

- 9 -**From 1738 to 1750****275. COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY****[9 August 1738]***(Extract)*

We have the honour to inform your Honours that three of your soldiers here in service have not hesitated, in the night between the 6th and 7th of last month, to desert from the new fort, where they formed a part of the garrison; but, through the wise measures of the first Under-signed, they were speedily pursued and were arrested on the way to Orinoco, near the River Waini, and brought hither as prisoners.

276. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**[12 August 1738]***(Extract)*

Without doubt metals must be here, and I ascribe the unhealthiness which prevails in the Upper Cuyuni, and the green film which is always on the waters there, to nothing else than the abundance of mineral matter in the mountains there; the taste of the little brooks flowing therefrom demonstrate this clearly; but we should require at least two expert miners to discover these. I shall do everything in my power by means of Indians to make some further discoveries. I hope this may prove of some use and profit for your Honours and then I shall deem my trouble and work well required.

277. COPY OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE**[20 August 1738]***(Extract)*

The Commander having submitted to the Court that the individuals Jan Coman, Michel Martin, and Francois Cornelis le Fevre, soldiers in the service of the Honourable West India Company, stationed at the New Fort, did on the night between the 6th and 7th July last desert from there in a corrial, but that by his Honour's orders they had been promptly pursued, overtaken near the Waini River, and brought back prisoners here.

And the Court, having maturely considered that it was extremely necessary that such crimes should be punished in the most rigorous manner as an example to others, did unanimously resolve to pass the following sentence in the matter:

Sentence

Whereas Jan Coman, a native of Landau, Michel Martin, a native of Paris, and Francois Cornelis le Fevre, a native of Ghent, soldiers in the service of the Honourable West India Company, stationed at the New Fort, did, after premeditation, take upon themselves to desert from the aforesaid fort on the night between the 6th and 7th of the past month of July, with the corrial of Jan Raim, and to proceed in the direction of the Orinoco, Jan Coman having, moreover, abandoned the post at which he was stationed, all of which matters are absolutely contrary to all Proclamations issued concerning military discipline, and more especially to Articles 16 and 28 of the Regulations concerning the aforesaid discipline made on the 18th August, 1590, and therefore ought not to be tolerated in a country where justice reigns, but must be punished in the most rigorous manner as an example to others.

The Commander and Councillors having taken note of the confession of the prisoners, as well as of everything that is incumbent upon them to do whilst administering the law in the name and on behalf of their High Mightiness the Lords States-General of the United Netherlands, and by express orders of their Honours the Directors of the General Chartered West India Company in the Assembly of Ten, have condemned the aforesaid prisoners. . . to be taken to the House Naby where criminal justice is wont to be executed. . .

And all three to be subsequently sent out of this Colony in an English barque as vagabonds, and to be banished therefrom for ever. . .

278. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO COMMANDER AND THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO

[26 February 1739]

(Extract)

And our attention has in no less degree been aroused by the Secretary's writing that he is persuaded that minerals are to be found in the mountains up in the River Cuyuni. We know no reasons, moreover, why this should not be so, and have ourselves for many years been persuaded thereof; but the first question is whether he, the Secretary, can find out where work should begin, in order to detect them, and what is his impression of those mountains, whether they are of earth or wholly of rock, in order that the miners, in case we send them, might be guided as to the tools they should take with them.

And, in the second place, we must also know whether, in case this work should be undertaken, you would be in condition to maintain yourself against the natives, if any are there or are to be looked for. We shall not hesitate to send you two able miners, if you can offer us a prospect of success, but without that the Company cannot afford to lay out needless costs at great risk, for the reasons adduced by the Secretary for his belief in this matter may be well grounded, and still it might be impossible of execution. In the meantime, we earnestly recommend you to lend the Secretary a helping hand as to everything he thinks he can discover, and as to what he may need

to that end; and we promise him and you also that we will show you our appreciation of your success by a grant of a percentage of the profits. If by this ship we could receive some ore, so as to have it assayed here, this, in case of a good result, would stimulate us the more.

279. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[20 May 1739]

At the Fort, River Essequibo, May 20, 1739.

Honourable and very worthy Gentlemen,

We have the honour to dispatch to your Honours by this vessel, a case marked with the mark of your Honours, No. 1, wherein you will find some ores specified in the accompanying list. We trust that they after being proved may be found to be worthy of the trouble of opening and setting forth the mines for your Honours' advantage.

Thorough knowledge on our part is wanting to give your Honours' perfect information thereof, but so far as may be known, the one which was taken from above the plantation Poelwijk, and is inclosed in compartment No. 1, promises somewhat well, because the veins thereof are very broad and frequent and overlie much territory. The same may possibly prove richer in the deep ground than on the surface.

The land here is very rich in metals – few mountains are found on which is not perceptible iron-stone, which is found near all sorts of metals; and the numerous *blende* and *katte* silver and talc should make one firmly believe this. If we had two or three German miners, well versed in their craft, profitable discoveries could, according to all opinion, be made higher up the same river.

We desire to be so fortunate as to be able to give with certainty knowledge to your Honours of such profitable discovery, since nothing would be more agreeable to us than to be able to contribute something for the notable advantage of your Honours, because we shall always esteem it the greatest honour to be taken with the greatest respect and esteem, honourable and worthy Sirs, for your Honours' most devoted and obedient submissive servants,

(Signed) H. GELSKERKE.
 L. STORM VAN'S GRAVESANDE

[Inclosure]

No. 1. This compartment, contains some stones dug just one-half quarter above the Honourable Company's plantation Poelwijk, being one rock of white stone with gold speckles, through the whole breadth of which veins run with frequency, westwards across the River Masaaruni near a little island, and eastwards through a great hill whereon is a sugar garden. The stones in No. 1 are of the highest of any of these veins. In No. 5 are the stones of the rock which is traversed by the veins. These have the most indications of a silver mine, yet some stones clearly containing in themselves yellow metal argue the belief that gold is therein.

No. 2. This compartment contains stones with which a hill above the plantation Pilgrim (about two and a half hours) is found covered to the depth of 3 or 4 feet. These, according to

(our) opinion, are iron, and are not worthy of transmission, but the stones in papers Nos. 6 and 7 found there between give clear indications of another valuable metal, in proof whereof the matrix rock in No. 2 is sent.

Nos. 3, 4, and 12 contain stones from some veins which run through a rock (similar to that above Poelwijk). According to opinion they are of the same sort, and lie by or about the Company's coffee plantation.

No. 5. Matrix of Nos. 2, R, 4 and 12.

Nos. 6 and 7. Already mentioned in No. 2.

No. 8. A piece of ore found up in the chain of mountains Cuyuni, not actually so high as the coffee plantation, but inland. It appears by external indications to be copper, but it contains also a pigment in its veins which should be seen as a sign of gold.

No. 9. Also from a vein in the aforesaid chain of mountains resembling silver.

No. 10 and 11 contain a piece of talc and a piece of *terra lemnia* or *sigillata*, here forthcoming in abundance.

280. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[12 September 1739]

(Extract)

The projected secret commission of the Surgeon Hortsman (who appears to be perfectly competent for such an undertaking), if it results successfully, promises much advantage.

281. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, AND L. L. VAN 'S GRAVESANDE, SECRETARY, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[15 September 1739]

. . . As the continuous rainy season since the sailing of "Den jongen Daniel" makes the road above the falls very dangerous, it has prevented the making of any further discovery – assuming that anything at all is to be found there. Now that the rainy season is drawing to an end, the second of the Undersigned is getting ready to make a journey with Mr. de Vries, shortly after the departure of this ship, to up in the River Cuyuni, to the high mountains here called the Blue Mountains; for the blue colour and the unwholesomeness of the waters of those river's sufficiently assure him that the mountains through which it runs must be very rich in metals – of what kind he will as far as possible try to find out.

The test made with Venetian glass of the ore sent your Honours from the Creek of Bonne-sieke induced us to send it, as otherwise we should have taken it for iron; but the glass, having assumed a bright blue colour, showed us that there must be silver in it, but we have much better expectations of the ore sent from the plantation Poelwijk, and ref the small pieces which came from above the falls.

282. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[23 November 1739]

On the 3rd of this month, the Surgeon Hortsman departed with two of the fittest soldiers, well provided with weapons and everything else which was necessary for his projected journey above the falls of Essequibo, furnished with proper instructions and passports in the Dutch and Latin languages in case it may be necessary for him to avail himself thereof.

Moreover, there have been attached to him four able and clever creoles to serve as guides and interpreters with the Indians whom they will pass on this journey, and who, by means of trifling presents, may be disposed to help to facilitate it, and some advices having since been received that Hortsman had successfully passed the falls, I hope in six months to have the honour to present to your Worships and agreeable report of the issue of this journey.

283. REPORT OF THE MINING ENGINEER, THOMAS HILDEBRANDT
[9 March 1741]

Report to the Directors of the General Chartered West India Company regarding the three mines begun by me.

(For the Amsterdam Chamber)

I made a beginning of prospecting, the 15th December, 1740, up in the rocks of the Massaruni. I find there, from one side of the river to the other, rough, hard rock in sight, interspersed with wild, uninviting fragments of quartz; and the rock is of this sort for an hour from above the plantation Poelwijk all the way to the River Essequibo. But beyond this there is another [sort of] rock, which extends its strata as far as the Blue Mountain.

I also prospected in the River Cuyuni – not further than a half hour above the coffee plantation – but found the rock wholly different from that in the River Massaruni. It is somewhat finer and more subtle than the rock of Massaruni, and has in it much "katte" silver, or "blende," which is by no means a bad sign.

Upon the above-named rock, which runs towards the Blue Mountain from the River Essequibo straight across to the other side, to the so-called Blue Mountain, and comes out at the plantation New Walcheren, the rock is red and yellow, soft, and has in it many fine fragments of spar, where I began a shaft (No. 1), in order to cut through such fine spar fragments, and to see what sort of metals they carry with them. . . .

In the rough rock up in Massaruni, a half hour above the plantation Poelwijk, I also opened a shaft (No. 2). . . .

In the aforementioned River Cuyuni, a half hour above the coffee plantation, I opened a shaft (No. 3) beneath a high hill.

284. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[3 April 1741]

(Extract)

It is very agreeable to me that your Honours have been good enough to approve the measure taken with regard to the deserters. The desertion has not only cost your Honour much money, but in itself, it constituted a clearly visible danger for this Colony, for had it remained unnoticed, their place of abode would have become a permanent hiding-place for all the slaves who might have a desire to run away, for which only too many had made up their minds.

This is also the reason for which I did not rest, and spared no promises or threats to obtain either alive or dead the three remaining [deserters], by all of which means I moved the Indians of Barima at last with much trouble to make an attack; the first time they failed, but the second time they were successful and under command of the Jew, Moses Isaakse de Vries, broke their necks and brought their hands here, which I caused to be nailed to a post, as a warning to others.

The Chief of the Indians aforesaid has offered to become responsible to me for all the run-away slaves of the Colony who take the way to Orinoco if I will station a Postholder in Barima, which would be a matter of great utility for the purchase of vessels and slaves; but I have not dared to undertake this without your Honours' orders. . .

I have changed the Postholders of Arinda, Demerary, and Mahaikony.

285. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE, SECRETARY IN ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[30 April 1741]

(Extract)

This is only to inform your Honours that on the 3rd of this month, April, Jaques Donacq, Postholder of your Honours trading place above Essequibo, arrived here, coming expressly to report that one of the Indians of the Post who accompanied Nicolaes Hortsman had returned, being sent by Hortsman himself with information that a very good journey had been made, and that he had traded away all the goods given to him; that his mate Christiaen Rijs, was on his way to come here by sea, but that he had considered it necessary to remain above; where he had planted the flag and cleared a bread garden, and since his instructions permitted the exchange of no goods except for gold, silver, or gems, I have good hope (if that Indian's statement can be relied upon) that that journey will turn out a great success.

286. THOMAS HILDEBRANDT, MINING ENGINEER, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[3 June 1741]

(Extract)

I also inform my Lords and employers that on the 3rd April I began the journey to the Blue Mountain, in order to examine the mountains. Accordingly, I made a beginning above the indigo plantation at the first small fall, but found only unpromising rock. Then I went higher up to a creek called Moroko-eykoeroe, and up to this point I have explored as carefully as anybody

could do, round about the Blue Mountain. I have, indeed, found beautiful lodes, but it will take severe labour to work it, since the mountain is covered with heavy iron rock as far as this afore-said creek, which lies full four hours above Blue Mountain. I have found at this place a beautiful copper vein which is worth going on with.

287. JOURNAL OF THE MINING ENGINEER, THOMAS HILDEBRANDT, FOR APRIL-MAY 1741

[4 June 1741]

(Extract)

Sunday, April 23 – Began my journey up the River Cuyuni in order to examine the high mountains above. Planned my journey so as to stay out for six weeks, and to go as far up as I had time and investigate as much as health permits. Took with me on this journey the miner Johannis Schols and the miner Falenteijn Leske, also the provisional miner Christofel Cramer, 13 slaves, and an old creole for guide through the difficult falls, also a housemaid. The same day ate breakfast with my people on the indigo plantation, and then pushed on my journey to beneath the great fall, called by the Indians Ematobo. Reached there safely in the evening at 6 o'clock, and stayed there over night. The whole way I also examined the rocks as much as possible, but found nothing in particular except that I saw the rock to be more variable than in the lower river. I also here and there washed sand, but found nothing of any mineral.

Monday, April 24 – While my people carried the things to above the great fall and with great difficulty dragged the two boats overland, I meanwhile washed the sand and examined the rocks, but found nothing of lodes; also found nothing [in] the sand washed. When the things were again loaded in the boat I again came to a difficult fall, where I ate my midday meal and had again to have the things taken out of the boat and the boats dragged over again; this done, went on to a fall named Awaroutaru, and having passed it stayed overnight at an Indian path two nights, for this reason, that I had to write two letters to the Company, one to Amsterdam and to Middelburg, as likewise also one to the Commander. Also prospected there somewhat, but found nothing save that I saw that a fine savannah lies there.

Wednesday, April 26 – After sending the letters overland to the indigo plantation, broke camp again and continued my journey and through God's blessing safely passed all the difficult falls. So at 11 o'clock I came to above the great island named Pavomba and there landed, and examined the rocks with the miners I had with me. . . .

After prospecting above the so-called Island of Pavombo I travelled the same day up to a creek named Tiboko-eykoeroe, which comes running from the foot of the Blue Mountains. There I had a tent of leaves put up in the heavy rain; and it rained also half the night through.

Thursday, April 27 – In the morning at 6 o'clock I went with two miners up the above-named creek, clearing a way through the bush in order to see whether the creek came from the mountain. So I followed it till it divided itself into two. Then I let my two miners with four slaves push up toward the right in order to prospect, and I . . . went up the left-hand branch to prospect. Having gone for some time there, came to a high round mountain. Had it cleared before me to up on the top, in order to investigate all thoroughly, but found nothings except that the whole mountain is covered with great wretched iron cliffs. Coming to the top of the mountain I looked about me

whether I could see more high mountains. So I saw before me, out through the bush, a higher mountain than the one on which I was. Had it cleared before me down the slope, coming into a valley. . . and getting heavy rain, we returned to our hut. It was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Stayed there again over night.

Friday, April 28 – . . . The same afternoon about 4 o'clock went up the river with a small boat in order to look for a creek, and found, about an hour from our sleeping-place, a creek which came down out of the back mountains. From there I went over to the other side of the river in order to see how high the mountains appeared. I saw everywhere high mountains peeping out. Went back to our stopping-place.

Saturday, April 29 – In the morning early I went up into the same stream Tiboko-eykoeroe. . . So I had this evening my things put in the boat in order tomorrow at daybreak to set out again for further up-stream, so as to make further investigation. . .

Sunday, April 30 – In the morning at 6 o'clock left the place where we had stayed four nights, at the creek Tiboko-eykoeroe, and came to a great fall named Tokeyne, where we had great[er] trouble to get up than we had yet had anywhere, the height of the above-named fall being 4 fathoms. If I had not had the luck of six Indians, who showed themselves helpful in dragging over my boat, I should have found it impossible to get up; and I kept these Indians by me still after they had helped me, in order to show the way further through the many islands and two other difficult falls, one named Simierie and the other Motoesie. Having passed these, I came to an island where three old Indian tents stood. Had these somewhat repaired and took our night's rest there. This island was named Arwattapaueroe, that is to say, Monkey's Island. The above-mentioned Indians I paid for their trouble one axe, one cutlass, two mouth-trumpets.

May 1741: Monday May 1 – Went from the Island named Arawattapaueroe to the mainland, for the reason that I saw before me a high mountain, in order to put up a hut there at once, so as to examine this mountain as deep inland as possible. . .

Tuesday, May 2 – In the morning early I left Monkey's Island for the new hut on the mainland, close by a creek named Moroko-eykoeroe. Went prospecting in the said creek. . .

Friday, May 5 – . . . Today an Indian came to me with his wife and children and has promised me for good pay to provide bread for my people two months long. . .

Tuesday, May 9 – Since, sick as I was, I could no longer hold out. . . therefore at 7 o'clock in the morning I left the newly-begun copper mine with. . . six slaves, five free Indians whom I have hired to help bring my boat down through the great falls, and left there two miners, Falenteyn and Christoffel Cramer, provisional miner, with eight slaves, in order to push on further with this work. . . So, after commending everything to them, I went down to about half-way above the falls, where there is a path to the indigo plantation. . . Sent my boat down to the indigo plantation, and . . . went on foot as far as the indigo plantation, and, after resting a little, my boat came, and so I went straight to Duynenburgh, [arriving] in the evening at 8 o'clock.

(Signed) THOMAS HILDEBRANDT

At Cartabo, June 4, 1741

288. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO

[4 June 1741]

(Extract)

The scarcity and lack of horses being taken into consideration, it was resolved that the respective plantations should send to Aguirre in order to barter for horses, and that the trading wares therefore be advanced out of the Company's stores.

289. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[10 June 1741]

(Extract)

It is fully two months ago since Jaques Donacq (who attended to the Post in Essequibo in place of the deceased Jacobus van der Burg) came to me to report how an Indian had arrived at the Post, and had informed him, by order of the Surgeon Hortsman, that he had planted the flag of your Honours by the Lake of Parima, and had taken possession of the land, had cleared a cas-sava garden there, and had dispatched Christiaan Reijs over sea to give a further account of the journey which had succeeded according to his wish.

290. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[10 November 1741]

(Extract)

Hildebrandt, the Director of the miners, has in the meantime made several requests to go and work up in Cuyuni at the place from which he brought the ore specimens which were sent to you by the ship "Den Jongen Daniel"; but it being impossible to grant him this because there were grounds to fear that his slaves, already thoroughly disgusted with the mining, would follow the other runaways, this request had provisionally to be denied him; nevertheless, as soon as the run-away creoles and slaves shall have arrived, this Director, with part of his people, shall get everything ready up in Cuyuni so as to make a beginning of the aforesaid work.

291. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[8 February 1742]

(Extract)

It would have been very agreeable to me if I could have give your Honours such agreeable news concerning the journey undertaken by the Surgeon Nicholas Hartzman and Christiaan Rijst to the Lake of Parima; but I must, to my regret, have the honour to inform your honours that the four creoles who had made the journey with the aforesaid Hartzman arrived here on the 25th November and reported to me that they had arrived at the Lake Parima, that the Surgeon Nicho-

las Hartzman had gone to the Portuguese; notwithstanding that, a good compass and a map of the country was given in his charge; that he had dwelt for some time with a priest. at a brook flowing to the town of Para; that the Governor of Para being informed thereof, had caused them to be fetched, and when they came into the town, the aforesaid Nicholas Hartzman and Christiaan Rijst entered into the Portuguese service, when the four creoles were placed in gaol to constrain them also to abide there; but being again discharged thence, they found means in the night, with a small vessel, to get across the Amazon, and having suffered hardships for about five months on the way, they finally arrived here again, and Hartzman had probably sold to the Portuguese all the wares (little of which had been given away).

This unexpected conduct of the aforesaid Nicholas Hartzman (who was a Protestant), and showed himself to be a great lover of such undertakings, and, moreover, had all the outward bearing of an honourable man, has greatly astonished me, and I shall leave to your Honours' consideration how necessary it will be that these two dishonourable cheats should be got hold of in order that they may be punished rigorously as an example to others, whereof possibly a good opportunity may come to be found by means of their High Mightinesses' Ambassador to the Court of Portugal.

292. JOURNAL OF THE MINING ENGINEER, THOMAS HILDEBRANDT, 1742
[January-May 1742]

The Prospecting Expedition to the Upper Cuyuni

Wednesday, January 10 – In the afternoon, at 2 o'clock, commenced my journey to the Blue Mountain, and went no further than the indigo plantation, and there spent the night.

Thursday, January 11 – Broke camp again in the morning, and came to above the first great fall, and there spent the night, and had great discomfort that day.

Friday, January 12 – Broke camp again; there met me at 10 o'clock some Indians from above, bringing turtles with them. . .

Saturday, January 13 – In the afternoon, at 3 o'clock, came under the second great fall, and saw almost no chance to get up, so was the water swollen, which in my former journey I could not get through, so that the additional Indians came in very handy, and it was dark by the time that we had the two boats up above. . .

Sunday, January 14 – In the forenoon, at 10 o'clock, came to the new copper-mine, and found that everything had caved in which we had previously pierced, so 2 at once sent two negroes with six Indians to fetch thatch for the making of a station, so as to keep dry at night. . .

Monday, January 15 – Began having another station made up on the mountain for me and my people. . .

Thursday, February 1 – Came again to Cartabo, at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Friday, February 2 – Got all ready to set out again to the River Cuyuni.

Saturday, February 3 – Set out again for Cuyuni, and took with me seven slaves from the mine Cornelia, and I spent the night on the indigo plantation, and let my men go on ahead.

Sunday, February 4 – In the morning, at 7 o'clock, I went overland, and came up with my men beneath the first great fall at 2 o'clock in the afternoon; and when my men had eaten, I had the things from the boat carried up above, and the boat drawn up, and when it had been loaded

again, set out and came to under the second great fall, at 8 o'clock in the evening, and stayed there over night.

Monday, February 5 – This morning at daybreak, I had the things carried around the fall, and the boat dragged up, and when she was loaded again, set out, and came to my mine at 11 o'clock...

Wednesday, February 28 – Set out again in God's name for the Upper Cuyuni, and took with me the miner, Stephanus Iske, and a freeman named Gerret Gertz also came with us, in order to seek four or five Indians. I came to the indigo plantation at half-past 9 o'clock, and I gave the miner Iske permission to go over to the coffee plantation. . . Came that day no further than two hours from the indigo plantation, and stayed there overnight, and it rained the whole night.

Thursday, March 1 – Broke camp again in the morning in God's name, and continued my journey, and came in the evening, at 6 o'clock; to the great island, full an hour and a-half below the great fall, and spent the night there. . .

Friday, March 2 – Set out again in the morning early, and came, at 9 o'clock, under the second great fall, and had the things carried overland and the boats dragged up and loaded again; and when the people had eaten breakfast, set out again on the journey, and came, at 1 o'clock, through God's blessing, to the mine Perker and Haak. . .

Sunday, March 11 – . . . Here, in the bush, it is full of vermin. There came this day fourteen Indians from up the river out of the savannahs, from whom I bought two red hammocks for the slaves, and also three pots and four turtles.

Tuesday, March 13 – . . . At noon today the two slaves came back from above whom I had sent out on the 9th of this month to fetch the Indians in order to clear the bread-ground, but they brought not one with them, and said that the Indians were all off to the savannahs to make war, and reported that there was no bread to be had above, that the Indians who were gone to the savannah for the war had bought it all up. . .

Saturday, March 17 – Let all the slaves make a clearing in the bush where the dwelling-house is going to stand, and also the smithy. . .

Sunday March 18 – Nothing happened, save that I let the slaves go over to the islands which lie here and there in the river to see whether they could find suitable ground for their folk, in order to clear bread gardens for them. The above-mentioned slaves came home again at 3 o'clock, and said they had found good ground. . .

Saturday, March 24 – Let all the slaves again clear the bush for bread-land. In the morning the three slaves, with the four Indians whom I had sent on the 15th of this month down the river to fetch bread, came overland through the bush. They had come to grief with the boat. . .

Monday, March 26 – I awaited the Indians in the morning till 9 o'clock, but there came no Indians, either to bring bread or go downstream with me, so I set out with nine slaves, but the water was higher than I had yet seen it, and I passed the falls with great danger, but just before reaching the indigo plantation I ran on a rock with the boat, so that a cask was thrown out and broken and a hole made in the boat. . .

May 1 – In the morning, at 2 o'clock, "De Ervattinge" reached home again at Cartabo; the same afternoon sent off a boat to the Upper Cuyuni, in order to fetch back the things from there, since in the rainy season I cannot accomplish anything, or let the work go on. . .

Saturday, May 5 – The slaves whom I had sent off on the 1st of this month came home from the Upper Cuyuni with the boat. . .

Monday, May 7 – Sent off a boat with eight slaves to the Upper Cuyuni, in order to bring down the things from the mine Perker and Haak. . .

Friday, May 11 – At 1 o'clock in the afternoon there came back safely from above the boat which on the 7th of this month, I had sent to the Upper Cuyuni, and brought the mining tools back. . .

Wednesday, May 16 – Sent another boat to the Upper Cuyuni to fetch the rest of the tools from the mine Perker and Haak, and to bring back the provisional overseer, who had to stay up there until all the things and the slaves were down. . .

Sunday, May 20 – Nothing happened, save that, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the boat which I had sent up on the 16th of this month came back from above out of Cuyuni, from the mine Perker and Haak, and brought back the last of the tools and other things. . .

293. JOURNAL OF THE MINING ENGINEER, THOMAS HILDEBRANDT, 1743 [May-July 1743]

(Extract)

May 1743. Monday, May 20 – Went to Cuyuni and took two miners with me to make the road, with eight slaves from the indigo plantation.

Arriving, ate our midday meal, and afterwards showed the miners at what place and how broad the road should be. The breadth is 1 fathoms. . .

Saturday, June 8 – The work as usual, except that the miner, Stephanus Iske, came from Cuyuni to report that with the road-making he had this week; got to above the first great creek at the high mountains. . .

Saturday, June 15 – . . . The road-making in Cuyuni is this week so far advanced that in four days it will have been cleared as far as the still water, but the bridge-making over the creeks, and the levelling of the mountain so far as it hinders the path has yet to be done.

Wednesday, June 19 – . . . found the road-making progressing satisfactorily. So I went with the miner, Stephanus Iske, through the bush to the quiet navigable water, in order to see where it was most suitable to land with the boat, and also a good place for the collecting of ore and other necessities. . .

Thursday, July 18 – Before my departure had Mr. Bate brought home; arriving at the indigo plantation, ate our midday meal, and afterwards went overland as far as the still water, and spent the night for the first time in the station which I have had made there in order to store in it all sorts of goods and ores which must go overland.

Friday, July 19 – In the morning at 8 o'clock set out again up-stream. Would have started earlier, but on account of the heavy rains had to loiter, and came at 6 o'clock in the evening under the great fall which lies a stiff hour from the mine, and stayed over-night, but had to put up the whole night with heavy rain (without any roof and fire, because of the rain). Early in the morning I looked out a suitable place where I could best get to from there overland, in order to make a station for storing ore and other commodities of the Company, and also at the same time to make a path overland in case we should leave anything important that might come to grief in the little falls which lie above the great fall to the number of two. So I went with miner Reynholt and two slaves into the bush along by the waterside in order to get to the mine, but it was wretched

enough before I could get through the rocks and the swampy land, where also great creeks had to be passed, and I had never before gone through that bush overland, so that I had a difficult job to get through to above. Spent in doing so from half-past 7 o'clock in the morning till 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

294. FROM THOMAS HILDEBRANDT, MINING ENGINEER, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER)

[28 July 1743]

(Extract)

So on the 26th of this month I went to the Commander at the new fort and submitted to him the report that I had been in Cuyuni with four miners, and had gone through the bush overland in order to inspect the mine Perker and Haak along with a miner named Reynholt and two slaves, and found everything according to my journal, to which I refer.

So I gave orders to make another small path through the bush, to be used by men, so as to escape the great danger of the falls, and later to transport other things by. When I had given instructions about everything I set out, and after my arrival reported to the Commander on the above-named date what progress had been made in road-making, as well as in the small path above the great fall and the station, which is placed there for lodging at night, and for storing things from thieves, rain, and disasters.

But having reached the fort, and made my regular report on the aforesaid date, I began to make my complaints about the planter of the bread plantation, and that I had so often sent for bread but got only a half packet, whereupon the Commander answered me that I was to send again, that he had ordered it to be given me, since it would last only some six weeks. At this answer I was astounded, asking "What says the Commander? Will that last only some six weeks? Where shall I then get bread up in Cuyuni in the wilderness for my people!" I received for answer that the mining was to be stopped.

295. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[2 October 1743]

(Extract)

The day before yesterday there were brought me the hands of the two still absent creoles Ari-aen and Fortuyn, who, having run away from the head miner, had been unwilling to come back on the pardon. They were finally made an end of by the Indians of Waini.

296. "MEMORIAS" OF MARQUIS DE TORRENUEVA ON THE SPANISH AND ENGLISH COMMISSION IN SEVILLE

[7 April 1737]

(Extract)

And in view of the fact that the Dutch are established within this demarcation and limits, on the continent of the Province of Guayana, and occupy with their cities and mills, the territory which stretches from the Orinoco to the before-mentioned Surinam, a distance of 5°, from 318½° to 324° of longitude, it would be well to consider whether they were in possession of those territories at the time the Treaty of Munster or Westphalia was signed in 1648, taking the necessary measures for the purpose, in connection with what was stipulated and is deduced from Article V of the said Treaty.

The opinion which I gave at the Council of State in reference to the disputes with Portugal on the question of limits with Brazil and to usurpations of that nation in those territories, and the means of re-establishing ourselves slowly in them, and embarrassing them in any more they may again attempt to carry out; and in which is also treated of what may and ought to be done to check the French on the Mississippi and the Dutch on the River Orinoco, who are trying by these rivers, to establish themselves in our dominions. . .

(Archivo de Simancas, April 7, 1737)

297. "MEMORIAS" OF MARQUIS DE TORRENEVA ON THE SPANISH AND ENGLISH COMMISSION IN SEVILLE

[7 August 1743]

(Extract)

And equal attention is due to the object with which the Dutch established themselves to the windward of the River Orinoco, in 5° north latitude, and 325° nearly of longitude, according to Delisle, to leeward of the island of Cayenne, and in 6° north latitude and 320° 40' longitude, with the two forts with the name "Zelandeses" between the rivers named Surinam and Supenam. And this could be no other than to get nearer to the mouth and banks of the said river, and to found thereon plantations, which might facilitate their traffic with the new kingdom, and enable them to penetrate by that part to those places and districts which their avarice might dictate until they made themselves masters of the mouth of the Orinoco, and the nations that dwell there in a vast extent of 260 leagues from there to the "villa" of San Juan de los Llanos, of which mention has already been made, for, from what Delisle shows, it is considered navigable for small craft throughout its course. And it being necessary to preserve this mouth as a safeguard of that kingdom, it is no less necessary to restrain the Dutch from approaching its banks either by land or water, keeping in view with this object the Vth and VIth Articles of the Treaty of Peace with that nation of 1648. The mouth of the River Essequibo offers facilities for carrying out those designs, being situated, according to this geographer, in 6° 40' latitude, and 318° 10' longitude, and its source in 1° nearly of north latitude, and 316° of longitude, thus the whole course of the river forms a large extent of country, capable of having established in it a distinct province, with a separate Government from that of Cumana, for it contains within its limits tribes of Indians to be reduced, many who would then serve as a barrier so that the Dutch might not pass to the west of

this river. Therefore, it would be convenient to occupy the mouth of this river with a fort, with the object that the town that might be built there should serve as a capital for the new province, and the Caracas Company should be charged with the population, cultivation, and development of it and its resources. And if this be not feasible, then it may be carried out by the settling therein of Cathalans. For although the climate is considered very hot, the fact of the Dutch having overcome that difficulty persuades some that the regular breezes from its mountain chains make it less felt, or that the advantages they derive from those places are so great as to counteract this inconvenience.

And having thus treated of how they, the Dutch, may be restrained for the present, and, in the course of time, by working quietly, the territory usurped by the Portuguese in the jurisdictions of Paraguay, Santa Cruz de is Sierra del Peru, Quito, and the New Kingdom, and also that they have taken by way of the River Amazons, may be regained, there only remains the question in reference to the Captaincy-General of the Rio de Plata.

(Archivo de Simancas)

298. WEST INDIA COMPANY TO COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO

[24 August 1744]

(Extract)

It surely would be reasonable for the Company to enjoy 5 percent of the exports of syrup and rum; it were even to be wished that we could prohibit one stoup of those articles to be exported anywhere but hither. But, because we fear that the Colony cannot yet do without the English and those of Orinoco, on account of the slight traffic from this country to the River Essequibo, we as yet do not venture upon a prohibitory resolution. We shall therefore provisionally acquiesce in the duty established; at the same time we must say that we think we know of a certainty that many frauds are perpetuated in this matter, and that a deal of sugar also is exported under the name of syrup. We therefore recommend to you that better precautions be taken against this, and that you take care that not so much sugar be sold for making syrup or rum.

As for establishing a Postholder in Barima for the purpose stated in your letter, we are not adverse to your making a trial; we, however, recommend that you take proper precautions that by this channel no frauds are practised.

299. MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF ESSEQUIBO

[23 November 1744]

The Commander represented that two Spaniards on their way hither from Orinoco had been arrested at the Company's Post in Wacquepo, and asked if they would be allowed to arrive in the Colony or be sent back.

It was resolved to allow them to come here this time, but that this must not be taken as a precedent.

300. THE COUNCIL OF THE INDIES INFORMS THE KING THAT THE COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF THE CAPUCHIN MISSIONS OF GUAYANA HAS PRESENTED A LETTER FROM THE PREFECT OF THE SAID MISSION, SETTING FORTH ITS MISERABLE CONDITION, ETC.

[8 November 1745]

The Council of the Indies, Madrid, November 8, 1745

Says that Friar Francisco Maria Arenzano, Provincial of the Province of Andalusia and Commissary-General of the Capuchin Missions of Guayana, has presented a letter from Friar Augustin de Olot, Prefect of the said Mission, in which he informs him of its miserable condition in consequence of the invasion made by the English in those parts in the year 1742, when they burnt two villages of converts and harried the rest; from which occurrence, and from the incursion of Carib Indians into the same territory, who have likewise pillaged and ravaged it, a great tumult has arisen, and so much restlessness among the converts, that in order not to abandon them some of the religious have had to sacrifice their lives. He begs that eight missionaries from the Province of Catalonia may be granted him in order that the accomplishment of his foundation may not be frustrated.

The Council, having heard the report of the Fiscal, and taken into account that for fifteen years no religious have gone to Guayana, during which time some must have died, and that this must account for the deficiency of reports from the Viceroy, President or Archbishop of the district which should precede this Concession (according to Law 1, Title 14, Book 1 of the Consolidated laws), it is of opinion that your Majesty should be pleased to grant his request, and that the provision in this law should be pointed out to the Commissary-General in order that in future he may not present such requests without the necessary preliminaries.

As it seems good.

The Commissary-General of the Capuchin Missions of Guayana represented to the Council of the Indies the necessity for sending some religious to those Missions, asking permission for eight to go from the Province of Catalonia. The Council is of opinion that your Majesty should permit it, and that the Commissary-General should be told not to make such requests in future without the formalities directed by the laws of the Indies.

As it seems good to the Council.

(Archivo General de Indias, Seville)

301. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[19 March 1746]

(Extract)

On the 7th of this month one Ignatius Courthial made an application to the Court for permission to cut a road through the wood in the River Cuyuni, in order to bring mules and cows into

the river overland by that road. It being possible that this may be of great profit and advantage, the permission was granted him on condition that there shall be paid to the Company 3 guilders recognition money for every mule, and 2 guilders for every horse or cow, and in order to prevent any fraud in this matter, it is my intention to place the Post which lies in Demerary (and now unnecessary there on account of the opening of the river) on this road instead, which Post, in addition to the trade which it will be able to carry on for the Honourable Company, will be amply provided for out of the recognition money.

I have not yet established any Post in Barima because I have not yet been able to find any competent person to my liking to whom to intrust the same, for I think that Post might become of great importance.

**302. WEST INDIA COMPANY TO COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO
[8 July 1746]**

(Extract)

It restrains for us to answer your last letter of the 19th March of this year; in answer thereto we say that we can approve the resolution taken by you and the Court of Policy regarding the request made by Ignatius Couthial [Courthial], and the further measures taken by you in that regard, for the prevention of all fraud in not rightly declaring the animals to be brought from the River Cuyuni.

However, in view of the fact that you think considerable advantage and profit will herefrom accrue, both to the Colony and to the treasury of the Company, we request that you cause to be kept a duly specified account of the dues that will be paid for the bringing in of each mule or horse, and that you send us an authentic copy thereof annually.

**303. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[20 July 1746]**

(Extract)

Having had the honour the previous week to write to your Honours by the vessel the "Vlissing Welvaaren", Captain D. de Boire, I should have allowed this opportunity to pass, had I not thought it my duty to give your Honours information that the Postholder of Wacquepo and Moruka came the day before yesterday to inform me that a nation of Indians have come down from Orinoco and have attacked the Caribs subject to us in the River Wayni, have killed several, and have threatened that they would extirpate them all, which would entail very bad consequences for this Colony.

Wherefore I have provided him with powder and shot, with an order to collect together all the Indians subject to him, and, as far is practicable, to assist the Caribs aforesaid, with a promise that I will give him support from here if it became necessary. And since I have strong reasons to suspect that the Indians have been sent by the Spaniards of Cumana, I have ordered him to inves-

tigate the matter as far as practicable; and I have expressly forbidden him to set foot upon the Spanish territory – not even to go below the River Wayni.

The inhabitant C. Finet, who has arrived from up the Cuyuni, has informed me that the report of the Caribs made to me some months ago is true, namely, that the Spaniards have established a Mission up in the said river, and have built a small fort there, he himself having been there and spoken with the priest and soldiery; that they were busy in making many bricks, with the intention of founding yet another Mission and fort some hours further down this river.

Next year, all the Indians from that direction are flying hither and praying for protection. I take the liberty humbly to entreat your Honours, finding myself very diffident in this matter, that your Honours will be pleased to image the goodness to honour me most speedily with your orders how I am to act herein, and your Honours may be assured that the same will be carefully executed.

I feel not the least diffidence as to dislodging them from that place and capturing those forts, but such a step being one of great consequence, I dare not take anything upon myself, especially as the proper frontier-line there is unknown to me. The River Cuyuni, where the aforesaid works have been constructed, is the same in which your Honours' indigo plantation lies, and where the coffee plantations are situated, and falls into the River Essequibo at the place where the old plantation, Duynenburg, used to stand on the one side, and where M. van der Cruysse dwells on the other, half a cannon shot below Fort Kykoveral.

Jan Stok, having returned home to Essequibo from his wanderings above in Cuyuni, has reported to me that he had heard from several Indians that Nicholas Hortman was on his way to return hither, but I can hardly believe this to be true.

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

[9 November 1746]

Sir,

Upon receiving your letter of July 20 of this year we without delay inquired about the departure of the ship "de Jalousie," skipper Roelof of Heysingh, the bearer of this missive, and, understanding that she had not yet sailed, we did not wish to fail to send you this missive, and thereby briefly to say that you will do well by driving away again out of the Wacquepo and Moruka the Indian nation which came down from far up in the Orinoco, and tear down what you find they have made there, and thus maintain the Company's territory, especially if you think you have reason for suspecting that this nation meant to undertake something which might tend to the disadvantage of the Company or of the Colony in the Essequibo. But, inasmuch as you are as yet in uncertainty about this matter, we are of opinion that you ought to proceed in this with all prudence, and we would suggest that before resorting to violence you try by amicable means to find out what might be the real purpose of those people in acting thus (in the meantime, however, repelling force by force, if it should come to that). For it might perhaps be that the Spaniards, who are very clearly acting secretly in the matter, are through those people seeking trade with those of Essequibo which it would be better to cultivate than to ruin. For the rest, we declare that we fully approve of the course pursued by you in this matter.

In the meantime we expect that you will let no opportunity pass to inform us from time to time of what may come to your knowledge in this matter, in order that we, being well posted, may know what to do or to avoid.

305. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[7 December 1746]

(Extract)

I have had the honour to inform your Honours, via Berbice River, of a Mission erected with a little fort by the Spaniards up in the Cuyuni, in my opinion on your Honours' territory, and that I had information from a certain source that they were thinking next year of founding yet another, lower down, whereat the inhabitants are very much aggrieved, and the Carib Indians a great deal more so, since it perfectly closes the slave traffic in that direction from which alone that nation derive their livelihood. They have also expressed a desire to surprise the Mission and level it to the ground, which I, not without trouble, have prevented, because they belong to our jurisdiction, and all their trade being carried on in the Dutch Colonies, such a step would certainly be revenged upon us by the Spaniards. It is very perilous for his Colony to have such neighbours so close by, who in time of war would be able to come and visit us overland, and especially to make fortifications in our own land is in breach of all custom. I say upon our own land – I cannot lay this down, however, with full certainty because the limits west of this river are unknown to me...

In the month of October last nine soldiers deserted from the Berbice River to Orinoco, and came to the plantation of Mr. Persik here, to get bread, but made no show of violence. I was not advised of this until three days later, otherwise I should have prevented them from going any farther. On their arrival in Orinoco they joined a vessel from Trinidad which was cruising about there to prevent trade, and captured three canoes from this Colony that were out fishing, one of which, belonging to your Lordships, was in charge of salter H. Cleyman with twenty-four hogsheads of salt fish; another belonged to Mr. Persik, and one to A. Christiaense. This Colony from its very beginning having been in the possession of that fishery, and never having suffered the least hindrance or opposition from the Spaniards, this appears to me to be a kind of piratical act which cannot be tolerated, especially since the stopping of that fishery would deprive all our slaves of food, those belonging to your Lordship, as well as those of the colonists, being supported by it, and we should then be obliged to buy our provisions for the slaves from the English at any price they ask, because these people must eat, and although they only get 3 lbs. of fish each every fourteen days, this would soon amount to a considerable sum if we had to buy it, the fish that is salted in the Orinoco, and which is incomparably better than the English cod, scarcely costing us, after reckoning all the expenses, an "*oortje*" a lb. Your Lordships will certainly understand the great importance of this matter, and I have no doubt that your Lordships will take such measures in setting it right as may be deemed necessary.

The new Governor being due in Orinoco in February next, I shall send there to claim the boats and cargoes, but I am certain that such will be in vain, having profited by the example of the Postholder, Jurge Gobel, whom they had promised me by letter to deliver up, out nothing came of it, the man now living in the Spanish village in Orinoco. . .

The miners have just come down the river, and have reported to me that, notwithstanding the sufferings caused by illness and want, they have examined the heaven-high mountains up in Essequibo; that many of them, being absolutely treeless, presented a fair appearance of containing ore, among others, the Calikko or Crystal Mountain, the top of which is full of brimstone and vitriol, and almost covered below with crystals and beautiful veins of silver ore; but that the Indian nations living in that district had not permitted them to approach it without a deal of difficulty, terrified by the treatment they had suffered at the hands of the neighbouring Portuguese; that the working of those mines would, moreover, entail a deal of trouble and expense, they being situated full three days' journey inland; that their greatest obstacle had been the want of good interpreters, since the creoles who had been with them had been observed to interpret very faithlessly, being continually in fear that they would again be employed in the mines; and that the Indian nations were all at war with each other, and were nearly all at war, too, with the Portuguese, who were continually making raids upon them and carrying them off; and that this was a source of great danger to any Christians who came there.

They also told me, and this was corroborated by one of our itinerant traders, that N. Horstman, who ran away some time ago, is continually with those Portuguese who ill-treat the Indians, which has caused the report to spread that he was coming back.

Seeing, therefore, that in the present state of things there was nothing to be done just yet, I discharged the miners from the Company's service on the last day of November. They have told me that they wished to stay and reside in the Colony. I am very glad of this, as it is possible that they may at some time or other be of use to me – especially Moshack, who is a good honest fellow.

I have frequently felt the want of a good sworn interpreter of the Indian languages, such as there is in Surinam, and this want has often been to our loss. I have frequently been assisted by the Jew, Moses Isakse de Vries, but he being now dead, there is not a good faithful one to be got, and I am obliged to trust to the negroes or creoles, who say or conceal whatever they wish.

306. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[23 March 1747]

(Extract)

Your honours' favour of the 1st November last year by the ship "Jalousie" came duly to hand, and I have the honour to reply thereto that in Wacquepo and Moruka all is again still, as the nation which arrived there with the intention of killing the Caribs dwelling there was received by them reasonably, and thereupon they again retired back up the Orinoco. But the undertakings of the Spaniards go so far that, if proper measures be not taken against them, they may, in the course of time lead to the total ruin of the Colony.

I have, in my previous letter by the ship "Vrindschap" (copy of which herewith), had the honour circumstantially to inform your Honours of the outrages perpetrated through the taking away of the fishing canoes (the consequences whereof we already feel, not one salter daring to take that way again, whereby English cod have already risen between 3 and 4 stuyvers per lb.), as also of the Mission and fort above in Cuyuni, and of the intention to build this year yet another

fort there, but some miles lower, for which they now are beginning to make ready, according to the report of all those who come along that river with mules.

Besides, it has been reported to me through the burgher Captain L. Persik, on his arrival from Orinoco, and confirmed by some Spaniards, that the Spaniards there had made a journey in the south-western direction right behind us, and had there discovered the origin of the Rivers Cuyuni and Massaruni (which two are the proper origin of the River Essequibo), both flowing out of a great lake or sea which is 60 miles long and 20 miles broad, and very deep; the water azure blue, without fish therein; from seventy-five to eighty hours in a straight line above Fort Kykoveral. That their intention was to establish a permanent settlement for themselves near the origin of the rivers mentioned, and to fortify it, so that we then should be hemmed in by a cordon.

They say that this is the so famous Lake of Parima; it is also thus named by the Indians dwelling thereabout, so that we have this much nearer than we ever thought, it having been sought much more to the south.

Mr. Persik, whom I have mentioned, has not only conversed with the Fathers and officers who made the journey, but has seen the map being made thereof (copy whereof I shall try to obtain by every possible means); he has also seen some Indians whom they have brought thence with them, who are fairly white, and clothed with cotton stuff that they themselves had prepared.

I take the liberty once again to direct your Honours' earnest consideration to the abovementioned, because it will be of the utmost importance in future to this Colony, which, by the blessing of the Most High, is beginning to attain a prosperous state.

I should already long ago have removed and demolished the first fort up in Cuyuni (which even now is easy of accomplishment on my part through the Caribs), if I were but rightly conscious how far the limits of your Honours' territory extend, both on the eastern and northern sides, as well as south and westwards, for the decision whereof not the least help is to be got in this once here. I therefore earnestly request your Honours to be pleased to send hither the necessary information concerning that matter, because an error in this might lead to quite too evil consequences.

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

[7 August 1747]

(Extract)

As to the forts already established in Cuyuni for the Spaniards, and those they might wish to establish there hereafter, we have thought it best to await the action to be taken thereon by the Assembly of Ten, of which we shall then notify you at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, we hereby repeat what in this connection we have written to you in preceding missives, and also very earnestly recommend you herewith to aid in every possible way, and with all your might, in the maintenance of the fishery, and to help preserve the right thereof.

308. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[16 August 1747]

(Extract)

I have discharged Pieter de Laet, the Postholder of Moruka, on account of his bad behaviour, and since that Post is of great importance, and it is essential to the Colony to keep up the same, I have appointed one Jan der Scharden, a native of Berlin, a Protestant, and a very competent man. I was very pleased to be able to find such a person.

**309. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (THE TEN)
[1-6 September 1747]**

(Extract)

September 1, 1747.

The President brought before the meeting the fifth item on the Agenda concerning the condition of affairs in Rio Essequibo; whereupon there was read a letter from the Commander, Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande, written there on the 10th July of the year 1746, and addressed to the Chamber of Zeeland, containing advices. This being deliberated upon, approved and agreed that the said letter be accepted for registration.

There were read two letters from the Commander, Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande, written in Rio Essequibo on the 20th July and 7th December of the year 1746, and addressed to the Chamber of Zeeland, containing sundry points of moment and concern touching the condition of the aforesaid Colony and occurrences there. . . This being deliberated upon, it was approved and agreed to request and depute Messrs. Backer, Van Loon, Luijcx Massis, and Ter Borch to examine more carefully the aforesaid letter, to report to the Assembly their findings, and to aid the same with their recommendations and advice. . .

September 2, 1747.

There was read a letter from the Commander, Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande, written in Rio Essequibo on the 23rd March of this year, and addressed to the Chamber of Zeeland, containing circumstantial information of occurrences in the aforesaid Colony, and of the condition of affairs there. This being deliberated upon, it was approved and agreed to request and depute Messrs. Backer, Van Loon, Luijcx Massis, and Ter Borch to examine more carefully the aforesaid letter, to report to the meeting their findings, and to aid the same with their recommendations and advice.

September 6, 1747.

Mr. Justice Backer reported try the Assembly that the Committee appointed by Resolution of this Body, dated the 1st and 2nd of this month, had examined the letters of Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande, Commander in Rio Essequibo, of the 20th July and 7th December of last year and 26th March of this year, containing various points of importance and interest touching the condi-

tion of the aforesaid Colony and the occurrences there, more fully recorded in the Minutes of the aforesaid dates, and that the Committee were of opinion that to the aforesaid Commander should be written in answer. . .

That in case there could be found in Essequibo a competent surveyor, he shall cause to be made an accurate chart of the said Colony, not only of the plantations in existence there and of their size, but also of the lands still uncultivated and not yet granted. . .

That all the respective Chambers, each by itself, shall investigate and inquire whether it can be discovered how far the limits of this Company in Rio Essequibo do extend; that, nevertheless, if in the meantime he can by indirect means, and without himself appearing therein, bring it about that the Spaniards be dislodged from the forts and dwellings which they have, as he maintains, made on the territory of the Company, and be prevented from further extending themselves there, he shall be permitted to carry this out. . .

And, lastly, all the respective Chambers are instructed to investigate whether it can be discovered how far the limits of the Company in Rio Essequibo do extend, and to report to the other respective Chambers what they find and discover. This being deliberated upon, it was approved and agreed to adopt the aforesaid report, and furthermore to convert it into a positive Resolution, and to thank the Committee for the pains taken, and Mr. Backer for the Report made.

**310. THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (THE TEN) TO COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO
[9 September 1747]**

(Extract)

If in Essequibo it be possible to find a good surveyor, we recommend that you cause to be made an accurate chart of that Colony, not only of the plantations there and their size, but also of the lands not yet cultivated or granted, and that you transmit that chart to us.

We approve the Regulations about the granting of lands mentioned in the Resolution of the Court of Policy of the Colony in Rio Essequibo, dated the 3rd April, 1746, and you may continue to grant lands on that footing, and you will inform us of all lands that shall be granted and of their extent.

We have requested all the Chambers to inquire, each on its own account, whether it is possible to find out how far the limits of the Company in Rio Essequibo do extend. Nevertheless, if in the meantime, you can, by indirect means and without yourself appearing therein, bring it about that the Spaniards be dislodged from the forts and buildings which, according to your assertions, they have made upon the territory of the Company, and can prevent, them from spreading further in that quarter, you will do well to accomplish this. . .

**311. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY
[29 December 1747]**

(Extract)

Two of our rovers, named Hermanus Bannink and Gerrit Goritz, have been murdered in the Upper Essequibo by the Indians. That such a thing has happened by no means surprises me, but rather that this does not happen much often, because the brutal dealings of that sort of people, who hesitate at nothing, must stir the Indians to revenge. The loss of those people would not be a matter of very great concern were it not that the consequences are of great importance, since I fear that those tribes between the Amazon and this river, which are tolerably powerful, being extremely embittered, and, fearing that vengeance will be taken for this murder, may perhaps raid our highest-lying plantations, and thus bring us into a war which might be by no means advantageous for this Colony. I have long foretold such a thing, and on that account have desired to close the River of Essequibo, but have met with much opposition on account of the profit which some draw from there through the slave trade. I intend to bring this matter once more before the Council on the 8th January next. . .

312. EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF AN ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE HELD AT THE FORT ZEELANDIA, IN THE RIO ESSEQUIBO

[8 January 1748]

January 8, 1748.

The Commander having shown what the consequences of the ill-behaviour of the traders in the Upper Essequibo already are and what they might still become, two or three Christians having already been killed by the natives, and that his Honour thought it best to close that river for some time, this was, after deliberation, agreed to and approved; but his Honour, in order to further the various claims which the inhabitants of this Colony still have outstanding there, undertook to charge the Postholders of the Honourable Company's trading-place Arinda with the recovery of the said outstanding slaves, on condition that the said Post-holders shall be paid 10 guilders per head for their trouble by the owners.

313. THE COURT OF POLICY, ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

[6 February 1748]

We have the honour to report that, in order to comply with your salutary intention, we caused to be posted everywhere the announcements of the sale on the 8th January last, of the burdensome and unprofitable indigo plantation.

But, to our sorrow, we must report that in this matter we could in no way attain the desired end, inasmuch as, although the conditions were arranged very favourably, not one person was willing to bid a single stiver thereon, presumably on account of the great distance and the insalubrity of the River Cuyuni. We had, therefore, to keep it for the Company, to whom, even for bread-grounds alone, it is worth at least 200 rix-dollars and more.

314. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY**[11 February 1748]***(Extract)*

I shall also, as soon as a favourable opportunity occurs, execute your Honours' orders emanating from the Committee of Ten, concerning the forts of the Spaniards, and as regards the fishery. I have brought the matter so far with the Commandant of Orinoco, that I believe myself that no further disturbances will occur, but I can obtain no satisfaction for the three canoes taken away because he pretends that this took place through a privateer of Trinidad, and thus out of his jurisdiction.

The captain of the privateer, aforesaid, is in chains in Trinidad, at the accusation of the Governor of Cumana, who himself cannot make good our loss. This is, however, very satisfactory for the future.

315. WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER) TO COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO**[30 May 1748]**

We also give our approval, both to the appointment made by you or another Post-holder at the Post of Moroco in the place of Pieter de Laet, dismissed, and also to the similar step to be taken by you as to the commander of the coast-guard.

It gave us especial pleasure to learn through a subsequent letter from you, dated the 9th September, how by the zeal you have shown the trade of the Spaniards in the river of Essequibo begins to develop more and more, and we hope that all further means will be put in operation to make it flourish there to perfection.

316. EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE COLONY OF ESSEQUIBO, HELD AT FORT ZEELANDIA**[1-2 August 1748]**

Counsellor Abraham Buisson having complained that one of his corials had been unlawfully detained at the Company's trading-place at Moruka, and praying to have it returned in good condition, free of cost and charges.

The Postholder, Jan de Scharden, is heard, who states that he personally went to Mr. Buisson to speak to him on the matter, but that Buisson would not listen to him, and only said, "I shall summon you"; and further declares that the corial was not at the Post, but was taken away by the friends of the Indian who had brought it there, and had only left a musket behind.

He further calls as witness Hendrick Cleyman, who, being heard, confirmed the statement of the Postholder.

The Indian being absent, the case is put off to next meeting. . .

The Honourable the Commander represented that a certain free Indian named Baraca, belonging to the Company's trading-place in Moruka, had complained that a person named Jean Pierre Maillard some time ago arrived with a pretended letter from his Honour to take his daughter

away to his wife, and that he, the Indian, had allowed her to go, and now asks for her to be returned. That His Excellency, knowing he had never been capable of issuing such unheard of orders, had sent the Indian with written orders to Maillard to let the girl follow her father at once, but he had not respected such order in any way, and refused to comply with it, and that the Indian had returned to his Excellency without results.

This audacious conduct having been considered, his Excellency the Commander is authorised to send for the said Maillard and the Indian woman.

317. POSITION OF IGNACE G. COURTHIAL, COLONIST IN ESSEQUIBO, TO THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER)

[18 August 1748]

To the Directors of the West India Company, Middelburg Chamber:

Gentlemen: Although it is many years since I had the honour of being granted admittance to this Colony, I have been your subject since only about two years ago, and did not decide to become so before I had had numerous talks with Mr. van 's Gravesande, our Commandeur, on the subject of the Roman Catholic religion, which I profess.

This liberty I deem to consist in having permanently, at my cost and expense, a chapel, with a priest for its service, in the deserts of Mahaica and Mahaicony; that is the name one ought to give to the sandy lands lying between the River Demerary and that of Berbice, since they are fit only to be inhabited by savages, as they actually are, and for raising cattle.

Nevertheless, in these lands which this Colony has granted me, one finds certain meadows which we call savannahs. These, joined to those of Berbice, which I have been honoured by having offered to me, could be made into an establishment such as I have in mind.

This establishment consists in the introduction, either by sea or by land, of enough horned cattle of the two sorts to be able in a few years, by the multiplication of their kind, to form a stock-ranch of from 12,000 to 15,000 animals. . .

This enterprise will seem to you hardly less daring than the one I have executed in opening and making at my cost and expense (an undertaking for a Colony) a road across the forests, until then unexplored, of 130 or 140 leagues, to the old fort, and thence to Berbice, by means whereof one can, at a very moderate expense, perfect it so as to be able to go on horseback, and with loads from Fort Nassau, in Berbice, as far as Peru – I have made more than half of it. . .

The Spaniards who dwell in the outskirts of the Provinces of Coumac, Caracas, Maracaybo, and even of Pampelona, and those who dwell in that of Cassanary and even in the Kingdom of Santa Fé, who on account of the great distance, the risks and obstacles, cannot transport their goods to the ships of the French, English, and Dutch smugglers, will, as soon as they are sure of finding here French, English, and Dutch goods, bring to this Colony, by an endless number of navigable rivers which issue from those provinces, their leather, cocoa, tobacco, their doubloons, and their gross piastres, for they will find on this road much smaller risk, having many routes whereby to evade the guards who will try to oppose their commerce.

This prediction I found upon experience itself. It is notorious to all this Colony that I was the first who, in 1736, ascended this river, and, having, wandered for several months from river to river, I discovered the mouths of these different rivers and taught them to the Spaniards, who un-

til then were ignorant of them; and since that time the Island of Martinique and even this Colony are beginning to derive some advantage from my discoveries. . .

The King of Spain grants titles of honour to the private individual who, by some small gift, draws from the forests a few Indian families to form a village, which becomes, through the ministry of a priest whom he places there, what is called a Mission.

He grants, I say, the titles of Marquis and Count, and governments, to him who founds a town, a city, with 25 or 30 families, merely by furnishing to each a dwelling a l'Americaine, or hut, with a pair of each sort of domestic animals.

I do not seek by citing this precedent to lay down laws, or to obtain anything which may be contrary to your interests or to your usages and customs, since each State governs itself by its own maxims and as seems to it good, but only to show that, if my requests should be looked on in Holland (of whose customs I am ignorant) as visionary and extravagant, they would in France and in Spain receive examination, and, without doubt, be granted as useful and reasonable.

It is for you, Sire, as Sovereign of this Colony situate in America, to examine whether the enterprise which I have the honour to propose to you, seems to you so important as I seek to make it appear to you. If it so seem to you, I beg you to give it your attention, and to honour me with a reply.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, with all possible respect, your very humble and very obedient servant,

(Signed) I. G. COURTHIAL.
Essequibo, August 18, 1748

318. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[2 December 1748]

(Extract)

This is only to accompany the copy of my previous despatch sent by the ship "Juffrouw Margareta", Captain I. Sibertse, which I learn, to my regret, has been captured by the French. However, I flatter myself that the map of this river thereby transmitted may yet come into your Honours' hands, because I am given to hope that all the books and papers of the ship will be returned again to their owners.

319. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[2 December 1748]

(Extract)

So I am in the same boat with the new Postholder in Moruka. This man, trying to observe his duty to the letter, and being unwilling to carry on an underhand trade with a party of inhabitants as his predecessors have done, has almost everybody for an enemy, wherefore I have to hear

daily complaints which, upon careful examination, vanish in smoke, though not failing to cause me much trouble and worry, as some of the leading men have had a hand therein.

Business with the Spaniards begins to grow better as time progresses, and it would have advanced somewhat better if the absence of goods through the long-deferred arrival of ships had not been a very great obstacle thereto.

Some Spanish merchants have been obliged to wait here nine, ten, yea, eleven months, to their great inconvenience. Pity that the business here is in so few hands, and causes such bitter jealousy, each grudging the other the slightest profit. That is also one of the reasons for the exasperation against the Postholder at Moruka; because he is an orderly man and conversant with the Spanish language they are afraid he will cause them prejudice, while he has never until now been in a position to cause the least. I shall try, as far as lies in my power, to encourage the trade and to advance it, and as far as possible to make it general. I hope now, with good reason, to succeed therein, because I think that now the ships will arrive somewhat more regularly and punctually to their time. . .

I hope that the letters and papers by the "Juffrouw Margareta" may yet come to hand, because I sent by her a map of this river made for your Honours out of different small ones which have been drawn from time to time, and whereof I kept no copy because it was impossible to find time therefor; and I would not defer complying as quickly as possible with the orders of their Honours in the Committee of Ten; and now for want of good paper for the purpose, I cannot make one. If it has not yet come to hand, I take the liberty of requesting your Honours to cause to be transmitted to me a book of the largest medium paper that I may once draw it up properly.

The Spaniards were beginning to gradually approach the Upper Cuyuni, but some weeks ago a war having broken out between the Carib nation and that of the Warows, which is carried on very obstinately, it will stop their further progress, and possibly, if the Caribs obtain the upper hand, they may even be driven somewhat further off, without our having in the least degree to meddle therewith. I wish, however, that if it were possible, I might know the proper boundaries. According to the testimony of old men and of the Indians, this jurisdiction should begin on the east at the Creek Abary, and extend westwards as far as the River Barima, where in old times a Post existed; but these sayings give not the slightest certainty. . .

A wanderer of the name of Pinet having gone up the River Cuyuni to obtain hammocks by barter with the Indians, was requested by me carefully to spy out the doings of the Spaniards in that region – a duty for which he is very well fitted because he understands the Carib language thoroughly, and is by no means destitute of intelligence. He returned here on the 13th November, four months after his departure, and has made report to me that the Spaniards had not yet undertaken the building of any forts or Missions as had been their intention lower down, but that they cruelly ill-treated the Indians subject to us, continually taking them by surprise in their dwellings and carrying them off, with their wives and children, to send them to Florida; that he had spoken to the Chief of the Spaniards, and had placed before his eyes the unfairness of this treatment, as well as the consequences of it, but that the latter had replied that the whole of America belonged to the King of Spain, and that he should do what suited himself, without troubling about us.

Pinet also reported to me that the Indians were in the highest state of indignation; that four of their Chiefs were on the point of coming down in order once more to come and complain to me, and that they had already sent knotted cords to all the Indian houses, which is their sign to meet on a certain day.

Seeing that all my remonstrances and letters to the Spaniards are of no avail, and no redress is obtainable, I intend to tell the Chiefs of the Indians when they come to me, that I can provide no redress for them, and that they must take measures for their own security. Then I feel assured that in a short time no Spaniard will be visible any more above in Cuyuni. I have always, but with great difficulty, restrained them, and prevented all hostilities by fair promises; however, before we come to that, I will next month send once more a letter to the Governor of Cumaná, who is expected at that time in Orinoco, and explain this matter to him seriously, with all courtesy, as well as the consequences, which cannot but be disastrous for them, and then await his reply, in order to govern myself thereby.

Ignace Courthial, who has constructed the road above in Cuyuni, and now has gone up the Orinoco for some hundred cattle and mules to import for trade, before his departure showed me a letter which he had written to be sent by this ship to your Honours, wherein are some proposals which appear to me somewhat strange, and to proceed from his Gascon ideas.

I have told him my opinion thereon, and advised him to leave out some points, but I believe he has not done so.

The man is very enterprising, and in a position to do much service to the new Colony of Demerara, by breeding there some hundreds of cattle for food, the traffic in hides from which will produce much profit, and also inland to advance very much the planting of tobacco, cocoa, etc.

The basis of his undertaking is well founded, and he is also quite in a position to perform the same, wherefore I take the liberty of requesting your Honours' serious consideration of this as a matter which will prove of great use and profit, and that your Honours will be pleased to have the goodness to make your intentions known by the first opportunity, because I expect him back again within five or six months.

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(Inclosure): Position of Ignace G. Courthial, colonist in Essequibo, to the West India Company (Zeeland Chamber), 18 August 1748 [Document No. 317 above].

320. EXTRACT FROM THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TERRITORIES OF THE ORINOCO, THE WAY TO PRESERVE THEM, ETC., WITH AN ACCOUNT OF CARACAS, AND TWO MAPS WITH THEIR EXPLANATION – BY ITURRIAGA

(Undated – but believed to have been written in 1748. However, the docket containing this document shows the year 1747, a date which is apparently incorrect.)

(Extract)

The town of Santo Thomas de la Guayana, the only settlement of Spaniards on the River Orinoco, is composed of sixty inhabitants, negroes, mulatto, and half-breeds, and a few whites.

All are idlers and their wives indolent creatures, content with bad cabins for houses, with the fishing, and spirits, which they make from the sugar-cane which is left over from their gluttony.

It is situated on the south bank of the river, a musket-shot from a small fort named S. Francisco de Assisi, erected on a rocky hill washed by the same river.

For the expense of its garrison there is assigned in Santa Fé de Bogota the charge of 100 effective soldiers at the rate of 10 escuados monthly, which amounts to 15,000 pesos.

From the 100 soldiers fourteen places are deducted, which contribute towards the salaries of the "Castellano", Lieutenant, ensign, and two sergeants of the company, twelve that are detached for the Island of Trinidad, and form its garrison; and five, eight, or twelve more for the Missions of the province for the protection of the Capuchin Fathers of Catalonia; and ten for the escort of the Paymaster, who goes yearly to Santa Fé for the amount assigned. Deducting besides some vacant places, some sick soldiers and others on leave of absence, the garrison must not be considered to count more than fifty men.

Such a small number of soldiers and of inhabitants, and the circumstances of these latter, who, on withdrawing to the interior Missions, leave nothing in their huts and fields to lose, gave an opportunity to the daring of an Irishman, who, at the beginning of the last war, came to conquer Guayana with sixty sailors and a brig, and in fact, did so, made himself master of the castle, carried away some cannons, spiked and threw in to the river the others, and burned the city and two villages of Missions, being irritated at not having found anything to plunder.

Three leagues further down than the city the great river divides itself into three mighty branches, two of which turn towards the north and north-east, and divide themselves into so many channels, which flow into the sea through more than forty mouths. The third, which turns towards the east, flows almost unbroken for 50 leagues until it flows out into the sea under the name of the Great Ships' Mouth because by it alone can ships ascend. By some of the other mouths small vessels of six guns can ascend.

Following the great branch in its course to the sea some rivers are met with, which flow out on the right-hand side, such as that called Aquire, and a branch of the River Barima, which divides itself into many other branches, and that great windward point forms a labyrinth of islands and channels.

By these channels, without entering the sea, one can navigate with small vessels to the block-house called the Post, which the Dutch of Essequibo maintain with three men and two small cannon, 16 leagues from the Colony towards the Great Ships' Mouth. And it is by this way that the Dutch make their voyages when they are returning from the Orinoco in small vessels, so as not to expose themselves to the strong currents and breezes which impede and render dangerous the navigation outside.

From the Missions of Guayana, under the charge of the Capuchin Fathers of Catalonia, without doubt some way or communication with Essequibo has been opened up, because the Governor of Cumaná, Don Gregorio Espinosa de los Monteros, received a letter from the Governor of Essequibo through the Prefect of those Missions, and this prelate did not make any difficulty in talking charge of and forwarding the reply.

The Caribs who dwell within the Orinoco occupy about 70 leagues of the south bank from the mouth of the River Caroni, distant 6 leagues to the west from Guayana to the mouth of the River Caura.

Their pride and superiority over the other nations keeps them in continual movement against them, although they may be very distant, with the view of slave-raiding, in order to sell them to the inhabitants of the Dutch Colonies – Essequibo, Berbice, Corentine, and Surinam.

For this journey they have besides the navigation of the Orinoco, and of the channels of the Barima, a road by land, which crossing the Caroni higher up than the Missions of Guayana, goes to the River Aquire, and they descend by it to near its mouth, having arranged beforehand for

some vessel to be waiting in this river, and they do not enter the Yuruari, but descend by the River Essequibo.

From the mouth of the Caura from 20 to 25 leagues are traversed, nearly uninhabited on both banks, to the first Mission of the Jesuit Fathers, called S. Ignacio de Cabruta, and, as in the 90 and more leagues from the mouth of the Caroni the Caribs hold sway, the navigation is dangerous for those who are not their friends, or who are not accompanied by a strong force enough to repulse their attack.

The very many attacks on the Missions, their desolation and destruction, are proofs of the dislike with which they regard them, and, with this knowledge, the Fathers are obliged to maintain a constant guard, with the help of an escort, and some small cannon and muskets. But it is seen by experience that this is not sufficient for the tranquility necessary to their increase.

The threats of the Caribs, which some Indians fear, their suggestions, which perturb others, and the free life of the forest, which appeals to all those recently settled, are likewise causes of the sudden dispersment which they have been wont to suffer, and, notwithstanding all this, such is the constancy of the Fathers, that after their third entry into the Orinoco they have succeeded in founding and maintaining five villages, from S. Ignacio de Cabruta, to the rapid of Atures, in a distance of eight days' navigation.

Since the savage and valiant Guipanovis destroyed, in the year 1747*, the new Mission of the rapid above mentioned, the Fathers have again established it, although at the expense of great labours, by bringing together some Indians, Maypures, and Parecas; and they guard the place with as much care as Cabruta, on account of these being the two most exposed – Cabruta to the attacks of the Caribs, that of the rapid of Atures to those of the Guipanovis, who inhabit the Creek Atabapu, seven days distant by navigation from the rapid. The Civitenes are wont to unite with their friends, the Guipanovis. They belong to the upper part of the Rio Negro, which is a half-day's journey by land from Atabapu.

These two nations manage fire-arms with much dexterity, so well, indeed, that the Chief Macapu alone, with eighty of his men, armed with guns, destroyed the Mission of the rapid, and on that occasion the escort and other Spaniards having followed him, with more than 300 Indians, they did not even dare to attack him in his village, knowing that it was well fortified. The original plan, inclosed, drawn on the spot by brother Vera, of these Missions, shows its fortifications.

In order that the evils explained may not go on increasing, it is advisable to take steps at once; and if some effective remedy can be supplied, that not only will put an end to their course, but also conduce to other good, it will be so much the better.

[* (*Sic*) in copy; the date of the docket, therefore, seems erroneous.]

(*Archivo General Central, Madrid*)

321. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO DIRECTORS' COMMITTEE OF TEN
[27 March 1749]

(*Extract*)

Some profit ought at times to be made out of the Spaniards, and we shall endeavour to pay as much attention thereto as possible, for many Spaniards come and go out of the river without coming under my observation: that is in breach of all rules and custom, but this occurring at the instance of some of the principal [planters], and also in order not to frighten away the Spaniards, I have until now connived somewhat at this, and have only ordered the Postholder of Moruka always to advise me when any come, stating their names, and to whom addressed, so that I am always informed thereof. . .

Upon a despatch written by me to the present Governor of Cumaná, named Don Diego Tabarez, wherein I have circumstantially gone into our grievances, I, in January last, received a reply from him in very courteous terms, wherein he replies to everything very circumstantially and sensibly, and declares himself to be ready for the observance of good neighbourship, and to be willing to contribute thereto in everything which is in his power, and not contrary to the commands of his Sovereign. He has also ordered the Commandant of Orinoco to pay over the capital proceeds (arising from) two slaves, deserters from the Honourable Company's indigo plantation, which were sold there, to whomsoever I should send to fetch the same, as also the Honourable Company's fishing-canoe, declaring that he cannot give up the other canoes because they were found to contain merchantable goods.

His Honour has made a proposal to me – through the Contador, or Secretary, of Orinoco – to conclude a Cartel for the restitution of deserters from either side, concerning which I am at present in negotiation, since he is willing to grant that we should deliver up deserters bodily, but that they should restore the price alone. I expect every day a reply to my proposition, and shall try to bring the matter quickly to a favourable conclusion, as being very profitable for this Colony. I shall send the Postholder of Moruka, who is at present, very ill, to Orinoco as soon as he has recovered.

322. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[29 March 1749]

Never hath any vessel of Surinam coming here paid anything for dues, either on entering or leaving, although all the itinerant traders which go from there in order to deal in slaves stop here, as all go to Barima, which is situated under this jurisdiction, to the great prejudice of the inhabitants, because they pay far more for the slaves than we usually do, and thus mostly run away with all, and we here can scarcely obtain any more.

323. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[10 April 1749]

(Extract)

Inclosed is the copy of a Proclamation which has been placarded by the Marquis of Cailus, the Governor of Martinique, all over the Island of Tobago, the original of which was torn down there by Captain Sayer, commanding His Britannic Majesty's warship the "Richmond", and sent to me by Mr. Gidney Clark on the 6th of this month, from which your Lordships will plainly see

that it is the firm intention of the French to establish themselves there – an intention which they have already fairly carried out.

The title of "Governor of the Continent from the River Amazon to the River Orinoco" (in which district Surinam, Berbice, and this Colony are situated), which that Marquis gives himself, seems to me somewhat strange, although the title itself is of little importance when it is not accompanied by immediate possession, and I would by no means grudge him the title of Governor of Tobago, in the same manner as that of these Colonies, where he has the title and we the possession.

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

[14 May 1749]

As for the plan of a certain Ignace Courthail [Courthial] which was sent by you for our examination, (but which did not come to hand until recently among some papers from the ship "de Jalousie"), we have, after reading it, found it of such a nature that it may, indeed, be expedient to make some further examination of the matter, and we also wish to give it a little further thought before we come to a resolution thereupon. We have found in it some points which would tend to make it attractive, but it also contains various things which would make it entirely impracticable. For this reason we have already sent a copy of it to the Presidial Chamber of Amsterdam, and it will doubtless be an object of further discussion in the next Session of the Ten.

325. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[8 September 1749]

(Extract)

At the same time, I have the honour to send herewith the Map of the Colony. It is not so well made as I wished, but that was impossible, because I had no colours or pencils; all that I had being entirely ruined by black-beetles. If Captain Creij had not placed at my service two indifferent pencils, I should have been entirely unable to fulfil your Honours' instructions.

It is as if the Orinoco trade had been at a standstill for some time past, for, ever since the peace, so many French ships have come there that everything is so glutted with wares, that very little chance is left for our colonists.

The Post in Moruka having become vacant by the death of J. de Scharde, I have placed there the Postholder of Mahaicony, Jan Stoete, who has done good service at the latter Post, and in his place in Mahaicony Stephenus Iske, formerly a miner, and of late assistant at the lighthouse, where no assistant is longer needed, the man in command now able to attend to it alone. I hope this may be approved by your Honours.

Having written to the Governor of Cumaná that, if he persisted in the design of founding a Mission in the River Cuyuni, I should be obliged to oppose myself there against effectually, he has replied to me that such was without his knowledge (not the founding of the new [Mission], but the site), and that, it should not be progressed with, as in reality nothing has been done. On

the map your Honours will find the place marked, as also the site of the one already established. For six months I have seen no Indians from that side, so that I do not accurately know how matters go on there.

Your Honours will also find marked on it above in the Essequibo River in the Creek Siparuni an active volcano, which was discovered there by the present Postholder of Arinda a year ago, which, as he was then afflicted with a great pain in his eye, he was compelled again to come away from, but his intention is at the close of the present year to go there again, in order to observe everything carefully. The Indians say that about six years ago it began to burn continually, and to cast out stones. They are excessively afraid of it, and almost all have retired from thereabout.

Of the runaway slaves from the new plantation, of which I had the honour to inform your Honours, five have been brought back again as prisoners, but two are still wanting who were the ringleaders, these having been slain by the Carib Indians, by whom also the last one brought in was wounded, but not of any consequence. They have to all appearance wished to resist, in order not to be taken prisoners. I don't yet know the circumstances, as the aforesaid Indians have not yet arrived.

326. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[20 November 1749]

(Extract)

The discoveries made in our neighbourhood by the Spaniards in the year 1748, a copy of the map whereof (notwithstanding its being prohibited on pain of death) I have been able to obtain cognizance of, is also of no small advantage for us – that notorious Sea of Parime, of which so much has been written for and against, by many believed to exist, by others held as a fable, having now at last been discovered and found, and even, according to the map, situated within our jurisdiction.

The information which I have obtained surreptitiously from the free Indians convinces me that the map has been accurately and well drawn up by the Jesuits, who formed that expedition, with an officer and forty soldiers.

327. EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF AN ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE, HELD AT THE FORT ZEELANDIA, IN THE RIO ESSEQUIBO

[5-6 January 1750]

January 5 and 6, 1750

His Honour [the Commander] further stated that some Caribs from the River Massaruni were come to complain of the colonist Pieter Marchal, they were thereupon admitted, and being examined by the interpreter, Bastiaan Christaansen, made their complaints concerning the said Marchal, saying that he had made them and their wives work for nearly four months without giving

them any payment, and that when he had fetched them from their dwellings he had told them that it was by the orders of his Honour the Commander.

The accused having been heard upon this denies everything, and is sharply admonished to leave the Indians there unmolested in their liberties, and to duly pay them for their services rendered.

The complaints concerning similar ill-treatment of the Caribs by Pieter de Bakker being confirmed by Mr. Pypersbergh, the said Pieter de Rakker is to be reprimanded.

328. COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY

[10 January 1750]

(Extract)

Your Honours know that in one of my previous despatches I had the honour to give your Honours information of the intolerable and inexcusable dealings of some of our itinerant traders above in the River Essequibo, which caused me to fear that the nations there would be induced to revenge themselves. Whatever means I employed I have never been able to obtain proof which was sufficient for a Court so as to be able to punish any of them according to their deserts.

Wherefore, being convinced of the justice of the Indians' complaints, I closed the river, and forbade individuals trading there. Subsequently I was compelled by the Council of Justice again to throw the trade open under certain conditions, although I sufficiently demonstrated the danger that was to be expected therefrom.

Now, finally, it has come to pass that my prophecies have been confirmed, as one of those itinerant traders, by name Jan Stok, an insolent and godless man, according to unanimous report, committed horrible enormities there. Accompanied by a party of Orinoco Caribs, he attacked the nations our friends close by the Post, Arinda, caused all the men to be killed, and carried away the women and children as slaves, ruined all the provision gardens, and perpetrated many other unheard of things.

In a word, they have made the Indians desperate, who intend to take vengeance therefor, so that the other traders who are still up the river are in extreme peril of life, and the plantations up the Essequibo run the risk of being deserted. On this account the Director of the plantation Oosterbeck (now St. Jan), has come in order to ask assistance in case of need.

In my journey which I made up the river I was already visited by a party of Akawois Indians to make their complaints, but did not yet learn one-fourth part of them.

I then summoned the aforesaid Jan Stok to appear before the Session of the Court on the 5th instant, which order he hath not obeyed, whereof report having been made to the Session, and the Postholder of Arinda having been heard with others, a warrant of arrest was ordered against him, and the ensign and a sergeant and four men were sent to arrest him, wherever he may be found, and bring him in custody here. An extraordinary Session for this matter will be holden on the 19th of this month.

I have immediately caused the natives to be informed of this, and caused them to be promised satisfaction, with a request to send their Chiefs, so that they may be personally present. This some have already assented to, but some lie so far off, and are so scattered through panic, that I have not yet been able to warn them. I believe, however, that as soon as they learn of the arrest of this man they will quite return to calmness.

However to obviate all further misfortunes (for a war with the natives would be the ruin of the Colony) I think it would be best (with your Honours' approval) that your Honours should be pleased to prohibit until further orders traffic with the Indians on the Rivers Essequibo, Massaruni, and Cuyuni.

I hope within a few months to have the honour to make a verbal report, and therefore I will not enlarge further upon this matter.

**329. THE ACTING COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[8 June 1750]**

(Extract)

Jacob Friedrich Mushack, Postholder at Arinda, up in Essequibo, came down in the beginning of April bringing for the Honourable Company three Indian slaves whom he had bought – namely, a man, a woman, and a boy, and whom I have provisionally placed on the plantation Duynenburg, and as the Assistant, Pieter Leenderse, has been brought from there very ill, and the aforesaid Mushack has asked me to let him have Jan Jacob Steyner, the constable, in the place of the latter as Assistant, I have granted him his request, and have appointed in the constable's place the soldier, Bartholomeus Cantineaux. . .

Jan Dudonjon having also sent a canoe to the Barimas, in charge of Adrian Christiansen, has had the misfortune to have it captured on the return journey by the Spaniards and taken to the Castle of Guayana in Orinoco.

**330. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY (ZEELAND CHAMBER),
1750; INCLUDING THE REPORT ON THE COLONY OF ESSEQUIBO SUBMITTED
IN PERSON BY THE COMMANDER
[22 June 1750]**

(Extract)

Monday, June 12, 1750

The Commander Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande having arrived here by the aforesaid ship "de Goude Spoor", and having sent in his name this morning to this Chamber, he was, with the approval of the members, admitted, and when he had taken a seat, by invitation of the President, and had greeted the members, he laid before the Chamber his written Memorial or Report, setting forth both the present state of the Colony of Essequibo and his plans for the correction and improvement of various matters there. . .

Report of the Commandant Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande

. . . The lighthouse has been washed away by the heavy swell of the water, and must be transferred to another place. At the Company's trading places everything is at present well, they being provided with good Post-holders. The one at Arinda up in Essequibo I have ordered to be trans-

ferred to four days' journey higher at the creek Rupununi, this being the direct route of the tribes who come from up in Orinoco and Corentyn and pass through the country to trade or make war higher up. . .

Hereby (by the introduction of more settlers) the Colony would attain a nourishing and, in course of time, a formidable state, and the interior (which is unknown) could be explored and cultivated, the lands which lie along the river devoted to growing sugar and rice, and those in the interior to other crops, by which many discoveries could doubtless be made which would bring great utility and profit. For this nothing is lacking but able and industrious people, and it is a shame (if I may use the word) for the Dutch, that two nations not to be compared with their for industry, namely, the Portuguese and the Spaniards, who are situated at the right and the left of these colonies, and who are groaning under so hard, even slavish, a rule, are owners of so many treasures and so fortunate in their discoveries.

For such an undertaking we ought to begin, at first, with not too large a number at one time: 20 to 25 families would be enough at first, and, when these had been there for some three years and thus were able to teach and help others, we might go on with larger numbers.

The reason why so little has been discovered is that the old settlers through rooted habit and those born in the colony through an inborn indifference, so strongly cling to their old way that nothing, not even the convincing reasoning, can tear them away from it, and nothing in the world can induce them to any new undertaking, there being among them no industrious and enterprising persons. . .

Article IV

It is necessary that the limits of the Company's territory should be known, in order successfully to oppose the continual approach of the neighbouring Spaniards, who, if they are not checked, will at least shut us in on all sides, and, who, under pretext of establishing their Missions, are fortifying themselves everywhere. And, because the limits are unknown, we dare not openly oppose them as might very easily be done, by means of the Carib nation, their sworn enemies. Please study in this connection the accompanying map, drawn up by the Spaniards themselves and copied from theirs. . .

Article VI

The frequent and well-founded complaints which the Spaniards make of the damage done to them by the Carib nation well deserve your Honours' attention, not only on account of the damage which the Spaniards suffer, for by their harsh and unjust dealings they give cause for this, but on account of the inevitable consequences which in course of time might befall the Colony. For it is the height of imprudence in the colonists that, urged on solely by an unworthy thirst for gain, they themselves put into the hands of that warlike nation, who beyond dispute are the bravest and most numerous on this coast, the weapons which in future may bring about their own destruction – I mean the fire-arms, powder, and ball so often given them in exchange for slaves. The meagre excuse to which they resort, namely, that these are only bad trade guns, is far from satisfactory, for not only are good ones sometimes found among the trade guns, but this dealing has already brought about this result, that the greatest terror which the tribes formerly had of such weapons has almost disappeared, which is in itself a bad thing. Wherefore it should be

deemed of the greatest importance that that trade be absolutely prohibited, and that under heavy penalties.

It must further be considered that if this prohibition extended only to the Colonies of Essequibo and Demerara, this would cause much damage to the colonists, without in any way answering the purpose, for a much greater number are sold by the neighbouring Colonies. The itinerant traders from Surinam, who have to pass the Company's trading place in Wacquepo and Moruka, and have already greatly damaged that Indian trade, always have an ample supply of them.

The wantonness of the rovers, or traders, up in Essequibo should also be forcibly restrained, for by it the tribes are greatly embittered. The wantonness goes so far that certain of these do not hesitate even to go with some tribes to make war upon others, or greatly to maltreat them, often carrying off free people and selling them as slaves, and abusing the Indian women. Hence it was that in the year 1747 the rovers G. Gorits and J. Bannink were murdered by the Indians, some others poisoned, and others forced to flee. These wanton deeds cannot be punished by the judge as they deserve, for legal proof is always wanting; moreover, the Indians are not believed, and the Indians who have been maltreated dwelling too far away, and having never seen the European Colonies, dare not come down to complain. Even if this trade up in Essequibo were prohibited, this would cause not damage to the Colony for those people would then turn to some other and more useful means of livelihood, and the Carib nation would still being slaves enough. Besides, they could betake themselves in the direction of Orinoco.

(Signed) L. STORM VAN 'S GRAVESANDE
Middelburg, June 19, 1750

331. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE COMMANDER'S REPORT **[27 July 1750]**

(Extract)

That the removal of the trading-place Arinda, which has taken place at the instance of the Commander (for the reasons set forth in his Memorial), it being also more advantageous for trade, should be approved, and, furthermore, that the transportation or transfer of the lighthouse and the other trading-places be left to the direction of the Commander Gravesande. . .

The determining of the limits being an object of His Highness' attention, to whom in this connection a certain small map, mentioned in the Commander's Memorial, had been handed by him, the Committee was of opinion that his advice thereon should lie awaited. . .

That, furthermore, they, the members of the Committee, were of opinion that the Company's shop there should again be started especially if some new colonists were to be sent thither, because not only would it in that case be extremely necessary for supplying the needs of those colonists but also in view of the increasing Spanish trade, it was not unlikely that a reasonable profit might be made by it, especially so if it could be brought about that the Spaniards no longer, as heretofore, has usually happened, tarried with their wares and articles of trade among the private settlers living up the river, but came with them farther down and as far as to the fort. To attain this end, a resolution might be passed that no one whatsoever should be allowed to come

into the river, much less make a stay there, unless he beforehand addressed himself to the Commander there, and asked him for permission to stay in the Colony for a stipulated period, and that at the same time all inhabitants should also be forbidden, without the aforesaid permission or consent of the Commander, to lodge or afford any shelter to strangers for more than one night, on penalty of a certain fine to be imposed for violation of either rule.

332. ACTING COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[8 September 1750]

(Extract)

The Commander at his departure gave me to understand that there was information that the Spaniards had begun to construct a new Mission close by here, and that it was necessary to pay attention thereto. I have carefully informed myself about it through the colonist Frederik Persik, who in person has gone thither, and has the greatest intercourse with the Spaniards. He has assured me that the last Mission which is being constructed is in a certain little river called Imataca, situated far off in Orinoco, and which (in my opinion) is directly far outside the concern of this Colony.

And concerning that which are said to have been constructed up in the River Cuyuni, I am instructed that they are very much nearer to the side of the Spanish than to our territory. I have, for reasons aforesaid, judged it to be my duty, to make a report thereof to your Honours.

Persik aforesaid has also informed me that the Fathers above in Orinoco were inclined to open a trade with this Colony in cattle, which they (if able to obtain permission therefor), would transport overland. If permission for this be asked, and the Commander be still absent, I shall refuse it, until your Honours shall be pleased to frame the necessary orders thereon which I hereby request.

On the one hand, this would contribute very much to the raising and cultivation of trade, but, on the other hand this would be a safe and open way (not to mention times of war) for the slaves who might come to run away from the Colony, unless a good Post were established thereon.

On account of the consequences, I have thought it best simply to mention the proposal to your Honours in order that you may be pleased to deliberate thereon as to your Honours' high wisdom may be judged most convenient, trusting that as the Commander in person is with your Honours he will have spoken thereof also.

333. ACTING COMMANDER, ESSEQUIBO, TO WEST INDIA COMPANY
[23 December 1750]

(Extract)

The 29th of the said month [October] it was reported to me that the runaways aforesaid were on an island (to which they got by means of a raft) up in Essequibo, eight days navigation from this fort, and that they comprised six men and two women, well provided with fire-arms.

These tidings were brought by the colonist Jacobus Maximilian, with the addition that they were trying to obtain a vessel to take them to the mainland. I paid attention to the news as of a

matter of great concern for the future for the runaways of this Colony who might find a safe hiding place there. I immediately summoned the aforesaid Maximilian, informed myself of everything, and found confirmation of what is mentioned above. Next day I sent the man as guide, with the Adjutant and a commando of four men with six negroes, and as many creoles and eight Indians, but I must tell your Honours that fifteen days thereafter they returned empty-handed reporting that the aforesaid runaways seven days before their arrival, had been able to get away from the island by means of the vessel wherewith the creole of the colonist, Andries Pieterse, lay there, to salt fish. Three of the runaways having (during the absence of the Indians at the fishery, while the creole was alone) managed to get into the vessel, over-powered the creole, tied his hands behind his back, took him in their company, navigated to the mainland, took all the food with them, released the creole and let him go again, they taking the way along the River Siparuni. I immediately caused information thereof to be given to the Carib and the Akawois nations, and entertain no doubt that they will be taken alive or dead.

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