni meets with our full approval. Nevertheless, we wish to be informed of what profit to the Company in particular this trade is, above and beyond that buying up of red slaves, and, moreover, whether the Company might not derive some further profit from those rivers than has hitherto been the case; and further, what quantity of red slaves are, or can be, bought up there in one year, and at what value these red slaves may be rated in comparison with negro slaves; and, furthermore, how much they come to cost by purchase.

**255. MINUTES OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**

**[1 April 1731]**

*(Extract)*

According to a report submitted by the Director of the coffee plantation, it was found that from December 1730 to February of this year he had planted 12,100 coffee shrubs and 200 cocoa trees in the new plantation.

**256. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY  
[4 July 1731]**

*(Extract)*

We can give no other reasons about the English trade than was done in our letter of the 1st June, 1730, as the lesser inhabitants of this Colony cannot exist without it. Since then nothing has been taken or bought of the English but horses, flour, boards and other necessaries, an account whereof we shall submit when the books are sent. Since your Honours desire to be informed from what places the English get the horses which they bring to this Colony, it is from their own land, called by them Rhode Island, Boston, and Amboy, places situated in New England and New Netherland. The trade to be done with the Spaniards in River Orinoco cannot be relied upon since they allow no trade above their fort with the Indians, but only with themselves, that they may have the better opportunity for confiscating the trader's goods on account, of any trifle, as happened quite recently to two inhabitants of this Colony, whose goods they took from them, and sent them off in a small boat, and who perished. Besides, the Spanish horses are not so good as those of the English, as is seen by many examples in this Colony; especially they will not thrive on plantations which have a marshy soil; moreover, we should have to send thither two or three times a year expressly to get horses for your Honours' plantations, for which purpose the necessary wares would be required, and this could not be done without danger, and would prove much more expensive than buying the horses here for syrup and rum.

With regard to the result of the Proclamation of pardon for the deserters, the effect has been very slight, as only two of your Honours' slaves have come back. The Commandant of the Orinoco has notified that the Governor of Trinidad would enter upon no negotiations regarding the runaway slaves, and if he did so it could only be for three years, as those Governors are relieved every three years, and it would be far too costly to be obliged to contract anew with them every time.

**257. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY  
[14 July 1731]**

*(Extract)*

Concerning the advantages of the trade in the rivers of Massaruni and Cuyuni for the Honourable Company alone, this consists only in red slaves, and the order has been renewed because the veto was one kept up by all former Commanders. But most of the Indians having left those parts that trade is now of less profit, except for the oriane dye. The plantation Poelwijk, lying up in the first-mentioned river, sometimes buys one or two red slaves in a whole year, but they are

mostly children of about 8 or 10 years old, who are bought for about twelve or thirteen axes and choppers, together with a few provisions. The red slaves, too, cannot work together with a black slave, and are mostly used on the plantations for hunting and fishing, the women looking after the cassava for the daily consumption of the plantation. The great number of rocks which lie in these two rivers, and which occasion the falls by reason of the strong stream rushing over them, makes these rivers unnavigable for large vessels, wherefore it is impossible to establish any plantations there, although the soil is very well fitted for it.

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**[Inclosure]**

*(Extract)*

List of the Cannon, today, July 12, 1731, existing at the Company's forts, etc., and placed as follows:

At the post of Wacquepo –  
 2 pieces cannon (2-prs.).  
 2 " " (1-prs.).

## **258. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[4 February 1732]**

*(Extract)*

We are honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 19th July of last year by the vessel "Oosterbeek", skipper Henderik van Riet, from which we see that the sample of indigo sent or examination was found to be of common quality, and that in order to value it thoroughly at least 18 or 20 lbs. were required. This quantity we will try to send on the next occasion. A commencement has already been made today and a clearing made and planted with indigo up in the River Cuyuni. The planter, Van der Meers, has been placed there, with twenty-two saves, to proceed with the cultivation as speedily as possible, if the season permits of it. The said Van der Meers has assured us that the indigo, of which a sample was sent to your Lordships, is as good as that made in the West India Islands. We therefore hope that the cultivation may be attended with success. The materials and necessities required for this were received in good condition by the ship "Oosterbeek" as *per factura*.

## **259. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[5 April 1732]**

*(Extract)*

Concerning the coffee, we have the honour to inform your Lordships that the greater part of the trees on the Island of Batavia are still in a thriving state; but the cocoa, being a very tender plant, much of this crop has withered and died. Every thing possible is done to further the success of these two products, and we trust that heaven will favour us with its blessing hereupon...

Captain van der Port will also hand your Lordships a small square box containing about 11 lb. of indigo. We think this will be sufficient to constitute a fair sample; meanwhile every effort is being to further the cultivation of his plant, of which the indigo planter entertains fair expectations.

## 260. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[5 April 1732]

*(Extract)*

On the 12th August of last year a beginning was made by nine negroes with cutting an opening for a new indigo plantation in Cuyuni, with making the houses for the negroes, and with all other matters required for the plantation at a place which the planter thought best fitted for the cultivation of the indigo. This opening being burnt at the beginning of October, was cleared of all the wood and rubbish on the 8th and following days, and indigo and cassava were then planted thereon. On going to inspect the newly-planted indigo on the 26th November I found it was coming up very nicely, but shortly afterwards quite two-thirds of it was spoilt and carried away by the heavy rains. The fresh seed that was sown here has come up very slowly, but the indigo planter has hopes that the undertaking will turn out fairly well, which I cordially trust, and I assure your Lordships that nothing shall be left undone on my part to encourage him further. . .

In order to attempt to carry out your Lordships' wishes concerning the cultivation of the trade with the natives inland ( if such be possible), I thought it best to use one of your Lordships' servants and two creoles for this purpose and considering that Jacobus van der Burg, who has salted for the plantation Poelwijk for many years in the falls, was best fitted for this purpose, because he was used to the climate, I sent him above the falls in Essequibo on the 15th October, 1731, with orders to go as far as he possibly could, to deal with the Indians in a most friendly manner, and further to see whether he could not induce any Chiefs to come here, so that I might, talk to them myself by means of interpreters; but as he has not yet returned I shall have the honour to report to your Lordships further on this matter at the proper time.

## 261. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[21 March 1733]

*(Extract)*

At the end of April of last year Van der Burg returned from his journey up the river, and having found insufficient water in the creeks, on account of the long-continued drought, he was un-

able to go so far as he had been ordered, and was only able to salt some fish. In October he again departed, and is still up in the country, so that I can make no report concerning his journey.

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**262. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[5 December 1733]**

*(Extract)*

The want of horses having already become great, on your Honours' plantations as well as on those of the inhabitants of this Colony, I shall by all available means try to obtain them from the Spaniards. For this trade, however, various wares are needed, such as polished axes and cutlasses, assorted Osnabruck linen, five nail knives, beads, etc., of all of which there is little or none here, as we could not leave the plantations without them. Therefore, I ask your Honours' permission to redouble my entreaties that your Honours may be pleased to send sufficient wares hither, and thereby enable us to buy the aforesaid necessaries.

The outrunner, Van der Burg, who has been among the tribes up in Essequibo for more than a year altogether in order to trade, sent me in September last one creole, with two slave women and some copaiba balsam, writing that he would himself come down in November; but I have not yet seen him.

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**263. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**  
**[5 December 1733]**

*(Extract)*

In reply to the orders given us by your Lordships to look out for fit grounds both for coffee and cocoa, we beg to reply that the coffee and cocoa plantation in Cuyuni having a fairly good soil for the cultivation of the aforesaid two commodities, all possible means are being employed there that can serve to further and increase the same, as your Lordships will see by the inventory of that plantation sent by the return of the aforesaid vessel to their Honours the Directors of the Zeeland Chamber. . .

But since we are not in a position to lay out new plantations for the further cultivation of the aforesaid two commodities with the number of slaves at our disposal here, seeing that the respective Directors regulate their work according to the slaves under them, we shall only be able to turn our attention for the present to the aforesaid plantation at Cuyuni, and further it as much as possible. The sample of indigo sent herewith – but only prepared in a barrel because the pits were not yet made – could not, in the Director's opinion, have turned out better. . .

Every possible means is being employed here to cultivate the trade with the Indians, but the many branches into which the nation is split up, and the absence of good interpreters, are great obstacles to success, and there is no probability that we shall discover any gold or silver mines so long as your Lordships find no opportunity of sending some able miners here.

**264. EXTRACTS FROM THE "CONSULTA" OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INDIES TO THE KING IN REFERENCE TO THE SWEDES ATTEMPTING TO SETTLE IN THE ISLAND OF TOBAGO, AND ALSO IN BARIMA**

**[1733 – Day and month not shown on the document]**

And when that service had been performed, Juan Miguel Hernandez was instructed to continue exploring the coasts; and the said Hernandez has reported that, having sailed out of the River Orinoco by the Grand Mouth, he noticed, in the creek called Barima, the place where the before-mentioned Swedes were located, and that, according to the information he received from the Carib Indians who dwell there, they had seen a number of white men and a large schooner, who were looking for a convenient place on which to settle, and making presents to the Caribs of hatchets, knives, machetes, and rum, with which they were much pleased, telling them they would return in the dry season. And that these same Indians declared that two launches with Frenchmen, and some fugitive negroes who were trying to reach Guayana, having come to that creek, they killed the Indians, and [left with] the launches and the effects they contained.

And Hernandez further relates that in the said Creek Barima there is a Carib Chief, son of Taguaria, their famous Captain, who has more than 200 Indians well armed, with plenty of munition; and that he told him they were there to have revenge on the whites of Guayana for having placed obstacles in their way of taking Indians from the Orinoco to sell the Dutch; and, further, that it was the Dutch who instructed them not to allow the Swedes to settle there, not to show them any place whatever, and that they would be well rewarded.

The Council of State, having heard the Fiscal, respectfully represents to your Majesty that the news transmitted by the "Alcaldes" of Trinidad is very informal and not drawn up in the manner it should have been, so that some resolution might be taken on this matter; but, notwithstanding, it does not appear well to despise it, on account of the situation of that territory so far distant from those places, where prompt measures might be taken to prevent any attempt by foreigners of settling, or founding cities in those parts. And, consequently, the Council is of opinion that the territory or Government of Caracas being the nearest, the Governor or Commandant be instructed to investigate this matter, and find out the truth of the whole affair, and in case it require any measure, to take all and whatever he might consider necessary, and send home a full account of all referring thereto, so that what may be considered well to do in conformity with your Majesty's pleasure may be resolved on.

*(Archivo de Indias, Seville)*

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**265. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**

**[8 June 1734]**

*(Extract)*

Toward the end of January of this year there arrived here an officer from the Orinoco with a letter to me from the governor, Don Augustin de Arredondo, whereby he notified me that he had obtained a reinforcement of soldiers, whose bread and other provisions had been spoiled by the roughness of the sea, wherefore he requested me to provide him therewith, as also with a small quantity of rum. The bread was made ready, and on the 19th February I sent back the said officer and dispatched two canoes to the Orinoco, laden with thirty hogsheads of bread, four half-barrels of rum, and four of syrup, with a letter to the Governor requesting him to send horses in exchange therefor. And in order to take good care of those goods and the return of the horses, I sent Francois van der Maale and John Jacob Reiter, both in your Honours' service, with the canoes; but the former, being the abler, to superintend everything. On the 23rd April van der Maale came back and reported to me that he had obtained eighteen horses by exchange, whereof five, which could not be got into the canoes, had remained in the Orinoco, and the other thirteen he had been compelled to leave at an Indian village between the Orinoco and the Post of Wacquepo, as there was not enough water in the savannah to bring the canoes across it. He handed me two letters from the new Governor, Don Carlos de Sucre, dated the 28th and 29th March last, who in very polite terms communicated to me that he had arrived there to assume command of the Spanish provinces, and he requested that I might be pleased to continue with him the pleasant relations entered on with his predecessor.

His Honour further gives me to understand that he has brought some troops to the Orinoco, and that he expects ten or twelve barques more with militia, whereof his Honour informs me, in order that there may be no uneasiness, or any the least apprehension, giving as reasons for this sending of so many troops to these frontiers, that he was persuaded by advices received that the Swedish nation was intending to found a Colony in the River of Barima, lying between the Orinoco and your Honours' Post at Wacquepo, and he could not persuade himself that the Dutch nation would tolerate in their neighbourhood so proud and haughty a nation as the Swedes; he declared in good faith and open-heartedly that this was the cause of his arrival with so many troops, and he also earnestly requested me also to impart to his Honour any advices thereof I might have...

Considering it my bounden duty to inform your Honours of these particulars, I have further the honour to submit to your Honours' consideration.

First, since the Spaniards are making themselves so formidable by the collection of a considerable number of troops, and we, on the contrary, are very weak here, whether it would not be of the greatest necessity to send hither some reinforcements of militia, especially since the real object of the Spaniards is unknown to us.

Secondly, if the Swedes undertake to try to establish themselves between the Orinoco and this Colony, on your Honours' territory, I should be obliged to try to prevent it, which, with the few soldiers that there are here, could hardly be attended with an expectation of success, and it will serve for your Honours' information on this subject that, after the departure of Captain Laurens Brander (who, in the year 1732, in the month of March, arrived in this river to provide himself with water and wood on the little ship the "Fortune of Gothenburg"), a rumour spread in this Colony that the said Captain Brander would again return in order to take possession in the River Barima of a tract of land which the King of Spain is said to have presented to the deceased Elector of Bavaria, who was Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and which the Elector had again presented to the King of Sweden; but concerning that, nothing until now having been undertaken,

it appears to me that the Spaniards are using this as a pretext to conceal their real aim. They also are spreading rumours that new forts will be built for them, and then their mines are going to be opened, but all this is uncertain.

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**266. WEST INDIA COMPANY TO COMMANDER AND THE COURT OF POLICY,  
ESSEQUIBO**

**[20 January 1735]**

*(Extract)*

We fully approve the course followed by you with regard to the Spanish Governor of Orinoco, and recommend you to go on in the same way with all thoughtful prudence, and not to desist from the complaint you have put forward, for, as you are well aware, it is a matter which might be of very evil consequences. But, this affair not yet having been concluded by you at the writing of the aforesaid letter, and this being also the first occurrence, we did not think it right to address the Spanish Ambassador about it; moreover, you, by correspondence to and fro, will arrange it much better and sooner than in any other way. It would be well if you could make some contract with the aforesaid Governor about deserters from either side, both whites and blacks. Perhaps it would also be useful if the Proclamation against desertion, if one exists, were renewed and amplified with some further punishment, for we cannot imagine that you would punish such deserters, whites or blacks, with death, though we also cannot believe that desertion is allowed to take place without punishment.

The considerations which you urge later in your letter were read by us with pleasure, and examined; but as with us there is as yet no uneasiness about any war, you can easily understand that most of the difficulties disappear. Still, those considerations continue to have this much of value, that we are informed, and can, in case of necessity, aid you betimes with men and material of war. It is, however, of the most extreme necessity that you use every precaution, particularly against those of Orinoco. It is for this reason that we have decided hereby to give you express orders that, by Proclamation to be read and posted as is customary, you, without delay, forbid each and every one, whoever he be to take any hand-arms or material of war from the river to Orinoco, or to any other places not under the jurisdiction of the States-General, on penalty, for the first offence, of confiscation of such arms, and, in addition, of a fine to double the value of such arms; and, if any one be found to do it a second time, that he be banished from the river all the days of his life, persons thus banished being sent direct to this country.

And, the better to carry out this Resolution, we order that you henceforth cause to be examined all boats leaving the river which excite the least suspicion, with promise and offer to the finder, or to the informer of one-half of the pecuniary fine.

And considering that, perhaps, a way might be found for exporting arms from the Colony without using the river, you must also provide against this as much as possible; and in order the better to take away all opportunity for exportation, we hereby authorize and order you to exercise strict supervision over all the ships which come into the river, and in case you find that to any plantations or to any individual more arms or material of war are sent that he needs for his own use, that you confiscate it, regardless of persons.

And in case it should happen that anybody should undertake to export slaves from the river, we order you to forcibly prevent this, and also to provide against it by Proclamation. We are well aware that, it is not expedient to prohibit intercourse with those of the Orinoco, but we cannot approve of your aiding them much; for this reason we cannot approve of your having provided the Governor of Orinoco with so large a quantity of bread, and we therefore recommend to you all thoughtful prudence. On the same grounds we also approve of the course pursued by you upon receiving the letter of the Spanish Governor, brought by Abraham Buison, of which you speak further on in your letter. And inasmuch as you inform us that those [of] Orinoco cannot subsist without those of Essequibo, we are bound to believe that along this line the whole matter will best be worked out, and we expectantly await the ship "Oosterbeek" to learn the further outcome of this affair.

**267. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[6 February 1735]**

*(Extract)*

On the indigo plantation an able negro was drowned, who, having run away and fallen into the hands of the Indians, the director of the aforesaid plantation gave orders to the creole, Jantie (who had been sent by the Commander up in the River Cuyuni) that, if he should find the negro among the Indians, he should put him in chains and bring him to the plantation. This being done, the aforesaid creole came down the falls, and on his way his canoe, getting on a rock, was cap-sized by the current, and the negro, having fallen out, was unfortunately drowned.

**268. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO**  
**[4 July 1735]**

After invocation of the divine name, the Commander brought forward the matter of Jan Cauderas, laid before the Council on the 12th April, and put off till to-day, informing them that this aforesaid Cauderas, as settler of this Colony, had a considerable time ago sought a permit from his Honour, to collect the debts of his comrade named Jeronimus Marseleijn, which he had left outstanding among the Indians in the River Barima, to the satisfaction of his creditors in this river.

Having collected some red slaves, which had been bought for his comrade's goods besides a canoe, he did not hesitate to go off with some Frenchmen from Martinique, who likewise traded there, to their island, and to abuse the permit that had been granted him, where, having disposed of his aforesaid comrades' slaves, he bought a boat, in company with others, and came again to the said River Barima to carry on business, giving himself the name of merchant on the aforesaid vessel, and, notwithstanding the desertion of which he had been guilty, he had the audacity to return to this Colony in a canoe full of Caribs, together with another of his shipmates, under pretext that he had some outstanding claims, and would take for them as much goods as were required to settle them, although before that time various accusations had been made against him,

as that he (Cauderas) should have said that he would take away the traders and. salters navigated from this river to the Orinoco, that he would also come to fetch away his comrade, and many other threats, whereupon the Commander, as soon as he had received news of his arrival in this river, sent off a Commando to the lowest places where he had arrived, with orders to apprehend him and bring him to the Fort Kijkoveral, where he has been placed in the gaol, and today, being brought before the Council and heard in his defence, he has denied all the accusations which have been scattered broadcast to his charge, and only confessed that instead of bringing the slaves belonging to his comrade to him, he had gone with them to Martinique, and had sold them to his advantage.

**269. THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (THE TEN) TO COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO  
[29 October 1735]**

*(Extract)*

*Amsterdam, October 29, 1735.*

We praise and approve all that has been done by the Commander with the Governor of Orinoco; and the agreement entered into with him; and recommend your Honour to use every endeavour to cause that commerce to increase more and more. With which we remain, etc.

FERDINAND VAN COLLEN  
PHILIP HACK  
WILLEM BACKER  
DIRK VAN DER MEER  
PHILIP ERASMIE  
JOAN CONSTANTIJN MATTHIASZ  
WILLEM VETH  
JOAN SCHAGEN  
ABRAHAM TER BORCH

**270. PRECIS OF DESPATCH OF THE GOVERNOR OF CUMANÁ, DON CARLOS DE SUCRE, RESPECTING THE EXCESSES COMMITTED BY THE CARIB INDIANS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE ORINOCO  
[12 November 1735]**

*Aragua, November 12, 1735.*

Don Carlos Sucre reports the excesses committed by the Carib Indians in the neighbourhood of the River Orinoco by reason of his absence from that part; that they have cut to pieces a settlement of 200 persons, which he had founded with three missionaries, of whom they killed one; and another, Father Joseph del Castillo, who is coming to the Court, succeeded in escaping. That,

upon hearing this, he went in search of the said Caribs, but directly they knew it they went off to the hills, and he was not able to reach them. That the said Father Joseph del Castillo will personally report concerning that country, the want of vessels and men which is felt, and consequently the distress in which it is placed for means and troops with which to act; for the troops which he was able to collect by double contributions he has had no means of helping, and they have abandoned him, so that he finds himself under the necessity of resorting to the expedient or method of trying a coup de main to gain or lose everything, or else to remain quiet and do nothing. He shows likewise how the Missions are on the point of perishing by the hand of the Caribs, in view of which he will do his utmost to try if he can get together as many as 150 men, in order to try to form at the Angostura of the River Orinoco a redoubt with good stakes, in order once for all to block their way and restrain them.

And he concludes with stating his advanced age, his great anxiety for the subjugation and security of those dominions, and asked that he may receive attention and help by measures fitted to remedy his present distress and struggles.

For the information of the Council of the Indies, June 5, 1736.

*(Archivo General de Indias, Seville)*

#### **271. ORDINARY MEETING [OF THE COURT OF POLICY] HELD IN RIO ESSEQUIBO**

**[4 December 1735]**

*(Extract)*

Jacobus van der Burg, being employed to make a trading place for the service of the Honourable Company up in the River Essequibo, in order to promote commerce among the Indians, has applied for some increase in his wages, and it being taken into consideration that he is obliged to endure much fatigue among the Indians, he has been raised from 12 to 14 guilders per month, commencing with the 1st January, 1736.

#### **272. ROYAL "CEDULA" RATIFYING AND APPROVING THE AGREEMENT MADE BY THE MISSIONARIES OF THE ORINOCO IN 1734. [ISSUED 16 SEPTEMBER 1736]**

**[16 September 1736]**

*(Extract)*

The King:

Whereas Fray Francis del Castillo, of the Order of Saint Francis, preacher and Apostolic missionary of the new reductions of the Indians, Pirittus, Palenques, Guaribes, Cumanagotos, Caribs, and other gentiles of the Province of Cumaná, has represented to me that an Agreement was made and ratified, in the City of Santo Thomé de la Guayana, on the 20th day of March, 1734 by the missionaries of the said order of Saint Francis, the Jesuits, and Capuchins, who reside in the

Missions and reductions on the banks of the River Orinoco, through the intermediary of Don Carlos Sucre, my Governor of the said Province of Cumaná . . . The said missionaries arranged and agreed with the Jesuits and Capuchins so that they might preach and extend the Holy Gospel on the other bank of the said river, the district of each body of religions, in which to exercise, without confusion, their holy profession. And that the Agreement may be perpetual and of force between the said three religious bodies, he entreated that I might be pleased to conform the said Agreement in all its parts, and for all time. The tenour of which is as follows:

In the City of Santo Thomé de la Guayana on the 20th day of the month of March, in the year 1734, Señor Colonel Don Carlos Sucre, Governor and Captain-General of those provinces and that of the Dorado, and the others discovered, and to be discovered of the River Orinoco, of New Andalusia, New Barcelona, their coasts and fortresses, for the King and Sovereign, there were convoked and assembled in the Government House, the residence of his Excellency the Very Rev. Father Joseph Gumilla, of the Society of Jesus, Superior of the Jesuit Missions of the Orinoco; the Rev. Fathers Fray Thomas de Santa Eugenia, Fray Antonio de Berga, and Fray Benito de Moya, of the said holy religions of Capuchins Cumaná Apostolic missionaries; the Very Rev. Father Fray Francisco de las Llagas of the Franciscans, and President of the Mission of the missionaries of Piritu; and the Very Rev. Fathers Fray Francisco Rodriguez de Ledesma, Fray Mathias Garcia, Fray Lorenzo Algaba, and Fray Bernardino Comacho, of the said Regulars of Saint Francis and Apostolic missionaries of the Missions of Piritu. Their Reverences being together assembled, his Excellency proposed to them, and said that he was about to pass from the Province of Cumaná to that of Guayana, as well on account of the news of peace being disturbed by the Carib nation, thereby causing the spiritual ruin of the converted Indians and the desecration of the temples, as for the carrying out of some Royal Orders. . .

And they there and then indicated to the Rev. Fathers Franciscans, present and future, for the purpose of establishing and founding whatever villages of Missions they might be able in this part of Guayana of the Orinoco, the [district] from Augostura up to the banks of this side below the River Cuchivero, in a straight line drawn from the borders of the said Orinoco to the Maranon or Amazons, *there remaining to the Rev. Capuchin Fathers, for the purpose of developing their Missions, the territory and district from the same Angostura downwards to the grand mouth of the said Orinoco,* where they will distribute whatever missionaries may come to them;\* to the Rev. Jesuit Fathers from the banks of the upper part the same River Cuchivero, the remaining part of the Orinoco, always advancing upwards, and both the one and the other boundaries or demarcations always in a straight line from the Orinoco to the Maranon or Amazons.

On which having been heard and understood by the said Rev. Franciscan Fathers, they unanimously said and declared that, once, twice, and three times, and as many more times as necessary, both in their own name and that of their Prelate, the Rev. Father Commissary of Piritu, Fray Francisco Rodriguez, and the other missionaries of the said Mission of Piritu, present and to come, they accepted, and do accept, the said territory which is indicated to them. . ."

And His Excellency the said Governor and Captain-General said that he approved, and does approve, this engagement, Convention and Agreement; and that he interposed, and does interpose his authority and judicial Decree, so that the same may be valid and binding for now and all time.

And that in the name of the King, our Sovereign, he returns them thanks.

And he commanded me, the Notary, to give to their Reverences whatever testimonies they might require, and to give him those corresponding to him, that he might render an account to His Majesty thereof. And he signing it with their Reverences, in my presence, as I testify.

(Signed) DON CARLOS DE SUCRE.

(Here follow the names.)

Before me:

(Signed) DIEGO ANTONIO DE ALCALA

King's Notary.

And having been seen in my Council of the Indies, with the report of my Fiscal thereon, it has appeared to me well to graciously condescend to this supplication and to confirm and approve in all and for all (as I now do by these presents) the foregoing Agreement. And, therefore, I command the Presidents, Judges of the Audiencias, Governors, and Royal officials, of the jurisdiction to which the territories indicated belong in the said Agreement . . . to observe, fulfil, execute, and cause to be observed, fulfilled, and executed, the same, &c.

Given at San Ildefonso, this 16th day of September, 1736.

(Signed) I, THE KING

By command of His Majesty, our Sovereign.

(Signed) DON JUAN VENTURA MATTURANA.

*(Archivo General de Indias, Seville)*

**(Note:** \* *Special attention is directed to the words in italics because in the "Apuntes Estadísticas" [Statistical Digest] of the State of Guayana, published by order of General Guzman Blanco (1874), p. 285, the citation of this passage, on which Venezuelan authorities based their claim makes it run as follows:*

*"To the Capuchins is assigned the territory comprised between [the sea-coast, which extends from the Grand Mouth of the Orinoco, to the Colony of Essequibo to] Angostura of the Orinoco, from east to west."*

*The words within square brackets are an interpolation or gloss which has been repeated in several works).*

## 273. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[12 January 1737]

(Extract)

Among the outgoing cargo are two half-kegs of fine dye, taken in exchange by Van der Burg up in Essequibo, where the necessary buildings have been made and a post established to extend trade through those regions, if possible, to the Amazon. But, although my expectations in this respect have not yet been fulfilled, still, in view of the slave trade and the production of fine dye, this post remains of much importance, since, small as is this beginning, we become acquainted among the Indians further inland, and this trade may by degrees become considerable. We pay to the Indians for 4 balls of this dye, one large axe, for three balls, one medium axe, for two balls one small axe, three balls of dye weighing 4 lbs. We still have here a whole keg of it, which did not come down until the end of 1736. If your Honours would some time be pleased to let me know what this dye is worth at home, we might calculate how much it costs the Company per pound, and in case of great profit put forth every possible effort toward extending this trade.

The Post of Wacquepo and Moruka, formerly the most important trading place for the Company's annatto trade, has these last few years considerably fallen off in this business. I have taken much pains to ascertain the reason of this, and it was told me that the Postholder, Jean Baptist, was neglecting his duty; but after careful investigation I have found that, as most of the Indians who live in that neighbourhood derive more profit from the slave trade with the Surinamers; their wives grow listless about keeping up the heavy work on the dye, notwithstanding continual admonition; and although I see no way of remedying his, we ought, nevertheless, to keep up this Post, because it was established for the maintenance of your Honours' frontiers stretching toward the Orinoco.

I have written to the Governor of Orinoco regarding the considerable claims which the inhabitants of this Colony still have outstanding there through the death of Francois van der Maelen, requesting him to honour the same with his favour and authority, so that Van der Maelen's debtors might be constrained to pay; but from his answer can easily be deduced that little satisfaction is to be expected. However, I shall, by further amicable remonstrances, try to dispose him more favourably. But this Governor himself being the most important debtor, with which fact I, out of politeness, did not disclose my acquaintance in my first letter, he, by way of precaution, withdrew his note of hand from van der Maelen's papers, which were in Orinoco, wherefore it seems there remains little, if any, hope of obtaining any part of the whole of this claim.

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**274. PRÉCIS OF DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR SUCRE, REPORTING EXCESSES OF THE CARIB INDIANS AGAINST THE MISSIONS, AND INTENTION OF THE SWEDES TO SETTLE IN BARIMA**

[13 August 1737]

*Cumaná, August 13, 1737*

The Governor, Don Carlos Sucre represents to your Majesty that as soon as he went from this city to the River Orinoco to carry out the operations for which he was appointed be reported to

your Majesty the condition of that fortress and dependency, and also of the war which the Carib Indians, with other allies, are making, causing death and torture among the missionaries, and other Spaniards; and that, he was without adequate forces and means to remedy such losses, and that, not having had any reply or decisions on the important matters in these reports, he finds himself compelled to have recourse to your Majesty on the same matter, pointing out the weighty reasons which press for a speedy decision, especially as the northern nations have begun to settle at the mouth of the river, and sundry families of Swedes are expected to come and settle in the Canon of Barima within the river of that name. This may result in the loss of those provinces and of that of Caracas, and in the ultimate blocking of the road to Santa Fé de Bogota. And the said Governor is unable to carry out suitable measures, both for want of means, as he has pointed out on a previous occasion, the funds appointed and destined to that purpose not having been forwarded either from Mexico or from Havana (and for the same reason it has been impossible to continue the fortification), and likewise for want of suitable forces, those of the Indians of the Capuchin Missions of Guayana being useless, for they have only recently been converted, and are quite uninjured to fire and warfare; also the fort existing there is short of men. For this reason nothing further can be taken in hand except defensive measures against the Caribs; to which must be added the great want of powder in the Forts of Cumaná and Araya, where there is not enough for a second charge of the artillery. And no help can be obtained from the arrangement made by the Viceroy of Mexico that in case of dire necessity recourse should be had to Havana; for the poverty of that treasury, owing to greatly increased expenses, is such that it is unable to afford this assistance. Likewise, the 400 men forming the garrison of Araya and Cumaná have no other attribute of soldiers save that of drawing your Majesty's pay. They are without rations or quarters, and have no military discipline. The Governor has remedied their ignorance and deficiencies as far as he could, but to carry the matter out thoroughly he requires your Majesty's instructions; and, in order to explain the circumstances more fully, he has thought it advisable to send the Marquis of San Phelipe y Santiago to Spain, to whom he has communicated his chief remarks upon these points, and who has likewise had practice and experience in those parts in his capacity of Major, and through having acted as deputy whenever the Governor has been compelled to be absent.

*(Archivo General de Indias, Seville)*

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