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FURTHER PAPERS  
RELATING TO  
SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES;

(*Demerara and Berbice* :)

*VIZ.*

Further Return to an Address of The Honourable the House of Commons,  
dated the 13th of April 1824 ;—*for*

COPIES OF THE RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Of the FISCALS of *Demerara* and *Berbice*, in their capacity of Guardians and Protectors of the SLAVES; with their Decisions in all Cases of Complaint of Masters and Slaves, respectively, against each other; and the Punishments inflicted, or Redress given, in consequence of such Complaints ;—from the 1st January 1814 to this Time :

AS FAR AS THE SAME RELATE TO

BERBICE.

(In continuation of the Papers presented 23 June 1825; N° 476.)

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*  
19 *May* 1826.

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**EXTRACT OF A LETTER** addressed to Sir B. D'Urban by Mr. M. S. Bennett,  
Fiscal of Berbice ; dated Berbice, 21st January 1826 - - - - - p. 3.

**LETTER** to His Excellency Governor Beard from the Fiscal of Berbice, inclosing,  
Copies of **COMPLAINTS** of **SLAVES** made at the Fiscal's Office, from the  
Year 1819 to the end of 1823 - - - - - p. 4

## FURTHER PAPERS

RELATING TO

SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES.

(BERBICE.)

EXTRACT of a Letter addressed to Sir B. D'Urban, by Mr. M. S. Bennett,  
Fiscal of Berbice, dated Berbice, 21st January 1826.

**M**Y Lord Bathurst was pleased to desire His Excellency, Lieutenant Governor Beard, to direct me to forward, for the purpose of being laid before the House of Commons, Copies of the Complaints of Slaves made at my office from the year 1814 to date of his Lordship's despatch. I lost no time in obeying this order, as far as was in my power; with copies of said complaints in duplicate, I had the honor to address the following letter to the Lieutenant Governor.

It is with deep regret that I have perceived from many of the public prints in Great Britain, that garbled statements of some of these complaints have been made public, and from the inflammatory manner in which they are stated in the speeches at a meeting at Norfolk, cannot fail to excite indignation against the discharge of the duties of my office, as well as the most unfounded prejudice against individuals of respectability in this colony; together with some of the complaints of Slaves transmitted by me, are the refutations; but in all cases brought forward, such are carefully kept in the back ground.

In cases where I found there was foundation for complaint, I deemed it my duty to bring it before the Court of Criminal Justice, the supreme tribunal of the colony, where his Excellency presided, and when once removed there, the complaint and decision upon it became matter of public record, and consequently totally unnecessary to form any part of the private memorandums which, as I stated in my letter to the Lieutenant Governor, I merely kept for my own satisfaction, my office not forming one of public record, nor were the slightest memorandum handed to me of the proceedings of my predecessors. This, I hope, will account for the apparently imperfect state in which these complaints were transmitted.

In corroboration of these assertions, I now beg leave to hand your Excellency statements of the proceedings, and explanations on many cases quoted at the Norfolk meeting. In regard to the assertions of some of the Speakers at this meeting, that they had their information from the Fiscal, I positively declare, I never, directly or indirectly, held any correspondence or communication with the gentlemen in question; and as to the unfounded assertion, that negroes, coming to my office to complain, were generally flogged by way of redress, I hesitate not to say, is a malicious falsehood. I have for sixteen years discharged the duties of my office in a conscientious manner, consistent with my duty to my Sovereign; and I have great pleasure in stating, that in none of His Majesty's colonies are the Slaves better treated than in this; every facility is afforded them to prefer their complaints, and when they are founded, the records will show the exemplary manner in which transgressors are punished. It is unnecessary for me to observe

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to your Excellency, how much negroes are in the habit of exaggerating their complaints, and, indeed, how very often they are unfounded; nine times in ten they proceed from the most indolent and worthless negroes on the estates, and are generally contradicted by the better behaved negroes. I will only trespass further on your Excellency's time by observing, that when complaints are once transferred by me to the superior tribunals, I am no longer a judge in such cases, but merely the prosecutor; and as I deem it my duty, in cases of importance, to resort to this mode of proceeding, it will further account to your Excellency for my decisions not being noted in many cases.

(signed) *M. S. Bennett,*  
Fiscal of the Colony.

His Excellency Major-General Sir B. D'Urban, K.C.B.  
Lieutenant-Governor, &c. &c. &c.

Fiscal's Office, Berbice,  
February 1825.

Sir,

IN compliance with your Excellency's command, I have the honor of forwarding Copies of Complaints of Slaves made at my office, from the year 1819 to the end of 1823. It is with regret I am to state, that I have not been able to comply with your Excellency's direction, by forwarding copies of such complaints since the year 1814. The discretionary powers vested in the Fiscal of the colony, to decide summarily on complaints of Slaves, had been exercised by my predecessors in office, without keeping minutes of such examinations, and I continued that practice until the arrival of your Excellency in this colony as president in the year 1819; and on your recommendation I kept a book of minutes, but without recording my decisions on the same, unless in such cases as appeared necessary to be investigated before Commissioners, or the full Court of Criminal Justice (the decisions in which cases are deposited in the secretary's office of the colony). This book of minutes I considered merely as a matter of self satisfaction, without contemplating the probability of its ever being called for, and to this only, the circumstance of my omitting to insert the result of my decisions is to be attributed.

Since the application of your Excellency for Copies of Complaints of Slaves, I have been more particular in receiving the same, and I have added the decisions made by me on such complaints.

I have, &c.

*M. S. Bennett,*  
Fiscal.

To His Excellency Governor Beard,  
&c. &c. &c.

### INVESTIGATIONS.

INVESTIGATION of a Complaint preferred by Nine Negroes, the property of Mrs. J. Saunders, residing up the *Berbice* River, by his Honor the President and the honorable Member Mr. Helder. *Berbice*, 1st Feb. 1819.

EXAMINATION of *La Rose*:—*La Rose* states the cause of his complaining is, that the gang of negroes belonging to his mistress, are 1st, not sufficiently fed; they are not allowed more than six cakes of cassava weekly, which is inadequate to their support. On being asked, how then have you got so stout and well-looking, he said, they were assisted by the Indians with food. 2dly, That they receive no clothing (on inquiry, the gang had received a jacket and a hat a year ago), and it was nine weeks after new year that they received no allowance of salt fish. Fish is given to them only occasionally. They return from the Bush every Saturday evening; on the Sunday they get six cakes of cassava, and nothing else, and they return on the Sunday morning. No complaint of flogging.

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Negro *Klaas*:—They have no more than six cakes of cassava weekly; that they are supplied by the Indians with food, but that the Indians are now tired of supplying them; that they return from the Bush on Saturday evening; on Sunday morning they reap cassava until eleven o'clock, they then go and prepare fire-wood and carry plantain suckers from an old field to a new one, with which occupation the day is nearly spent, (three o'clock); that from the time of their master's death they have had clothing but once (Mr. Helder states Mr. Saunders died in 1814). *Klaas* produced a bolt and shackles, with which the negro women are often confined, the ancles and wrists crossways, by which they are bent double. He was twice confined in that way himself, by order of his mistress, for tying up shingles badly; he was so confined from evening till morning. They receive fish only on holidays, and tobacco and rum is given only on holidays also. He and three others, when Mr. Sterk was there, went to complain of hunger, and his mistress ordered them to be laid down to stakes, and flogged them with two drivers; he supposes he received sixty lashes.

Negro *Conraad*:—*Conraad* states, that he gets only six cakes of cassava a week, and having a wife belonging to his mistress, he gives her half of his allowance (three cakes); the women never get any allowance, only occasionally a small piece of fish; if they steal secretly any of the roots of the cassava, when they are preparing it, and detected, they are flogged, as was lately the case with my wife; that from being constantly worked in the Bush, and beaten by the heavy rains, they have represented their uncomfortable case and situation to their mistress, requiring rum, and other refreshments of good food; but always had for answer, she had nothing to give, and if they had any complaint to carry it to the Fiscal. It is a long time since they received clothing, only twice since the death of their master; mistress came to town a little after Christmas, and had the gang called up, and told them she could not get clothing for them. They are made to reap cassava, carry plantain suckers, and fetch fire-wood on Sunday morning, which occupies the greatest part of the day, as it is nearly dusk by the time they have sharpened their tools. He was confined in the shackles before and since his master's death; but that it is the common mode of punishment for the women.

Negro *Kees*:—*Kees* states, he only gets six cakes of cassava, out of which he gives three to his adopted mother; that he with Tom got flogged for complaining that they had not sufficient food, his two hands tied on the side of his neck, and flogged with bush rope, which breaking, he was flogged with a rope now produced, but making too much motion, was tied down and flogged with this rope. The women have no allowance, and when they complain or murmur, they are immediately fastened in the shackles; it is about two years since they had clothing. They are made to reap cassava, and get fire-wood every Sunday till late, the sun declining before the work is finished.

Negro *Lubin*:—*Lubin* states, that the negro men are only allowed six cakes of cassava; they get no fish or rum; mistress occasionally purchases fish, but not to give the negroes, but for the purchase of plantains; they get no clothing. Two years since they had any. The children and women get no allowance. If any of the negroes complain of hunger their hands are tied to their necks, and flogged with bush rope. The women are frequently confined in the shackles. No Sundays are allowed them; they are made to reap cassava, and fetch fire-wood every Sunday, until the greater part of the day is spent; they have repeatedly complained to their mistress for want of food, clothing, and other comforts, and were in hopes the grievances would be redressed by her, and therefore they complained no further, but finding themselves disappointed, they had at last come to town.

Negro *Tom*:—*Tom* states, he is not sufficiently fed or clothed, and flogged, as the others state, when any complaint is made to his mistress on the above subjects; that he only gets

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six cakes of cassava a week, and the last clothing the year before this. The women and children get no allowance; the former are constantly confined in shackles for not performing sufficient work, which they are not able to do for want of being fed. Sunday is not given them; they reap cassava and fetch fire-wood, which occupies them great part of the day.

*Negro Sam*:—Sam states, they have only six cakes of cassava for a week's allowance, and when they complain to their mistress of scanty allowance they are flogged. They get no clothing like other negroes; the women and children get no allowance; that the men share theirs with them, and look to the Indians for their support. The women are generally confined in the shackles, and the men made to work the greatest part of Sunday in digging cassava, and carrying plantain suckers and fire-wood; in 1817 they last had clothing.

*Negro William*:—William states, they only get six cakes of cassava a week; that his wife and children get no allowance whatever, that he is therefore obliged to give the greater part of his to them; if they complain to their mistress of this scanty allowance, they are flogged with bush rope and rope's end; that the women are confined in the shackles; they do not get clothing like other negroes; the last time they were supplied was in 1817. They got three ells salempores, a jacket and hat. No Sundays allowed to them; they must reap cassava, carry plantain suckers, and fetch fuel till late on that day. On being asked why he had not come to complain before, he said he hoped his situation would have been made more comfortable, particularly as their young master was expected out, but now that he is come, and finding themselves more neglected by their mistress than before, they could not bear it longer.

*Negro Adam*:—Adam states, he is driver, and had been deputed by the gang to represent to their mistress that they were not sufficiently fed or clothed; that his mistress, instead of affording redress, she directed him to be confined in the stocks; Tom and Kees then stepped forward to expostulate, and they were both flogged with a bush rope, Tom the most punished; he (Adam) was soon released from the stocks, and sent to the Bush. The men are made to reap cassava, carry plantain suckers and fuel every Sunday until a late hour; after this employment they have just time to sharpen their tools before it is dusk. The women and children get no allowance. Christmas is the last time we had rum or fish. He gets a dram weekly, on making a report of the work done in the Bush. The women are frequently confined in the shackles; the last one confined was Accessia the cook, about four or five weeks ago. A considerable time since they got clothing; in 1817 they got a jacket and hat, and three ells of salempores.

*Examination of Mrs. Sanders*:—States that her negroes get six cakes of cassava made from a basket full of the root; that the cakes are very thick, and the allowance now is the same as it was fourteen years ago; that each negro gets half a bottle of rum weekly, but when it is nearly expended, once a fortnight, they get salt fish weekly, or an allowance of salt. They have had no fish since new year, in consequence of her absence from home, and no one there whom she could entrust with the keys. Food is dressed every day for the children; no allowance is given to the four field women, in consequence of their allowing their allowance to be eaten by the hogs; the withdrawing of the allowance was previous to Mr. Sanders's death; that the negroes are clothed yearly with a jacket, hat, and three ells of salempores. The women have osnaburgs and a hat, but no jacket or blanket. The negroes are obliged to bring home a basket of cassava every Sunday morning, and fire-wood in the evening, that they have only to go to the field to fetch home; the cassava is brought home to be prepared for next week's allowance. The task can be done in half an hour; the bringing of the fuel on Sunday evening, because they prefer it.

INTERROGATORIES presented to the Honourable Commissaries of the Court of Criminal Justice, in a suit of inquiry instituted on a complaint preferred by nine negroes, the property of Mrs. Sanders, against their said mistress; the said interrogatories to be put unto Christiaan Philip Mackreel, overseer of Mrs. Sanders.

Art. 1.

Your name, age, religion, place of birth and occupation?—*Ans.* Christiaan Philip Mackreel, 42 years of age, protestant, Berbice, wood-cutter.

2.

Are you not employed by Mrs. Sanders to superintend her gang of wood-cutters in Upper Berbice?—*Ans.* Yes.

3.

What food, and what quantity, is given to the men, women and children, belonging to Mrs. Sanders, weekly, to your certain knowledge?—*Ans.* Cassava, a basket full each man; the women get no allowance: a pot is boiled at 11 o'clock every day, consisting of barley, rice or plantains; they are moreover always in the house with their mistress.

4.

Is the quantity of cassava served to the men gang sufficient for their week's allowance, or have you ever known them to complain of insufficiency of food?—*Ans.* The allowance given to the negroes is the same as was issued previous to Mr. Sanders's death; the negroes were always satisfied to appearance, and I can declare, that I never heard them complain of any short allowance, until Mrs. Sanders's late return from town.

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5.

On such complaint being made to Mrs. Sanders, have the grievances been redressed; or have two or more of the slaves not been punished for such representation; and if so, describe the manner, mode, and extent of punishment?—*Ans.* On their complaint being made, Mrs. Sanders said, I cannot give you more this week, as no more is prepared, but next week you shall have a cake more. The negroes were satisfied; but Kees being impertinent, he received thirty-nine stripes with a carracarra or bush rope; he was laid down and received them. The negro Tom was punished the same day. The driver Adam having complained to his mistress, that Tom had absented himself from work three days, his hands were tied round his neck, and he got ten with the carracarra; but making too much motion, his mistress desired him to be laid down, and received thirty-nine lashes with the carracarra. More than thirty-nine are never inflicted; I always count them myself.

6.

Do you not return with the men-gang every Saturday evening, from the Bush; what work is required of the negroes on Sundays; when do they commence, and when do they complete the same?—*Ans.* Yes; early in the morning they go to fetch their allowance from the field; the driver Andries, and four women, reap it on Sunday morning; they generally finish this at ten o'clock; sometimes, if they exert themselves, at nine o'clock; they then work on their own grounds. At five o'clock they return from their fields, each with a bundle of fire-wood.

7.

How long have you been in the employment of Mrs. Sanders; and what clothing has been given the men, women and children, during such period?—*Ans.* I am from Surinam; with Mr. Sanders about twenty-two years ago, and have always remained in his service; the men get every year, a jacket, a hat, and three ells of salempores. The women, four ells of osnaburghs, with a hat; next year, a blanket, a hat, and three ells of salempores; the house-women checks. This year's allowance is not yet issued, but was brought up by Mrs. Sanders.

8.

Is Mrs. Sanders not in the habit of causing her slaves, and the women in particular, to be confined in the shackles?—*Ans.* Mr. Sanders was in the habit of confining them in shackles, if the men did not do their task; but since his death, the shackles have been thrown aside, and are quite rusty.

9.

Was the woman Acissie not confined four or five weeks ago in said shackles; if so, do you know what fault she committed to deserve that punishment?—*Ans.* I am ready to declare on oath, that I never saw her so confined, or heard of it. The shackles were thrown into the river, and found there by one of the negroes, and brought out, and it has ever since remained in the hospital. The negro women are often confined in the stocks, but never in the shackles; and on returning from the Bush, I generally learn what punishment by confinement has taken place.

10.

Have you, or have you not seen other negroes, the property of Mrs. Sanders, confined in said shackles?—*Ans.* I have never seen or heard of any negro being so confined, since Mr. Sanders's death.

11.

Relate the several instances that you know, any of the negroes belonging to Mrs. Sanders having been confined in shackles?—*Ans.* I have never heard of any.

12.

Describe to the court the manner in which negroes are confined in shackles, belonging to Mr. Sanders, and now exhibited to you?—*Ans.* In Mr. Sanders's life-time I have seen them confine their ancles and wrists crossways, but in Mrs. Sanders's time I have never witnessed it.

13.

Did the driver, Adam, lately represent to Mrs. Sanders, that the negroes complained they had not sufficient food, and was he not confined in the stocks? and on what pretence? how long confined?—*Ans.* Yes, when the complaint was made of not having sufficient food, as was represented by Adam, the driver. He was not confined that Sunday; it was the Sunday before. Ten negroes brought home 100 bundles of shingles in a week, and he was confined for about half an hour, and no longer, but it was the Sunday previous to the complaint being made.

14.

What allowance of rum and fish is issued to the men, women and children? Is the fish not generally given by Mrs. Sanders to strange negroes for plaintains?—*Ans.* The driver gets a bottle of rum every week, each negro half a bottle of rum as long as there is any on the



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the estate ; it is seldom out ; the driver gets a fish, each of the men a half a fish if large, or a whole one if small ; I lay out the allowance myself. Mrs. Sanders purchases four bunches of plaintains weekly, which she pays a fish for ; the women get half a fish once a fortnight or three weeks.

15.

Are you ready to make oath to your replies?—*Ans.* Yes.

Berbice, 2d Feb. 1819.

(signed) *M. S. Bennett*, Fiscal, R. O.

The foregoing answers were repeated to respondent, who declared perfectly to understand the same, to persist thereby, and was willing, and did make solemn oath, that the answers so given by him were the truth and nothing but the truth.

(signed) *Henry Beard*, President.

(signed) *W<sup>m</sup> Helder*.

(signed) *C. P. Mackreel*.

### RESULT.

FROM the foregoing examinations it was proven by the evidence of the overseer, C. P. Mackreel, on oath, that Mrs. Sanders had not confined any of the negroes in shackles. The other charges appeared satisfactorily made out. The Fiscal was recommended to demand the penalties incurred by Mrs. Sanders, for non-compliance of the court's ordinance ; the following letter was addressed to her :

Extract from the Fiscal's Letter Book.

To Mrs. Sanders,

Fiscal's Office, Berbice, 2d Feb. 1819.

I take leave to inform you, that the complaint preferred by your negroes, has been this day investigated, before his honour the President, and the honorable member (Mr. Helder) of the court of criminal justice, and it appears the following grievances complained of are satisfactorily proved :—1st. That they are not sufficiently fed.—2d. That they are not clothed agreeable to the court's ordinance.—3d. That they were employed and made to work on Sundays ; for each of which offences you incur a penalty of five hundred guilders. His honor, the President, has authorised me to demand the several penalties herein stated, and in default of non-compliance on your part, to institute actions at law, for the recovery of the same. I therefore request your immediate attention to my application, to prevent further expense.

I have, &c.

(signed) *M. S. Bennett*, Fiscal.

The above fines, with the expense of investigation, f. 312, were duly paid.

ON the complaint of Mrs. Sanders's negroes, on the 18th of August 1820, the Fiscal can trace no minute of decision thereon, nor charge of expenses incurred for investigation. He would therefore conclude the complaint was groundless, and dismissed accordingly.

On the complaint of the 8th of September 1823, the Fiscal observes, Mr. Sanders was prohibited from resorting to similar mode of punishment under any pretext whatever ; the negro was returned to his mistress. The concluding part of Mr. Sanders's reply, viz. " David was punished by the boys under his feet with tamarind rods, on account of his back being cut up," does not imply that the negro's back was sore from any punishment he had received from Mrs. Sanders, but in order to shame David. There were weals apparent on his back, but the negro stated he had had them many years.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the negresses *Nelletje, Julie, Lea* and *Mietje*, each having infants in their arms, belonging to plantation Genderland, to the Fiscal, on the 11th of March 1819.

No time is allowed us to nurse our children, during the crop, an equal quantity of coffee is expected from us as other women having no children, or of the men. When weeding grass a similar task is given to us as to the rest of the gang, which we are not able to perform in consequence of our carrying our children on our backs ; in failing to do so we are beaten by the driver, l'Esperance, with the handle of his whip. *Nelletje* and *Mietje* were flogged the day before yesterday by the carpenter *La Fleur* ; they with others were weeding the dam ; they made a fire to drive away the sand-flies ; they were seen by Mr. Joel, the manager, suckling their children ; he inquired if they had no work to do ; they replied, they had taken up their children at that moment, as they were crying. They were laid down and flogged, their coats are stained with blood. Mr. Joel took the fire up and threw it in the trench. *Julie* was locked up in the stocks, because she did not keep up with the rest of the gang, and threatened to be flogged next morning. She is a young girl,

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girl, with her first child. Lea complains she is not allowed to suckle her child during her work; she was threatened to be flogged next day by Mr. Joel, at the same time with Julie.

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## RESULT.

THE Fiscal has a perfect recollection of having attended on plantation Gelderland in consequence of these complaints, which were greatly exaggerated. He examined the field work, and found that on such of the coffee beds as were weeded by women having children, there was on each such bed additional hands. The charge against the driver was strictly denied by him, of having struck or beaten them with the handle of his whip. The driver was most seriously admonished to refrain from ever attempting to do so. The two women appeared to have been flogged. Mr. Joel stated, he had repeatedly prohibited the making of fire in the fields; the spot where the fire was made, and alluded to in the foregoing complaint, was pointed out to the Fiscal, it was in the coffee field, and therefore likely to endanger the cultivation; this was the reason why they were flogged. The chief cause of dissatisfaction arose from a contention between the manager and the complainants; the manager insisted the children should be left under the charge of nurses; the women insisted on taking them on their backs to the fields. After hearing both managers and complainants, the Fiscal interposed his authority, directing that the children for the future be given in charge of careful nurses, and the complaint was therewith dismissed.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the negress *Jane*, the property of A. G. Bourmester, to the Fiscal, on the 11th of March 1819.

Jane states, Her master gave her to his housekeeper Grace, who is constantly abusing and ill-treating her; she is often in the habit of beating her with any thing that comes to hand, sometimes with a fire-stick, and sometimes with a piece of wood. On Monday morning she was sent by Grace to look for wood; when she returned she took a piece of crab-wood and beat her with it, and kicked her; her master was not at home; she got breakfast for her mistress and a gentleman (Mr. Hervey); after breakfast, she sent me for wood. I have just recovered from a fit of sickness, having had a blister on my belly, which was not yet well. I felt faint, and was under the necessity of sitting down to recover myself; when I came home with the wood it was about 11 o'clock; as soon as I returned she began to beat her and kick her. A boy belonging to Mr. De Geoje, named Alexander, saw when she beat me, and a girl named Sophie, belonging to Sur Austhran.

February 10th, 1826.

Mr. A. G. Bourmester having been required to attend at the Fiscal's office, and inquired of, if he had any remembrance of the result of this investigation, he having answered it in behalf of his housekeeper Grace, states, That he perfectly recollects the case to have been exaggerated, but not having been able to prove to the Fiscal's satisfaction, that the complaint of the negress, Jane, was unfounded, the fiscal had insisted on his paying a fine on behalf of his housekeeper, Grace, to which he had been under the necessity of submitting.

(signed) A. G. Bourmester.

(signed) M. S. Bennett, Fiscal.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the Negress *Minkie*, the property of Thomas C. Jones, to the Fiscal, on the 12th of February 1819, and examined before his Honor the President.

*Minkie* states, Mr. Jones took her out of the barracks on Tuesday. After I came home, he sent me to Mr. Henery, who would not buy me; he sent me to another gentleman; I do not know his name, but he lives in town. They both said my master asked too much for me, and sent me back; I begged for a pass to look for an owner; master said no, he would put me down, and cut my ———, and would give me more than the law. I was laid down and tied to three stakes, and Chance flogged me with a cart whip; got a severe flogging. Saw Mr. Layfield at this door, with another gentleman, and Mr. Kerschner, the baker, saw it from his window. Mr. Jones bought me from Mr. Logie, of Demerary. I have marks of severe punishment on me visible, old and recent flogging, all inflicted by Jones.

Re-examined on the 13th.

I was confined in the barracks on the 14th of November last past, by my master, Thomas C. Jones, on account of running away. I was sent to sell bread, and not having sold it, I ran away, fearful of punishment from Peggy, who does not like me. Peggy is housekeeper to Mr. Jones. I was absent only four or five days. My master took me out of the barracks last Tuesday afternoon; he said he would send me to Mr. Henery's store to sell me; I was sent there with Chance, with orders to him to bring me back if Henery did not buy me; I was not bought. Chance took me to another gentleman, whose name I do not know; his clerk said he was not there. I was taken home. I told my master I did not want to stop with him, but wanted to remain in the barracks until he sold me; he said, you want to stop in the barracks, do you? I will give you the barracks on your ———; I was laid

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laid down and tied to stakes, and he said he would flog me, and then sell me; I was severely flogged with the cart whip; Chance flogged me. Exhibits her posteriors, which are covered with a plaister by order of the doctor, and apparently lacerated to that degree, that the court judged it expedient to direct her not to uncover it. Says, Mr. Kerschner, the baker, was at his window when she was punished.

Examination of *W. F. Rudder*, assistant to Messrs. John and James Beresford, practitioners of physic:—He attended the woman Minkie yesterday, by order of Dr. James Beresford; perceived her posteriors to have been much lacerated; I applied a plaister to the parts, as had been directed the day before by Dr. John Beresford, in consequence of their being much inflamed. She appeared to have been much flogged formerly; fresh scars are very apparent, and evidently inflicted with the whip.

*Antho Kerschner* examined:—States, He knows nothing of the woman being flogged, but he heard the sound of the whip, and inquired of a white cooper, who lived with Mr. Layfield, why Mr. Layfield had been flogging one of his negroes? to which the cooper replied, it was not Mr. Layfield, it was Mr. Jones.

Examination of *Edward Hughes*, native of England, in the employ of Thomas F. Layfield, New Amsterdam:—States, He heard the sound of the whip, and in the evening overheard the negroes say it was a woman belonging to Mr. Jones, who had been flogged. I was in my shop at work, but neither witnessed the woman being flogged, nor did I see her afterwards. Mr. Kerschner inquired of me, which of Mr. Layfield's negroes had been flogged, and I replied, I heard it was one of Jones's,

Examination of *Thomas C. Jones*:—States, That he has owned Minkie for two years, during which period she has been absent one half of the time. I took her out of the barracks on Tuesday afternoon, and sent her to three persons who had applied to purchase her. On her return home, she was so extremely insolent, that I was under the necessity of flogging her, after telling her she would be flogged for her insolence; I was under the necessity of breaking her mouth, previous to my having her tied down. I had thirty-nine lashes laid on, and they were well laid down. When I sent for her I had no intention of flogging her, but after sending her to three different persons for sale, and not succeeding, I told her she had deserved a flogging; to this she replied, "you cannot flog me; I have been too long in the barracks; and if you flog me, it shall cost you plenty of money." I then directed her to be flogged, and that they should be well laid on, which was then done. I gave her thirty-nine; it was the first time she was ever flogged by me.

#### RESULT.

HIS honour the President, and the honourable member of the court, before whom this investigation was taken, were highly indignant at the treatment of this female. No evidence, however, could be obtained to convict the proprietor of having inflicted severer punishment than that prescribed by law. The Fiscal was recommended to pay strict attention to the conduct of said proprietor towards the complainant. The following letter was addressed to Thomas C. Jones.

Extract from the Fiscal's letter book.

Sir,

Berbice, 20th March 1819.

THE complaint preferred by the negress Minkie, your property, of having suffered severe and excessive punishment, has been investigated by his honour the President, and the honourable J. G. C. de Nienwerkerk, senior, member of the court of Criminal Justice. No sufficient evidence is obtained to warrant the institution of criminal proceedings against you on this charge. It is my duty to state, that the honorable gentlemen before whom this complaint has been investigated, are fully satisfied, that the unfortunate female slave Minkie, has been flogged in a most severe and cruel manner; to her sufferings, you thought proper to add (as appeared from your own confession) of breaking her mouth, in a most brutal manner. Your conduct calls for redress; but, unfortunately for the cause of humanity, sufficient evidence cannot be procured to inflict punishment on you. It is with the consent and approbation of his honor the President, that I do most seriously caution you, as to your future conduct towards this slave, as it will be my duty, as well as inclination, vigilantly to watch over your behaviour to her. You are desired to take her from the custody of the under-sheriff, on payment of the costs incurred of this inquiry.

I am, &c.

(signed)

*M. S. Bennett,*  
 Fiscal of the Colony.

To Thos. C. Jones.

The whole of this proceeding, with exception of the Fiscal's letter, was contained in the book of complaints delivered to the Lieutenant Governor.

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Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the Negro *Tommy*, belonging to Mr. Fraser, inquired into before his Honour H. Beard, President of the Courts of Justice, 9th February 1819.

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Complainant states, He is a cooper by trade, and employed as such by his master on Goldstone Hall. On Friday morning last he went to the boiling-house for nails; there saw another cooper, named George, heading up sugar; complainant went to one of the casks, and took a lump of sugar for the purpose of sweetening three gills of hot water; did not hide it, but proceeded with it from the boiling-house in his hand; was met by his master, Mr. Fraser, who inquired where he got the sugar; complainant informed him of his having taken it, and for what purpose; his master immediately ordered him to be laid down, and tied to stakes, put two drivers over him, and one hundred lashes was laid upon him. On inquiry how complainant knew that one hundred lashes had been inflicted, he said that persons standing by had counted them. Required to state the names of such persons; says, Barbara, Shaw, and Betsey counted them; the overseer lately come to the estate was present. After receiving this punishment, Mr. Fraser went to complainant's house and searched it; found in his tool chest a quantity of old nails, amongst them also a very few new ones. Mr. Fraser went to the trouble of weighing them; there were 14 lbs. Accounts for having these nails in his possession, by stating, that being employed by Mr. B. Jeffery to cooper some casks, he had, according to his custom, kept all the old nails; that on quitting Mr. Jeffery's, he had omitted to give the nails over, to the quantity so procured; he was also in the habit of putting up any old nails which passed through his hands at Goldstone Hall; he had no particular view in keeping these nails; some were occasionally used by him to repair his house, some in his work, when required; "and I trust, from the quantity found in my chest, which was frequently to the view of others, that it cannot be construed they were selected and reserved for sale." Complains, he is not sufficiently fed or clothed; has but one bunch of plantains a week; has belonged to Mr. Fraser about five years, during which period he has had clothing but twice; does not belong to Goldstone Hall, but to Mr. Fraser. Exhibits his posteriors; a few lashes appear, not more in appearance to sanction the supposition he had been flogged beyond the lash prescribed by law; on this being represented to complainant, he said, he had been favoured by the drivers, who threw their whips over him; names of drivers, Tommy and Acarra. Says, after being flogged, Mr. Fraser had his buttocks washed with brine, and ordered him to be locked up every night in the stocks; was confined Friday, Saturday night, and all Sunday.

Berbice Presidency, 10th February 1819.

Investigation Complaint of *Tommy*—continued.

Examination of *Samuel Willcox*, overseer on plantation Goldstone Hall, states:—The negro Tommy was flogged on Friday for stealing sugar. Tommy came to me, and asked for nails; I went with him to the store for them (the store is not in the boiling-house); after delivering the nails, and returning with him, I was met by another negro, who also asked for nails; I had, therefore, to return to the store. I learnt from Gift, a boy in the still-house, Tommy had gone into the boiling-house to Tommy the driver. Mr. Fraser met Tommy the cooper, and brought him to me with the sugar, and asked me if I knew any thing about it; I said no, but I supposed he must have got it out of the boiling-house during my absence; the sugar, I suppose, was about the quantity of half a pound, more or less. Mr. Fraser ordered the drivers Tommy and Acarra to flog cooper Tommy; he was tied down to stakes and flogged; to the best of my knowledge, he received forty-one lashes; I counted them; to the best of my knowledge, there were neither more nor less than forty-one. He appeared much cut. I have seen negroes flogged before, but never with so much severity. He was loosened, and went about his work immediately. Mr. Fraser then went, as I am informed, and searched Tommy's house, to see if he could find any thing else; I learnt this from the driver who went with Mr. Fraser. The drivers Tommy and Acarra returned with a box to the boiling-house door, from the cooper Tommy's house; I saw a napkin, having about a pound or two of sugar, and some nails, old and new ones, about 15 lbs. weight; I believe the old ones were the largest proportion. The coopers came daily for nails, and took as many as they deemed necessary for the work they had to perform. I never knew Tommy to be guilty of stealing nails; I have heard from the drivers, Tommy the cooper was not to be trusted. Mr. Fraser, in consequence of finding the nails, directed him to be confined in the stocks till Christmas; he was put in the stocks at night since the flogging. I believe he gets his allowance as the other negroes, and they are all well fed. During my residence upon the estate, he has conducted himself with propriety; the negroes do not speak well of him. The negroes are never allowed to take sugar out of the boiling-house; they get molasses almost every Sunday. I do not know whether he was confined in the stocks on Sunday last, or not. I believe I have not seen him on the estate since last Monday forenoon. I did not count the previous cracks of the whip; but the forty-one lashes, which I can correctly speak of, I counted as those which cut him on his bottom.

Examination of *William Fraser*, proprietor of plantation Goldstone Hall:—I was amongst the coopers on Friday last, at the stove holes, aback of the boiling house; I saw Tommy passing with something in his apron; I asked him, what have you got there Tommy?

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he replied, nails. I said, too much nails for you alone; he said it was for himself and another. I requested to see them; after some delay or hesitation on his part, I took hold of his apron, and looked into it, and found sugar and nails mixed together. I asked him, where he had got the sugar? he said, in the boiling-house. I asked him, who gave him the sugar? he said, he had taken it. I observed, do you not know, you are not allowed to go into the boiling-house to take sugar? you also know, if I found you out at such work, I would punish you; had you come and asked me for sugar, I would have given it to you; you also know, I never forgive lying or stealing, and therefore I must punish you. The overseer and driver were about the door; I directed the driver to flog him; and tied him to the stakes and flogged him; and in consequence of the fault he had committed, I gave him such a punishment as I, as owner of that slave, considered myself in duty bound to do; always bearing in mind the laws of the colony with respect, and I gave him thirty-nine lashes.

#### RESULT.

It appeared from the foregoing investigation, that the negro Tommy was guilty of taking sugar out of the boiling-house, an act reprehensible, and deserving of punishment. But it also appeared evident, from the testimony of Samuel Willcox, the overseer, that the proprietor, W. Fraser, had exceeded the law, by causing a severer punishment to be inflicted on the said negro Tommy than the law sanctioned; namely, two lashes. His Honor the President, recommended the Fiscal to apply for the penalty enacted by the court's publication, for this breach of ordinance, together with the costs of inquiry, and in the event of hesitation or refusal, on the part of the said William Fraser to pay the same, to institute an action for the recovery thereof. In consequence of this recommendation, the following letter was addressed to Mr. Fraser, proprietor of plantation Goldstone Hall.

Sir,

Fiscal's office, 10th February 1826.

The complaint preferred by your slave Tommy, of being punished excessively, has this day been investigated before his Honour the President, and the charge of receiving excess of punishment is corroborated by testimony of one of the overseers of plantation Goldstone Hall, present at the punishment of said slave, I have now to inform you, that you incur a penalty of three hundred guilders for breach of the first article of the ordinance of the Honourable Court of Criminal Justice of the colony, dated 14th November 1810; which penalty, with the costs of investigation, I demand be forthwith paid, to prevent the institution of proceedings at law for the recovery thereof.

I have, &c.

To Wm. Fraser, Esq.

(signed) *M. S. Bennett*, Fiscal.

The fine of three hundred guilders, together with the costs, amounting to *f.* 69, was consequently demanded, and afterwards received from Mr. Fraser,

Which I attest,

(signed) *M. S. Bennett*, Fiscal.

The whole of this proceeding, with the exception of the result, and Fiscal's letter, was contained in the book of complaints delivered to the Lieutenant Governor.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the negro Brutus, belonging to plantation Providence, against the manager, to the Fiscal, on the 26th June 1819.

Brutus states, he is watchman of the plantation walk. The manager told him he was to take two negroes and a little boy, all of whom had yaws, into his house. Complainant objected to do so, in consequence of his never having had that disease, he therefore slept some nights in the open air, and built himself a small hut in the plantain walk, and covered it with dry leaves. Manager observed it, and said, come here, I will show you where to make a house on the road; he put up a stick to show me where the spot should be; he told me to make the yaws negroes dig and drain near the spot; the negroes said, they could not work in consequence of their being covered with that malady. I told this to the manager; he said lick them; I said, if I flog them with my whip and hold it, I shall catch the yaws also; I am afraid of it. The manager wants my daughter Peggy; I said no; he asked me three times; I said no; he kept the wife of Rule, and after having her a few nights, left her, therefore I refused. Manager asked me Friday night; I refused, and on Saturday morning he flogged me; it is not for my work; this thing hurt me, and I came to complain.

Direct attendance of Peggy. Peggy being sick, Acquasiba, her sister, attended; states, that manager sent aunt Grace to call Peggy, and to say if Peggy would not come, I must; we said, daddy said we must not, I was too young; Grace left us and went to daddy, shortly afterwards she returned, and tried to coax me to go, but I would not, as my daddy had forbid it. Grace went and told the manager. The manager sent to call Fanny. Fanny went up and found him in his room, and all of us (the creoles) got orders to be watchmen at his door; I was watchman, Peggy, Fanny, and many more.

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The manager, Robert M'Dermott, positively denied having flogged Brutus on any other account, than for neglect of duty; there was no appearance of punishment to induce the Fiscal to suppose he had received beyond a few lashes. The Fiscal had a long conference with H. Bethune, the attorney of Mr. Henery, (at this time in London); this gentleman assured him he had been on the estate, and had used every endeavour to discover if Brutus had received punishment on account of his having refused his daughter to the manager, but had failed; and on his, the attorney's assurance, that if this charge could have been brought home, he would have instantly discharged him from the estate. The Fiscal forbore inquiry, after admonishing the manager on his conduct.

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Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the negroes *Avanture, Sam, Wilhelmina, Avanture, Betje*, and the children *Ordinance* and *Anna*, the property of Robert Elwes, to the Fiscal, on the 8th of April 1819.

Negro *Avanture* states, That his master ill treats his children, and principally that his housekeeper, Fanny, is always severe against him; that Mr. Elwes never gave any allowance to his children, and that when the mother carries them rice or any thing else, Fanny, the housekeeper, throws it away. That he, the complainant, gets only one bunch of plantains a week, and a small piece of salt fish; that he is also obliged to work, as well as the other negroes on a Sunday, till four o'clock, p. m. That since his master bought him he never had a Sunday for himself, and that generally they are treated very bad; that on holidays they are obliged to attend to their work more or less.

Negro *Sam* states, That he only gets one bunch of plantains, and a small piece of fish a week; that he is obliged to work every Sunday till four o'clock, p. m.; that even during the last holidays, he was obliged to be out upon his master's business; that in cases of sickness, no attention is paid to them.

Negress *Wilhelmina* states, She is the mother of the girls, *Betje, Anne*, and of the boy *Ordinance*, and that her daughter *Phillipentje* remained upon the estate; that all these children are in the service of the house; that her master, but particularly Fanny (a slave), his house-keeper, treats her children very bad; that when one of them is sick, and she brings something for her child to eat, the same is thrown away under great abuse from Fanny. That the children never get any allowance of food, or any clothes, (they being naked, with the exception of a small piece of cloth for decency sake); the one girl is between eleven and twelve years, and the other, eight or nine years. That their master, as well as Fanny, are continually beating them with bush rope, of which the children exhibit the marks. That Fanny cut her child *Betje* with a knife on her finger, by her flying into a passion, on account that the knives were not cleaned so quick as was ordered. That she is worked every Sunday till four o'clock, after which, she and the other negroes are obliged to cut grass for the horse, and procure fire-wood for their master's kitchen; that she gets only one bunch of plantains, and a very small piece of salt fish a week, as her allowance; that she has but once received  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of checks, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of osnaburgs, and nothing for her children; that a few days ago, the girl *Betje* was ordered by her master to take the dung away near the bridge, for which purpose she took something to remove it, but was ordered to remove the dirt with her own hands. That in case of sickness of herself or children, their master cares very little about them; that the boy, *Ordinance*, lingers very much, occasioned by constant bad usage, and that his master don't like them.

Negro *Avanture* alias *Quamino*, states, That he is eight or ten years of age, that he is a house-boy. That Fanny sends him early in the morning to milk the goats; that in case he does not do this quick enough, she comes out and beats him, also his master, pulling him often in a cruel manner by the ears and nose; that he gets no regular allowance of provisions, but lives only upon what he can get. That he minds the horse, cleans his shoes, turns the coffee, and more of like work; that his master never gives any clothes; and when sick, after taking salts, he is obliged to perform the same task.

N. B. The other complainants being present at this examination, say that they are forced to work after taking physic; finally, the complainants prove by many old marks on their back and posteriors, that their statement is not at all incorrect, and that they have been severely dealt with.

Sir,

Berbice, 17th April 1819.

I have the honor to report, for your information, that I attended on plantation *Zelden Rust*, for the purpose of investigating the complaint of the negroes, *Avanture, Sam, Wilhelmina, Avanture, Betje*, and two children, belonging to Mr. Elwes, the present proprietor of said plantation, and found the complaint of their working on Sundays corroborated by all the negroes on the estate. The negroes appeared healthy and well cared; but they were very much dissatisfied with the conduct of the negro woman Fanny (a slave of the property), a favourite house servant of the proprietor's. The negroes also complained of being flogged with carracarras, and produced a bundle of them, which were kept in readiness for service when required. The manager and proprietor, Mr. Elwes, admitted that they were occasionally employed on Sundays, until eleven o'clock, but solely to work in their own grounds. I therefore prohibited him from insisting on their doing any work on

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Sundays (save such as stated in court's ordinance), unless it was in land given them as their own, the produce of which, to be considered as their exclusive right, and by no means to assist towards the maintenance of the slaves. I also prohibited the further use of the carracarra in presence of the gang; and directed, if these, my orders, were not punctually obeyed, that they should cause the same to be represented to the nearest burgher officer, whom I should request to attend to their representation,

I have, &c.

To His Honour H. Beard,  
 President.

(signed) *M. S. Bennett,*  
 Fiscal.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the Negroes *Brutus, Goodluck, and Ambrose*, belonging to Plantation Cotton Tree, the property of W. Katz, Esq. to the Fiscal, on the 22d May 1819.

That they are not allowed time for breakfast, that they sleep in the field, that they work in the field till the gun fire, and then have to cut grass, and they go to the field at cock crow; that they are confined to the stocks, and not allowed to go out, even for the common calls of nature; that they went to their master, Mr. Katz, to complain, and he flogged them; the plantains given them for allowance rot in the house, not having time to eat them. Inquired what work they do at eight o'clock at night? Replied, cut canes.

Mr. *W. W. Kernan*, (the manager of the Cotton Tree Estate), being in attendance, denies the charges preferred. Declares that the negroes are allowed from eleven to one every day, to get their breakfast; that they are turned out between five and six, just at day-break, and turn in at dusk in the evening; after which they cut or bring the grass, which, according to the general custom of negroes, they cut at noon; that the Cotton Tree Estate is in sugar; that whenever they cut canes, the tops are brought home instead of grass. Denies the charge of cutting canes until eight o'clock, as very improbable; firstly, from danger of the negroes cutting themselves; and secondly, from the fear of cutting a field of canes improperly. He states that Goodluck and Ambrose having ran away about three weeks ago, and on being taken up, they were confined in the stocks at night; and is positive that they never were confined in the day, as that would be a loss of labour, and no punishment to an idle negro. Brutus was placed watchman over them, and the three have been absent from the estate since Tuesday evening, to the best of my recollection. Refers himself to the overseers on the estate for proof of the above assertions, and to Mr. Katz, as proprietor, who frequently visits the estate, and would not sanction any oppression of his slaves.

The negroes being admitted, and inquired of, when they absented themselves from the estate, Brutus says, they left the estate in the evening, and went to N° 2, took a small punt, and came over in the night. Goodluck prevaricates, saying that they took the small punt from N° 2, but the tide turning against them at breakfast time, they got to the mouth of Canje, and remained there all day; they intended going to their master, but being afraid, they did not go; they slept in the punt all night, and came to the Fiscal's next morning, say yesterday, Friday morning.

The charge preferred by the negroes being contradicted by the manager, and the negroes prevaricating as to the time of quitting the estate, I directed the attendance of the overseer of Cotton Tree; and he having attended, about two o'clock, on Saturday the 22d, gave the following information, declaring himself ready to affirm the same on solemn oath.

*Thomas Kelly*, overseer on Cotton Tree, declares that the negroes are turned out between five and six o'clock, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past five the bell rings, at eleven to turn in, and at one to turn out; that he has known some of the negroes to work at breakfast time, by order of the driver. That the manager has in his presence reprimanded the driver for doing so, and on one occasion punished him. That he never knew the negroes to work after dusk. That two of the complainants were ordered to be locked up every night for three weeks, for running away twice; that neither of them were locked up during the day, to his knowledge, for the above crime; they could not have been confined without his knowledge, he being field overseer; that he read the list of negroes to throw grass on Tuesday evening last; that Brutus on this occasion not bringing grass, he inquired the cause of such neglect, and was informed he was employed in confining Goodluck and Ambrose in the stocks. That some time after, but on the same evening, the driver came and reported Brutus, Goodluck and Ambrose, had absconded themselves, which he (overseer) communicated to the manager.

The complaint of the negroes appeared unfounded, for which, and for absenting themselves from Tuesday evening till Friday morning, the Fiscal directed each to receive 75 lashes, which were inflicted on Monday morning, the 24th instant.

Sir,

Berbice, 24th May, 1819.

I HAVE maturely investigated the complaint preferred by three of your negroes, attached to plantation Cotton Tree, against their manager, Mr. Kernan, and having found their complaint without foundation, I have deemed it my duty to order the said three slaves  
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to be exemplarily punished at the public market place, which was done this morning in my presence. I have endeavoured, and I hope succeeded, in impressing on their minds, that as much as it is my duty to attend to any complaint of negroes, and to cause redress in all cases of oppression, so also it is my duty to inflict punishment on slaves who prefer false and ungrounded complaints against their employers; and I have moreover pointed out the duty incumbent on a slave in the event of supposed grievance, to represent the same to the proprietor, their master, previous to the immediate application to my office. I feel a pleasure in stating, that I have every reason to believe that the punishment inflicted on them has been deserved. In returning them to plantation Cotton Tree, I flatter myself it will be unnecessary for me to state, that the manager is to receive them again in favour, resting satisfied, that the punishment inflicted by me has been in proportion to the offence committed.

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I have, &amp;c.

(signed) *M. S. Bennett,*

To W. Katz, Esq.

The Fiscal of the Colony.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the Negroes *Nelson, Milton, Simon, Ned, Cupid, Trim, and Jack*, belonging to Plantation Rosehall, to the Fiscal, on 27th May 1819.

Negro *Nelson* :—The deponent, speaking for all the complainants, states as follows:—That they were all engaged by the manager to gin cotton for himself on their Sundays, for which he promised each f.3 a day; after working three Sundays, and receiving no payment, they declined to continue with their work; on demanding the payment, the manager called the driver, and gave them d— good payment: That they only got this year for their allowance, each a small blue salemores cap, a jacket, a blanket, and a hat; and that N<sup>o</sup> 1, the estate belonging to the same proprietor, had checks and osnaburghs added to their allowance; he, the deponent, stating, that all this had been on the estate for their use too; but that the manager disposed of it for his private use and benefit: That they are obliged to bring, every evening, an uncommon large sized bundle of grass (the measure whereof the deponent deposited herewith), and that when the measure is not full, they are obliged in the dark to look for more grass; that in telling his master the hardship of their case, he flew into such a passion, that he broke one of his teeth; that on coming in the negro-houses at night after work, and inquiring after their things, the manager, when hearing this, takes them up directly, and lodges them in the stocks, adding further, that in case they are not satisfied with him, they may go and complain where they please.

Sir,

Berbice, 27th May 1819.

I beg leave to inclose you, copy of a complaint preferred by seven negroes attached to plantation Rose Hall, against their manager. Mr. John Cameron, part proprietor of the said property, informs me, that he has received a letter from the manager, Mr. Sutherland, stating, that one or two of the complainants have received a few lashes, which he suspects to be the occasion of their quitting the property; and the driver of the estate, who is present in town, denies any knowledge of the cause of their coming to complain. As it is probable the complaint is unfounded, and that the detention of the negroes, and the attendance of the manager in town may be attended with inconvenience to the estate, I have to solicit you to visit plantation Rose Hall, and investigate the complaint; and if the grievance does exist, afford redress, or if unfounded, direct such punishment as the case may appear to require.

To J. G. C. de Nieuwerkerk,  
Burgher Militia.

I am, &amp;c.

(signed) *M. S. Bennett, Fiscal.*

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the Negress *Roosje*, attached to Plantation L'Esperance, to the Fiscal, on the 10th of June 1819.

*Roosje* states, She was sent to pick coffee in the logie, by order of the manager; she represented to him she was too big (far advanced in pregnancy) to stoop. Manager directed her to comply with the order; she went and picked coffee on her knees. "Note," the picking here alluded to is not in the fields, but sorting of the cured beans in the logie, preparatory to its being shipped. At eleven o'clock our work was examined, and the manager directed the driver, Sondag, to flog us; it was done with the whip doubled. When Sondag, the driver came to me, he said to the manager, this woman is rather big with child; the manager replied, give it to her till the blood flies out. I WAS FLOGGED WITH CARRA-CARRAS. This happened on Friday; I went to the field on Saturday; I told the driver I would not work as I had pains in my loins; he directed me to go to the manager. I did go, and was sent to the hospital; remained there a day, the doctor examined me, and said there was nothing the matter with me, sitting down was not good. I went to the field, was put upon a row with another to help me; on Sunday evening I miscarried; I was five months gone with child; the labour was heavy; the midwife had to force the child from me; the child was dead, one eye was out, the arm broken, and a stripe visible over the head,



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head, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN DONE BY THE WHIP DOUBLED. The doctor came to attend me on Monday morning; the child was not seen by him, it was buried; he prescribed for me; the child was seen by Ariaantje, Claartje, Mary Anne; I was assisted by sister Claartje; the regular midwife, Mary Anne, did not attend me, as I was taken suddenly; she was sent for, however, and saw the child.

Evidence of *J. H. Eenhuys*, assistant surgeon to Dr. Westerveld, practitioner and medical attendant of plantation L'Esperance, states, That he visited the woman Roosje early in the morning of the 14th March; she informed me she had miscarried the evening before; I examined and prescribed for her. A few days previous to this occurrence, I saw Roosje in the sick house, she was complaining and pregnant. I thought between three and four months gone with child. I experience that many women miscarry from not taking exercise, and contracting lazy habits; thinking this was the case with her, I directed her to take exercise. I did not see the child; I believe it was buried. I inquired if she had been delivered of the after-birth, and being informed by the midwife and old woman she had, I directed something for Roosje and went away.

Evidence of *Zondag*, driver of plantation L'Esperance, states, That the women were put to pick coffee, a certain quantity was required, which was not got. The overseer told me, by order of Mr. Grade, the manager, I was to range the women out on the plankier, and told me to begin and flog them from one to another; I began, and went on till I came to the woman Roosje, I gave them about 12 or 13 stripes with the whip doubled; on coming to Roosje, I observed to the manager this woman was pregnant; the manager said, go, that was not my business; I did so; she did not get more than the rest; I did not flog her with a carracarra, it had broken before I came to her; she received her punishment with the whip doubled. She miscarried a few nights after this punishment took place; it was inflicted at breakfast time, at eleven o'clock; I did not see the child, Claartje told me the child was in ——. The question being put to him, "Whether the manager on his (driver's) representation, that Roosje was pregnant, he had made use of the words, *never mind, flog her till the blood comes;*" he replied, yes, he did.

Evidence of Jonas, Mary Anne, Ariaantje, George, and Claartje, all belonging to L'Esperance, having been heard, and corroborating the circumstances in the statement made by Roosje, the Fiscal deemed it his duty to bring the complaint before the honorable court of Criminal Justice, and after collecting before the honorable commissioners of Criminal Justice, all the evidence and information that could be obtained; he (the Fiscal) filed his criminal demand against C. J. Grade, which, with the honorable court's sentence in the above cause, is hereunto attached.

#### Complaint of *Amsterdam* and *Murphy*, Plantation Philadelphia.

IN reference to the complaint of the above negroes, the Fiscal observes, the former negro did not belong to Mr. Katz, but to the proprietor of a task-gang, at the time of his complaint employed by Mr. Katz, on his estate Philadelphia, to relieve the gang of that estate from laborious work. Murphy's conduct was represented by the manager of the estate to have been mutinous, which statement was corroborated by witnesses. He, Murphy, was therefore punished with fifty lashes, and worked in chains attached to his ankle for three months, on the authority of the Fiscal, as appears from a note made in the book of complaints, delivered to his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor.

*Peter M'Culloch* overseer on plantation Philadelphia, saith, That on the night of Saturday the 2d instant, he was awakened by a noise in the negro houses, resembling the beating of drums or tambourines; that I then, in company with the other overseer, immediately proceeded to the house from whence the noise issued, where I there found assembled a number of negroes, which I verily believe were engaged in dancing; but the greater number of them escaped by a back door; but that a negro named Murphy, sat unconcerned in the house, as if no dance had taken place. That on Sunday morning, the manager of the property gave directions to put the said Murphy, together with the other negroes assembled at the dance, in confinement; he became outrageous, and swore, by *J—s Ch—t*, that he would not be put in confinement; and also swore, that if a white man dare trouble or lay a hand upon him, he would know what to do with him; but that after some persuasion of the drivers who had him in charge, he permitted himself to be confined in the hospital, where he told me, with great vehemence, and striking his breast, "that before two months expired, I would not be on the property."

That in the forenoon of the following Monday, I, in company with the manager, and the other overseer, had him removed to another apartment in the hospital; that he then again became outrageous and mutinous, and seized a cutlass, which he brandished with great violence, and which, I verily believe, he intended to do the manager, the other overseer, or myself, some serious bodily injury, had he not been immediately overpowered and put in the stocks, where he harangued the negroes to stand out against the orders issued to put him in confinement; and also said, that he would make blood stream down from the stocks to the hospital door. That from making use of such language, I solemnly declare, that I considered my life in danger, while he remained on the estate; that he that night broke out of the place of confinement, and made his escape.

Plantation Philadelphia,  
 12th August 1823.

(signed) *Peter M'Culloch.*

*Francis Macdonald*, overseer on plantation Philadelphia, saith, That on the night of Saturday the 2d instant, I was awakened by a noise in the negro houses, resembling the beating of drums or tambourines; that I then, in company with the other overseer, immediately proceeded to the house from whence the noise issued, where I found assembled a number of negroes, which I verily believe were engaged in dancing, but the greater number escaped by a back door; but that a negro named Murphy, sat unconcerned in the house, as if no dance had taken place; and on the following morning, the manager of the property gave directions to put the said negro, Murphy, together with the other negroes assembled at the dance, in confinement; that upon such orders being issued, he became riotous, and made great resistance with the other overseer, but that afterwards he was put in confinement in the hospital, with the other negroes. That on the forenoon of the following Monday, I, in company with the manager and the other overseer, had him removed to another apartment in the hospital, considering him a dangerous person to remain with the other negroes; that he then again became outrageous and mutinous, and seized a cutlass, which he brandished with great violence, and with which, I verily believe, from his extreme violence, he intended to do the manager, the other overseer, or myself, some serious bodily injury, had he not been immediately overpowered and put in the stocks; and he afterwards said, that he would make blood stream down from the stocks; that from his extreme violence, and the expressions he made use of, I solemnly declare, that I considered my life in danger, while he remained on the estate; that he that night broke out of the place of confinement, and made his escape.

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Philadelphia, 12 August 1823.

(signed) *F. Macdonald*.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the Negress *Laura*, belonging to a  
Plantation, N° 6, Cange Creek.

Complainant, with a child at her breast, says the master, meaning the manager, does not allow her to nurse her child in a proper manner; that she is not allowed the liberty to take her child (a very young one) to the field, to give it now and then the breast, but is obliged to leave it with an old woman at home; that when she steals from her work to go to her child, and the manager or overseer discovers her, they punish her directly; that once the driver assisted her in going to her child, for which he was punished and locked up in the stocks. Says, to have brought this child with great pain into life, it being of a weak constitution, requires of course maternal attendance; and as she is not allowed to provide fully for the same, she requests therefore assistance in obtaining this natural favour.

*Richard White*, manager of plantation, N° 6, or Reliance, having been required to attend, to answer to this complaint, he stated, When he was first appointed manager of the estate, it was his intention to erect huts in the fields for the women suckling their children; but this was objected to by Messrs. Menwerherk and Cameron, the proprietors, who directed the children should be placed with nurses. There are four nurses to attend the children. The women with young children are allowed to remain in till half past six o'clock in the morning; they come from the field at half past ten o'clock, go to the field at half past one o'clock, and return at half past five, but which hours are not attended to in turning out; denies the driver ever to have been punished as stated; says that his attention to children is proved, from the circumstance of twelve children having been raised in two years on this estate.

*Note on the above.*—There can be no doubt on the Fiscal's mind, that he disapproved of the complaint of *Laura*; the number of nurses on the estate, the time allowed for nursing and caring of children, he deemed sufficient. On complaints similar to this, the Fiscal on all occasions recommends every possible lenity and accommodation to be shown to women in a state of pregnancy or nursing children.

*Philip and Leander*; Plantation Bestendigheid :—The complaint of these negroes was fully investigated. The number of hogs on the estate became so great, and the damage sustained so considerable, that the attorney thought proper to direct the manager to inform the negroes, that the hogs were not only to be kept up, but that it would be desirable to dispose of the greater number of them; this having no effect, the attorney directed the manager to call up the gang before the door, and acquaint them that he insisted on the above orders being enforced; but this proved equally ineffectual. The attorney therefore called up the gang, reprimanded the owners of hogs for their disrespect to his orders, pointed out the injury sustained by the estate, called to their recollection the few that were kept by him or the manager for their own use, were kept penned up; and then directed the manager to give them a certain time to dispose of their hogs; and in the event of their continuing to disobey, he directed, as many as were found at large should be shot. The time was fully sufficient to enable the negroes to dispose of them; but the complainants failed doing so, and that although they were cautioned in the mean time to observe the order, they still failed; the consequence was, that their hogs were killed, as many as were found at large. It appeared further, that these two men, when they found the overseer and driver beginning to kill the hogs, they were then wishful of collecting them, they were however killed. The Fiscal regretted that the manager considered it necessary to kill the hogs; he was however fully satisfied that sufficient warning had been given them to put them away; he was also sensible of the great mischief sustained from hogs.

On the complaint made by the negress *Jenny*, and her son *Philip*, for severe and cruel punishment inflicted on them by their mistress, *Eliza Ann Sanders*, the Fiscal deemed

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it his duty to prosecute the said complaint before the honourable Court of Criminal Justice; his criminal demand and conclusion having been filed, the honorable Court decreed the sentence hereunto annexed.

The negro *Donderdag*, belonging to the plantation Nieuw Hoop, the property of Mr. Calmer, who stated to have complained thrice, and to have been twice flogged in the market by the Fiscal, is a notorious bad character. The complaints against him by his fellow slaves, for continually stealing their poultry, provisions, &c. were so frequent, as also that of the proprietor against him, for running away, after committing the above thefts, that the Fiscal deemed it necessary that he should be worked in chains twice, once on the public works in town, and once on the estate.

The complaints made by the negroes of plantation Resolutie, the property of Major-General Murray, against John Hopkins, the manager, were found in many instances to be greatly exaggerated. On the complaint of the woman being represented to Mr. John Murray, the attorney of the estate, he immediately dismissed Mr. Hopkins, the manager.

The complaint of the negress belonging to plantation Prospect, under the attorneyship of William Ross, is stated at length in the pamphlet. It is evident, that the only work on Sunday was throwing of wood and grass at night; the quantity of each is but trifling. Mr. Ross nevertheless directed this work to be discontinued immediately, and the negroes appeared perfectly satisfied with the assurance of the manager, that the order would be obeyed.

The complaint of the negroes of plantation Culcairn, the property of William Ross, against the manager, is also fully stated in the pamphlet. Captain Grant did investigate this complaint, and found the same so unfounded that he deemed it necessary to punish them. The Fiscal, in his letter to Captain Grant, recommended that Mr. Austin should accompany him, not for the purpose of investigating the merits of the case, but as Captain Grant was not a sugar planter, and Mr. Austin was one of experience, the Fiscal deemed it necessary, that in inspecting and examining the work on the estate, Captain Grant should have some one to whom he could apply to for information and advice, independent of the manager of the property, against whom the complaint was made, and who of course would have represented things most favourable to himself.

Answer of Mr. Spangenburg to the complaint of Samuel.

The dancing of slaves on Christmas commenced on the evening of the 24th, and concluded on that of the evening of the 26th, according to law; the day after the 27th is a working day. I gave them no task, but set them about light work round the buildings. On the 28th I gave the negroes their regular task, which they did not finish; on the 29th I gave them a new task, and told them it was to be finished. I then left the estate. On the morning of the 30th returned early, overlooked the work, found it not finished. Samuel received 25 lashes; that was all the punishment he received; that evening he went off to complain.

Complainant says, the negroes are over-worked. In reply, I have to state, that I never could get them, when cleaning coffee trees, to finish more than 60 trees; the usual task on other estates is from 90 to 100 trees. In making heaps of cassava for their own use they would only make 40 heaps a day, which is scarcely more than one-third of what they could do. In planting plantains, although the suckers were brought to the spot, I could never get more than 30 planted. With respect to the complaint of not being well fed, I was purchasing plantains from *Standvastigheid*, and I get a full allowance for the negroes, as will appear from the account with that estate. The merchants accounts will also show that they are well supplied with fish and tobacco; I did not give them clothing at Christmas, for this reason; if I had purchased them at that time they would have swelled up the year's accounts considerably, and as the merchants expected to be paid early in the year, and I was only a new beginner, I did not wish to involve myself. The negroes are perfectly aware that their clothing was already bespoke, and that they are to receive it at the Easter holidays. Samuel is acting as driver; he is actually receiving double allowance at the time of his complaint. When sick I nurse them myself, and feed them from my own table; during three years I have only lost one child, and I attribute the loss of it to my absence in town, when confined from illness. Samuel is present, and if he can deny any thing I have stated, I will thank you to direct him to do so. This is the first time that I ever punished him; he is a good negro, but much given to drunkenness. I was very nearly losing him some time ago; he was in a corical with some of his comrades; when he came opposite to my place he would not go out, and they, supposing he would swim ashore, threw him in the river; had not the negro Junius been near at hand, he would have been drowned.

Investigation of a Complaint preferred by the negro *Scipio*, belonging to plantation Friends, to the Fiscal, on the 10th February, 1819.

*Scipio* states, he complained last Saturday to the manager, that he was sick; the manager sent him to plant corn; Sunday morning complainant went to manager's door. The manager drove him from the door, saying if he came again, he would have him tied and flogged. Monday, he was sent to the plantain walk aback, but not being able to work from pain in his knee joints, he complained to the driver, La Rose, who said he could not help it, I must go to the manager; I was afraid to do so, in consequence of the threat yesterday, I therefore went to my work, but was backward; this was perceived by the overseer;

seer; he ordered the driver to give me eight lashes, which he did, with further order, if I did not keep up with the other negroes, to flog me again. The driver, La Rose, a little time afterwards, gave me two stripes with a carrarra. I desired him to examine my knees, and he would see I could not work. He replied, I cannot help it, it is the orders of the manager and overseer. About ten o'clock that day, I made my escape, and got as far as Bellevue, where I slept, and came to town yesterday afternoon to complain.

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12th February.

Examination of *W<sup>m</sup> Forsyth*, manager of plantation Friends :—States, That the negro Scipio came to complain on Thursday of pain in his knees; I gave him a dose of salts, and on Friday he returned to his work; on Saturday, he told me he had run a nail in his foot; I examined it, but could not perceive that a nail had run in it. On Sunday, he complained again; fearful I might be again mistaken, I directed the overseer to make him wash his foot and to examine it carefully; he did so, and he stated he could not perceive any thing. I directed him to put a poultice of cassava, lest the negro's statement might be correct; this was done, and although I did expect Scipio would go to his work next morning, I gave the drivers no orders respecting him, nor did I direct him to go to work. On Monday morning however, he went to the field; the overseer did not return to the buildings till the evening, the gang having been employed aback; he inquired of me if Scipio had come home, I replied he had not; the overseer then told me, that finding that Scipio had not dug the plantain holes sufficiently deep, as he had been repeatedly ordered to do, he directed the driver to give him six lashes, which were inflicted in his presence; and that on the negroes turning out at one o'clock Scipio was absent; states that the punishment alluded to was not inflicted, because Scipio had not performed a sufficiency of work, but because it was improperly done; and says, that the driver La Rose, on being questioned on the subject, positively denies having flogged him with carrarra of his own accord; denies the assertion of Scipio's having been sent on Saturday to plant corn, that article having never been planted on the estate since he has had the management of it.

After this examination, Scipio was directed to attend; the statement of the manager was read to him, which he did not contradict. The Fiscal explained to him, that notwithstanding slaves were permitted in all cases to prefer complaints, and that every attention should be shown, and redress afforded when entitled thereunto, yet that it was incumbent on the President, as well as the Fiscal, to punish false accusation against their owners and managers, and he, the complainant, having confessed that his complaint to the manager was, that he had run a nail in his foot, on the Saturday, and again on the Sunday, and admitted that the means of relief resorted to by the said manager was true, he, the complainant, was directed to be flogged, in presence of the Fiscal, on plantation Friends, as an example to the gang of that estate.

15th February.

The Fiscal attended this morning on plantation Friends, and agreeable to resolve on the 12th instant, caused the negro Scipio to be punished, in presence of as many of the gang as could be conveniently collected, after explaining to Scipio, and the bye-standers, the cause for inflicting punishment.

#### Complaints of the negroes belonging to plantation Berenstein, against the manager Deussen.

The complaints were found greatly exaggerated; a number of the negroes who had, from their infancy, been employed as mechanics, sempstresses and domestics, were sent by the agent to work in the field on that property; the negroes complained of this, and they frequently quitted the estate of their own accord; and it appeared evident to the Fiscal, that the manager, against whom numerous complaints were made, was a mere cypher on the property, it being required of him to cultivate provision fields on an unfruitful soil with slaves, the greater part of which were not accustomed to field work, and over whom, neither himself or his employer appeared to have sufficient control or authority. The Fiscal's opinion is, that these slaves had not just grounds of complaint against the manager.

The complaint of the negroes of plantation Profit.—This complaint was investigated on the 27th October 1823. The complaint of ill-treatment was entirely refuted (the medical practitioner was on the property during this investigation; he was taken suddenly ill, and it was found necessary to request the attendance of Mr. W. Munro, a physician, to visit him). The practitioner, in a few words, declared that the complaint of being neglected when sick, was false.

The estates journals were examined, for the purpose of ascertaining, if the slaves of the property were well supplied with food and clothing, and the following extract was taken therefrom :—

January.	A cask of fish	-	-	960 lbs.
February.	Borrowed	-	-	1,500 -
April.	A cask	-	-	918 -
May.	Three casks	-	-	2,607 -
July.	A ditto	-	-	816 -
August.	Three ditto	-	-	1,632 -
September.	Ditto ditto	-	-	1,748 -
				—10,181 lbs.

Salt served out occasionally, of which there were ten tierces on hand.

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22d March 1822, the following clothing was served out :—

Men, each,	Women, each,
A lined jacket,	A lined jacket,
A hat,	A hat,
One yard salempores,	Four ells checks,
Four yards osnaburgs.	Four ells osnaburgs.

To working creoles, each a lined jacket, a hat, checks and osnaburgs; young creoles, each checks and osnaburgs.

The manager produced a letter received yesterday, inclosing invoice of clothing, by the ship *New Volunteer*, now arrived in Demerary from that colony. All the plantation stores are received. Large fields of plantains are cultivated on lot N<sup>o</sup> 9 on this coast, and belonging to this estate. The work complained of was examined; the Fiscal was satisfied it was not more, and in many respects not equal, to that on other properties. The complainants failed in proving any part of their statements; two of them were flogged by the Fiscal's order. The whole of this statement (with the exception of the medical practitioner's attendance) was in the book of complaints given to the Lieutenant Governor.

The complaints of the negroes from plantation Foulis.—Plantation Port Mourant, the 3d and 27th March 1823, was investigated by the acting Fiscal; His decisions on those cases accompanied the complaints.

The decisions on the within cases, and the remarks made thereon, I do attest to be true and correct.

(signed)

*M. S. Bennett,*

Fiscal of the Colony.

EXTRACT from the Register of the Proceedings of the Council of  
Government, Berbice.

Wednesday, 11th January 1826.

THE Honorable Member, Simon Fraser, stated, That in consequence of the very injurious observations which had lately appeared in several of the public prints in England, reflecting on the character and conduct of the inhabitants of this colony, and which reflections had arisen from certain reports of his Honor the Fiscal, relative to complaints made unto him by negroes, of alleged acts of severity, and which reports had been transmitted in a most imperfect state to His Majesty's government, he, the honorable Member, thought it but just, that the colonists, who were not only disposed to court inquiry, but anxious for the strictest scrutiny into their conduct, should have every opportunity afforded unto them to rebut the charges of their calumniators, and therefore he should humbly move, that his Excellency be requested to call upon his Honor the Fiscal, for a detailed report of the nature of the inquiry instituted either by him, or the honorable court of Criminal Justice, into the complaints alluded to, as also of the final judgments in each case; and further, that his Excellency be requested to transmit the same, by an early opportunity, unto the right honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, in order that His Majesty's government may be in possession of the facts of the case, and be enabled fairly to meet the unqualified attacks which there is too much reason to believe, will be levelled against the West India character in the ensuing sessions of Parliament, founded on the garbled and imperfect documents already noticed.

The honorable Member further submitted the propriety of these observations, as conveying the sentiments of all the Members of Council, being inserted on the minutes of their proceedings, to which his Excellency was pleased to accede.

(A true Extract.)

(signed)

*J. White,*Dep<sup>y</sup> Sec<sup>y</sup>.



## FURTHER PAPERS

RELATING TO

SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES.

(BERBICE.)

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,  
19 May 1826.*

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