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# SLAVES.

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## FURTHER PAPERS

RELATING TO

## SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES:

(*Religious Worship of the Slaves in Demerara.*)

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VIZ.

- N<sup>o</sup> 1.—Copy of a Proclamation issued by Governor *Bentinck*, dated 25th May 1811.  
N<sup>o</sup> 2.—Copy of a Despatch addressed to Governor *Bentinck* by the Earl of *Liverpool*, dated Downing-Street, 15th October 1811.  
N<sup>o</sup> 3.—Copy of a Proclamation issued by Major-General *Carmichael*, dated 7th April 1812, recalling Proclamation 25th May 1811.  
N<sup>o</sup> 4.—Copy of Major-General *Murray's* Circular Instructions to the Magistrates of the Colony of Demerara, dated 16th May 1823.

Colonial Department, }  
Downing-Street, }  
11th May 1825. }

R. J. WILMOT HORTON.

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*

11 *May* 1825.

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## FURTHER PAPERS RELATING TO

N° 1.

Copy of a Proclamation issued by Governor *Bentinck*; dated 25th May 1811.

### PROCLAMATION,

By His Excellency *Henry William Bentinck*, Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the Colonies of Demerara and Essequibo, and their Dependencies, Vice Admiral, &c. &c. &c. President, and the Honourable Court of Policy of the said Colonies :

UNTO whom these Presents shall come Greeting, Be it known :

WHEREAS Representations have been made to us, That numerous meetings of slaves are permitted to take place on the east coast of this colony, at late hours in the evening, which, although they are avowedly for religious purposes, yet being at unseasonable and improper hours, have been found productive of disorder, and, if continued to be allowed, may have the most dangerous tendency : We have therefore thought fit to enact, as it is hereby enacted, that from the date of the publication of these presents, no meeting or convocation of slaves shall be lawful, or permitted to take place after the hour of sun-set, for any purpose whatsoever, except only for the usual purposes of the estate or plantation to which such slaves shall belong. And we do hereby, in the strictest manner, forbid any proprietor, attorney, or manager of estates, to permit such meeting, under pain of the severest penalties of the law, directing the burgher officers of the different districts to use their authority to prevent the same, authorizing them, in case of resistance, to commit the person or persons so resisting or refusing to comply ; strictly conforming themselves to the instructions given them in the 24th article of the militia regulations.

Given under our ordinary sitting, held at the Court House, in Stabrock, this 2d day of May 1811, and published on the 25th of the same month.

(signed) H. W. BENTINCK.

By command of the Court,

(signed) *Alex<sup>r</sup> Timme*, Act<sup>s</sup> Dep. Sec.

N° 2.

Copy of a Despatch addressed to Governor *Bentinck* by the Earl of *Liverpool*; dated Downing-street, 15th October 1811.

Sir,

THE attention of His Majesty's government has been called to a Proclamation issued by you on the 25th of May last, respecting the attendance of negroes at places of public worship, which they have perused with great regret and dissatisfaction.

This Proclamation appears not only to prohibit the general attendance of persons of the description to which I have alluded, in chapels or houses of public resort in great towns or elsewhere, within the said hours, but even to prevent the assembly of the slaves of an estate, for the purpose of divine worship or instruction, in any house or building belonging to such estate, with the consent of the proprietor or overseer of that estate.

It must be obvious, that as the slaves are usually employed in daily labour from sun-rise to sun-set, a prohibition to them to assemble for the above purposes at any other time, must amount nearly to a prohibition of instruction altogether; and such a prohibition, when extended to the estates and territories of individuals, is absolutely inconsistent with those principles of toleration which must be considered in force in every colony or settlement subject to His Majesty's authority.

His Majesty's government feel no disposition, from any facts which have come within their knowledge, to look with jealousy and distrust upon the conduct of the missionaries; and they have yet seen no plan by which the benefits of religion can be extended to the inhabitants of some parts of the globe without their aid and assistance.

I have received therefore His Royal Highness the Prince Regent's commands, to desire that you will recal the Proclamation of the 25th May last.

If the police of the settlement shall require any regulations upon this subject, it must in the first place be understood that no limitation or restraint can be inferred upon the right of instruction and of preaching on particular estates, provided the meetings for this purpose take

take place upon the estate, and with the consent and approbation of the proprietor or overseer of such estate.

2dly. As it has been represented that on Sundays inconvenience might arise from confining the hours of meeting in chapels or places of general resort, to the period between sun-rise and sun-set, it may be proper, that on Sundays the power of assembling should be extended to certain hours of the day; viz. from five in the morning till nine at night; and on the other days of the week the slaves should be allowed to assemble for the purpose of instruction or divine worship between the hours of seven and nine at night on any neighbouring estate to that to which they belong, provided such assembly takes place with the permission of the owner, attorney or manager of the slaves, and of the owner, attorney or manager of the estate on which such assembly takes place.

3dly. To prevent any possible abuse, it may be advisable that all chapels and places destined for divine worship, of public resort, should be required to be registered; the names of the persons officiating in them should be made known to the Governor, and the doors of the places should be opened during the time of public service or instruction.

I am, &c.

(signed) LIVERPOOL.

### N° 3.

Copy of a Proclamation issued by Major-General *Carmichael*; dated 7th April 1812, recalling Proclamation 25th May 1811.

#### PROCLAMATION,

DEMERARA, (L. S.)—By Major-General *Hugh Lyle Carmichael*, Acting Governor of the Colonies of Demerara and Essequibo, &c. &c.

WHEREAS I have received instructions from his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to recal the Proclamation issued on the 25th of May 1811, and to give every aid to missionaries in the instruction of religion: the Proclamation of the above date is hereby recalled, and the following regulations will take place from this date.

1st. It is to be understood that no limitation or restraint can be enforced upon the right of instruction, on particular estates, provided the meetings for this purpose take place upon the estate, and with the consent and approbation of the proprietor and overseer of such estate.

2dly. As it has been represented that on Sundays inconvenience might arise from confining the hours of meeting in chapels, or places of general resort, between sun-rise and sun-set, the hours of assembling on that day shall be between five in the morning and nine at night; and on the other days the slaves shall be allowed to assemble for the purpose of instruction or divine worship between the hours of seven and nine at night, or any neighbouring estate to that to which they belong, provided that such assembly takes place with the permission of the overseer, attorney or manager of the slaves, and of the overseer, attorney or manager of the estate on which such assembly takes place.

3dly. All chapels and places destined for Divine worship, of public resort, shall be registered in the Colonial Secretary's office; and the names of persons officiating in them shall be made known to the Governor, and the doors of the places shall remain open during the time of public worship or instruction.

Given under my hand and seal at arms, at the Camp House, this 7th day of April 1812, and in the 52d year of his Majesty's reign.

(signed) *H. L. Carmichael.*

By command,

*John Carmichael*, Government Secretary.

God save the King!

### N° 4.

#### Memoranda:

THE annexed circular instructions to the burgher captains (magistrates) of the respective districts of the colony, were issued by General Murray on the 16th May 1823, (not on the second); and they enclosed, as will be seen, an extract from a despatch of Lord Liverpool, of the 15th October 1811, to Governor Bentinck; but I cannot discover that any proclamation was issued thereupon by the Governor.

19th September 1824.

(signed) *B. D'Urban.*

Copy of Major-General *Murray's* Circular Instructions to the Magistrates of the Colony of Demerara; dated the 16th May 1823.

Government Secretary's Office,

George Town, Demerara, 16th May 1823.

Sir,

I AM commanded by his Excellency the Lieutenant-governor to transmit to you the enclosed extract of a despatch, containing the instructions of His Majesty's government relative to the religious worship of the negroes on estates; and I am to request that you do, without loss of time, distribute to the proprietors or managers resident within your district, the accompanying copies thereof, with a view to their conveying the contents to the slaves under their charge.

His Excellency has directed the general circulation of these instructions throughout the colony, in consequence of his having become acquainted with the existence of a misconception of a very serious nature, which appears to prevail amongst the negroes in some districts, and more particularly on the estates on the east coast, leading them to consider the permission of their masters unnecessary to authorize their quitting the estate on Sundays, for the purpose of attending divine worship; a misconception of so injurious a tendency as to render the most active measures necessary, effectually to eradicate it.

You will therefore be pleased, at the same time that you make known to the inhabitants of your district the wish of his Excellency the Lieutenant-governor, that the accompanying instructions on this head should be complied with in every particular; to acquaint them that his Excellency, considering the beneficial consequences which cannot fail to result from the general and judicious extension of religious sentiments among the slaves, feels it a duty incumbent upon him strongly to recommend that nothing less than a very urgent necessity should induce the planters to refuse passes to such of their slaves as are disposed to attend divine worship every Sunday.

Aware of the possibility of abuses arising out of these indulgencies, His Excellency would recommend a system of prevention, as preferable to that of punishment after transgression; and he is of opinion, that any possible abuse might be effectually checked, were the slaves accompanied to the place of meeting by any overseer or other white person, which would be in other respects advantageous, by enabling the planter to judge of the doctrine held forth to his slaves.

You will further be pleased to make known to the slaves, that whilst His Excellency feels a strong disposition to encourage the propagation of religious knowledge among them, by every means sanctioned by the laws, he will be found equally determined in checking frivolous and ill-founded complaints on their part if persevered in.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

(signed) *John Murray, Gov. Sec.*

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Extract of a Despatch from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, bearing date Downing-street, 15th October 1811.

"IT must, in the first place, be understood that no limitation or restraint can be enforced upon the right of instruction and of preaching on particular estates; provided the meetings for this purpose take place upon the estate, and with the consent and approbation of the proprietor or overseer of such estate.

"Secondly, as it has been represented that on Sundays inconvenience might arise from confining the hours of meeting in chapels or places of general resort, to the period between sun-rise and sun-set; it may be proper, that on Sundays the power of assembling should be extended to certain hours of the day; viz. from five in the morning till nine at night; and on the other days of the week the slaves should be allowed to assemble for the purpose of instruction or divine worship between the hours of seven and nine at night, on any neighbouring estate to that to which they belong, provided such assembly takes place with the permission of the owner, attorney or manager of the slaves, and of the owner, attorney or manager of the estate on which such assembly takes place.

"Thirdly, to prevent any possible abuse, it may be advisable that all chapels and places destined for divine worship, of public resort, should be required to be registered; the names of the persons officiating in them should be made known to the Governor, and the doors of the places should be opened during the time of public service or instruction.

(signed) "LIVERPOOL."

"Governor Bentinck, &c. &c. &c."

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A true Extract,

(signed) *John Murray, Gov. Sec.*

13th May 1823.



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