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TRINIDAD NEGROES.

RETURN to an Address of The Honourable House of Commons,
dated 12th June 1827; *for*

E X T R A C T S

From the Minutes of Evidence taken by the Committee
of the Council of *Trinidad*, for enquiring into the
Negroe Character.

Colonial Department, }
Downing-Street, }
14 June 1827. }

R. J. WILMOT HORTON.

VIZ.

Tuesday, 14th December 1824 :
Robert Mitchell, Esq.

Tuesday, 21st December 1824 :
Joseph Harrigan, Esq.
Joseph Peschier, Esq.

Tuesday, 28th December 1824 :
Dr. Alexander Williams.
Joseph Peschier, Esq.

Tuesday, 11th January 1825 :
Antoine Victoire St. Brisson, Esq.

Tuesday, 18th January 1825 :
Dr. Alexander Williams,
Burton Williams, Esq.

Wednesday, 19th January 1825 :
Dr. James Lynch O'Connor.

Tuesday, 25th January 1825 :
Josiah St. Jago Robbins, Esq.

Wednesday, 25th January 1825 :
Joseph Peschier, Esq.
José Antonio Adia, Esq.
Thomas St. Hill, Esq.

Tuesday, 1st February 1825 :
Robert Mitchell, Esq.

Wednesday, 2d February 1825 :
John Cobham, Esq.
James Meany, Esq.

Tuesday, 8th February 1825 :
Mr. Argust F. Blackwell.
Mr. John Fogerty.

Wednesday, 9th February 1825 :
Dr. Elias Tardy.

Tuesday, 15th February 1825 :
William Stuart, Esq.
John Lamont, Esq.

Tuesday, 22d February 1825 :
J. B. Littlepage, Esq.

Tuesday, 1st March 1825 :
Edmonstone Hodgkinson, Esq.

Wednesday, 2d March 1825 :
Dr. R. Garcia.

Wednesday, 9th March 1825 :
St. Hilaire Begorrat, Esq.

Friday, 11th March 1825 :
John Lamont, Esq.

Wednesday, 16th March 1825 :
Henry St. Hill, Esq.
Edmonstone Hodgkinson, Esq.

Saturday, 9th April 1825 :
William Wright, Esq.
Senor D^a José Zepero.
The Rev. David Evans.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed;
14 June 1827.

E X T R A C T S

From the Committee of Council of Trinidad, appointed on the 4th of November 1824, "for the purpose of obtaining a more correct knowledge of the Negro Character, as exhibited in this Colony, in the state both of slavery and of freedom."

Tuesday, 14th December 1824.

THE HON^{BLE} W^M H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Robert Mitchell, Esq. sworn, and Examined.

Extracts from
Minutes of Evi-
dence before
Committee of

WHEN did you first arrive in this Colony? In 1797.—What profession have you followed during that period? Five years a merchant; twenty-two years a planter.—Have you resided for the whole of the latter period upon your estate? Eighteen years only.—During these eighteen years have you conducted your estate in detail yourself, or by the assistance of a manager? Generally by a manager, occasionally by myself.—Then you think yourself quite competent to speak on every point of detail relating to the management of a sugar estate? No, I scarcely think myself competent.—To what branches do you allude, in which you consider yourself not competent? I am competent only to speak to the care and management of negroes in the hospital.—Are we to understand, then, that you manage your estate yourself only in case of necessity? Yes.—Are you not chief superintendent of the American refugees? I am.—Have you filled that situation since their first arrival in the colony? Yes.—When did these refugees first arrive in this island? The first party, fifty-seven in number, arrived in November 1815, five hundred and seventy-five in August 1816, and seventy-nine in January 1821.—Did these three parties constitute the whole original number of American refugees? Yes; but fifty-two African females were added to the settlements in 1817, and a short time afterwards eleven more. These females were prize negroes, sent from Barbadoes. No other addition has been made to the settlements from any other source.—What is the present total number? I think about eight hundred and seventy-six; but will produce a correct return when next before the Committee.—Can you state how much their establishment has cost the government? I think about 30,000 *l.* currency up to 1822; but a correct statement can be procured from the Treasury.—Had they any particular difficulties to contend with on their first arrival? None in particular; the principal party came at the commencement of the rainy season, which I consider to have been unfavourable to them.—In what particular respect did that circumstance prove unfavourable to them? It prevented labour from proceeding advantageously, and induced fluxes and fevers, of which one hundred cases occurred in the first three months.—What preparations were made for them previous to their arrival? Four thatched buildings, each sixty feet long and twenty feet wide, were ready for them; all that these could not accommodate were received in the Indian village, and no individual suffered from want of shelter.—Did they erect their own houses subsequently without assistance? They received nails and necessary tools; and being divided into companies, the sawyers and mechanics amongst them supplied the necessary materials and workmanship, which could not be performed by ordinary individuals.—Did they not receive provisions and rations from government whilst engaged in this work? Yes, they received rations by order of government, for eight months.—Did the distribution of rations cease at the expiration of that period? Some ceased to receive rations in five months; generally they ceased at the expiration of the eight months; but rations continued to be distributed to the infirm until their recovery.—What further assistance did they receive from government? They received hoes and cutlasses, which are the only agricultural implements they require.—Did they receive any cooking or domestic utensils? An iron pot for cooking to each mess, sufficient for that purpose.—How much land did each settler receive? They received five quarres, or sixteen English acres each, so soon as the distribution of
the

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Council of Trinidad, on the Negro Character.

the allotments could be made out, which has only lately been done.—How did they maintain themselves previous to the distribution of these allotments? They were allowed to cultivate as much land as they pleased in the vicinity of their villages, of which there was more than they could cultivate.—Have they paid any thing for the expense of that survey, or any consideration for the land? None.—Are they subject to any taxes or dues of any description whatever? They are subject to a quit rent, and to the hospital dues, and to no other tax or assessment.—What do these amount to? The quit rent amounts to 15*s.* currency, or 6*s.* 6*d.* sterling per annum, for the sixteen acres; and the hospital dues to 18*s.* currency, or 7*s.* 6*d.* sterling per quarter.—What are the refugees entitled to receive in return for these hospital dues? Medicine, medical attendance when ailing, nourishment, and whatever may be prescribed by the medical attendant.—When were the hospital dues first established? In 1818.—Under what authority? That of his Excellency the governor.—Has a medical practitioner been constantly engaged since that period, to attend upon them? Whenever one could be procured, he was engaged by the year, otherwise he was employed by the visit; but they have never been without the benefit of a medical attendant.—Are they removed to an hospital when sick? They are attended in their own houses.—Why was this mode preferred? Because I consider it the least expensive, and most beneficial arrangement for themselves.—Is there any code of instructions by which these people are governed? Yes.—Have you a copy? Not with me; but I will produce it when next before the Committee.—In what respect do they differ by these instructions from free labourers in general? They cannot work out without a permission from me; and a contract is entered into before me between the parties.—Under what circumstances do you feel yourself authorized to refuse such permission? I refuse it whenever the hospital dues of the party desirous of working out are unpaid.—From what you have stated to the Committee before, the refugees appear to be established in messes; please to explain the nature of the whole arrangement? They are established in eight villages, each under the superintendence of a serjeant and corporal, whose duties are to keep the peace; they have authority from me to confine in the stocks for twenty-four hours, and to inflict twelve lashes for petty thefts, or disturbance of the peace, but must report the same to me on the day after the offence. What authority do you exercise yourself beyond the cases recited, and from whence is that authority derived? I exercise a discretionary authority; and in cases where the offences are not of a very serious nature, I take cognizance of them as superintendent. I have sentenced to fifty lashes, but never enforced beyond twenty-five, and in all such cases I report the same to the governor: I have no written authority so to act; but immediately on the arrival and establishment of these people, Judge Bigge came down and addressed the assembled companies, explaining to them that in serious cases they would be sent up for trial to Port of Spain, but in cases of a less serious complexion, that I should take cognizance of them. Under that authority I have continued to act, and have reported my proceedings regularly to his Excellency the governor, which have been approved of by him.—Does that approval precede the execution of the sentence? For the last three or four years it does.—Do any broils or disputes take place amongst them respecting their women? More from that source than any other, but the number of broils are very limited.—Do you think that disputes on this account occur more frequently with them than amongst slaves? In about the same proportion.—Are these broils and disputes principally amongst the married couples or the single people? Principally amongst the married couples, and more amongst the Africans than the American born.—Are they generally observant of the marriage tie? Generally so, and they live decently together.—Taking them generally, do you consider them to be a sober people? They consume a great quantity of rum, but many of them are sober, particularly the officers and headmcn.—What are the Committee to understand by your expression of “many” of them being sober? About one half I consider sober, who either do not drink at all, or who do not drink to excess frequently.—Are the women at all given to intoxication? A few of them.—Do you think in a greater proportion than slave women? I think more than I should expect to find in an equal number of slave women.—Are they careful of their children? Yes, more particularly the American born; they feed and clothe them well, according to the usage of the country.—Are they more attentive in this respect than slave women generally are? I think the American women are, but not the African women.—Do they consider themselves to be of a superior rank to the slaves? It appears to me that the Americans do.—Do they associate freely, and upon an equality with the slaves?

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dence before
Committee of

Yes, generally, when employed upon plantations; and they appear to have no objection to dine and mix with them in their dances and amusements; but I know several, perhaps one tenth, which include the headmen, who do not so associate with them, and I think it arises from their considering it a condescension.—Do any of these headmen appear to have much influence over them? Yes, some, a considerable influence over them.—Does that influence arise from the authority they possess under your superintendence? It does, when united with other intelligent qualities; I think the authority is the basis of their control.—When you stated that they associated freely with slaves upon estates, do you mean that they do not so in their settlements? I do.—Do they ever give dances or entertainments at their settlements? Frequently on Saturday and Sunday evenings.—Would they exclude slaves of their acquaintance from joining them on these occasions? I do not know, but they are prohibited from receiving the slaves. Do they ever harbour runaway slaves? I have only known of two instances in which runaway slaves have been found in their houses, and I do not believe that it has ever occurred more frequently; they have been repeatedly warned that severe punishment would be the consequence.—In what respect do they differ in their food and state of living from slaves on estates? The American lives decidedly better, the African a little more so.—Do you think their serjeants and corporals live better than the drivers and headmen upon established estates? I do not think they do.—Do they clothe themselves on holidays better than slaves in general? I do not think much better on holidays, but decidedly better at their ordinary work.—Do the men cohabit with negresses upon estates? The unmarried men do.—Do they appear attached to their offspring by these connections? I have had no opportunity of judging.—Do they make themselves useful in apprehending runaway slaves? They have apprehended several, having orders to stop all negroes without passes going through the settlements, for which they receive the usual reward of four dollars each for those belonging to the quarter, and eight dollars if belonging to an adjoining quarter.—From their feelings towards the slaves, do you think they would skreen them if skulking in the neighbourhood? I do not think they would.—In the event of any insubordination amongst the slaves, do you think there would be any danger of the American refugees joining them? I do not think there would.—Will you explain to the Committee the grounds of that opinion? These people have been brought up as soldiers, with the feelings of soldiers, and consider themselves indebted to the government for every thing; I have always endeavoured to keep up that feeling, and have always found them prompt when called upon.—Do you think there may be no danger of that feeling subsiding from their usual intercourse with slaves, and having children of their own by slaves upon plantations? It may have that tendency.—Has any thing like a riot or disturbance occurred amongst them since their establishment? No.—Have they any arms in their possession? They have no King's arms when they turn out to parade, but they have many fowling pieces in their possession; thirty out of the first party who joined the militia of the quarter keep their own arms, which are only pikes.—Then the great body of them are not embodied with the militia? No.—Is there any particular reason for this distinction? I had no order to embody them with the militia.—Did you not consider that the proclamation ordering every freeman to join the militia, applied to these people. I did not.—Has the mode you have adopted been approved by the governor? It has.—In what respect does the parade duty they perform differ from ordinary militia duty? They assemble only with the militia on the ground, where their names are called over, and on ordinary occasions they are immediately dismissed.—You have stated that these people work out only by permission; can they absent themselves for any length of time from the settlements but by permission? The regulations prohibit it, but they do it very frequently.—Is there any particular day or time fixed when they are all required to show themselves to you as superintendent? No particular day.—What is the total number of the refugees now on the list of the establishment? I think eight hundred and seventy-six; but I will furnish a correct list.—Has any register been kept of the births and deaths. Yes.—Do you consider it to be a correct one? Yes. Do they baptize their children regularly? I think they do, but I have no register of the baptisms; Mr. Adams, a missionary, baptized some; Mr. Hewitson, a clergyman of the established church, some; Mr. Woolley, I think, some; and the catholic priest at the mission.—Do they consider the children so baptized by the latter as catholics? I am sure they do not.—How many of the refugees are now resident at the settlements? I think about seven hundred, of which two hundred may be men, the rest women and children.—How many adults are there in the whole

whole number of refugees? I think about three hundred and fifty men, and about one hundred and sixty women.—Of the three hundred and fifty men, how many have a fixed residence at the settlements, and never leave it to work elsewhere? I think under fifty, but I will ascertain this more correctly.—How many of these three hundred and fifty men have no residence at the settlement? About one hundred and fifty, who are unmarried men, with the exception of three or four.—How many of these have absented themselves altogether without leave? About fifty, the remainder show themselves occasionally.—Of the one hundred and fifty who appear to have no fixed residence at the settlements, how do you suppose they are employed? Some in droghers (as sailors); some in Port of Spain, and others on estates; but I know of only two who are cultivating king's land on their own account.—Of the two hundred men who are established at the village, do they all cultivate ground on their own account? Yes.—Are these all married men? With the exception of twenty to thirty.—Are there any free women cohabiting with the settlers not included in the list? About six; three of whom are English negresses, and three French coloured women.—Do these two hundred men, who cultivate ground at the settlements, ever work out on hire? Yes, about one hundred and fifty of them.—For what periods of the year? They generally work out from January to the end of April, cutting canes; some in September, October and November planting canes, and many in December cutting fire wood; about fifteen or twenty saw and cut timber for the greater part of the year. Do these men go to any distance from the settlements? Seldom beyond the neighbouring quarter.—What portion of time in the year does each individual think necessary to devote to his cultivation at the settlements? I think fully six months, exclusive of Saturdays to Mondays, when they most generally go home.—Do they ever work on Sunday in their own grounds? Never.—How do the sawyers and stave splitters keep their cultivations in order when absent for the greater part of the year? Generally speaking they are more industrious, earn more, work well in their grounds, and can afford to hire others to assist them; so that their cultivation is equally extensive and in as good order as the others.—What wages do they generally receive for cutting canes? The price is 18*l.* currency per quarrie, or three acres and one fifth, when they are ratoon canes, and 22*l.* for plant canes.—How long would it take an able bodied slave to cut a quarrie of plant canes? I cannot say.—How much do you think a steady working American, without undue exertion, could gain per day at this work? I think he might gain 9*s.* currency per day; I judge from having seen a piece cut down by them, and having made the calculation; but at their usual rate of work they do not gain more than 4*s.* 6*d.* currency.—Do you think that a steady good working slave would gain as much as 9*s.* currency per day at the same work? I think so.—What wages are they paid for planting canes? Generally from 50*l.* to 60*l.* currency per quarrie, or three acres one fifth, inclusive of clearing it of bush; at this work I do not think they clear so much per day as by cutting canes, when the demand for them is greater.—What do they charge for cutting a cord of wood, and what are the dimensions of a cord? They charge 6*s.* to 7*s.* per cord of six feet high, eight feet long, and four feet wide.—How much of this work can they perform in a day? They can cut one and a half cords with great ease, but they seldom cut more than one.—What other work do they engage in? They fell high woods on the same terms and equally well, with peons, at the rate of 18*l.* currency per three acres and one fifth (a quarrie): I am not aware that the Americans at the settlements ever engage in any other employments than those I have specified.—What is the nature of their cultivation on their own land? Provisions generally, corn, rice and plantains; they have lately planted a few coffee trees; and there may be one thousand coffee trees in the whole settlement; no cocoa, cotton or indigo.—Do they raise more corn and rice than they consume? Yes.—What are the usual prices of these articles in the neighbourhood of the settlements? Corn in times of plenty is one dollar per barrel, frequently two, and as high as two and a half; but this corn is unshelled, and taken by the purchasers at their doors.—How much is this per bushel of shelled corn? At the rate of two barrels and a half in the ear to one in grain, which contains three Winchester bushels, the price at the cheapest time is 7*s.* 6*d.* currency per bushel.—What is the ordinary price of rice? Clean rice sells from five to ten dollars per one hundred pounds in the neighbourhood of the settlement.—Is this well cleaned, fit for the London market? It is much broken for want of mills, but is sweet and good for use.

Tuesday, 21st December 1824.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Joseph Harrigan, Esq. sworn, and Examined.

Extracts from
Minutes of Evi-
dence before
Committee of

WHEN did you arrive in this colony? In June 1823.—Whence did you come? From Tortola.—What object brought you to this colony?—To fix forty negroes by leasing them out, if I could not dispose of them by sale.—What arrangements did you ultimately make? I thought it more advantageous, after some enquiry, to purchase an estate, and did so.—Have you brought any more negroes to the colony since that period? About one hundred and thirty more; from the whole number I have sold fourteen, and retain the remainder to cultivate the land I have purchased.—Did you follow the profession of a practical planter for many years in Tortola? From sixteen to twenty years in Guana Island and Spanish Town, under the government of Tortola.—What produce did you grow upon your estates? Cotton entirely.—Did you understand the mode of cultivating sugar in those islands? Not perfectly; but I have seen a great deal of it, and have had the direction of several sugar estates as attorney and executor.—What induced you to leave those islands and emigrate with your slaves to Trinidad? From the barrenness of the soil, the frequent losses arising from hurricanes, and dry weather.—How did you feed your slaves generally in Tortola; by provisions from the store, or by land apportioned out to each individual to cultivate for his own use? They had as much land as they chose to cultivate, but I was generally obliged to give them a weekly allowance of American provisions from the store, because they were not able to raise provisions for themselves.—Then the supply of ground provisions to your slaves in Tortola caused some annual expense? Very considerable; some years the crop would not pay half the expense.—Were not the slaves occasionally subjected to privations in consequence of the difficulty and expense in feeding them? Notwithstanding every exertion they were frequently subject to great privations; on many occasions the proprietors had not the means of feeding them, and the weaker ones must have suffered considerably.—Whence do the people of Tortola principally derive their supply of American provisions? From St. Thomas's.—If all foreign supply were withheld, would the labour of the slaves applied solely to the cultivation of provisions enable them to subsist themselves? Certainly not if left to themselves, but under the direction and discipline of their masters it might be done; but this I think doubtful, and, in case of a hurricane, impossible.—Are you then of opinion that a slave, when freed, will not work as steadily as when in a state of slavery? Certainly not; particularly in the cultivation of the soil.—On what grounds do you form this opinion? Principally from my observations of the conduct of the slaves manumitted by Mr. Nottingham and others; and particularly from a body of fifteen manumitted by Mr. Perceval about the year 1815; the land he gave them, one hundred and sixty-six acres, joined my estate; the greater number sold their land; I purchased about one half of it, and could have purchased the whole had I been disposed to do so.—How then did these people of Perceval's support themselves? Some by fishing, others went to sea; three or four of them fared very badly, and were dependent upon my slaves for support.—How many of those originally manumitted by Mr. Perceval did you leave resident upon their land? Not more than three or four, when I left Tortola in May last.—In what state was their cultivation at that time? Little or none; not sufficient to support them more than a week.—You have then revisited Tortola since your arrival in this colony in June 1823? Yes, I went there in February last to remove my family to this colony.—Had you any code of laws for the regulation and management of slaves in Tortola? Yes, there was an Act called the Slave Act, which was passed shortly after the establishment of the legislature, many parts of which have never been acted upon in a single instance that I am aware of; some of these clauses have been since repealed as injurious to the slaves.—Have you a copy of these Acts, or either of them? No, I do not believe they are in print.—Is there in existence any printed copy of the laws of Tortola? I believe not.—What produce do you propose cultivating on your estate in this colony? Sugar only.—Do you propose to manage the estate yourself? I shall reside upon it,

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it, and be assisted by a manager.—Was your estate fully cultivated when you purchased it? No, not more than twenty acres cultivated; fifty to sixty acres of wood were cut down; I have had forty-five acres cut down since I took possession, and am now cutting down more.—Do you employ your slaves in felling these woods? In the provision grounds I do, otherwise I employ free labourers.—What description of free labourers do you employ? Peons to cut down timber; American refugees to saw boards and scantling.—Do you find these people behave well and continue steady at their work? I have no fault to find with the peons, they work by contract, and I was in no hurry; I generally gave them sufficient time, having never found them punctual to time; with respect to the Americans, I cannot say so much; they are very frequently drunk, work slower than the peons, and mix more with the negroes.—What objection have you to their mixing with the negroes? They entice them to drink, interfere with the wives of the men, which creates quarrels and disturbances, and I have dismissed them in consequence.—From your knowledge of sugar planting in Tortola, do you think the slaves work harder here than in Tortola? No, I think the labour a great deal lighter, the land in Tortola being dry and rocky.—Is your experience in this colony sufficient to enable you to form a just estimate of the comparative advantages in the situation of slaves in this island, and of slaves in Tortola? I have lived here long enough to enable me to say that the labour of a negro in this colony is much lighter than in Tortola. In what cases do you think a slave in Tortola may have enjoyed advantages over a slave here? The only advantage I know of was the privilege of being allowed to keep cattle.—In what respect did that privilege benefit them? In the use and sale of the milk and butter.—Do you think that a slave in Tortola had better opportunities of making money than a slave in Trinidad? No; generally speaking, they have better opportunities here.—Did the slaves in Tortola increase in number? Generally speaking, I understood there was a decrease, but on my own estate there was a regular increase.—From the observations you have made, have you any reason to doubt the continuance of this increase in your gang in this colony? I see no reason to the contrary; they have continued to increase during the eighteen months some of them have been here.—Are you aware that the negroes in this colony decrease annually, as exhibited by the return of the registrar of slaves? Yes, I have seen the return.—Can you at all account for this circumstance? I really cannot fix upon any particular cause; I am very attentive myself to making my slaves keep themselves dry, and when they return from the field I send the drivers, and frequently go myself to see them throw off their wet clothes; this may be the cause of their keeping in health. Do you think that they would not of themselves take this precaution without being looked after? I think not; I feel it necessary never to let the omission pass unpunished; I lately detected a man getting under his blanket in bed with his wet clothes on.—Are your negroes contented and satisfied with their present situation in this colony? Yes, I believe so; I had lately an opportunity of trying them, when one of my vessels was about to return to Tortola; I told them if any wished to return they might do so; only one old woman seemed inclined to move, and said she would prefer going if her master went, but not otherwise; her chief objection appears to be to the wet weather and the mud.—What clothing do you give your negroes? I give them the usual allowance of two suits; but on their arrival here I give them an extra suit; and should any individual require more, I consider it necessary to supply it, lest they should suffer from the change of climate.

Council of Trinidad, on the Negro Character.

Joseph Peschier, Esq. sworn, and Examined.

HOW many years have you resided in this colony? About twenty-nine years.—What profession have you followed during that period? Since 1804, when I returned from England, where I was educated, I have followed solely the business of a planter.—In what line? Principally a sugar planter; I own a cocoa estate, but cannot say that I perfectly understand that line of cultivation.—Then you think yourself competent to answer most questions connected with the management and cultivation of a sugar estate? Yes.—Are you not also superintendent of the negroes established in your quarter, lately apprentices on Sir Alexander Cochrane's estate? I am.—When were they so established, and when did your appointment take place? In 1820.—What were their original numbers? Sixty.—What are their present numbers? I will procure a correct return to lay before the Committee.—Can you say whether they have increased or decreased? The number

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dence before
Committee of

is about the same.—Do you receive any salary as superintendent? I have received nothing yet; I was offered a remuneration last year, but considered it so inadequate, that I have since petitioned his Excellency the governor upon the subject.—How much did the establishment of these people cost the government? About 680*l.*; but I beg to refer the Committee to the account before the Governor.—Are they all established in one village? Yes.—What preparations were made for them before they were removed to it? The village being in the vicinity of their former residence (the Good Hope estate), part of them remained in their old houses until they had built others, and another portion remained in the “Casa Real” until their houses at the village were completed.—Did they receive rations for any period? For one year they received rations of rice, corn-meal and fish, as much as was necessary for their subsistence.—Had they any provisions remaining in their old grounds at Good Hope estate? They had, but they received full rations independent of any thing they had from this source.—Had you any written instructions given to you respecting the government and discipline of these people, at the time of their establishment? None, in writing; but his Excellency the governor, a short time previous to their liberation, visited them on the Good Hope estate, and informed them of the intended arrangements in their favour, and that they were to obey my orders. Under the mode of superintendence which you have adopted, in what respect do these people differ from free people in general? They are forbidden to leave the village for any purpose without a written permission.—Where was the necessity of this arrangement? Because they would not cultivate their provision grounds, and were idling their time over the quarter to the great injury of the neighbouring estates.—In what respect was their conduct injurious to their neighbours? By their enticing other slaves to steal for them; I know this has happened frequently; and in two instances I detected individuals amongst them with sugar, molasses and syrop in their possession, which was proved to have been stolen.—How much land was given to each of these settlers? No particular quantity has been assigned to them; their front line was marked out, and they may cultivate as much in depth as they please.—Under what tenure do they hold these lands? I believe under the same tenure as other free settlers.—Then they cannot sell their land? No free settlers, I believe, have that power.—Are their lands fertile? Particularly so for provisions and coffee, and I think they would answer well also for cocoa.—Do they pay rent or taxes of any description whatsoever? None.—Do you think that with respect to their situation in life any thing more could have been done for their comfortable establishment than the measures adopted? I think none; they were fully fed whilst building their houses, received nails, iron pots for cooking, hoes, cutlasses and axes; their land had been previously cleared of timber, and their rations were continued until their own grounds fully supplied them.—Had the money which has been expended upon these people in their establishment been previously divided amongst them, and they had been left to their own self-government, would they have made a proper use of it? I think they would have squandered it away in rum, and have done no work at all.—On what grounds do you form this opinion? From the difficulty I had in making them work their grounds; I was obliged to go there three times a week and force them to work; I frequently found them lying a sleep, and was obliged to threaten them repeatedly; to punish two by inflicting twenty stripes, and to imprison several during the night, to compel them to work the grounds from whence they derived their subsistence.—These people having been now established under this discipline since the year 1820, do you consider them at present fit to be left to their own self-government, subject only to the control of the general laws? Certainly not; they are much given to drinking, and if not controlled, many would fall victims to that vice; their broils would probably lead to fatal results; as it is, many cases of great violence have occurred, two or three of them of an atrocious nature; I am obliged to appoint one of the best amongst them to overlook the rest, and without his control I think they would murder each other.

Tuesday, 28th December 1824.

The HONBLE WM BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Doctor *Alexander Williams* sworn, and Examined.

OF what profession are you? The medical profession.—How many years have you practised in this colony? Thirty odd years.—In what particular line? As a practitioner of medicine and surgery, attending upon families and slaves in town and country: but twelve or fifteen years have elapsed since I gave up the latter practice, with the exception of the estates of a few friends in the vicinity of Port of Spain.—From your long practice can you state whether many cargoes of African slaves were sold in this colony before it surrendered to the British forces? I recollect only one sloop or schooner which brought between twenty or thirty slaves from one of the other colonies, but I do not recollect a single vessel direct from the coast of Africa; it is possible that the house of Barry and Black may have introduced slaves by some indirect mode.—To what do you attribute this circumstance? It may have arisen from the cultivation of the island being then limited, chiefly confined to cotton, with a little coffee and cocoa; I do not recollect more than one sugar estate at the period of my arrival; the sugar chiefly consumed in the colony was at that time brought from the Spanish Main.—Then the great influx of African slaves took place after the capture of the island by the British? Yes.—Had you any opportunity of observing the slaves so imported? Yes; I was appointed inspecting officer by General Picton, and it was my duty to visit every slave ship immediately on her arrival.—In what state as to health and appearance were these slaves generally on arrival? Generally in a healthy condition, as their importation took place subsequent to the Acts of Parliament, which regulated their treatment in the middle passage.—In the course of your duty as inspecting officer had you no occasion to place any of these African vessels under quarantine? I recollect only one instance, in the case of a vessel infected with the small pox.—How long did you fill the office of inspector? Until the abolition of the trade.—Were these imported negroes subject to any particular disorders to which Creoles are not subject? None in particular; they were generally healthy people.—To what then do you attribute the mortality which the Committee have been given to understand occurred annually amongst these imported African? I ascribe it principally to the disease commonly called mal d'estomac and to dysentery.—To what cause do you ascribe the more general prevalence of these diseases amongst the imported Africans than amongst Creoles? Principally from chagrin, added to change of diet and a new course of habits.—Did you observe in the course of your practice that any particular planters were more successful than others in preserving the health of these Africans? Yes; I think that in general the French and Spanish planters were more successful in preserving them.—In what respect did their treatment of their Africans differ from the English mode? Generally speaking they did not purchase so many at a time, by which they were more easily provided for; they paid personally more attention to them, and were always careful to have a sufficiency of the country provisions growing; whilst the English relied upon the purchase of the American provisions.—Are you then of opinion that the ground provisions of the country were better adapted to the African constitution than the rice, corn and flour brought from America? I am clearly of that opinion with respect to Africans.—Are you certain that it may not have arisen from the supply of purchased provisions being frequently more limited than when the supplies were growing upon the estate? I do not think they were ever stinted in provisions, they had always a sufficiency to eat, but they had no surplus to give away to their favourites, or to purchase luxuries, as in the case of the slaves belonging to the generality of French planters, who had a garden of their own in bearing in twelve months after their arrival on the estate; the want of this increased that chagrin which was generally most fatal to new negroes.—How came the English planters not immediately to adopt a system which was obviously so successful with the French? In general the French resided upon their own estates, whilst the English properties were more frequently conducted by managers.—Do you then attribute the mortality which occurred amongst imported Africans principally to mismanage-

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ment, and in no degree to cruel treatment or to overwork? I do not believe they were ever cruelly treated or overworked; under the best management the mortality was infinitely greater than amongst seasoned negroes, but less amongst the foreigners than the English, for the reasons I have before stated.—Was there much severity in the general system of discipline by which slaves were governed during the continuance of slave trade? I do not think that punishments were unduly severe; they were more frequent in consequence of the frequency of runaways and general disorderly conduct amongst the slaves; the system was greatly improved by the regulations of General Picton, which placed the slaves under greater control, prevented night assemblages beyond a certain hour, by which quarrels were less frequent, and regulated the number and extent of their provision grounds, which gave less temptation to theft.—During your practice and general acquaintance in this colony, did no case of barbarous or unjustifiable treatment of slaves by their masters ever come to your knowledge? Not one within my own particular observation; I have heard of two or three only; one was the case of Le Bis, which became the subject of a criminal prosecution; I cannot recollect the names of the other parties; I believe they occurred at Naparima; I heard of them only by report.—What was the general feeling in the public mind when those cases occurred? Very indignant; in the case of Le Bis, in particular, every individual expressed his abhorrence and regret that he did not meet with the punishment he deserved.—By what means did he escape punishment? I cannot say exactly; I believe on some point of Spanish law; but the proceedings, I suppose, are on record.—Do you think that if any other cases of cruelty had occurred, you could have avoided hearing of them? I think, from my general acquaintance and practice in the colony, I should have heard of them.—Have any of the cases you have alluded to occurred within the last ten years? None; the last, which was that of Le Bis, occurred, I think, in 1810.—Have you ever had an opportunity of witnessing corporal punishments in the army? Never.—Have you ever been called in to attend upon a slave, in consequence of severity of punishment?—I never have, to the best of my recollection.—Do you think, that in the usual mode in which punishments by the whip have been inflicted in this colony, a slave is thereby incapacitated from attending immediately afterwards to his usual work? I do not think he is; in all cases within my observation they turn out immediately afterwards.—To what cause do you ascribe the great decrease annually in our slave population? I cannot satisfactorily account for it; I can attribute it only to the disproportion between the sexes.—From the general treatment of pregnant women upon estates in this colony, do you think that it may not arise from over work at improper periods? Certainly I do not.—How then can you account for the natural increase amongst the American refugees, where a great inequality of sexes also exists? I really cannot say; I am unacquainted with the American refugees; I can only say that the system adopted upon estates with respect to pregnant women generally, cannot, in my opinion, have contributed to the decrease in the slave population.—Are the principal number of cases which occur in the hospitals upon estates to be ascribed to the nature or quantity of work performed by the slaves? I have no reason to think that the quantity of work they perform can injure their health; they more frequently arise from intemperance and imprudent conduct; from exposure to night air, and over exertion in dancing; of which there cannot be a more convincing proof than that the number of the cases in the hospitals are invariably greater on the Monday than on any other day; a fact which must have fallen under the observation of every medical man accustomed to attend upon estates.—Do you then generally find the slaves thoughtless and careless of their health? Generally so; they are careless of the distance they go at night to attend a dance, or to what exposure they may subject themselves afterwards; and it is always found necessary, in administering particular medicines, to confine the patient in the hospital.—Are you then of opinion, that if a slave were informed that exposure to the air would be fatal under the operation of particular medicine, that it would not deter him from going out? Generally, I think it would be imprudent to trust them.—Are slaves generally to be depended upon in taking care of each other during sickness? Generally speaking, they are not; some of the regular nurses at the hospitals are attentive.—Could you entrust a sick child to any better or more careful attendant than its mother?—Yes; often I would rather trust to the nurse; I do not think the mother to be depended upon, particularly if she be young.—Can you trust to a slave's own description of his case, when he comes into the hospital? Not easily; I am obliged to get at the truth circuitously;

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ously; and in all cases in which they receive personal injury from disputes amongst themselves they tenaciously conceal the truth.—In the opinions you have expressed as to the dissipated habits, thoughtless character, and the little confidence which can be placed in slaves, do you make any distinction in favour of the female sex? With the exception of integrity, I consider the women to be worse than the men.—Are cases of *coup de soleil* frequent amongst labouring slaves in this colony. No, I think them very rare.

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Joseph Peschier, Esq. again called in, sworn, and further Examined.

FOR what term of years were the liberated negroes you superintend apprenticed to Sir Alexander Cochrane's estate? I understand for fourteen years.—From the unfavourable report you give of these people, do you not consider them to be worse than gangs in general? I consider them to be amongst the worst, but there are many as bad.—Are you not administrator and manager of the sequestered estate called Carapichina Hall? Yes, I am administrator of all the sequestered estates; but I am manager of Carapichina Hall in consequence of the particular request of the late Mr. Langton, proprietor of one half of the estate, the other half only being sequestered.—How long have you managed this estate? Since 1815.—Do you reside upon it? Yes, continually. From your knowledge of the character and disposition of this gang, do you think that if manumitted their conduct would be no better than that of Sir Alexander Cochrane's apprenticed negroes? With the exception of four or five individuals in the gang, which consists of one hundred and forty-nine, I think they would be worse: about two years ago they took it into their heads that they were to be manumitted, when they entirely abandoned their grounds, and I was obliged to bring three of the most intelligent of them up to Port of Spain before the governor, before they could be persuaded to the contrary.—How came they to take up this idea? I cannot say exactly; I heard that they considered themselves to be King's negroes, and expected to be liberated as well as Sir Alexander Cochrane's.—After the opinions you have expressed, how do you account for the generally favourable report made of the manumitted slaves in each quarter by the commandants? I beg to refer the Committee to my own return as commandant of Couva; and the number of manumitted slaves resident in that district amounts to thirty-six, the whole of which had their freedom given to them for their good qualities, with the exception of three or four who earned it by their industry.—The Committee have now before them a report made by you to his Excellency the governor in June 1823, relative to the conduct and condition of the apprenticed negroes, in which they find stated that out of the total number of twenty-four men in the village, nine are described as "hard drinkers, and very fond of rum;" seven as drinking, and fond of rum;" are the Committee to understand that you consider only eight of them to be sober? At that time the return was correct, but out of the eight then enumerated, three have since taken to drinking, and Joseph is dead; so that I now consider four only not to be drunkards.—Have you no means of repressing this vice? I used formerly to confine them in the stocks for drunken squabbles, but finding that it had little effect, and becoming doubtful lately of my authority so to do, I have given it up.—The Committee do not understand that part of your report to his Excellency the governor, which relates to the earnings and expenditure of these apprentices; the former during a term of eighteen months are reported to be five hundred and eighty-five dollars, and their expenditure during the same period to five hundred and ninety-three; do you consider them to have been in debt for the difference? No, I consider the account to be incorrect; I could not procure any better account from them.—What is the general appearance of their establishment; is it better or worse than negro villages in general? The general appearance of the houses I think better, as I superintended their construction, and they wanted neither time nor materials.—Does the interior of their dwellings exhibit more of comfort and propriety than negro houses in general? About the same appearance.—Do they live as to food better than slaves in general? Not in the least.—Do they dress any better than slaves in general? Not better than the commonest slaves; and in no respect equal to our best negroes.—Are these people in the habit of working out on hire for the neighbouring planters? Occasionally, but less frequently so now than formerly.—What medical attendance do they receive? In serious cases I send for Dr. Armour.—By whom is he paid in these cases? Out of the fund supplied by government.—In the event of drunkenness and insubordination, would it not be advisable to punish them by the infliction

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infliction of fines? If it were possible to exact the fines, I think it might have some good effect.—Where would be the difficulty in exacting the fines? I could find no property to levy upon but the provisions in their grounds, which would immediately discourage their cultivation.—Have they no pigs or poultry? Yes, in about the same quantity as slaves; but I had so much difficulty at first in persuading them to raise these, that I should be afraid of seizing upon them.—What wages do they earn per day when they work out for the neighbouring estates? I believe the usual hire is 4 s. per day, and they find themselves.—Do they give general satisfaction to their employers?—I believe not; I heard most people complain so much of them, that although I had determined, as their superintendent, never to employ them, I thought it necessary to try them, and hired them for four days; when finding them doing less and less every day, I dismissed them.—Amongst the women who have children, do they appear to be kind and careful of them? They appear to be so, but set them so bad an example that I think they would be better removed from them.—Have you ever heard any complaints of their harbouring runaway slaves? Never; I have threatened them severely should they be guilty of it.—Have you had any acquaintance with the class of people they call peons in this colony? I have occasionally employed them.—What are these people, and whence do they come? The real meaning of the word peon is, a man who is hired to labour by the day; but in this colony it is generally applied to a mixed coloured race who migrate from the Spanish Main; some few are natives of the colony.—Are these people found generally useful to the planters? Yes, in felling woods.—Do they perform that work better than slaves?—They do, from their continued practice, as we avoid as much as possible risking our slaves in that work.—Are they never hired for any other employment?—They are hired to cut down brushwood occasionally, by contract. I have tried them at cutting canes, but did not find them answer; indeed I am of opinion that they will answer for no work but contract work, for you can place no dependence upon them as to time, as they will only work in fine weather.—At their usual rate of wages, if a peon worked fairly and steadily, how much could he earn per day? He could earn 9 s. currency per day.—Upon what description of food do they generally live? They prefer salt fish, with plantain and cassada.—How much would this diet cost per week? About 9 s. currency per week.—Do they seem possessed of much property? None.—Is it not possible that they may have property lodged elsewhere, although they wander about for employment? I think not, for those who reside in the quarter are equally poor. I have been applied to frequently by them to excuse their attendance at parade for want of shoes and white pantaloons.—When performing work by contract, are they able to subsist themselves until it is completed? Never.—Do they furnish their own tools? Never; their whole equipment consists of the clothes they have on, a blanket and a stick, and possibly, in addition, a hammock made from the bark of a tree; and they cannot begin to work unless furnished with tools and provisions.—Is there ever any want of employment for them in the colony? I think they have generally full employment.—What then can be the cause of their being so destitute, when they can so easily earn a competency? From their idle lazy habits; they drink very hard, and never think of looking for employment until they have spent their whole earnings.

Tuesday, 11th January 1825.

THE HONBLE W^M H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Antoine Victoire St. Bresson, Esq. sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you resided in this colony? Since July 1797.—What profession or calling have you followed during that period? I came here as an officer in the Royal Foreign Artillery, in which corps I remained until 1802, being then a captain; I then became a sugar planter, which business I have followed ever since.—Do you manage your own estate, and continually reside upon it? Yes.—Have you been in the habit of hiring peons and free labourers? At the commencement, when I had free negroes, but not lately.—Why have you given up that practice lately? Because they are not to be depended upon; they only work as they please, and in consequence I was often deceived in my calculations.—How many

many slaves did you own when you were in the habit of hiring peons? From twenty-five to thirty.—How many have you now? Fifty-one.—You did not then find that your estate could be as profitably conducted by free labour as by purchasing additional negroes? I do not think that an estate can be conducted at all by free labour, which I assert from my practical knowledge, as I never would have purchased additional negroes could I have managed without them.—Were you not for some time commandant of the quarter in which you reside? Yes, for fourteen years.—Can a peon work in a quarter without permission from the commandant? He is obliged to report himself immediately on arrival, and show his permission of residence.—You then knew every peon who came into the quarter, and had as good an opportunity of hiring him as any other individual? I had.—As you have invariably managed your estate yourself, do you consider yourself well acquainted with the habits and dispositions of slaves? I do.—Do you consider honesty to be a common virtue amongst slaves?—Some are honest, but in general they are the reverse.—When you say “honest,” do you mean strictly honest, as the term is understood in England? Not exactly; there are some temptations which none of them can resist.—Is a thief considered a very discreditable character amongst them? If he steals from his fellow slaves they dislike him; but I never found that their characters seemed to suffer in each other’s estimation for stealing from their masters.—May not this arise from the management of the masters themselves in some cases? I am not aware of this being caused in any respect by the master.—If you had a driver on your estate, a clever active man, better fitted for that office than any other slave in your possession, would you break him for committing a theft? Yes, I broke a driver for that very crime; but after trying several other slaves, I was obliged to replace him again.—Then you admit that in some instances the master’s interest induces him to prefer a clever to a moral slave? Certainly. And do you not think that these examples must affect the moral feelings of slaves? They must; but the master cannot help himself.—Do you consider chastity to be an ordinary virtue among female slaves? Not in the least.—Have you any female slave upon your estate who has confined herself invariably to one husband? I have some who have lived regularly with the same man, but who have certainly not been faithful to him during that period.—Do you not consider it to be the interest of the master that slaves should be married together, and remain faithful to each other? Certainly; I have done all in my power to promote it, but they have invariably objected, and claim the right of consulting their own inclinations.—Did you ever punish them for changing their wives or husbands? I have occasionally punished some of the younger ones, but it had very little effect; and the elder generally allege such plausible reasons for a change, that I have considered that I should render them miserable by obliging them to remain together. Whenever I find a man with two wives, I endeavour to persuade him to give up one; but their general customs admit it; the women themselves do not object to it; and it is so well understood, that they have a particular appellation for two women living with the same man; they call each other “combosse.”—Do you then think it is impracticable to cure their ordinary habits of licentiousness? I think it impossible to do it for some generations.—Are slaves generally sober? Some are, the women much more than the men; but it is necessary to restrict them as much as possible from liquors, to prevent their making an improper use of it.—In what way do you feed your slaves? The gang in general are treated according to the existing regulations; the whole, little and big, receive three pounds and a half of salt fish in the week, and have as much land as they choose to cultivate; with the Sundays, holidays and half days, in the week out of crop, as prescribed by General Picton’s regulations.—Do they not invariably receive the whole profits arising from their labour in their own grounds? Invariably.—Will not a sense of their own interest induce them to work without compulsion? I am sure it will not; their indolence is in general so great, that they must be compelled to work on the extra days which I give them to work in their own grounds. I find it necessary to turn them all out in the morning, as if they were to work for me, and then march them into their own grounds; otherwise under one pretence or other they would hold back and loiter away the day.—How are your canes brought from the field to the mill? On the backs of mules principally; I am now about to use carts, having made the road practicable.—Did you ever bring them upon the heads of negroes? Never.—Do you think that it is practised upon any estate in the colony? I have never heard of it; in fact, it would be impossible, from the smallness of our gangs.—Did you acquire your gang of slaves by purchase?—The principal part of them; some by inheritance.—In either

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either case were families divided? In no case were children under sixteen divided from their mothers; and in no case would a proprietor ever purchase a woman without her children, or children without their mother; their own interest would prevent their doing it; in fact, it is an invariable custom for a planter to ask a slave, before he purchases him, whether he likes to serve him, and if he makes any objection, he knows that he would be of more trouble than profit to him.—Are husbands and wives ever divided for sale? Never, where the parties express a wish to live together; but as they have frequently more than one husband or wife, they are not very tenacious themselves on this point.—Do you consider night-work to be common upon sugar estates in this colony during crop? I do not think it can be common. Few estates in the colony make more than nine hogsheads of thirty-six inch truss per week, which will require only six to seven coppers of three hundred and fifty gallons of cane-juice each per day, which can easily be done, if the slave work moderately well from four in the morning until eight at night.—In such case, does the whole gang work during crop from four in the morning until eight at night? No; the mill gang, consisting of seven, turn out at four A. M. and turn in at six in the evening; the boilermen and firemen turn out at six A. M. and turn in at eight to nine at night; and the main body of the gang never work but in day-light, and have the same hours in and out of crop for their meals; this was the rate of work upon my estate formerly, and I have every reason to believe it to have been the same upon every estate in the colony of the same size.—Did you ever hear of a gang being obliged to work on the Sunday for the benefit of the master? I never heard of an instance of the general work of an estate being carried on, unless in the case of a fire amongst the canes, which rendered it necessary to grind and manufacture them immediately, in which case the slaves were always remunerated to their satisfaction; no other work was done but what necessity absolutely required, such as potting sugar, taking care of cattle, stock, &c. and the necessary watchmen; in other cases, such as carting sugar on Sunday, where a vessel required dispatch, the persons employed were volunteers, and were always remunerated, either by money or an equivalent in time during the week, as they might prefer.—What clothing do you give your negroes every year? A hat, a jacket of blue cloth, two pair of Osnaburgh trousers, two Osnaburgh shirts, and a blanket, every second or third year.—Do you find this sufficient for the purpose? Perfectly, when they are careful of them; but some of them sell them in spite of every precaution.—Do you ever punish them for selling their clothing? It would be useless to do it, they never will confess that they have sold it, and allege that it has been stolen.—Are not soldiers in the British army punished for selling or losing their clothes? Very severely.—What do you call very severe punishment? I mean from one to three hundred lashes, which I have known inflicted for such an offence.—Then do you generally consider punishments in the army to be more severe than those inflicted upon slaves? Beyond comparison, a great deal more in my time, since then I cannot speak from my own knowledge: I have known three thousand lashes sentenced to be inflicted upon a soldier for desertion when in garrison, of which he received as much at different times as the surgeon thought he could support; in some cases a part of the punishment was suspended and kept *in terrorem* over the head of an offender, which could be inflicted upon him at any future indefinite period without a court martial.—Were those who were punished prevented from doing duty immediately? They were regularly carried into the hospital, where some of them remained for three or four weeks before they could be turned out to their duty, or to receive the remaining lashes due to them, and this I have known repeated three times for the same sentence.—How long have you known a slave confined in hospital in consequence of a severe flogging? I have heard of one or two instances of slaves being confined three or four weeks, but to my own knowledge I never knew of a slave being confined more than three or four days; in general they turn out to work immediately.—How long is it since you knew of a slave being confined in the hospital from the effect of punishment? I think not within six or seven years past.—Do you consider punishments to be more or less severe now than formerly? Much less severe than formerly, when the number of new negroes required frequent punishments to keep them in order.—Do you think that a master, under the regulations which have existed in this colony for many years past, could commit an act of cruelty or unjustifiable severity with impunity? It is hardly possible, I think: to my own knowledge I know of none.—Could a master by any power he possesses prevent a slave from finding his way up to the syndic and guardian and making his complaint? He could not, sooner or later he would

would find his way up.—Do you think that the slaves have been long perfectly acquainted with the existence of an officer in Port of Spain appointed to redress their complaints? They know it, and have long known it perfectly well.—Is Sunday generally a leisure day to a proprietor or manager of an estate? On the contrary, the plauter has more to do and more anxiety on that day than on any other.—Whence does the necessity arise? It arises from the negroes having more liberty on that day, being more commonly drunk and riotous, requiring the watchful attention of the master to prevent fires and accidents, and it is considered indispensably necessary that a white man should always be upon the property on Sunday.—What language do the negroes generally speak in this colony? From the mixture of nations they generally speak a jargon of English, French and Spanish.—How long would it take an European to make himself intelligible as an overseer to the negroes? Three months at least, but sometimes much longer, according to the youth of the party.—Do you allude to the vocabulary necessary only for the usual work of the estate, or could he render himself intelligible on general subjects? I allude only to the work of the estate.—How long do you think it would take an individual so to master their language as to explain to their comprehension the ordinances of the Christian religion? I really cannot say, I think a very long time, for I have many negroes to whom I cannot teach the Lord's Prayer, although I have endeavoured to do so for these many years; they attend for that purpose every evening out of crop, and every Sunday morning in the year.—Of what faith are you? The Catholic.—Is the practice you have stated of collecting the negroes to prayers general amongst the Catholic proprietors? I believe it is.—Have you had an opportunity of seeing negro dances and entertainments in this colony? Yes, I have.—Under what regulations do these take place, and are they frequent? They take place only by permission of the master, and the driver or headsmen attends to keep order.—How often do they occur on your estate? Once or twice a month, but when not on my estate, on that of one of my neighbours, so that every Saturday night there is a negro dance.—Are they not frequently too much fatigued from the labour of the week to be able to dance on Saturday night? Never; but I have frequently known them to be too much fatigued on Sunday morning to go into their grounds.—In what style are these entertainments generally given? In a general way they dress in their best clothes, dance both Creole and African dances, drink lemonade and rum and water; but on particular occasions they have subscription balls, or what they call bouquet balls, so named from the king and queen of the night wearing a nosegay, which they present, when leaving the table, to two others, who preside at the next entertainment in the same capacity: on which occasion every person pays on entering two or four bits each (10*d.* to 20*d.* sterling) for the general expenses. On these occasions they have roast pigs, roast fowls and capons, sometimes hams, a great variety of cakes and fruits, rum and claret, with coffee and chocolate, sugar and syrop, as much as they can eat and drink. These entertainments begin with a dinner, and last until day-break the next morning, being from twelve to eighteen hours, during which period some of the negroes will go to the expense of changing their dresses two or three times; they wear muslin gowns, India smonckers, Madras handkerchiefs, ear-rings and necklaces in profusion, and many dress in shoes and stockings.—Do not the regulations restrict dancing beyond nine o'clock at night? They do; but on common occasions you cannot restrict them to that hour unless you leave your bed yourself; and on the particular occasions I allude to, they would be so discontented if not permitted to follow their usual custom, that no master would venture to prevent it.—How often do these bouquet balls occur, and are they always in the same expensive style? About once in every two months in my quarter, with very little variation in the same style, and I believe they occur as frequently in every other part of the island.—In what manner is a negro's property distributed after his death? In general they state before their death how they wish it to be disposed of; should this not occur, it is distributed amongst the nearest relatives.—Should it occur that a slave dies immediately after the annual distribution of clothing, is he considered to have the power of bequeathing it as his own property? Always.—Did you ever hear of a master interfering with the property of his slave, or taking any portion of it? Never, under any circumstances.—Do disputes frequently occur amongst slaves themselves respecting property, or any other cause? Frequently; but oftener from jealousy of their wives or husbands than from any other source.—In such cases do they appeal to the master for redress? They do so in cases of theft or assaults,

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but endeavour to keep their jealousies amongst themselves.—Would it be possible for this description of police to be administered by any other person than the master?—It would not be possible; they occur so frequently, that were they to apply to any other authority the loss of time would be ruinous to the estate.

Tuesday, 18th January 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} W^M H. BURNLEY, IN THE CHAIR.

Doctor *Alexander Williams* again called in, sworn, and further Examined.

YOU stated at your last examination by the Committee, that one principal cause of the mortality amongst newly imported Africans was chagrin; are you of opinion that this chagrin arose from strong feelings of sensibility excited by separation from ties and connections, or from being compelled to daily labour here after leading a life of comparative idleness in Africa? I think from an inclination of both these causes?—Do you ever observe any particular difference of manner, denoting a previous difference in rank or condition amongst these imported Africans?—I could observe no external appearance in manner denoting a difference in their condition.—Upon what class, then, did the mortality principally fall, upon the elderly persons or the young; or did you observe that the finest and apparently the most intelligent amongst them were the earliest victims? The people brought to the country were, generally speaking, all young, well formed and healthy, and from my observations and practice I do not think that the most intelligent amongst them were more liable to mortality than the others; on the contrary the Eebos, who were generally considered the most intelligent and high spirited, were the best labourers, and the average mortality amongst them did not equal that amongst the other tribes from Africa; the same with the Coromantee slaves, but not to the same extent.—You have stated to the Committee that the imported African slaves were generally in a healthy condition; but were there not always, in every cargo, a proportion of what was then termed “refuse people”? Yes, there were generally some in every cargo, but not many.—Were not these imported slaves landed always previous to sale? Yes, always.—Did your inspection and duty cease immediately upon their being landed? I had nothing to do with them as inspecting officer after sending in my certificate as to their condition on arrival, unless it was necessary to put them under quarantine, when my duties continued until it was discharged, but this only occurred once.—You have stated to the Committee, that in your opinion the treatment of slave women upon estates is in no respect instrumental to the decrease which has been observed annually in the slave population; but are you not of opinion that there is an increase generally in the population of domestic slaves? I cannot answer as to the fact of their being generally an increase; I can only say that in my own family many years elapsed without any of the females having children, and within the last three years two of the same women have commenced breeding, and have had each of them twins at a birth.—What are the ages of these women? One of them I believe to be twenty-six, and the other thirty-two.—To what cause do you ascribe the circumstance of their becoming mothers so late? I can only ascribe it to their previous debauchery and promiscuous intercourse.—Do you conceive it to be within the power of the master or mistress to improve the morals of the female slaves? I think it almost impossible.—Do you think it not practicable to confine the young female domestics to their apartments at night, as is the custom in Europe? I do not, unless by chaining or otherwise imprisoning them; I speak generally, there may be some individual exceptions.—From your observations in the course of your medical practice upon estates, do you consider slaves generally to be more or less healthy during the period of crop? Generally speaking, more healthy during the sugar crop; I cannot speak of coffee or cocoa crops, not having attended estates where that produce was cultivated.—Are the slaves generally less healthy at the conclusion than at the beginning of the sugar crop? I have always found them equally healthy throughout the crop.—Have you been in the habit of attending the free black and coloured labouring classes? I have occasionally.—From your observation have you any reason to think that they are more healthy than slaves in general? I have not observed them to be more healthy; on the contrary, I think them more subject to disease from their greater excesses and their bad habits;

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I have known many slaves who continued healthy so long as they were in slavery and under control, who after they had obtained their freedom became sickly from their excesses.—Do you own an estate in this colony? None, and never had an inclination to own one.—From whence does your disinclination to own an estate arise? From my aversion to the management and discipline necessary to govern a large body of negroes.—Are the domestics which you have about your establishment all slaves? All of them.—With the feelings you have expressed, why did you not prefer employing free persons? Because, in the first place, they are not to be procured but at a great expense; and in the next, on account of their general habits and characters, from which I should have apprehended as much or more trouble than I experienced from my slaves.

Council of Trinidad, on the Negro Character.

Burton Williams, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you resided in the colony? About three years and a half.—Whence did you come? From the Bahama Islands.—Did you bring many negro slaves with you? I brought altogether three hundred and thirty-one.—Did you reside many years in the Bahamas? Thirty odd years.—Did you acquire your property in slaves by purchase or inheritance? I inherited only seven, of which six are now living; and I purchased about one hundred, all the rest I raised.—What was the article cultivated upon your estate in the Bahamas? Cotton entirely.—How were your negroes fed, and what was the regulated allowance given to them? They were fed altogether upon corn, and the regulated allowance was eight quarts per week for the field hands, and half allowance for those under twelve years of age.—Did they receive no allowance of salt fish or herrings? They received nothing beyond their corn, except at Christmas, when it was the custom to give them about three or four pounds of either fresh or salt meat.—Do you consider eight quarts of corn to be sufficient for the subsistence of a working negro in the Bahamas for a week, exclusive of the provision he may raise in his own grounds? I know it is perfectly sufficient, having been engaged there in settling new estates, when the slaves had no resource of their own.—Had they generally any ground allowed to them to cultivate for their own emolument? Generally they cultivated a small garden, but had as much land as they pleased.—Had they any particular time given to them to cultivate this land? None, by law; generally speaking, they had nothing but their Sundays; I gave mine one day in each month, to encourage them.—Was the management of your slaves in the Bahamas subjected to legal regulations? The allowance of corn was fixed by law, as well as the limitation of punishments, which could not exceed thirty-nine lashes in one day.—In what manner was this punishment inflicted upon estates? Generally by switches cut out of the woods; some used cats, and some cow-skins.—Did you make any distinction between males and females? None.—Had you any military establishment in the Bahama Islands? Yes; in Nassau and New Providence.—In which of the islands did you reside? I had estates in three; in Elethura, St. Salvador and Wathing's Island, but mostly resided in the latter.—Had you any military post established on this island? None.—Did you never feel apprehensive of insurrection amongst your slaves from the want of this military protection? Not in the slightest degree; I had no fear of my negroes, and in time of war they were regularly armed with muskets issued by government, and served under their masters for the protection of the island against the enemy.—What induced you to quit the Bahamas to settle in this colony? From the poverty of the soil and general prevalence of hurricanes, in consequence of which for the last six or seven years the inhabitants generally had little or no revenue; hearing of the fertility of this island, and the inducements held out to settlers, I came here in the hopes of improving my property and circumstances.—Have your expectations in the respect to the fertility of the soil been realized? Perfectly; I have never seen better any where. I have been in most of the English islands, and am well acquainted with the best soils in the southern states of America, and consider the land of the quarter in which I reside to be equal to any I have ever seen.—Do you consider your slaves, generally speaking, to be benefited by their change of residence? In some respects I think they are, as they have a better opportunity of disposing of their surplus produce, and making money, than in the Bahama islands.—Do you consider them to be as well fed here as in the Bahama islands? With respect to quantity I think they are; but I consider corn to be a better food than plantains, or other island provisions.—Do you consider it to be more difficult

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to raise corn here than in the Bahamas? The Indian corn can be raised in greater abundance; but from its being so subject to the weavel, it cannot be depended upon as food for the whole year; and the Guinea corn, which we kept in reserve in the Bahamas, is not, from my observation, productive in this colony; every other description of ground provisions are fourfold more productive than in the Bahamas. With respect, however, to the feeding of negroes, I am firmly of opinion that the allowance of fish given here is too great, to which cause I principally attribute the prevalence of sores amongst my people soon after their arrival here.—Do you consider your slaves to be benefited by their change of residence in any other respects than those you have mentioned? Not for the moment; but I am of opinion, from the exhausted state of the land in the Bahamas, that in a few years I could not have made a revenue sufficient to clothe and maintain them, although I possessed one thousand three hundred acres.—But if your slaves had been left to take care of themselves, do you not think they would have found the means of clothing and maintaining themselves? I am convinced not; I know a case directly in point. Mr. Maly, a gentleman with whom I was acquainted, made his slaves free, in number from fifteen to twenty. About sixteen years ago they had as much land as they chose to cultivate; but they abandoned their cultivation and houses, and went into the town, and I believe there are only four or five of them now alive.—Have your slaves suffered in any respect since their arrival here? Some little in the seasoning, as I arrived here at the commencement of the wet season, and settled in the woods.—In what respects did they suffer; did you lose many of them? Many had fevers, and agues, and bowel complaints; but I lost only seven in the first two years.—You stated that they complained of sores soon after their arrival; do they continue to be troubled with them? They are now getting clear of them, having only two with sores, and those almost well.—From your experience since you have been in this colony, do you think that your gang will continue to increase in the same proportion as in the Bahamas? I have no reason to doubt it, from the increase had already; thirty-four children have been born since my arrival, of which thirty are now living; and in the Bahamas the usual loss from locked jaw within the first nine days was one third.—To what cause do you attribute the more frequent occurrence of locked jaw in the Bahamas than in this colony? I cannot account for it; I only know the fact.—Are you not aware that the slave population in this colony has been annually decreasing; and to what do you attribute this circumstance? I have been told so; and I think, from the observations I have made, that it may arise from the disparity in the sexes; and in the next place, I do not think sufficient care is given to their living together as man and wife, by giving a feast to the gang when they come together, and a sharp punishment when they part.—Are the sexes in your gang nearly equal? I think the females exceed the males by fifteen.—Is the nature of the labour performed here generally harder than the slave labour of the Bahamas? I think not; and my slaves have given me the same opinion.

Wednesday, 19th January 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY, IN THE CHAIR.

Doctor *James Lynch O'Connor*, sworn, and Examined.

OF what profession are you? The medical and surgical profession.—How long have you practised in the colony? I have been a licensed practitioner since 1817. For the two first years I was performing my duty as an assistant surgeon in the Royal Artillery; I then retired on half pay, and have since attended in my medical capacity upon families in Port of Spain and its vicinity, and upon slaves on estates in the country.—Do you own any estate in the colony? I own no estate, and have no interest in any.—What are the principal diseases to which slaves are subject in the colony? Inflammatory diseases, fevers, dysentery, mal d'estomac, dropsy and rheumatism.—Are they generally more subject to disease than you would expect to find in an equal number of Europeans in their own climate? I think they are more liable to disease than the labouring classes in the county of Mayo and Sligo, in which I principally resided during the early part of my life.—Do you then consider this climate to be less favourable to its natives than that of the north of Ireland?

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I consider the climate equally favourable, but attribute the greater prevalence of disease to their general habits of dissipation, and their great thoughtlessness; they take no care of themselves, but yield to the impulse of the moment, and never look to consequences; they require to be looked after in every stage like children; and if you wish to keep them in health they must be kept under control.—Do you consider the quantity of labour performed upon estates here by slaves to be injurious to their health? Not generally, but in some particular cases, such as a negro with a feeble constitution, and an external appearance of health; in these cases he may have too severe a task imposed upon him, without the master being conscious of it.—Do you think, generally speaking, that the quantum of labour expected from the slaves is more than they are capable of performing? Generally speaking, I do not; but I have sometimes suspected that a sufficient portion of time is not allowed to them for resting during crop.—Within your knowledge, what is the greatest number of hours which a slave has been obliged to work during the day, and which caused those suspicions? I cannot answer as to the number of hours; my suspicions arose from seeing the works about, and fire in the boiling-house, between nine and ten o'clock at night.—In those cases were you aware whether the people working at that late hour had been spelled or not? I cannot say, not being acquainted with the detail of the work of the estate.—Do you find the slaves generally less healthy in than out of crop? Always more healthy during crop.—Are you then generally of opinion that the diseases of slaves arise, in any degree, from their being overworked? I do not, except in the case I before alluded to, in which a man's physical strength may not be equal to his external appearance, which occurs now and then.—In such cases how is the master to act; from your knowledge of the slave character, do you think he could rely upon a slave's account of his own powers and capacity? Generally speaking, no reliance is to be placed upon their own account of themselves. I mention this circumstance as an evil inherent in compulsory services, many cases of which I have met with in the army, and for which there is no remedy.—Are you aware that in this colony the slave population has been regularly decreasing for some years? I am.—Can you attribute this to any particular cause? I can, to many causes, and, in my opinion, substantial ones. First, a large proportion of the negroes of this colony are Africans, amongst which there is a great inequality of the sexes; second, the prevalence amongst them of promiscuous intercourse, dissipation and drunkenness; third, the neglect and want of attention generally from the mothers to their offspring; and fourth, the extraordinary habit which prevails amongst them of young men cohabiting with old women. These causes affect the sources of population; independent of which, I am of opinion that great mortality occurs amongst a certain portion of slaves, who are left to provide for themselves in the same way as the best class, but who, from their perfect apathy and idleness, are totally incapable of taking care of themselves, and ought to have their food cooked and distributed to them daily, as is practised in many instances with respect to children on estates.—What proportion do you think these helpless slaves bear to the general numbers of the slave population? I cannot say exactly, it differs much upon different estates; but I do not think I am beyond bounds when I say that two-thirds of the slaves generally in the colony require to be fed like children. Do you think that the treatment of pregnant women in this colony can be improved by any further indulgences? I think it impossible; generally they have at present too much license and indulgence; it would be better to keep them employed in light work constantly, than allow them time to themselves, which is frequently passed in dissipation.—Are miscarriages frequent amongst the negro women?—I think women of all classes are more subject to miscarriage in a tropical than in a northern climate; they frequently occur amongst negroes, which I attribute in a great degree to their own imprudence, and I have strong suspicion that a practice (which they admit to exist amongst them) of procuring abortions is frequently the cause of them.—What is your opinion as to the general care and treatment of slaves in hospitals on estates? I think the owners are actuated by the best motives, but proceed upon erroneous principles in all cases where a medical attendant is not regularly attached to an estate.—Do you think that any material improvement could be made in the general treatment of sick slaves in hospital on those estates which you attend regularly in your medical capacity? I think that the men and women ought to be kept separate, and that stretchers (or a folding bed, with canvas bottom) should be furnished for each patient, and that they should be employed in light work as soon as they can perform it, whilst it is too commonly the case to allow them to remain perfectly idle until they join the effective gang.—In any case

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have you observed that there has been a deficiency in the necessary medicines, or in nourishing diet for the invalids? I have in no case found the proprietors backward in furnishing every requisite necessary, even at a considerable expense.—What is your opinion as to the advantages enjoyed by the slave population of this colony with respect to medical attendance, compared with the labouring population in Ireland? It will admit of no comparison; whole districts in parts of Ireland remote from cities have no opportunity of procuring medical assistance and nourishment at the same time, except from the county hospital, which is in no degree adequate to the wants of the lower classes, from which cause I am assured that numbers of them perish for want of proper assistance.—Are you of opinion that slaves in the colonies suffer more from the heat of the climate than the labouring classes of Britain from the severity of the cold in winter? The slave here suffers in no proportion from the heat of the sun compared to the oppression under which an European labours from the same cause in the harvest months, without adverting to the misery endured by the latter from the severity of the winter.—Is it common for slaves to be laid up by a *coup de soleil*, or from the effects of working in the sun? I have never known a case to arise from that cause alone.—You stated in answer to a former question, that you believed the diseases of slaves to arise principally from their own dissipation; to what species of dissipation do you principally allude? To their indiscriminate amours and excesses, which lead them to expose themselves in their visits to each other at all hours of the night; and as estates are widely detached from each other in this colony, they travel great distances and cross rivers, exposing themselves to the night air: any person in the habit of travelling at night, which medical men are obliged to do, meets them abroad at all hours; the men are, besides, much addicted to drinking ardent spirits, which is the source of many of their disorders.—Are the women as much given to these visits as the men? I believe them to be equally libertine, but the general custom is for the men to visit the women at night; when dances and entertainments take place the women are as much abroad as the men.—Do you think it possible for the master to keep his slaves, either male or female, at home during the night? I consider it to be impossible; even the soldiers in the black regiments cannot be kept in the barracks at night, although they are subject to three hundred lashes when they are detected.—Are the slaves to be found wandering about as frequently on the Saturday as on the other nights in the week? More frequently on that night and the Sunday night than the whole of the rest of the week put together; most of the mischiefs and accidents arising from riotous conduct occur on those nights, and I generally expect to find the consequences in the hospital on the beginning of the week.—Can you trust to their remaining in their beds at night when really sick and under the effects of medicine? There may be some exceptions, but in general no confidence can be placed in them, and the only prudent way is to lock them up during their sickness.—In general do you find them attentive to each other when sick? From the observations I have made during the whole of my practice I believe them to be perfectly indifferent to the sufferings of each other in general: a case occurred recently in which an incurable cripple on Mr. Black's estate could hardly meet with necessary attendance in consequence of his suffering under a loathsome disease; only one negro could be induced to go into his house even to give him food, notwithstanding every threat and persuasion on the part of their master.—Have you found slave mothers in general kind and attentive to their children? I knew a solitary instance of strong attachment on the part of a slave mother to her infant; she was ordered not to give it the breast in consequence of great debility succeeding a violent attack of disease, and a proper wet-nurse was provided for it; but notwithstanding every solicitation, and being warned of the fatal consequences which would result, she took forcible possession of the infant, persisted in suckling it, and died shortly afterwards from debility: with the exception of this case I believe them to be very careless about their offspring.—Have you ever been called in to attend upon a slave in consequence of the effects of corporal punishment? I only recollect one case, when I was called upon by the late protector of slaves to visit a slave who was suffering from the effects of a flogging: on examination I found that he had run away from the estate immediately after his punishment, and in consequence of neglect considerable ulceration had taken place.—In cases of punishments upon estates which may have fallen under your observation, is the culprit prevented from proceeding immediately to his usual labour? I recollect some few cases at the commencement of my practice where the slave was laid up four or five days in consequence of the effects of a flogging; latterly no such cases have come

come under my observation, and the common practice is for a slave to go to work immediately after he is punished.—Do you then consider the punishment usually inflicted by the whip on slaves to be severe, or the contrary? They are in general so trivial that I am never called in.—But may it not possibly occur that the severity of the punishment may be the reason why it should be concealed from you? I believe it to be impossible for an owner of a slave in any part of the colony with which I am acquainted to conceal any act of cruelty to a slave, from the facilities afforded to them to make their complaints.—Have you ever known a slave in this colony to be branded by his owner? I have never known it, and have never met with a slave branded or marked in any other way than with his country marks.—Is it still the practice in the British army to brand deserters? It was at the period when I quitted the service, and I believe still continues.—From your recollection are the army punishments by flogging more severe than those inflicted upon slaves in this colony for similar offences? It is impossible to compare them together: for repeated desertion and mutiny, or striking a superior, they suffer death; for drunkenness, leaving the barracks without leave, the most trivial theft, selling their necessaries, or an insolent word or gesture, they receive from one to three hundred lashes, as sure as the act is detected; and it is invariably necessary to take them from the triangle to the hospital to be placed under the care of the surgeon, the marks of which punishment they generally carry about them as long as they live.—Are you aware of any reason why a strict discipline should not be equally required for the government of a body of slaves as for a regiment of soldiers? I know of none; I believe the consequence of relaxation of discipline may be as fatal in the one case as in the other.—Have you been in the habit of attending the free labouring classes in your medical capacity? Yes, I am in the habit of attending many, and particularly the black soldiers disbanded in 1818.—In their habits, manners, and apparent condition, are the free labouring classes much superior to slaves? I think the slaves generally better fed and better clothed; those of the free labouring classes who have families suffer from want of food, and their children are very badly taken care of; their moral habits and characters are in no respect superior to slaves, on the contrary I think they are more depraved, being subject to no control: among many instances, I have heard of a negro man belonging to Mr. Roberts, who purchased his freedom two or three years ago for five hundred dollars, he never worked afterwards, and died in about six weeks, in want and misery, greatly owing, I believe, to his intemperance: the disbanded soldiers, although receiving an allowance from government, are, I believe, amongst the most miserable in the community, and are invariably given to hard drinking; none of these people are ever able to pay one farthing for medical attendance, I am occasionally obliged to feed those I attend, and in most instances I have met with the grossest ingratitude in return.—You are then of opinion that the condition of the free labouring classes in the colony is inferior to that of the slaves? My observations are limited to Port of Spain and three leagues round, and in that space I am decidedly of opinion that their condition is not equal to that of a slave; in health and strength a single free man appears to be in prosperity, but when he gets encumbered with a family, or deprived of his health from accident or disease, having previously made no provision, he and his family suffer the most abject misery; and I know many free labourers who cohabit with slave negresses from no better motive that I can discover but to insure themselves a subsistence.—When you first commenced attending upon estates, what time did it require to enable you to understand the language of the negroes? I have a great facility in acquiring languages, and having previously been in the habit of attending negro soldiers, I had no difficulty in understanding the slaves.—How long do you think it would take an ordinary individual to understand the language of slaves in this colony, and to render himself intelligible to them? I think it might take eighteen months, to make them intelligible to each other on every point connected with the routine of the estate; for any purpose beyond that I cannot say.—Do the Europeans arriving here in the capacity of tradesmen, apprentices and overseers, enjoy good health? No; I believe two thirds of them die in the first three years.—To what do you attribute this mortality? To a climate uncongenial to an European constitution; to indulgence in spirituous liquors, and ultimate abandonment of themselves.—Are you a married man? I am.—From your general acquaintance in this community are you of opinion that marriage is as general amongst the white men as in Europe? It is not so general as in Ireland.—Is it customary for the single men to keep coloured or black mistresses? It is very frequent among the single men.—To what cause do

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you ascribe the prevalence of this custom? Principally to a great disproportion between the sexes amongst the whites; and to the necessity of having some house-keeper to look after their domestic concerns, and to attend upon them when sick.—Are their connections generally temporary, and liable to be dissolved by sudden caprice? They are generally permanent, and last until the marriage or death of the keeper.—What are the usual consequences of either of the foregoing events to the female? If the man who has protected her is affluent, she is well provided for by him, and in any case she has generally an opportunity of saving enough to keep her comfortably for the rest of her life.—Is she the less considered by her relations in consequence of such a connexion? I should suppose not, for I have known some respectable coloured men marry women under similar circumstances, and their own families never hesitate to receive them.—In the course of your practice have you ever met with the case of a female in this colony reduced to disease, want and wretchedness, in consequence of such a connexion? I never met with such a case.—Can you state whether there is a single brothel in this colony? I do not believe there is one.

Tuesday, 25th January 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY, IN THE CHAIR.

Josiah St. Jago Robbins, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you resided in this colony? Ten years.—Of what country are you a native? I was born in Massachusetts, and brought up in Georgia.—Have you ever resided on the Spanish Main? Yes; I resided on the coast of the Gulph of Paria between eight and nine years.—What trade or profession did you there follow? I was a planter and owned two estates, there were about eighty slaves on each; the produce of the one was cotton, and of the other cocoa nuts.—Where those slaves attached to the estates when you purchased them? Those on the cocoa-nut estate were, on the cotton estate there were about fifty when I took possession, the remainder I purchased.—Were those slaves so purchased newly imported Africans? Yes.—Did they come directly from Africa to the Main, and what price did you pay for them? They came from the island of Trinidad, where they had been previously imported in British vessels, and cost me on landing at Guiria above 50 joes, or 400 dollars per head.—Had you a free population in your neighbourhood? Yes, there was no want of peons, who are universally spread over the Main; and there was a mission consisting of about three hundred Indians within fifteen miles of me.—Did you then find it more advantageous to purchase new negroes from Africa, than to carry on your cultivation by hiring free labourers in your vicinity? Decidedly so; I do not think it would have been practicable to carry on a cultivation by free labour alone; and that seemed to be the general feeling in the country, for every individual purchased slaves who had the means of so doing; even the free coloured and black people, of which there were a great number in the vicinity of Guiria who had been driven at different times from the French and English islands, and had taken refuge there, all cultivated their estates with slaves in proportion to their means.—What induced you to quit the Spanish Main? The revolutionary troubles existing there; I had openly attached myself to the independent cause; and when General Bores re-established the royal authority, I was obliged to fly for my life to this colony.—In what quarter of this island did you establish yourself? In the quarter of Chaguanas, where I still reside.—Have you any peons or free labourers in your vicinity? Yes, there are about twelve families of peons, who emigrated from the same cause as myself to this colony, who, from their previous knowledge of me, have settled and continue to reside upon my estate; and I occasionally hire free Americans who want employment.—What were your motives for permitting these peons to settle upon your estate? Motives of humanity in the first instance, as they came over from the Main in the most destitute and miserable circumstances that human beings could be in, without food or clothing, and suffering under diseases acquired in the woods whilst concealing themselves from the royalist forces; I hoped besides to make them useful, in some degree, in the cultivation of my estate, upon which I had only twenty-two negroes, with little prospect of increasing their number in consequence of the abolition of the slave trade.—Did these

these people, or do they now, pay any rent for the land they occupy? None at all; and I was obliged to assist them gratuitously at the commencement, by placing them on land already cleared of the timber, and in helping to build their houses.—Do you speak the Spanish language fluently? As fluently as I do English.—Do these peons speak good Spanish? Very good; in this respect they speak much more correctly than the lower classes of free English and French.—From your knowledge then of this class of people, acquired during your residence upon the Spanish Main, and in this colony, do you consider yourself to be perfectly acquainted with their dispositions, habits and manners? I think I am.—Have your expectations been realised with respect to their utility in assisting to cultivate your estate? From my previous knowledge of them I never formed very high expectations of their utility; but from the circumstances under which they emigrated here, I was in hopes that it might be possible to improve them, and attach them to the soil by the agreement entered into between us.—What was the nature and particular conditions of this agreement? I agreed, first, to assist in building their houses, and to accommodate them with lodging until they were completed; second, to support them until able to work out for themselves; third, in case of sickness or inability to work at any time, to advance to them their subsistence, to be repaid to me afterwards in labour; fourth, to allow them as much land as they chose to cultivate, free of rent; fifth, to find them employment whenever they were in want of it, at the rate of 3 s. 6 d. currency, one pound of salt fish, ten plantains, and two wine glasses of rum per day, with the understanding that they might take work elsewhere if they could get better wages.—Did you stipulate no conditions in return for these advantages? Only that they should give my work a preference when they could not make better terms elsewhere.—Were these conditions committed to writing? No, none of them could read or write, but they were frequently explained to them before the commandant of the quarter, and a Spanish gentleman, Don Juan Antonio Rancés, residing in our neighbourhood, with whom they were previously acquainted on the Spanish Main.—Are they generally stout able-bodied men, equal to the creole slaves? I think they are equally so.—Is there any work at which, by the task, they can earn more than 3 s. 6 d. per day without over exertion? At cutting down wood they can easily earn one dollar per day.—What then are the causes which prevent their being as useful as slaves in the cultivation of estates? Because you never can depend upon them; they work only when they please, have a great repugnance to it, and what they do is done in a more slovenly indifferent way than by the slaves.—Is it not possible to make a previous contract with them to work steadily every day for three months, one month, or even for a week? I have tried it often; at this moment it would be highly important to me to be able to induce them to work steadily; I have offered them 4 s. 6 d. per day instead of 3 s. 6 d. if they would continue constantly at work six days in the week; but in every case but that of one individual they have broken the contract within a day or two after it was made.—Would it not be possible to exact a penalty from them for breach of contract? Quite impossible; after remaining upon my estate above nine years, they are now in possession of no property, and are most frequently in my debt; to keep them upon the property I find it expedient to forgive them annually any small balance which may be due to me, otherwise they would start off to avoid the payment of it.—What are the circumstances which render their services important to you at the present period? I have taken a share in the contract for the supply of the hard wood required in the erection of the military barracks now building; and as we are bound to furnish it as fast as it may be required, it becomes essentially necessary to have a command of labour to a certain extent.—Are we to understand that you find much difficulty in complying with the contract in consequence of the indolence of these people? A great deal; I am obliged to keep forty on my working list, where twenty steady men could easily perform it; I am every day liable to vexations and disappointments; frequently when the carts have been loaden wth timber over night, and every arrangement made for their departure before daylight, the peon employed and hired as a carter was either not to be found, or refused to turn out for that day; and those employed in foddering the cattle required to draw the timber, will occasionally inform me at noon that they intend to work no more for the day; under those circumstances I am obliged to draw off the slaves from my cocoa estate, as well as from Mr. St. Hill's, who is joint contractor with me, to prevent the work standing still, or the cattle from starving; and unless we possessed these slaves in reserve, I feel assured that it would be impossible to complete the contract.

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—Are you then of opinion that no dependence can be placed upon them as free labourers, and that they cannot be advantageously employed as such? Certainly; no dependence can be placed upon them, and no person would ever employ them for any other purpose than felling timber who could procure slaves. On our fertile soil they are to a certain degree useful when you can get no other hands, and work under the eye of the proprietor in the same manner as slaves, but to leave them to themselves to work as free men in other countries, I know, from an experiment I have made, that they cannot be advantageously employed in the cultivation of the soil.—What was the experiment to which you allude? About five years ago I purchased a grant of fifty quarrés on the banks of the river Canupia, which is as fertile as any land in the colony, for the particular purpose of making the experiment; I placed six families of peons upon it, which have occasionally varied from four to ten; I found at the onset that it was impossible to commence the cultivation without some slave labour, for the land being flat and alluvial requires draining, and the peons have such an aversion to this work that I was obliged to employ slaves to perform it; they then planted plantains, and young coffee and cocoa trees, the work of which was laid out under my directions, but the weeding was afterwards so badly performed that the whole of the coffee trees are destroyed, and about one half of the cocoa; as long as the plantains remained in bearing I was enabled to pay the expenses of their hire, but since they have begun to fail I am obliged to advance money for that purpose, and I am now contemplating the abandonment of the place.—Would it not be saleable in the market even in its present state? To a person possessing a gang of slaves without land, it would be a very valuable property, but this is not now likely to occur.—Have those families of peons which were settled upon your estate at Chaguanas increased in numbers during their residence? No, they have rather diminished, the greater part of the children born have died.—To what do you attribute this mortality? Entirely to want of care in the mothers; for the negro children belonging to my female slaves, who have been under my own care during the same period, are all, with the exception of one only out of ten, alive and healthy.—Are they not then attached to their offspring? Yes, the mothers seem very fond of them; but as they will not forego any of their habits of dissipation and wandering, the children from neglect get diseased and perish.—Are the women much given to wandering? Yes, they generally accompany their husbands on their hunting expeditions, and are fond themselves of fishing, being frequently absent in the woods two or three nights with their children.—What are their domestic habits and occupations? They do little or nothing but work the provisions for their families, and wash their clothes when they have a change, which is not often; the greater part cannot sew, and employ those who can to make up the garments for them; they spend the greater part of the day in smoking and sleeping.—In what condition do they keep the cultivation on the ground which you gave up to them on your Chaguanas estate? There is not now a sign of cultivation; for the first two or three years they had some provisions in consequence of my allowing them to reap what was growing on the land which I had previously trenched and planted with provisions and cocoa, and which it was understood they were in consequence to keep clean; but in this I was disappointed, and have given that plan up.—How do they now subsist themselves? They depend entirely upon their wages, with hunting and fishing.—Do they profess to be catholics? They do.—Are they attentive to their religious duties? In no one respect, but in tenaciously keeping all the holidays and feast days, and they generally abstain from dancing and music during lent; I believe only two or three of the women know the Lord's Prayer.—Have they been regularly married together by the priest? I believe they only cohabit together as suits their inclinations; some of them have changed their wives and husbands two or three times since they have been on my property.—Are these parties held in less estimation, or considered in less reputable characters by the rest of their country-folk? Not at all; constancy seems not to be considered a virtue amongst them, and chastity is, I believe, quite unknown; three of the women notoriously live with two husbands, one in particular, who is considered a headwoman amongst them, occupies a house, in the two wings of which her two husbands quietly reside, and in fact I may say they live in a state of nature.—Are they fond of strong liquors? They are extravagantly attached to rum, and will do any thing to obtain it.—Do the women drink rum as well as the men?—They are equally fond of it, and will drink to intoxication when they can procure it.—Are they quarrelsome or violent when in liquor?—Very much so; I may safely say there is a drunken riot every Sunday, in which they often wound each

each other with sticks or cutlasses.—Do you ever interfere on these occasions? Whenever I hear of cutlasses I do; but broken heads are so frequent that I leave them to settle their matters themselves.—Have you any authority to act as magistrate over them? No official authority.—Do you take upon yourself to settle their complaints, or punish them for these offences? In some instances I am obliged to do so to prevent more serious consequences.—Do you believe that they consider you to be invested with authority? They do; if they thought I possessed no authority over them they would be unmanageable, and I should be obliged to turn them off the property or leave it myself.—Is the commandant of the quarter aware of your exercising this authority?—He is, being aware of the necessity of it.—As these peons, according to your account, have generally no property at the end of the year, how do they dispose of their money? As they usually work only three days in the week, they have to purchase provisions for the other four days, and the remainder of their money is generally expended in rum and tobacco.—On what food do they principally subsist? On salt fish, plantains and corn, and occasionally a little salt pork.—Do they never eat fresh provisions, or raise poultry and pigs? The only fresh meat they have is the game they catch; pigs they never raise; to induce those I placed upon my Canupia estate, I gave them two breeding sows, on the condition that I should share in their produce; there was no difficulty in feeding them from the plantains which are blown down in an unripe state; but upon inquiry after my share, six months afterwards, I found they had eaten up the little pigs as well as their mothers.—Do they expend much money in clothes?—They cannot, with the exception of a few; they do not lay out as much money as the clothing of my slaves cost me.—Are you then of opinion that they do not expend as much money in British manufactured articles as the slaves? In no proportion, I do not think one half as much; their general expenditure in clothes cannot equal what by law we are obliged to provide for our slaves, without calculating the finery the latter invariably purchase for themselves.—You consider, then, their condition not to be equal to that of slaves?—Their condition and comforts are in no respect equal to that of slaves, they are abandoned to every description of vice, and in case of sickness would die of want and misery unless relieved by charity.—Do they frequently apply to you in such cases? Frequently; I have been feeding one man for the last five months, he is not above thirty years of age; but when he fell sick he had not the means of providing for himself for a single week.—Are they generally kind and hospitable to each other when in sickness and distress? They are, as far as their limited means permit, but they rarely have a provision for the morrow.—From your knowledge of other free labourers, do you consider the Indians or free Americans to be a better description of people than the peons? The Indians are less vicious, but they are not equal to the peons in capacity for labour; the Americans make much more money, those I have employed being principally sawyers, who can easily earn one to one and a half dollars per day, the whole of which they spend in rum, provisions and clothes; those who work with me take regularly one bottle of rum per day; I endeavoured to limit them to half, but many left me on that account; and to prevent a failure of the timber contract I was obliged to submit to their demand. In their moral habits they are in no respect superior to the peons, and they are so indolent that none of those I employ have earned more than \$150, in the last twelve months.—What do you raise upon your estate at Chaguanas? Cocoa only.—How many slaves have you upon it, and do you employ a manager? I have twenty-two slaves, and I manage it myself.—Have you a medical attendant engaged by the year to visit your gang? There is none in the quarter, but I was originally myself brought up for the profession, although I never practised it publicly, I have always prescribed for my own slaves, and consider myself well acquainted with the diseases of negroes; I am in the practice of attending, as a friend, the slaves upon the estates in the neighbourhood.—Can you form an opinion as to the cause of the decrease of the slave population of this colony? The principal cause I consider to be the opening of new lands, which operates equally in cold as in hot climates, by creating exhalations injurious to the general health; the next is the promiscuous intercourse which prevails not only amongst the slaves, but between the slaves and the lower classes of free people; I am not aware of any other leading causes.—Do you think that they are in all cases fed and properly lodged? In the quarter of Chaguanas I am sure they are, from the opportunities I have had of judging when visiting the sick upon estates.—In what mode are the slaves fed in Chaguanas?—They receive weekly three and

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a half pounds of fish for each adult person, and half allowance for the children ; they have the regular days for working their grounds, and their provisions are so abundant that two or three provision boats are loaded by the slaves every Friday for the market in Port of Spain, and this out of a population of four hundred.—But notwithstanding the general prosperity of the slaves, have you not observed that upon every estate there are some who will not provide for themselves under every advantage ? There are some ; but very few can suffer in Chaguanas, the cultivation being principally cocoa, which cannot be raised without plaintain trees for a shade, the general abundance is so great that none can want ; great care and attention is also paid to this subject, the managers looking carefully after the slaves, and obliging them to go into their grounds.—Do the slaves receive the whole produce of their grounds for their own private benefit ? After feeding themselves they have the whole surplus.—Do you then consider this stimulus to be insufficient, and that compulsion is besides necessary to induce them to work their grounds ? With some few it is quite sufficient, but the majority would be in want if coercion were not employed to make them work.—Are you then of opinion that slaves generally are not sufficiently provident to take care of themselves ? I am sure they cannot ; the estate I possess furnishes a strong case in point ; when Mr. Herriot, the former owner, died, he left twenty-one slaves, the executor left them to take care of themselves for three years ; he furnished them with nothing, and expected nothing from them ; they had their whole time at their own disposal, with all the plantains and provisions upon the estate ; during the period seven died, and those remaining were in so miserable a state that three of them were past cure, and I think the whole of them would have gone very shortly, if they had not fallen under the care of a master.—What proportion of the slaves in the colony do you think could be trusted with wages in money in lieu of rations and clothing ? I have only two out of twenty who would not abuse that confidence, and I believe my slaves to be as good as the generality of slaves in the colony.—During your residence in Georgia, had you any opportunity of being acquainted with the discipline of slaves in that state, and the nature of their punishments ? Not particularly ; I was acquainted with several proprietors, and was often upon estates, but was not a planter myself ; I believe in general their system to have been much more strict and severe than in the West India colonies.—How was the system upon the Spanish Main ? About the same as in this colony before the order in council.—Are you in the habit of communicating occasionally with individuals of the Spanish Main ? I am.—What has been the effect of the edict declaring all slaves born after a certain day free ? I can only speak with respect to the effect in that part of the country in which I resided, which is nothing, in consequence of the destruction of the slave population ; the greater part of the men were carried off to the armies, and the women and children died in the woods : of the one hundred and sixty which I possessed, I can only ascertain, from the latest accounts, that sixteen are now remaining.—Is it not possible that some of these may be manumitted, and are now living as free people ? No, I am sure there are none, as they have a very rigid police ; of the sixteen I have mentioned, two of them had wandered to the island of Margueritto, and one to Rio Caribes, one hundred miles from Guiria, and were reported to me as ready to be given up.—Are not those who have joined the army declared free ?—They are free to remain in the army, but if they wish to quit it must remain in their master's service.—Do you consider the peons on the Main to have been equally depraved in habits and manners with those of this colony ? They are the same people, with the same habits and inclinations, but under greater control ; the commandants kept those in their immediate neighbourhood under awe, and confined them in the stocks for the slightest offences ; those who resided in the country lived very detached from each other, and had greater difficulty in procuring rum.—After the settlement of affairs upon the Main, had the proprietors much difficulty in collecting and recovering their slaves ?—Those that remained were glad to return to the protection of their former masters ; mine would long ago have joined me here, could they have been admitted. I have now one woman, whom I freed for her faithful services when I left the Main ; after an absence of six or eight months she found me out, and followed me to this colony, and has lived with me ever since voluntarily as a slave, without wages, receiving her clothes and provisions.—Are you acquainted with any similar instances in this colony ? I believe Mr. Graham, in my neighbourhood, has a negro man whom he manumitted some years ago, but who prefers remaining in his service on the same footing as before.—Were the proprietors on the Main very
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attentive to the religious duties of the slaves? They were; in this respect they were much better instructed than the peons; they had prayers regularly upon most estates every evening, which the overseers superintended, or in his absence the driver.—Did the effects of this system operate favourably upon the minds of the slaves?—I think it did; it brought them together at night, taught them habits of subordination, which the implicit obedience inculcated by the catholic religion tended greatly to promote.—Were they in other respects more moral in their behaviour and manners than the slaves in this colony? They certainly were in every respect; showed a greater outward appearance of propriety, and were less insolent and more obedient to their duties.—Are you of the catholic religion yourself? I am.—Have you adopted the same system with the slaves on your estate in this colony? I have not; I shrunk from the task; I found their habits always fixed, and could have little hope of success with the establishment of free people upon my estate, whose depravity was incurable; the facility also in procuring rum in this colony is a great obstacle to the improvement of the slaves, for we always found on the Main that the morals of the slaves were better in proportion to their distance from the great towns.—Do you consider a certain quantity of rum necessary for the health of working negroes? Much depends upon their previous habits, and in low swampy situations I think they require it; I think they generally require more here than on the Main.—Could slaves on the Spanish Main procure rum whenever they pleased? Only those in the vicinity of the town, and it was never considered necessary to serve it out to them as a ration.

Council of Trinidad, on the Negro Character.

Wednesday, 26th January 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WILLIAM H. BURNLEY, IN THE CHAIR.

Joseph Peschier, Esquire, again called in, sworn, and Examined.

FROM the wandering habits of the peons, is it possible for the commandants of quarters to exhibit a correct annual return of their numbers? No, we cannot; they avoid, besides, as much as possible reporting themselves.—How do the wandering peons subsist in old age and sickness? I know one, named Juan Assevero, who is superannuated and maintained by his children, who are slaves on the Ross Park estate, and another named Pasqual, who is also maintained by the slaves on the same estate.—Do you suppose that they can at all times afford each other Christian burial? As far as their means and situation permit, they may; one of the most respectable amongst them in my neighbourhood, Juan de la Cruz Marchand, died last year; he was buried in his ordinary clothes, without any coffin; and when I remonstrated with his son afterwards on the subject, he defended himself by pleading his want of means to bury his parent better.—Should any of them die from debility or disease whilst wandering from one quarter to another through bye places, would the commandant always receive notice of the event? No, they generally bury them without notice to the commandant.—Is there no particular officer appointed to whom cases of violent death, or deaths arising from accident, are reported? I believe they are always correctly reported to me.—Has the village occupied by Sir Alexander Cochrane's apprentices been ever visited by any of the missionaries in the colony? A Mr. Stephenson paid a visit to the village in October last; I have not heard of his being there since.—Is there any impediment to the missionaries teaching and preaching to the people? None, if they present a written authority of the governor; but these apprentices generally call themselves Roman catholics.—In what manner are the slaves fed in the quarters over which you preside? Every one above twelve years of age receives three and a half pounds of fish in the week, and half that quantity for those under that age.—Is the half allowance of fish for the children given to the mothers to provide for them? I give the mothers one half of the half allowance only; the remainder I keep myself, and have a pot boiled for the children, consisting of fish, plantains and yams, and occasionally salt beef and rice, of which I give the children that are weaned two meals a day, besides what they receive from their mothers; the sucking infants are brought to the house, and get pap made of flour in my kitchen three times a day.—Is it usual to adopt the plan with respect to the sucking infants? No; the usual plan is to give the mothers the flour and sugar to provide the pap for the infants; but finding that in

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some cases the infants suffered by the mothers eating the flour and sugar themselves, I adopted this plan.—How do the adult negroes supply themselves with ground provisions? From the produce of their gardens; they have more land than they can cultivate, and have often more time allowed them than the regulations of General Picton direct.—Do you consider then that the time allowed by those regulations is not sufficient for the purpose? Yes, I consider it amply sufficient.—Why then do you allow them more? Having removed the cultivation and works of my estate into new lands, this arrangement rendered it necessary for the negroes to establish new grounds, and I gave them in consequence additional time; to the negroes of the Carapichina Hall estate I was obliged to grant the same indulgence, in consequence of the abandonment in which they had left their grounds when they fancied they were to be made free.—Are all the adult slaves able to feed themselves properly under these arrangements? Generally so; some few I am obliged to feed.—The Committee have been given to understand by a medical gentleman, that in his opinion two thirds of the negroes in the colony have not sufficient foresight to provide for themselves in this mode, to which he attributes, in some degree, the mortality which occasions the decrease annually in our slave population; from your general experience do you consider this opinion to be correct? If the slaves were left entirely to themselves, and not compelled to work in their grounds on the days allotted to them, a large proportion of them would suffer; but when they are properly attended to in this respect, I believe not more than two or three in a gang require to be fed with daily meals; and they are generally so worthless who require this management, that I never knew of one living for any length of time under it.—But the Committee understand it to be the regular plan in Barbadoes for the master to feed the slaves, and not to give them land to work on their own account, and in that colony they appear to thrive and increase in numbers? Barbadoes is a drier island, and may be more healthy, and that system of feeding being universal there the negroes are accustomed to it; here they would consider it to be a disgrace, and would lose all the advantages they derive from the sale of their surplus produce; and I think they would suffer greatly by having such a measure forced upon them.—Could no plan be adopted to fill up their vacant time advantageously on the Sunday? I am not aware of any; if there were any church on the quarter the well disposed would attend it, but the idlers and ill disposed never would but from fear of punishment; I am now obliged to correct some who absent themselves at the usual hour of prayers.—Could not the manager or overseer devote some portion of his time on Sundays to the instruction of the slaves? The overseers on the estate under my charge attend regularly morning and evening prayers on the Sunday, which occupies, with the calling of the roll and assembling the slaves together, about one hour; they have no further time to spare without neglecting their necessary duties, which includes attendance on the militia once a fortnight, looking after the stock-keepers to prevent trespasses by the cattle, watching in every direction to guard against fires, and generally keeping the police amongst the slaves, which is more necessary on the Sunday than on any other day.—What clothing do you give your slaves? In the course of the year I give them two suits, consisting in the whole of one blue jacket of pennistone, two shirts of duck and osnaburgh, and one duck and one osnaburgh trowsers, with a hat; and every other year a blanket.—Do you give those articles all at the same time? No, I give every six months, having found that when they received the whole together some of them sold a part.—Do you consider the quantity of clothing allowed them by the regulations to be sufficient for their health and comfort? I think it amply sufficient as the well disposed slaves who are careful of their clothes make them last much beyond the year; when in the field they generally prefer working with a piece of osnaburgh tied round their waist, forming a short petticoat.—Would it be advantageous to allow people of this description a fixed sum of money in lieu of their clothing, and allow them to find themselves? I think not; for although capable of taking care of their clothes, most of them I fear would spend their money in rum.

José Antonio Adia, free man of colour, introduced by Mr. Peschier as a person capable of giving the Committee information relative to Sir A. Cochrane's apprentices, sworn, and Examined.

Thomas St. Hill, acting as Interpreter.

OF what country are you? I am a native of Cumana.—How long have you been in this colony? Seven years.—Where have you principally resided during that period?

period? For the last three years in the quarter of Carapichinia; before, I lived in Chaguanas.—What trade do you follow? I am a sawyer.—Are you acquainted with the free people who formerly worked with the slaves on Sir A. Cochrane's estate? Yes, I have lived above a year in their village with one of the women, by whom I have a child.—Are these people generally well behaved? They are very fond of drinking, and when drunk, are constantly fighting.—Do you think the conduct of these people worse than that of other free people? Yes, I think much worse; they drink harder, and are fonder of fighting.—Do they ever injure each other in their quarrels? Punir wounded Paschal with a cutlass in the thigh; Demdenard struck Dublive in the face with the handle of an axe, which would have killed him if he had not avoided the principal force of the blow, by getting behind the door-post; and Basil set fire to Tristram's house in the middle of the night when asleep, with the intention of burning him, because he had been obliged to pay Tristram in the morning two dollars which he owed him.—Is there no one in authority over them to keep them in order? Yes, one of the number, named Fly.—What steps does Fly take, in case of a drunken riot, to quell it? He finds it very difficult to do any thing; they pay no attention to his orders; and when he directs one to tie another, they refuse to do it, and he calls me to assist him.—Has Fly ever punished these people for their misbehaviour? Yes.—What punishment does he inflict upon them? He flogs them with a mammuri (a ratton) upon the breech.—Do you think they deserved the punishment inflicted upon them? Yes, they did; it was in consequence of their fighting with each other, and to prevent further mischief.—Do you think their behaviour would be worse if they did not receive the punishment for the offences? Yes; if there was no one in authority they would be much worse.—Why do you continue to live amongst so bad a set of people? I would gladly quit them, if I could obtain permission for my wife and child to accompany me; but she is obliged to remain in the village.

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Thomas St. Hill, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

ARE you not commandant of the quarter of Chaguanas? I am.—How long have you filled that office? Since August 1820.—In your return of March 1824, to his Excellency the governor, of free people domiciled in your quarter, the whole are stated to be labourers; do you mean by this term that they all work out daily for hire? They are all day labourers.—Are the Committee to understand that they are like day labourers in Europe, and can at all times be hired for agricultural purposes for the day, the month, or the quarter? No; they take only such employment as they prefer, and work only when they please.—What occupation do they prefer? They prefer felling wood by contract, and will work in no other way when they can get occupation in that.—When so occupied, will they work steadily six days in the week? On the average I do not think they work more than three days in the week.—When not occupied in felling timber, will they weed, and perform the ordinary labour of slaves? They will cut down weeds with a cutlass, and pick cocoa, but will never engage to weed with a hoe.—Are you not obliged to trench the land which you plant with cocoa in Chaguanas? We are; it would produce nothing without it.—Can these free people be induced to perform the work, and handle a spade? I have frequently offered them extra pay to do so, but could never succeed.—Do they live entirely by what they earn as labourers, or do they cultivate any ground for themselves? They live by their wages; only four of the individuals included in my return to the governor cultivated land for themselves, and they have latterly given this up.—Are they in any state of comfort or prosperity? Quite the reverse; their personal appearance is miserable; they have no provision for the morrow; and when taken sick, they depend upon the proprietor of the estate where they are working for support.—In such cases do they always repay the advances which may be made to them? Very rarely; in most cases which have fallen under my observation, they take the first opportunity of absconding from the estate.—Do they provide their own tools when they come to work? Never; you are always obliged to provide them.—Amongst the manumitted slaves contained in your returns, do any of them work out as labourers? Two of them.—Do they work steadily or occasionally? More so than the peons; one of them, who is since dead, worked for me as steadily as a slave.—Are the manumitted slaves in your quarter generally better behaved than peons? Yes; those in my quarter were mostly domestics, who were gratuitously manumitted by their masters for their good conduct.—Are you not contractor for the labourers employed in the erection of the new barracks

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at St. James's, now building by the Board of Ordnance? I am.—What is the greatest number of labourers at any time employed there? Two hundred to two hundred and fifty.—Do you pay them higher than the usual rate of wages in the country? I did at first; but I consider 5 s. per day, which I pay them at present, to be equivalent to 3 s. 6d. in the country with rations.—Are all the labourers you employ free people? Not more than two thirds.—Why do you employ slaves? Because they were tendered to us.—Could you have procured a sufficient number of office labourers? We found it impossible, and were obliged to employ an agent to procure labourers from the Spanish island of Margueritta.—How many did you procure from that island? About thirty to forty.—Is there not a regular check-list kept, showing the number of days work performed by each individual? Yes, we keep a weekly list of the work performed by the Margueritta people, and a monthly list of the others.—Can they maintain themselves during these periods, or do you make them advances? We are obliged to make them advances almost daily, by which we are sometimes losers.—How long since you commenced this contract?—The contract has been entered into some time, but the building of the barracks only commenced in April or May 1823.—Have any of the free labourers worked steadily during the whole of that period? None; the longest period any of them has worked has been six months; generally they do not remain more than six weeks.—During these six weeks how many days in the week do these labourers work steadily? Expecting this question to be put to me I have carefully examined the check-list of the free labourers for a period of two months, and find that their average labour amounts to fourteen and a quarter days in the month.—Do you believe this to be a fair average of their work throughout the whole period? I do.—Have you examined the check-list of the slave labourers during the same period? I have not.—Do you think that they have kept to their work more steadily than the free labourers? I think so, but will take an early opportunity of ascertaining it.—At this kind of work do slaves labour as well as under the eye of their master? By no means, the slave is under no more control than the free labourer, and the master only knows what work he has performed at the end of the month.—In general, which description of labourers would you prefer? Slaves, if they could be procured.—Are overseers employed at the barracks to keep the labourers to their work? Yes.—Is the day's work they require light or heavy? I should not consider it to be heavy, as I have known them return from their work occasionally at two o'clock, when I have every reason to believe they had completed their tasks.—Do you think the overseers would permit them to go before they had completed their tasks? Certainly not, if they attempted it they would be checked.—Would a casual observer be able to distinguish the free from the slave labourer at St. James's, by his air, manner or appearance? Not at all, there is no difference in their appearance.—Do the free labourers seem to enjoy more comforts, or does their condition appear to be any way superior to that of the slave labourers? I consider their situation not to be equal to that of the slaves; for in health they are no better off, and in sickness they have no visible means of support.—Do you know of any other contract for labourers existing at present in this colony besides your own? There is no other.

Tuesday, 1st February 1825.

THE HONBLE WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Robert Mitchell, Esquire, again called in; sworn, and Examined.

[Mr. Mitchell presented to the Board Returns of the population, births and deaths of the American refugees; of the individuals found cohabiting together in 1817; of those who had been married by the Rev. Mr. Clapham; of those who had formed connexions together subsequently; and of the separations and changes which had since taken place. Also a copy of Minutes of Council of the 11th July and 15th November 1816, with a Letter from his Excellency the Governor of the 13th August in the same year, addressed to Mr. Mitchell, as superintendent; the whole containing instructions under which he has governed the American refugees.]

BY the return of population it appears that the total number of the refugees is now nine hundred and twenty-three, which exhibits an increase of one hundred and
forty-

forty-seven since their first settlement; but in the same return the Committee observe that sixty-five are absent without leave; how long is it since you have seen the whole of these sixty-five people? There are about one dozen that I have not seen within the last five or six years.—Can you say how many of them you have seen within the last twelve months? I think about twenty of them.—What assurance have you that the remaining forty-five are still alive? From occasionally making inquiries respecting them of the others.—From your former statement to the Committee relative to variations in prices of corn and rice at the settlement, are they to understand that those variations took place in different years, or annually at different seasons? Annually at different seasons.—What does rice generally sell for in the husk? I do not know of any having been sold in that way except for seed, for which I have paid six dollars per barrel.—Is the cultivation of rice increasing? It is.—How many barrels of corn and rice could you purchase by contract in the season? I think the whole of the settlers may raise throughout the year two thousand barrels of corn in the ear, and four to five hundred barrels of rice in the husk.—As you stated that many of the refugees had not been regularly married from the want of a clergyman, the Committee wish to know if any obstruction or impediment exists to the visits of the missionaries? There is no impediment; in one instance, at the commencement of the settlement, an individual missionary, whose character would not bear the strictest scrutiny, was prevented from visiting them.—What road-duty are the refugees obliged to perform? For the last two years they have not worked more than one day in the year on the public road, besides keeping the roads to the settlements cutlassed, which may have taken about as much more time.—Is their individual duty upon the road generally equal to that of the slaves in your quarter? It is not; the slaves are generally obliged to work about six days in the whole year.—What is your salary as superintendent? 50 s. currency per diem since 1818; previous to which it was 4 l. currency.—Are there any other officers who receive a salary? Yes, the assistant superintendent receives 15 s. per day, and is allowed besides 7 l. 4 s. per month for the hire of two servants; no other salary or expenses are now attached to the establishment.—What advantages do the serjeants and corporals receive? They receive nothing; their appointments are honorary.—The Committee having been given to understand that these officers are the most influential persons to procure the services of the others, when required by the planters; do you think they may not occasionally receive bribes or douceurs for so doing? I have heard of one or two instances of this occurring shortly after their arrival, but latterly I have every reason to think that they have received nothing.—With your present experience and knowledge of these people, are you now of opinion, that if the monies defrayed by the government had not been expended in their establishment, and that these people had been left to their own resources, they would have suffered materially? I have not the least doubt on the subject.—Are you of opinion that at the present time the discipline under which they are kept could be advantageously dispensed with? I am sure it could not, either with regard to their own comfort, or the security of the neighbourhood; those who attach themselves to the village are in better circumstances than those who are habitually absent; and by the returns of deaths, the Committee will see that ten out of the twenty-two deaths since 1823 have occurred amongst one hundred and eighty-seven absentees.—Could you not advantageously substitute fines in lieu of corporal punishments for offences? I think it would be very injudicious to attempt it; if any of their little property was seized, I think they would immediately start from the settlement.—What description of property are they generally possessed of? A few fowls and pigs.—Have none of the superintendents, or the most industrious amongst them, horses, horned cattle, carts or wheelbarrows? None of them; I recollect one who had a horse, but he was not used for any purposes of agriculture, and did not live more than six months.—By the second article of the minute of council of July, it is directed that the spots selected for the establishments of the Americans should be of the best land; was this attended to? It was, as the land will show.—What proportion of time in the week, properly applied upon such land, do you consider to be sufficient to subsist an individual? I think half a day, properly applied, would be sufficient.—Were the five quarries of land given by the government distributed to each family, or to each individual? Every man received five quarrés, whether with or without a family.—What plan do you adopt with respect to the young men growing up, do you give them land? Only one has applied, and I gave him five quarrés.—Have not many young men grown up since the first distribution? I cannot say; there must have been several.—Do the parents seem attentive in bringing up their children

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children to industrious habits? The Americans more so than the Africans.—In this respect will the best of them bear a comparison with the labouring classes in England, who generally oblige their children to do something useful at an early age? No, it will bear no comparison; they generally let their children have their own way.—From your observations, do you think that the next generation will be more industrious than the present? I fear that the facilities they possess of gaining a livelihood in this colony will present obstacles to their improvement in this respect.—Are they permitted by the government to sell their lands? They are not.—Is it part of your duty as superintendent to visit their cultivations, and where you observe neglect to spur them on? It is; I have been unremitting in that part of my duty; and unless I had exercised it, many of them would not have done as much as they have.—How often do you visit them for that purpose? Upon an average about twice a month; but it is one of the principal duties of the assistant superintendent to visit their cultivation once a week.—If this duty were now suspended do you think their cultivations would be neglected? I should apprehend it.—What are your other essential duties beyond examining into the state of their cultivations? Writing passes, adjusting contracts, administering the police and settling disputes, which takes up most of my time. In my last examination I stated, by mistake, that I had no written authority to inflict punishments, but the Board will observe with reference to the sixth article of the minute of council of 1816, that I am therein authorized to redress complaints, hear grievances and to punish offenders.—In the returns laid before the Board there appear to be eight individuals who never quit the villages to work out, are these people to be considered as amongst the best characters? They are.—You stated before, that many of those who worked out planted canes; is this a laborious occupation, and in what respect does it differ from planting canes in the old islands? It in no respect resembles that work in the old islands; no more land is turned up than is just sufficient to cover the plant, and no hole is dug; it is as easy as the cultivation of provisions.—Do they ever engage themselves to dig trenches with the spade? They do, and are expert at it.—Do they ever hire themselves out as boilermens and firemen? I know of no instance of it, and do not think they would act as firemen.—Have you heard of their manumitting their slave children which they may have had by negresses upon estates? It has never occurred, and I should have known of it if it had.—Do the Women work out on hire? Only two, who hired themselves out as domestics.—Do the women generally work in their own grounds? Yes, they do.—How do they usually employ themselves on Sundays? They generally hear a lecture from one of their preachers, which may occupy them about two hours; the rest of the day they pass quietly, the Africans are fond of dancing on Sunday.—Since rations ceased to be distributed to them in 1817, have any of them from want required relief? Yes, every year, there are some amongst them who return from working out, and who have in the interval abandoned their grounds.—In what way do they receive relief? They generally come with a sore, or plea of sickness, and are admitted upon the hospital list.—You stated that you had refused permission to the refugees to work out until the hospital dues were paid; how has this operated to effect their payment? In a very trifling degree; they soon found the means of working out without my permission.—How much is due by them at present to the hospital fund? About 700*l.* currency.—Does this arrear arise from want of means, or want of inclination to pay it? I think from both causes.—Amongst the settlers do you find the Americans generally more moral and correct in their behaviour than the Africans? I think the reverse, the Americans are cunning and artful, and have no idea of the truth; most of the thefts have been committed by them; the Africans are more steady and quiet, and you can place more reliance on their word.—In the return you have given in of the separations amongst the married couples, it appears that in nine out of ten cases the women have deserted their husbands; from your observations do you consider the women to be less constant in their attachments than the men? I think so, I have generally observed a disinclination amongst the females in all the free labouring classes to marry, those who are catholics defer until they are in extremity, to ensure absolution from the priest.

[The following letter, which his Excellency the Governor had directed to be laid, with other papers, before the Board, was then read.]

Sir,

27th June 1823.

WITH reference to the evidence I had the honour to give yesterday before your Excellency, and the honourable Council, I feel called on to explain more fully than

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than I did, the opinion I gave, whether sugar estates could be carried on entirely by free labour; I do not think they could, in the manner the work is carried on at present, making certain large quantities of sugar in a given time, in many instances working eighteen out of the twenty-four hours, which constant labour the free settler will not submit to, whose easy circumstances renders him independent; but I am of opinion that estates with few slaves are greatly assisted by free labourers, as in the quarter of North Naparima, where in many instances within my knowledge, the canes are planted and cut down, whilst the staves, hoops and heading are split by them; and was the free population greater than it is in the colony, I have no doubt sugar estates, carrying on labour from sun rise to sun set, might be worked by them, whilst the planter would receive a moderate indemnification for his outlay.

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To your Excellency's question of the means I considered the best for adopting the slave to his new state of liberty; first, his religious instruction, that is his duty to God and to his master; second, the giving a stimulus to his exertion by holding out a prospect of his acquiring his liberty by industry and care, and I can conceive no stimulus stronger than the purchase for him in the first instance of a day in the week, or sixth part of his value, on which capital he could in a few years work his freedom, and when free, reimburse the advance of his original purchase to government.

I am aware that the nature of slavery is such that many slaves would not avail themselves of the boon, but the most deserving part would.

I have the honour to be

Your Excellency's most obedient and most faithful servant,
(signed) *R. Mitchell*, Commandant.

It appears by this letter, that after all your experience of the American refugees, you were of opinion in June 1823 that they were highly advantageous to the planters in your quarter as free labourers; are you still of the same opinion? I am.—Do you think it would be advantageous to the planters in your quarter if their numbers were doubled? Most decidedly.—Have you ever made any calculation to ascertain whether it would be advantageous in a general view to the government or to the colony to increase their numbers? I have not.—The Committee are anxious to make this calculation, and to simplify it will take the number of thirty-two Americans, men, women and children, which cost the government in their establishment about 42 *l.* currency each:

- 32 Americans at 42 *l.* each gives 1,344 *l.*
- 12 to be deducted, being in the proportion of three eighths for women and children, who by your statement never work out.
- 20
- 10 to be deducted, as it appears from your evidence that upon an average the men work out only half the year.
- 10
- 5 to be deducted, as it appears from their habitual loss of time that when working out they only perform half the work of an able-bodied slave.
- 5 remainder.

By this calculation it would appear that a proportion of labour equal only to that of five steady working slaves has cost the British Government 1,344 *l.* currency; have you any objection to make to this calculation? It appears to me to be correct.—Does it not then appear to you, that although it might be advantageous to the planters in the vicinity of the settlements, it would be a very unproductive scheme of general policy to increase the numbers of the refugees? It would appear so.—You stated in the same letter to the governor that slaves on sugar estates worked in many instances eighteen hours out of the twenty-four; do you mean in these cases to allude to the whole of the gang upon an estate, and to every day throughout the year? I mean only in time of crop, and the people employed at the mill and works.—Is it a general custom in your quarter on estates to make the mill and boiling-house gang work in crop time eighteen hours out of the twenty-four? I do not think it is the custom at present, but I think it was three years ago.—Do you know from your own observation that this was the case? I have been told so.—How much sugar per week is made on the largest estates in your quarter? From ten to twelve hogsheads; generally the rate of work is from eight to nine, or one and a half hogshead per day of thirty-six in truss.—How many gallons of liquor would

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would it take to make one and a half of these hogsheads? About two thousand gallons in the yielding season.—Do you not, from your knowledge of a sugar estate, consider it to be great mismanagement to take eighteen hours to boil off two thousand gallons of liquor? I do, when the coppers are well hung, in which respect great improvements have been made of late.—Do you find that the manumitted slaves in your quarter are more useful to the planters as field labourers than the American settlers? I do not know of one manumitted in my quarter working out as a field labourer; those who do not cultivate their own ground as free settlers, generally work as journeymen tradesmen.—Amongst the manumitted slaves are they in all cases able to work and maintain themselves when free? I know of no instance in my quarter to the contrary.—Are you aware of any instance in which slaves possessing the power of freeing themselves have preferred remaining in servitude? Yes, I have known several; I had one slave in my own possession named George Ireland, who was himself the owner for many years of another slave, purchased by his own money; he bought also the freedom of two of his children, and finally died himself a slave in my service.—You stated in your evidence before the Council last year, that you had increased your gang of slaves considerably since 1817; how many have you purchased since that period? About forty.—With the means then of purchasing slaves you consider it to be more advantageous so to do, than depend upon the free labourers in your vicinity? I do.—Would you give a preference to a gang of hired slaves rather than depend upon the free labourers? I would, as they could be depended upon; last year my free labourers left me in the middle of crop, by which I suffered considerable loss.—Are you not corregidor of the Indian mission in your neighbourhood? I am.—What is their present number? Two hundred and fifty by the last return.—How long have you filled the office of corregidor? Eighteen years.—Have the Indians increased in number during that period? The returns throughout that period are not entirely correct, as the peons were included with them for the first six years; but from my observation, and the returns since, I think their numbers are about stationary. Are they of more value to the community as labourers than the Americans? I think, with respect to labour, there is no great difference, but they are preferable as being quiet and more manageable.—In other respects is there any great difference in their moral habits and manners? I think them more honest than the Americans born, but they are equally fond of liquor.—From your observation do many negroes suffer in your quarter from neglect of their own grounds, and being too improvident to take care of themselves? A great many I am convinced would suffer, if not compelled by the master to work their grounds.—In your opinion, are there many whom it would be more advantageous to feed like children, with cooked meals? There may be a few, but it would not answer with our best negroes.—Have you ever observed that the comforts, clothing or food of the negroes has varied for the last ten years, according to the price of sugar or other produce? The state of the markets never affect a negro's comforts; but I consider their situation to be much improved within the last twenty years.—Independent of the allowances prescribed by the regulations to be given to each slave, is the master in the habit of giving them any thing else? Yes, occasionally I give mine half a pound of salt pork in addition to their fish; they regularly receive tobacco, pipes, salt, rum, molasses and sugar, and they frequently ask for soap, and a variety of little articles in the store, which are rarely refused, if they behave themselves properly.—Are any of these douceurs secured to them by law? None of them.—As a regular food, do you think they would prefer fresh beef and mutton to salt provisions? I am sure they would have a decided objection to it; the natives of the country, white as well as black, prefer salt provisions.—Are you of opinion that our slaves receive too much salt fish, and that it renders them liable to sores? I have not observed it; there is a prejudice against herrings on that account in the colony, but I cannot say how far it may be founded.—Have you any division in your hospital for the males and females? I have not; our gangs are generally small, and when really sick, it is found preferable to let them remain in their own houses.—Do you find that under these circumstances you can trust to their not exposing themselves improperly when under the effect of medicine? I have suffered in that way, but my gang is small, and the sick not numerous.—What clothing do you give your slaves every year? A woollen jacket and trowsers, one shirt of check and another of red baize, with a pair of sheeting trowsers and a hat; every second year they have a blanket. To the women I give a woollen petticoat and long wrapper, two shifts, a handkerchief and a hat; blankets the same as the men.—

men.—Is this found to be amply sufficient? It is for those who take care of it; my women are careful in that respect, but several of my men are not.—Do you know of any slaves who habitually dispose of their clothing immediately after they receive it? I have none in my gang; but it is not an uncommon thing.—Is it found that this offence can be arrested by punishment? It is generally found unavailing to punish them.—What magistrates have you resident in the quarter of North Naparima of which you are the commandant? There is an assistant besides myself, but no other magistrates.—Do you receive, either of you, any pay or emolument from the government for serving in that capacity? Nothing.—Would it be possible for you to preserve the peace and order of the quarter without the assistance of the whole of the white proprietors? It would be impossible; I consider every white proprietor to be virtually acting as a magistrate, and to be as much bound as myself to preserve peace and order, whenever he may be present, and to attend any summons should I require assistance.—Are you aware of any laws to that effect? I know of none, but custom and necessity prescribe it.—Are you then of opinion that where a master's power over his slave is diminished, his power as a magistrate is weakened in the same proportion? I am.—Are you in possession of any official instructions for your guidance as commandant?—I know of none, but those of General Picton's.—Have you any regular military force established in your vicinity? There has never to my knowledge been a military force in it since its first settlement.—Would the inhabitants of the quarter make any pecuniary sacrifice to ensure the protection of a regular force? I do not think they would.—In the event of any disturbance or insurrection, have you the power of calling out the militia? I am not aware whether in my civil capacity of commandant I possess that power, but as commanding officer of the division I can do so.—Are you aware of any form prescribed to the commandant similar to the reading of the Riot Act in England, previous to his calling upon the military, to act? I know of no form or instructions to that effect.—In the event then of any disturbance or insurrection, the line of conduct to be adopted by a commandant would depend entirely upon his own judgment and personal character? Yes, I think so.—Are there many foreigners resident in your quarter? Very few.—From your general acquaintance with them, do you consider them to be more or less independent than the English planters in their circumstances? Generally, I think the foreigners more independent.—Do they generally consider themselves to be more attached to the soil than the English? I think they do.—Does an English planter pay as much attention generally to his comforts on an estate as the foreigners? I think not.—For example, is he fond of planting fruit trees? Decidedly not.—Generally speaking, do you consider the English planters to be independent? I do not.—Do you know of any disposable capital within the colony? I know of none; the foreigners owning cocoa estates may have money to spare, but money is only to be borrowed from the merchants in England.—Do you think that a British merchant would as readily lend money on a coffee or cocoa estate as on a sugar estate? I think he would prefer lending it on the security of a sugar estate.—Do you think that, under any circumstances, a British merchant would lend money on the security of an estate in this colony raising only corn or cattle? I am confident he would lend money on no such security.—Are you then of opinion that the preference given by the British merchant in this respect has tended in a great degree to influence the cultivation of sugar in this colony? I decidedly think it has.

Council of Trinidad, on the Negro Character.

Wednesday, 2d February 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

John Cobham, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

ARE you not a native of the island of Barbadoes? I am.—Are you well acquainted with the management of slaves upon sugar estates in that colony? I think I am; from my birth I resided upon my father's estate in that island.—Were you at any time owner of a sugar estate yourself in that island? About three years.—How long have you been resident in this colony, and in what capacity? I have been here about sixteen months, and in possession of a sugar estate.—Do you continually reside upon it and manage it yourself? Yes.—Have you resided here

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It was 25, not 39.
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here long enough to make yourself acquainted with any difference which may exist in the system of treating and managing slaves in both colonies? I think I have.—In what does that difference principally consist? There was no material difference in the system of punishments, excepting that latterly the use of the cat was universally established in Barbadoes for the cartwhip.—From your general observation do you consider that slaves here are punished more severely than in Barbadoes? I do not.—Is not the number of stripes limited by law to be inflicted upon a slave less than in Barbadoes? Yes, since the order in council; but previously it was the same, thirty-nine lashes.—Is not the system of feeding the slaves here different from that in Barbadoes? Entirely different; in Barbadoes the whole of the slaves indiscriminately receive from the master not only fish but vegetable food, and provide clothing for themselves; whilst the custom here is to allow the slave time in lieu of the latter, which he is expected to provide for himself.—Which of these plans do you consider preferable? As a planter I prefer the Barbadoes plan.—Do you adopt it yourself? I have, my people whom I brought with me from Barbadoes being always accustomed to it.—What do you consider to be the principal advantage attending the Barbadoes plan? I think it insures the negroes being better fed, as I do not think they can be trusted to take care of themselves: since 1812 it has been a general custom in that island not only to give them the provisions, but to have a dinner cooked and distributed to them, that we might be sure of their getting at least one good meal; for it was discovered during that year, when provisions were very scarce, that many of the negroes sold their allowance and starved themselves; and the children we never trust to the mothers but provide for them entirely; and I think it very probable that the increase in the numbers of slaves in that island may have been assisted by this system of feeding, as it has been decidedly greater latterly than formerly.—In the event of a slave considering himself ill used in Barbadoes, were his facilities of complaint equal to what they are here? No; the facilities of complaint were by no means equal to what they are here.—Do the slaves work harder here than in Barbadoes? No; the slaves in Barbadoes do infinitely more work in a day than slaves here, and apparently with perfect ease to themselves.—With respect to the general appearance of the slaves as to health and strength, do they look better in Barbadoes than in this colony? Yes, I think they are generally finer looking people.—Are they chiefly Creole slaves upon the estates? With very few exceptions entirely Creole.—Do you consider the lands here to be more fertile than in Barbadoes? Without comparison more fertile.—Can you suggest to the Committee a probable cause why our slaves in this island should decrease in numbers, whilst they increase in Barbadoes? I have often considered the subject, but cannot fix upon any cause which appears to me sufficiently satisfactory; it may be owing to the disparity of the sexes, and the small number of women compared to the men, whilst in Barbadoes I believe the females to be the most numbers.

James Meany, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

WHAT official situation do you hold in this colony? I am town major and chief of police, which office I have filled since 1818.—What are your general duties, and under what authority do you act? I act under a commission from his Excellency the governor; my authority extends over Port of Spain, where I permanently reside, and generally throughout the colony, I believe, should occasion require it, having occasionally repaired by orders to other quarters. My business is generally to preserve peace and good order, and to see that all the government and police regulations are carried into effect.—Is it your duty to take up idlers and vagrants, as well as those who commit breaches of the peace? It is.—Do you possess any authority as a magistrate to fine and imprison? I have authority to fine to the amount of 10*l.* currency, and to imprison free persons until they can furnish security to appear before the alcaldes; and in all cases I possess the power of imprisoning slaves.—Are the vagabonds and paupers whom you find wandering in the streets of Port of Spain mostly slaves or free persons? Mostly free persons; but vagabonds and paupers are by no means so numerous here as in the cities of Europe, and vary much from particular circumstances; for a short time we had many, during the emigration of the coloured inhabitants from the Main; and at one time we were troubled with many of the unfortunate persons who went out as adventurers to join the Independents on the Spanish Main.—Is it common to meet with slaves begging for alms in the streets of Port of Spain?

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I never recollect but two instances, which occurred about five years ago.—In these cases were the slaves in absolute want of food? Not at all; their masters were willing and able, and did provide for them; but one being old and the other a leper, they did no work for their masters, and adopted this plan to raise money.—Do you know of any public hospitals existing in this colony for the benefit of the slave population? There is not one.—Do you consider such an establishment necessary? I think not, as I never recollect a circumstance in which an owner could not provide for his slaves.—From your experience would you consider such an institution necessary for the lower classes of free labourers? Certainly I think so; there is at present an infirmary established by the cabildo, which is capable of taking care of about fifteen to twenty, but which is not large enough for the wants of the poor free people who cannot provide for themselves.—How is the medical and surgical attendance provided? Dr. Neilson is permanently engaged, and a sick nurse is regularly in attendance; but in all cases of accidents I call upon the nearest medical person.—Are you aware that the medical gentlemen in town frequently attend upon poor free persons gratuitously? I know that Doctor O'Connor frequently attends upon them in this way, and I believe the other medical gentlemen are in the habit of doing the same thing.—Amongst your official duties do you not attend to the complaints of slaves, as well as of their owners? I do.—Are there not many individuals in moderate circumstances, in and about Port of Spain, owning only two or three slaves? I believe there are many who own only one.—Are you aware of any public funds or securities in this colony in which small sums of money could be profitably invested for widows and female orphans? There are none.—Has it not been usual with guardians and executors, in these cases, to lay out small sums of money in the purchase of one or two slaves, as affording the most beneficial and secure investment? It has.—In your capacity of chief of police, do you ever meet with public prostitutes plying in the streets of Port of Spain at night? I am sure there is nothing of that description.—Do you know of a public brothel in the town? There is not one.—Do white men here frequently keep coloured mistresses? It is not uncommon.—Are these connexions frequently dissolved from caprice, or do they appear to be permanent? With very few exceptions they are permanent.—Do such connexions usually entail want and misery upon the female? Never; they usually find the means of making a comfortable provision for themselves.—Do your official duties lead you much in the way of the free labouring classes in Port of Spain? It is a particular part of my duty to keep a vigilant eye over them.—Are they generally in comfortable and easy circumstances? Generally they are in great poverty, and I believe live only from hand to mouth; for usually when they fall sick they are in extreme want and require assistance, and when they die they generally leave no funds for their burial; the coffin, if it cannot be procured by a subscription amongst their surviving friends, is furnished by the cabildo, and the grave dug gratis. This very frequently occurs; so much so, that I have a regular contract with Martinborough, the carpenter, to furnish the coffins when required.—In their habits and manners are they more or less moral than slaves? They mix so much together that there can be little difference in their moral feelings; neither is there much or any difference in conduct between them and slaves who contract to pay their owners by the week or month, and are in a great degree under no control.—Then you do not think it advantageous to the slave to make such a contract with him? Quite the reverse; it is sure to render them immoral and vicious, and when they cannot earn what they have engaged to pay, they acquire the habit of stealing it.

Council of Trinidad, on the Negro Character.

Tuesday, 8th February 1825.

THE HONBLE WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. Argent F. Blackwell, sworn, and Examined.

WHAT office do you hold in this colony? Alcayde of the royal gaol, and attorney of the prisoners.—What are the duties which appertain to these offices? I have the chief command and superintendance of the gaol, and am responsible for the whole management of it, to see that the orders and regulations of the government and magistrates are enforced. It is my duty to notify to all proprietors of slaves the detention of those which belong to them, and to take care that they do
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not remain in gaol after the term of their sentence has expired. I purchase all the provisions required for the maintenance of the prisoners; I keep the whole of the gaol accounts, and have the charge of supplying the gaol infirmary.—How long have you filled these offices? I have been alcaide only ten months, but served altogether in the department about four years, in the previous offices of clerk and gaol attorney.—What salary do you receive, and by whom is it paid? My salary is 800 \$ dollars per annum, which is paid by the Board of Cabildo.—Do you make any difference in the work and discipline of prisoners previous to and after trial? Yes, in all cases, whether free or enslaved; none are put to work in the tread-mill, nor to pick oakum previous to trial; they are only obliged to keep their own rooms clean.—After sentence to what description of work or punishment are they subjected? For slight offences they are sentenced by the courts to work in the tread-mill, but when sentenced to hard labour they work in chains, and clean the streets of Port of Spain; we have besides three solitary cells in which prisoners are sometimes confined by order of the court.—What portion of time during the day do the prisoners work in the tread-mill? They work alternately in spells, fifteen minutes at a time for six hours, so that each individual is upon the wheel for three hours in the course of the day, provided I have no orders to the contrary; but it has happened that prisoners have been sentenced to work only half an hour in the day.—Is there any medical gentleman engaged to attend upon the prisoners in gaol? Yes, Dr. Neilson is the gaol physician; he attends daily at seven o'clock in the morning, and at any other time when summoned.—Does he examine each prisoner as to the state of his or her health previous to their working in the mill?—Yes, and when he considers that the prisoner from the state of his health ought not to be subjected to that discipline, he records the same in the mill-book, and it is my duty to make a report thereon immediately to the sentencing magistrate.—Does the gaol physician examine into the state of the provisions or the dieting of the prisoners? The regidor of the cabildo inspects the provisions to see that they are of proper quality, and it is his duty to hear if the prisoners have any complaints on that score, or on any other; but the gaol physician, whenever he considers it necessary, recommends alterations in the nature and quantity of food given.—How often does the regidor attend at the gaol? Regularly twice a week.—What is the ordinary allowance of food to each prisoner per day? Each prisoner receives one pound of corn meal and a quarter of a pound of salt fish per day.—Is this the regular diet of the prisoners who are in health, without variation? It has been so since the establishment of the tread-mill early in 1823; previously they received sixteen ounces of bread and half a pound of fish, but this was considered too much by the board of magistrates, and the present quantity was ordered.—When the prisoners are not working on the mill, are they employed picking oakum? Those who are under sentence.—Are slaves committed as runaways considered to be under sentence, and worked accordingly? In this respect I follow the directions of the chief of police, who visits the gaol every morning and examines the runaways committed; if they appear to have any just ground of complaint against their masters they are not worked, otherwise they are put into the tread-mill with the other prisoners.—Have you resided upon estates in this colony in the capacity of manager or overseer, or in any other? Never.—What fees are charged for the commitment and maintenance of prisoners? The charge for commitment and release is 12s. Ten shillings is charged for the mill, or for corporal punishment by the cat, and two shillings per day is the charge for food; all currency.—How many accounts do you keep, and under what distinct heads? I keep three accounts for the gaol; one for the mill, which includes wear and tear and the supply of grease; this is credited by the profit arising from the grinding of meal, and the charge of 10s. for each prisoner working upon it. There is another account open for the supply of provisions to the prisoners, and other necessary articles required for the use of the gaol, such as brooms, tubs, wood for fuel, iron pots, blankets, servants hire, with other small miscellaneous charges, to the credit of which account is placed the commitment and subsistence money, and that part of the fee for corporal punishment which is not received by the driver, besides which I keep a third account for the salaries of the officers under me.—Are the receipts generally equal to the disbursements under those separate heads? Not all of them; the mill has hitherto paid, but the charge for commitment and subsistence is not equal to expenditure for the various articles included in that account.—After balancing the whole of the accounts what did the gaol establishment cost the cabildo last year? I have just rendered the account, and the expenditure exceeded the receipts by 1,475*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.* currency.—Is no separate account kept for the sub-

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sistence of the free labourers confined in gaol? No, the subsistence of the slave and free labourers is blended together.—What is the difference in the number of free persons committed compared to the slaves? I think the free persons are about one fourth less than the slaves.—Can the free persons committed always pay for their commitment and subsistence money? When committed on criminal prosecutions the court does not always sentence them to pay their expenses, otherwise I have great trouble in getting it; not more than half of those committed are able to pay when released; from the remainder I am obliged to take their promissory notes, and have great trouble in recovering even one half of the notes so given.—Which are the classes of the free people who pay the best, and which are those who do not pay their expenses? Those who most regularly pay are the Spanish labourers, or those who serve in the employment of gentlemen, and the disbanded soldiers who are in the receipt of pensions, which I secure by attending on the pay-day; I find the greatest difficulty with the wandering disorderly labourers who have no settled residence, amongst which I include the disbanded soldiers who have no pension and reside in the neighbourhood of Port of Spain.—Do you find any difficulty in recovering the fees from the owners of slaves? I do from those residing in the country, particularly the coloured proprietors.—What is the general amount of loss upon these collections? I think the whole will be paid, although with some delay.—Have you ever observed any slaves committed who were branded with letters and other distinguishing marks? Never; none that I have seen were marked except with their country marks.—Are the males always separated from the females? They are kept in separate wards, so that they can have no communication with each other at night; when picking oakum they are placed on separate benches, and when they receive their meals; but we are obliged to work them on the mill with the men, for want of a sufficient number to make distinct spells.—How many persons do you require in a spell to work the mill? By altering the regulator I can work from two to seven.—Upon an average, how many have you generally under sentence to work the mill? Generally from twelve to fourteen; I never knew more than twenty-six, or less than four.—Is it part of the duty of the gaol physician to see that the persons sentenced are equal to the fatigue of the mill? It is my duty, when I observe any who seem not equal to it, to call for his opinion.—As the women work regularly with the men, do you find them equally able to bear the fatigue? By no means; I consider a fortnight's labour for a female to be equal to a month for a man.—With respect to the general conduct of the prisoners, do you observe any difference between the free labourers and the slaves? Yes, I find it more difficult to govern the free people; they are more insolent and riotous than the slaves.—Amongst the slaves do you observe any difference in the conduct and behaviour of the sexes? Yes, I find the men easier managed than the women; the latter are more insolent, use worse language, and are more quarrelsome amongst themselves. I am rarely obliged to go into the men's ward at night, but am frequently called into the women's ward to keep them in peace and order; and I have generally observed less of decency and propriety of behaviour amongst the most intelligent of the female slaves who reside in and about Port of Spain, than those who come in from the country.—What are we to understand by less of decency in the behaviour? I mean that those who reside in and about the town are more bold and daring than the others in their indecent behaviour; there seems to be very little sense of shame amongst any of them. Whenever a heavy shower of rain suddenly falls, it is the regular duty of a person under me to prevent their stripping themselves stark naked, and standing under the waterspouts; and at the time appropriated for the men to bathe, if a vigilant look out is not kept, they will slip in and mingle with the naked men, which has frequently occurred. In this respect I have observed that the Bermudian and Antigonian women have less shame than those of this colony.—How are the baths arranged for the use of the men and women? There is a room used for that purpose, about ten feet by eight, in which four half puncheons are placed, filled with water from a pump close to it; every prisoner is obliged to bathe once a day; the women bathe first at day-light, the men immediately afterwards.—How often are prayers read in the gaol? Every Sunday morning I read prayers to the prisoners, for about half an hour.—Do you generally find them quiet and attentive? They are always quiet, and generally attentive; and since I have adopted the plan I think it has increased my authority over them.—Do you not, in some cases, permit prisoners who have the means to receive their own provisions in gaol; and under such circumstances what are the rules and limitations? Prisoners in general,
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except in criminal cases, after judgment is pronounced, are permitted to receive from their friends a reasonable quantity of provisions, according to their situation in life; but no wine or spirituous liquors are allowed to be introduced on any account, whatever may be the station of the individual, without an order from the gaol physician.—Are slaves ever sold to pay the gaol expenses? Yes, when slaves are committed as runaways, and the masters are duly notified to take them out within a given period, if they neglect so to do the slave is sold; but when committed by the court they are never detained on account of the gaol fees.—Are the cases frequent in which slaves have been sold for the gaol fees, and does it generally arise from the inability of the owner to pay them? There were about five or six sold last year; and in all the cases I am acquainted with the slaves were such bad subjects that the masters thought it the best opportunity to get rid of them.—How many prisoners could the gaol conveniently hold? For purposes of security eighty could be confined; but with reference to classification and separation I do not think more than thirty could be properly confined; but this estimation is exclusive of the debtors, of which twelve might be comfortably accommodated.—What is the average number of debtors in confinement? I never had more than four, and that for a very short period; there is seldom more than one.—What mode do you adopt for the confinement of criminals under accusation for capital offences? We have a part of the outer court of the gaol appropriated for criminals previous to trial, in which there is a building termed the House of Security. In this the criminals are lodged under a sentry, and are allowed communication with their friends between eight to ten o'clock in the forenoon, and from one to three in the afternoon. When the case is sent for trial to the court of criminal prosecutions, the prisoner is removed into the royal gaol, under a warrant from the judge of criminal inquiry, when he is placed in a distinct ward appropriated for criminals under trial; if sentenced to capital punishment, he is put into a solitary cell, and ironed, until the sentence is executed.

Mr. *John Fogerty*, sworn, and Examined.

WHAT office do you fill in the royal gaol? I am warder of the gaol.—How long have you held that situation, and what salary do you receive? I have been in the situation about ten months, and receive 400 dollars a year.—How long have you been resident in the colony? I have been in it about eighteen months.—Have you ever served in any situation upon estates?—Yes, I lived in the employ of Mr. Pilkington on his cocoa and coffee estate at Arima.—Have you had ever an opportunity of seeing the nature of the labour performed by slaves upon sugar estates? I have frequently been upon sugar estates since my arrival here, and often when I was in the naval service, having been three years upon the West India station.—What is your opinion as to the difference of labour between working on the tread-mill and working in the field? I think there is no comparison in the labour; even when the prisoners are working on the mill the labour is, in my opinion, lighter than labour in the field; but the whole time they work on it does not exceed three hours in the day; those who are new to it and awkward in the step labour harder than the others, but in two or three days they acquire a greater facility.—Then you consider the punishment not to be so severe to an old as to a young offender? By no means so severe.—Do they ever show symptoms of distress and uneasiness as if the labour were severe? In some cases when diseased, and suffering under mal d'estomac, they seem to feel it acutely, and their labour is remitted by the physician; but in ordinary cases they feel it so little that I am obliged to exert my authority to prevent them from laughing and joking when at work.—Do you ever observe any symptoms of grief and despair amongst the prisoners as if they felt miserable in their confinement? I have occasionally seen an air of dejection in the free people, but have observed nothing of the kind amongst the slaves.—Is the picking of oakum a severe labour to them? No, it is not, they are only expected to pick four pound per day, when they do nothing else.

Wednesday, 9th February 1825.

THE HONBLE WILL^M H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Dr. *Elias Tardy*, M. D. sworn, and Examined.

WHAT is your profession? I practise as a doctor of medicine, and am a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of London.—How long have you practised in this colony, and what is the nature of that practice? I have been in general practice since 1817, attending upon families as well as negroes upon estates.—Is your practice as a medical man upon estates extensive? Yes, I have generally under my care about two thousand negroes.—In regular attendance how often do you visit each estate? The distant estates once a week, those in my vicinity twice; but in cases of accident and sickness I attend as often as may be necessary.—Is it the usual custom amongst proprietors to contract for medical attendance upon estates by the year? It is very general, and those who do not engage me by the year engage me by the visit.—In any case then do you think it probable that the slaves of the quarters in your vicinity can suffer want of medical attendance? I do not.—Are you aware of any improvement which might be suggested to the proprietors of estates for the better care of sick negroes when in hospitals? I am of opinion that the interior of the hospitals might be greatly improved by having separate apartments for the different classes of sick, so that those who are seriously indisposed, or suffering under surgical operations, may be kept perfectly quiet: in no case should the hospital be made a place of punishment to confine the offenders in the stocks, which is now too frequently the case: the beds should be so arranged that the nurses can go round them, and in all cases a supply of palliasses should be ready, to avoid the delay which sometimes occurs in preparing them.—When you state that offenders should not be confined in the stocks in the hospital, do you mean to exclude the use of the stocks from the hospital altogether? No, I think in all cases a set of stocks an indispensable appendage to an hospital; negroes with sores and ulcers upon their legs cannot be depended upon to remain within doors, nor can those who are addicted to eating dirt be restrained unless confined.—Are you aware of any other improvements which can be suggested? I know of none; I never in any case met with a want of medicine or proper necessaries, and my recommendations and prescriptions, as far as the owner is concerned, are invariably attended to.—From your observations, have you ever had occasion to suspect that slaves when complaining of sickness are kept at work, and prevented by the owner or manager from going to the hospital? I do not believe that it ever occurs; for whenever a slave complains of sickness, although doubts may exist as to his veracity, he is generally put into the hospital until I can examine him; and it not unfrequently happens that I turn them out as requiring no attendance.—What are the prevailing diseases which affect slaves in this colony? Pleurisies and inflammation of the lungs, diarrhœa and dysentery, inflammatory and bilious fevers, mal d'estomac and anarsaca, worms, ulcers, chigoes, yaws, ruptures, miscarriages, wounds and injuries, and the venereal.—Do you ascribe any of these diseases to the labour imposed upon them, either in its quality or quantity? I cannot conceive that in any case it arises from overwork; and on sugar estates, which are the most laborious, there is no department which can be considered prejudicial to the health but that of the firemen.—Do you then consider the business of a fireman unhealthy? I do not consider the labour in itself to be unhealthy with proper prudence and attention; but this can rarely be expected from negroes; and as they frequently expose themselves when in a profuse perspiration to currents of air, more diseases result from this employment on estates than any other.—To what other causes, then, do you principally ascribe the diseases you have detailed? Diseases of the lungs almost entirely arise from dancing, drinking, bathing whilst hot, sleeping on the ground when intoxicated, and walking great distances at night, to which causes I also attribute the prevalence of bilious and inflammatory fevers; ruptures arise from dancing and carrying heavy burthens, and from neglect in infancy by their mothers; miscarriages I also impute to excess in dancing, fighting, dissipation and incontinence, and not unfrequently, I am persuaded, from drugs purposely taken; mal d'estomac, dysentery and diarrhœa, arise from intemperance in drinking;

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ulcers and chigoes from sloth, filth and dirt; and wounds and injuries, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, from riotous quarrelling amongst themselves.—Are the Committee then to understand, that the greatest proportion of the diseases or slaves arise entirely from their own misconduct, and not from the effects of the climate, or the work of their masters? Certainly I am of that opinion; the labour of a field negro cannot be severe, for frequently domestics prefer going into the field, and I never knew one previously accustomed to field work who was not dissatisfied at being brought into the house. I always expect to find the hospitals full on Monday morning, arising from their dissipation, or their labour on their own account on Saturday night or Sunday; it would be endless for me to enumerate cases of their wilful imprudence, by which their diseases are aggravated or rendered fatal under the effect of particular medicines: it is absolutely necessary to confine them at night; no dependance can be placed on their care of themselves. A case occurred lately with a negress belonging to Mr. Joseph under my care, who had an inflammation of the lungs, for which a blister was applied upon the chest; she was strongly cautioned not even to allow her feet to get wet, and two days afterwards, in crossing the river, I found her sitting naked in it with the blister still suppurating; it would be impossible to enumerate to the Committee the numberless cases of similar thoughtlessness which have come under my observation.—Do they generally show so much feeling and attachment for each other that they can be safely entrusted with the care of each other when in sickness? No, they do not; I would not trust a child to the care of its mother; I state this from many facts which have come under my observation; were it not for the care and attention of their masters and mistresses before and after delivery, a very considerable portion of the slaves born would perish before twelve months old; they would suffer not only from the neglect, but frequently from the barbarity of their mothers; as a proof of which I beg to mention the case of a wench named Polly, belonging to the Golden Grove estate, who was confined in the hospital from sickness, and at her own request was allowed her child, a little girl of four or five years old, to keep her company; the child took some of her mother's provisions out of her calabash, who finding she would not desist after several boxes on the ears, deliberately took the child by the hair of the back part of the head, and with a fire stick with which she had been cooking, burnt off both her lips which caused the death of the child; this is the most atrocious case I know; but minor acts of cruelty and barbarity to their children occur frequently.—Have you ever been called in to attend upon slaves suffering from the effects of severe floggings? I have seen slaves incidentally in the stocks who had been punished with a flogging, but have never been obliged to prescribe in such a case even a dose of salts: from all my observation I believe the punishments inflicted are so mild as not to prevent a slave from immediately proceeding to his usual work, and that the confinement in the stocks was solely intended as an additional punishment.—Which of the instruments for inflicting punishment do you consider the severest? I think the cow-skin is the most severe, the cat-o'-nine-tails less so than the cartwhip. In what part of England have you practised as a physician? I practised fourteen years in London.—From your observation and practice, please to state to the Committee what is the difference in the care and trouble which devolves upon the master and mistress in London when their servants fall sick, and that which under similar circumstances devolves upon masters and mistresses in this colony? In London when a servant falls sick, if it is likely to be a serious case, they are removed to an hospital or infirmary, and the masters and mistresses have no trouble or care of them, whilst in this country a domestic is attended upon as one of the family; without the personal attention of the master and mistress many of them would die: I know instances of devoted attention by ladies to their sick domestics, acting in the capacity of sick nurses, which in London would hardly be credited.—Can you attribute any part of the mortality to the want of a sufficiency of food, or to an improper mode of feeding the negroes? Not to any want in the quantity or defect in the quality of the food, but the health of many of them, I am convinced, suffer from their eating it partially raw; from their indolence and laziness they loiter away their time instead of cooking their dinner, and then take their salt fish and plantains into the fields slightly broiled upon the coals; and amongst other causes of mortality which I omitted to state to the Committee, I have observed that a great proportion of the young children die of worms, which I attribute to the trash and unripe fruit they are permitted to eat, and to their food being improperly cooked; in all cases I should recommend their being taken away from their mothers and placed under
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the charge of a person whose duty it should be to take care of them and to prepare their food.—Do you then consider that it would be more advantageous to the health of the negroes to have their food cooked for them? To the description of negroes I have attended to I am certain it would.—Are you at all acquainted with the system pursued in Barbadoes? I have been in that island but am not well acquainted with the system pursued upon the estates.—Do you think that the quantity of salt fish we give our negroes tends to affect their health and to create sores and ulcers? Geneally I think it is the best food they can get, and what they prefer to all other; in some particular cases of cutaneous diseases it is advisable to diminish the quantity of salt food.—Do the negroes appear to suffer from the effects of work at the end of the crop season? They are invariably in better health at the crop than at any other period.—Are you an owner of an estate, or do you hold a share in any estate in the colony? I have not the slightest interest in any estate in the colony, and own only five domestics from mere necessity, arising from the impossibility of hiring them.

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Tuesday, 15th February 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

William Stewart, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

WHEN did you arrive in this colony? I think about 1792, but I hardly recollect the exact date; I know it was previous to the insurrection in Grenada, from which island I came to this.—Were you resident any considerable time in Grenada previous to coming here? Yes, several years; before which I was at Nevis, and have been altogether fifty-one years in the West India colonies without ever leaving them.—What trade or profession have you followed during that period? With the exception of ten months I have followed no other business but that of a sugar planter.—Have you served in every capacity as overseer and manager, as well as proprietor? I have, and also as attorney.—In what quarter of the colony do you now reside? In Savanne Grande.—Is your residence near the settlement of the American refugees? I am placed almost in the centre of them.—Have you not some superintendence over them? I am assistant superintendent under Mr. Mitchell.—What duties does this office impose upon you? I am expected to take a regular ride once a week round all the villages, to see that all is orderly and quiet; that they are attending to their cultivations; to call the roll when they turn out; to report absentees without leave to Mr. Mitchell; to ascertain from the corporals and serjeants if any offences have occurred, and report offenders to Mr. Mitchell.—Have you any authority to punish offenders without reference to Mr. Mitchell?—I never exercised any authority beyond putting offenders in the stocks, when Mr. Mitchell was not in the quarter; when he is there I send them to him.—Have you resided amongst these people since their establishment? Yes; but not as assistant superintendent, which office I have held only for three years.—What space of ground do these villages cover? I cannot say exactly; they do not lay in a straight line; I do not think it possible to ride round the whole in one day; it takes at least four or five days to make a minute inspection and examination into the state of the villages.—The Committee have been given to understand that you have settled one if not two sugar estates by the labour of these free people? No, I cannot say that information is correct; I began to settle the estate called Broomage, (which I have since sold to Mr. Brown,) in 1815, prior to the arrival of the Americans, and received very little assistance from them until the crops of the estate were established.—What is the name of your present estate; and did you not commence it in the expectation of carrying it on exclusively with free labour? The name of my estate is "*Who's Afraid*;" I commenced it in 1819, but certainly under no idea of carrying it on with free labour alone; I was in possession at that time of about fifteen negroes, and having money due to me from the sale of the Broomage estate, I intended to purchase more. I certainly expected assistance from these people in cutting wood, &c.; but I think a man would be mad to expect to carry on a sugar estate by any free labour which I have had an opportunity of knowing.—What are the principal difficulties and impediments to such an undertaking? You can place no dependence upon them; when you most want their services they are most likely to fly off and leave you, without giving

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giving any reason.—Have you upon the whole found their services useful in assisting your slaves to settle your last estate? I have not; the first trial I made of them I contracted with a party to cutlass brush wood, burn it off, and plant it in canes; they got unfortunately about 50 dollars in my debt, and went off with all my axes and cutlasses, which I had some difficulty in recovering by application to Mr. Mitchell.—Did you not recover your 50 dollars by the same means? I did not even attempt it.—Who was the contract made with, the labourers individually, or with a headman for the rest? The general rule is to make a contract with one, who is supposed to be responsible for the others.—Has this responsible man no property on which to levy in the event of a breach of trust or contract? So little that no man would incur the trouble and expense of a suit for the chance of recovering from him.—Are you then of opinion, with the experience you now possess, that a sugar estate cannot be carried on by the labour of these people? I think it impossible; in fact I have given up the attempt to cultivate sugar on the estate I last settled from the disappointments I received from them, and am now planting coffee only.—What is the condition of these labourers compared generally with slaves upon estates? Taking them generally they are not so comfortable and well off as slaves.—Do you consider them to be improving gradually in their circumstances? I think some individuals are; but as the absentees are increasing, I think the value of the whole cultivation has diminished.—How are they in their moral habits and conduct compared to slaves in general? Taking them collectively, they are a better informed, more intelligent people than our slaves, who consist mostly of Africans; if the latter were allowed as much liberty as these Americans I do not think they would behave themselves as well.—Do they drink more rum generally than slaves upon estates? They do, because slaves are kept more under control.—Do you think that disputes and broils occur more frequently amongst them? I do, from the same cause.

John Lamont, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you resided in this colony? Twenty-two years.—What is your calling or profession? I am a sugar planter.—Are you practically conversant with that business, or do you employ a manager? I am practically acquainted with the business, having been solely employed in it for that period; first as overseer, then as manager, and now a proprietor of two sugar estates, with three more under my superintendence as attorney.—Do you think yourself competent to answer any questions relating to the management, discipline, habits and dispositions of negro slaves? I think I am, with reference to slaves in the colony of Trinidad, having never been in any other.—In the course of your business as a planter, have you been in the habit of availing yourself of the services of free labourers in the colony, and in your opinion what is the value of these services? I have frequently employed them; with an ample command of slave-labour no one could advantageously employ them, except in cutting down forest trees, and even that could be cheaper performed by slave-labour, but for the risk of accidents; our gangs, however, being generally limited in number, they are frequently found useful in assisting to cut canes and fuel wood, and to brush land.—Do they perform any of these labours better than slaves? The peons are very expert axemen, from continued practice; canes they cut very slovenly; no man would employ any other than slaves in this work, if he had them; the second growth of canes much depending upon the care with which the first are cut.—Are they ever in the habit of hiring themselves out as boilermen or firemen? Never, to my knowledge; I consider that however limited a planter's strength might be in slaves, he would always place them in situations requiring steady attention, and only hire free labourers for the most ordinary occupations, on which he could not suffer so much by their desertion of their work.—Your general experience, then, does not lead you to expect from them a steady application? Never.—Do these opinions apply generally to all the free labourers; namely, Americans, Peons and Indians? Generally to the whole of them.—Amongst these different classes which do you consider to be the most useful? There are two classes amongst the Peons, those who are established in hired residences, and those who are vagrants; the fixed peons are by far the most useful, and most to be depended upon.—From whence do the peons originally come? From the neighbouring provinces on the Spanish Main.—In what quarter of this colony do you reside? In South Naparima.—Are you not commandant of that quarter, and is it not expected that these peons should
always

always report themselves to you? I have filled the situations of acting commandant and commandant for about nine years, and it is an order of government that free labourers of every description report themselves to the commandant on entering the quarter.—In making your annual returns of the amount of the free population, how do you make up the returns? I ascertain the number of labourers settled on the King's land, of which there are only a few, the greater number are on private lands, and every proprietor is obliged in the month of December to report every free person fixed upon or working at the time on his estate, which returns are accumulated, and sent to the office of the commissary of population.—Then the returns so made out do not exhibit the natural increase or decrease of the free labourers in your quarter? Of the fixed residents only, the others appear and disappear so frequently that it is impossible to obtain a correct return of their births and deaths; the return given in exhibits the actual number in the month of December, but may not be correct for any other period of the year; for the facility of communication with the Spanish Main is so great that it is impossible to prevent a clandestine intercourse with it.—Do you then think it impossible to prevent our slaves from deserting to the Spanish Main if they were so inclined? The whole British navy could not prevent it.—The Committee observe in your return of the manumitted slaves resident in your quarter, given in to the commissary of population in March 1824, that their number then amounted to ten, all of which are described as good characters; do you mean that they are honest, industrious and sober? I take them to be honest, knowing nothing to the contrary; industrious, compared to our free population; and sober in the same proportion.—You then consider the manumitted slaves in your quarter superior to the free labourers? To the general class of free labourers, certainly.—What is the cause of this difference? Because most of them have purchased their freedom by their industry and saving habits; and the others were gratuitously freed by their owners, in consequence of long and faithful services.—Are manumitted slaves then generally to be depended upon to support themselves afterwards with honesty and sobriety? I think they are generally, having acquired fixed habits, and arriving usually at the middle period of life before they can purchase their freedom; notwithstanding which, I know several instances of slaves who were industrious and well-behaved previous to acquiring their freedom, who afterwards fell into contrary habits, were principally supported by the charity of their old fellow-slaves, and died from the consequence of intemperance.—Amongst the well-disposed sober slaves who have purchased their freedom, do they generally amass property afterwards? Very rarely; out of the ten returned for our quarter two only have accumulated money enough to enable each of them to purchase a child, and they enjoy the advantage of residing upon their former master's estate, where they have their houses and grounds, and cultivate what land they please, free of rent or taxes.—How does it happen that a slave, with a very limited portion of time to himself, so frequently accumulates more money than he can do afterwards when perfectly free? One cause arises from the preference given by the master in the purchase of provisions and stock raised by his own slaves; in the next place, he is in every respect provided for in health and in sickness by his master, so that whatever he makes is clear gain, without any deduction.—Their industry is principally in acquired habit; and when freed from the control of the master they gradually give up the practice of it, and indulge in greater expenses.—From the general character of slaves, what proportion of them could be advantageously paid in money in lieu of their provisions and clothing? Not above one fourth or one third at most of the adult population of the best gangs I am acquainted with, could be so trusted; and the adoption of such a plan would be positively injurious to the rest, who, from their imprudent habits, would sell their fish and provisions for an inadequate price, and suffer in consequence. In this way we find the vicinity of free labourers injurious to our estates.—How are negroes generally fed in this colony? They are allowed three pounds and a half of salt fish from the proprietor; their ground provisions they are generally expected to furnish for themselves, for which purpose they have the Sunday in every week, half a day in every week out of crop, and four holidays, which time is allowed by law, and they have as much ground as they can cultivate.—Are you of opinion that the time allowed by law is amply sufficient for the purposes required? Certainly; for numbers of them are enabled by these means alone to purchase their freedom; but I forgot to mention that they have other opportunities every day, when performing task-work, of gaining one, two, and even three hours, to attend to their own concerns, without including the time allowed to them for necessary meals.—The Com-

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mittee have been informed by a medical gentleman, that he considers the Barbadoes plan of feeding the negroes by an allowance of ground provisions, as well as fish from the store, and cooking them one meal in the day, as the best, on the ground that slaves generally are too improvident to be left to take care of themselves; are you acquainted with this plan, and what is your opinion on the subject? It is necessary to adopt it partially on every well regulated estate, for children, convalescents, and those who are too negligent to be trusted to take care of themselves. I should suppose that from one fourth to one third of the adults would be benefited by this treatment.—You are not then of opinion that the plan would answer for the slaves universally? I am sure it would not; the better class of our slaves would be indignant at such treatment, and would consider the enforcement of it an act of grievous tyranny; so much is it considered a degradation, that it operates as a punishment, and is the means of sometimes exciting emulation amongst the idle.—As you stated that task-work afforded some advantages to the slaves, we wish to know whether it is much adopted on sugar estates in your quarter? Very generally.—How long has the practice existed? It was practised on a few estates for several years past, and has continued gradually to gain ground.—In what branch of labour is task-work found most advantageous? In every species of field work.—What are the principal advantages derived from it? In getting the work done sooner, and apparently more cheerfully, as it affords the industrious part of the gang more time to themselves.—How many classes do you divide the workers into, so as to apportion the labour to their strength? I divide the adults into three classes.—Will the extent of labour apportioned for one day, on the weeding of a cane piece, answer for every other day in the year? Certainly not; it depends upon a variety of circumstances; the state of the weather, which sometimes so materially alters in the same day as to render a new calculation necessary; the age of the canes, the nature of the soil, which varies materially even in small distances, and the growth of the grass and weeds to be eradicated.—Can you depend upon this task-work being performed well and faithfully without superintendence? No; on the contrary, task-work requires more minute and constant superintendence than gang-work, from the natural tendency to hurry over the work as quickly as possible.—Do you find generally that planters are much prejudiced against novel improvements? On the contrary they are generally too eager in adopting every thing which holds out a chance of improvement; witness the unsuccessful experiments made every day; no expense is spared in adopting improvements and machinery to facilitate labour.—How are canes carried to the mill in your quarters? Generally on mules backs; for in consequence of the inequality of the surface, carts can be used to advantage only in a few situations.—Are canes ever carried on negroes heads to the mill? Certainly not; it would be impossible to carry on the work of our estate by such a process.—Are you of opinion that instead of the expensive plan of a set of sugar works and distillery for the exclusive use of each estate, that one set could be centrally established, so as to answer advantageously for three or four estates? On the contrary, it has been found most advantageous, as creating a saving of labour, to put up two sets of works on the same estate, which obviates the necessity of distant carriage, as well as night-work; and unless the distillery adjoins the boiling-house there would be a considerable loss, independent of the labour of transport, by the skimmings becoming acid, and before they could be set up.—What is the general ratio of work in the sugar manufactories of your quarter? The average work is from ten to twelve hogsheads of thirty-six inch truss per week, in the height of the season.—How many gallons of liquor does it require to make this quantity of sugar? From two thousand to two thousand six hundred gallons of liquor.—What description of mills have you upon the estates in your quarter? Cattle mills altogether, with the exception of one steam-engine and two windmills.—What time will it take with a cattle-mill to grind two thousand or two thousand six hundred gallons of liquor? When every thing is in proper order, it can be done in twelve hours.—You state that it can be done in twelve hours; but what is the ordinary time that it does take in the usual state of mills? Should it exceed thirteen to fourteen hours, we consider that there must be a defect in the machinery or management calling for an immediate remedy.—As you have stated that planters eagerly catch at improvements, it is probable that the steam-engine established in your quarter will induce the erection of many others? From our experience we are not disposed in this colony to consider a steam-engine an improvement upon a cattle-mill; it takes a considerable quantity of fuel, which is expensive where coals can be procured, and in the interior, where wood only can be used, becomes

at last extremely laborious; there is little saving of stock, because a double set of mules for carrying canes is necessary, from the rapidity of its work, which keeps the people incessantly employed, whereas the time taken to change the mules in a cattle-mill allows a pause in the monotony of the labour.—But do not these pauses in the labour tend to retard the work, and to keep the slaves employed later at night than where a steam-engine is worked?—Most certainly, if you pretend to make as much sugar with one cattle-mill as with a steam-engine; but as the rate of labour in a mill can only be proportioned to your means of boiling off the liquor, it has been found more advantageous in this colony to put up two cattle-mills and two small sets of works on different parts of an estate in the midst of the cultivation, rather than erect a steam-engine to supply one large expensive establishment; and in this way I know as a fact that an estate in this colony can do more without working later at night than with a steam-engine.—Does the management of a sugar estate require much system and foresight? I know of no business requiring so much system and industrious attention; in many parts of the work plans must be laid two or three years beforehand, and more mischief may be done in one year than can be remedied in three.—Do you cultivate any other produce upon your estate but sugar? Nothing else, with the provisions necessary to feed my negroes.—Is there no rotation of crops which could be advantageously adopted? I know of no crops which would pay so well as sugar, even in these times.—You do not then think that corn would pay as a cultivation? I am sure it would not upon a sugar estate; upon an agricultural property alone a rotation of crops might answer, but with our manufacturing establishments it could never answer, as the capital of all the machinery would be laying idle if sugar were not continually cultivated; as it is, we are almost always obliged to retrain our negroes at the commencement of every crop what they had practised the preceding.—Do you know of any estate where corn and cattle are raised only? It would be impossible to raise corn and cattle on the same estate, from the careless indifference of our labourers; to a certainty the whole of the corn would be eaten up by the cattle, unless fences were made at a cost beyond the value of the crop; corn is raised only by small settlers at a distance from estates stock, but as a profitable cultivation on a large scale I think it would never answer.—Looking at the negro character generally, do you consider honesty to be an ordinary quality amongst them?—There are some exceptions, but generally we do not expect to find honesty in a negro.—Are they honest among themselves, with regard to each other's property?—I think they are, and they hold an individual who steals from his fellow slaves in the greatest aversion; they will use every means, direct or indirect, with the greatest rancour, to injure him.—Would the same slaves denounce a thief who had stolen from their master?—Not readily; when these things are discovered, it is generally in consequence of a dispute between the parties.—In the exceptions you have alluded to with respect to honest negroes, were they the most intelligent and best informed of the gang? In many cases they were.—Do you expect to find more honesty in proportion to the intelligence of a slave; for instance, are the Creole slaves more honest than Africans? They have more pride, which prevents their stealing openly; they may be more crafty, but I would as soon trust the slaves generally as the lower class of people in the manufacturing towns in Great Britain.—When provisions are planted by the master for the sole use of the slaves, can he hope to reap them without placing a watchman over them? It is always necessary to place a watchman over them.—Do you usually give a watchman a gun or other fire arms, for the purpose of shooting trespassers upon provision grounds? No; the watchman may sometimes have a gun, for the purpose of driving away birds, or to kill the wild animals that injure the provisions; he is usually armed only with a cutlass, which he is strictly ordered never to use but in self defence.—Have you ever heard of steel traps or spring guns being set for the protection of property?—Never; the interest of the proprietors forbids an expedient by which more property might be sacrificed than what they intended to protect.

Tuesday, 22d February 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

J. B. Littlepage, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

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Minutes of Evi-
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HOW long have you resided in this colony? Since the 9th of January 1799.—What office do you fill at present? I am harbour-master.—How long have you acted in that capacity? Since 22d November 1821.—Is there much intercourse between the colony and the Spanish Main? Yes, much with the adjacent provinces.—What is the nature of it, and in what manner is it conducted? Principally in small open undecked vessels called launches, which bring mules, cattle, cotton, indigo, cocoa, corn, poultry and plantains, and occasionally money.—Does this trade appear latterly to be increasing? Yes, I think it has within the last eighteen months nearly doubled.—What do they usually carry back in return? Dry goods and rum, with a few articles of iron and hardware.—Do you keep any return of the quantity of rum exported in the Spanish launches? Yes, I have brought with me a return of the quantity exported last year, which amounts to three hundred and forty-nine puncheons by the office books, but from my personal observation I am convinced that the quantity actually taken away by the launches exceeds that amount by one third.—What motive can those people have for concealing the quantity exported? None that I know of; there is no duty on the export here, but being all smugglers they habitually prefer concealing their operations.—Is much Indian corn imported into this colony from the Main?—A considerable quantity, I should think at least one half of the island consumption.—Can they afford to sell it so cheap as to exclude the importation of corn here from every other part of the world? I think they ought to be able to do so; but there is a regular import of corn to some extent from the United States of America.—Are you aware that there is a considerable migrature of a class of people called peons annually to this colony from the Spanish Main? I am.—Do they come in the same vessels that bring cattle and colonial produce? The greatest number of them do, they work their passages up for the purpose of coming here to labour.—Do you keep a return of the numbers of these peons coming and going from the colony? I keep a return of those who report themselves upon their arrival here, but this is very incorrect, as a great number land clandestinely along the coast; and as to their departure, I really do not know how or when they return, as they never present themselves at all; they always go clandestinely; and I have known several instances of their stealing canoes, and sometimes carrying off slaves belonging to the island with them.—Would it be possible to adopt any regulations to prevent these clandestine movements of the peons? It would be impossible; the Spanish Main is so near, the sea so calm, that open boats may land upon any part of the coast, and no naval force in the gulph could prevent it.—Do you keep a return of all the passengers who enter and leave the colony? Yes.—Do you consider this return to be a correct one? Yes, I consider the return of the passengers to be correct, by which I mean passengers in all vessels who report at the custom-house, which does not of course include the launches from the Spanish Main.—Can you state to the Committee the number of white males and females who annually arrive in those vessels, and leave the colony, to enable them to ascertain as near as may be the numbers of each sex who ultimately remain to settle in the islands? I can for the time I have been in office, and have brought a return for the years 1822 to 1824 both inclusive, showing the arrivals of white males

Arrivals of white males	984
Departures of d ^o	687
	297
Arrivals of white females	170
Departures of d ^o	144
	26

leaving a remainder of two hundred and ninety-seven males and twenty-six females left in the colony during those three years.

Tuesday, 1st March 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WILLM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Edmonstone Hodgkinson, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

WHAT official situation do you fill in this colony? Commissary of population and acting surveyor-general.—How long have you held these offices? Since July 1818.—What are the different classes of population in this colony as distinguished in the annual returns of your office? Whites; free coloured persons, which includes free blacks; Indians and slaves.—Is the population of the settlements of disbanded soldiers and American refugees included under the general head of “free coloured”? It is.—How are these returns made up by you? They are made up by combining the different returns received from the commandants of quarters and alcades de barrio.—From your knowledge of the mode in which these returns are framed by the commandants, do you consider them in all cases to be accurate, as showing the exact state and number of the existing population? I do not think they are correct, although more so than previous to November 1820, when a proclamation was issued by his Excellency the governor, requiring greater exactitude in the returns made by the inhabitants to the commandants, and ordering the same to be made upon oath.—Why do you then suppose that these returns are not now perfectly correct? I have generally observed a great unwillingness on the part of the lower orders of free people to give the information required, which renders it impossible for the commandants in all cases to be correct.—In a return signed by you on 13th June 1822, of the population of this colony from the years 1812 to 1821, and laid before the House of Commons, there appears to be a great variation in the annual numbers of the “free coloured class;” do you impute this variation to the cause you have just stated? No, I impute it principally to the flux and reflux of emigrants of colour from the Spanish Main, arising from the alternate success of the contending parties in the revolutionary war, which invariably drove the weakest into this colony.—As the Indian population is not affected by these causes, do you consider the returns respecting them to be perfectly correct? I consider the returns of the Indian population which are made by their corregidores, who reside with them and over them, to be correct since the year 1818.—Have you framed an abstract of the returns made out in the early part of last year by the commandants and alcades de barrio, intituled “Labourers born Free,” and “Manumitted Slaves”? I have.—Has this abstract been transmitted to the Colonial Office? I believe it was forwarded early in December last.—Did this abstract contain any explanation showing in what respect the labourers differed in their habits from English labourers? It contained only a statement of the property they possessed, and their character is given by the commandants in those returns.—Have you by you the returns of the population since 1821? Yes, I have brought them with me.

Council of Trinidad, on the Negro Character.

N. B. The following is a copy of the paper handed in by Mr. Hodgkinson.

	Whites.		Coloured.		Indians.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1822 -	1,864	1,477	6,411	6,981	440	453
	4,341		13,392		893	
1823	1,920	1,466	6,383	6,964	429	443
	3,386		13,347		872	

Wednesday, 2d March 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WILL^M H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Doctor *R. Garcia*, sworn, and Examined.

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Minutes of Evi-
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Committee of

OF what profession are you, and how long have you resided in this colony? I am a lawyer, and have resided here since 1813.—What did you practise previously? After I had completed my studies at the university of Caraccas, I practised in that city for some time, and was then appointed “teniente gobernador,” and “auditor de guerra,” of the province of Guiana, in which situations I was ultimately confirmed.—What were the particular duties which attached to these employments? As teniente gobernador I was a magistrate presiding over the tribunal of First Instance, with civil and criminal jurisdiction; as auditor de guerra I was also a judge in military matters, and the legal adviser of the captain general.—Do you consider yourself well acquainted with the laws which regulated the discipline of slaves in the province of Venezuela previous to the year 1810, when the revolution broke out in Caraccas? As an advocate it was my duty to be well acquainted with them.—Can you state to the Committee the days and holidays allowed by law to the slaves in Caraccas, on which they were not obliged to work for their master? Besides the Sundays in the year, the slaves were not obliged to work on the 1st and 6th of January, the 2d of February, the 25th of March, the 24th and 29th of June, the 25th July, the 15th August, the 8th September, 1st November, and 8th, 25th and 26th December, which thirteen days were called the “dias de precepts,” besides which they had the four moveable feasts of Pascua, Pentecostus, Ascension and Corpus Christi.—Were the slaves obliged to work for their masters on every other day in the year except on the seventeen you have enumerated, and the Sundays? On every other day in the year they were obliged to work for their masters.—Did this rule apply to house servants? No; they were obliged, in their domestic capacities, to serve every day in the year.—Was there any law regulating the value of a slave at which he could purchase his freedom?—Yes, there was a tariff established by authority, regulating the value of slaves in cases of manumission.—Was this tariff higher or lower than the prices at which slaves could at the time be purchased? Generally they were the same prices.—Are you acquainted with the term “coartado” as applied to a slave? Yes; “coartado” means a slave who has agreed with his master as to the price which he is to pay for his manumission, and has paid a part of the same, after which he cannot be transferred by his master to any other owner.—Was it optional on the part of the master to enter into this contract or not? Entirely optional.—Was there any law at Caraccas which permitted a slave at his option to buy a portion of his freedom, and enjoy a similar portion of his time, until he paid the whole of his value by instalments? There was no law to that effect.—In effect, was there any custom of the kind at Caraccas? I have heard of such a case, but it was rare.—Was it a prevailing custom at Caraccas to allow a slave to work out as he pleased at such labour as he preferred, and to be master of his own actions, paying only to his owner a certain sum or hire at stated periods, as agreed upon between them? It may have happened, but I do not recollect a single case.—Had you any officer in the province of Caraccas with duties similar to that of our guardian protector, to whom the slaves could apply for redress against their masters? We had a syndico procurador, protector of slaves, but not vested with such full powers as the guardian protector in this island.—Are you acquainted with the royal cedula of 1789, regulating the treatment of slaves? I am.—Was it ever acted upon, or considered to be in force as a law at Caraccas? I was too young to recollect the reception of this act, but I have every reason to think that it was never acted upon; and I know that it was suspended by another royal cedula, as stated in “Teatro de la Legislacion Universal de España e Indies,” vol. 12, page 156.—In general were you acquainted with the nature of the produce cultivated by the proprietors of estates in the province of Caraccas? Not well; I believe they principally consisted of sugar, cocoa, coffee, indigo and cotton.—Were these estates principally cultivated by slaves? Indigo was manufactured principally by free people, coffee and cotton by slaves, but with the assistance of peons in time of crop; sugar and cocoa was cultivated in general by slaves alone.

Weunesday 9th March 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} W^M H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

St. Hilaire Begorrat, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you been a resident in this colony? Since April 1784.—In what capacity or line of business? As a merchant, on my first arrival, for three years; since then I have followed the business of a planter, first in the cultivation of coffee, and since 1795 of a sugar estate, and I am now proprietor besides of a cocoa estate, which I have settled in Oropuche.—Were there many sugar estates established in this colony on your first arrival? There were but two which could be termed sugar estates; there were some small establishments called “trapiche,” which manufactured a low description of sugar denominated “papelone,” from which the molasses was not extracted, and was wrapped up in a piece of dry plantain stock, generally in forms of about three pounds weight.—Did the island at that time manufacture a sufficiency of sugar for its own consumption? By no means; the greatest quantity consumed came from the other islands, and some of these papelones from the Spanish Main.—Have you any recollection or idea of the number of slaves at that time in the colony? I am sure that on my arrival in 1784 they did not amount to one thousand.—As the Committee find that at the time of the capture of the island in 1797 the slaves amounted to about ten thousand, how and by whom was that large number introduced? A great many were introduced by the house of Barry and Black, English merchants, from the islands of St. Vincent and Grenada, and the revolutionary troubles in Martinique in 1792, brought an emigration of between three and four thousand slaves into this colony with their proprietors.—During the period between 1784 and 1797 have you any recollection of any Spanish vessel bringing slaves into this island direct from the coast of Africa? No, not one; several Spanish vessels from the Havannah came here to take slaves away which had been imported by Barry and Black, and some from Lagaira for slaves for Caraccas.—Have you ever been in the province of Caraccas? I was there in 1781, and remained about six months in the provinces of Caraccas, Cumana and Barcelona.—Had you any opportunity of seeing the estates and cultivation of those provinces? Yes, I had many opportunities of seeing sugar and cocoa estates, and the establishments called hatos for the rearing of cattle.—How were these sugar and cocoa estates cultivated, by slaves or by free labourers? Altogether by slaves, with assistance occasionally from peons in cutting down woods, precisely as we employ them in this colony.—Did you in no one instance meet with an estate cultivated by free labourers entirely? Not one, and from general inquiry then and since, I do not think there could have been any estates worked by free labourers alone.—Have you any recollection of the prices of slaves at that time in Caraccas? Yes, the price of an able bodied slave was from 300 to 350 dollars.—Do you think that the peons or free labourers were more numerous and easier to be procured at that time on the Spanish Main than at present? I cannot say from ocular observation, but have no doubt, from what I have heard and what I know of the late revolutionary wars in these provinces, that the free population must be greatly thinned since.—Have you ever met with any cases in which house servants have preferred quitting their employment to engage in field labour? I have heard of many cases of slaves who in preference left their domestic occupations to become field slaves.—To what do you attribute this preference? They enjoy more liberty and independence as field slaves.—Have you ever met with field slaves brought by necessity into the house, who wished to continue in that service? Never, they are unhappy until they return again into the field; they do not like to remain under the eye of the master. Did you ever act as commandant of the quarter in which you reside? Yes, for three years.—From your experience whilst in that office, what proportion of the disputes and quarrels which occur amongst the slaves and free labourers relative to property or otherwise do you think are settled by the commandants, compared to those which go before the ordinary tribunals? The disputes of slaves were generally settled in my time by the owners; as to the differences amongst the peons, not one in fifty were settled by the ordinary tribunals, they cannot possibly attend to them? Is the cocoa estate you have settled at Oropuche in the neighbourhood of the disbanded soldiers who have been established at Cuaré, in that part of the country? It is about five or six miles distant from them.—Have you availed your-

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self much of their labour in the cultivation of your estate? I never tried them, for many of my neighbours who made the experiment did not find it answer.—In general are they not employed by the planters in the neighbourhood? I believe in a very trifling degree.—Do you pass through their settlement on your way to your estate? There are two roads, one passing through their settlements, which I occasionally take.—What is the general appearance of their villages, do they seem to be in a state of comfort and prosperity? Their appearance is most miserable, particularly in the two furthest settlements, where their huts are huddled together without order, and many of them in a state of decay.—What is the general appearance of their cultivation? Their cultivation is as miserable in appearance as their dwellings; I passed through the settlements in September last when the rice crop was coming on, which is the only cultivation they have worth speaking of, and I am sure the whole crop of the three settlements would not exceed two hundred barrels in the husk; the people look healthy, but are apparently most indolent and lazy, as I always see them laying about in every direction, whenever I pass through the villages.—What does their rice generally sell for in the husk? From three to four dollars per barrel.—In the general demeanour and conduct, do the neighbouring inhabitants find them quiet and orderly? Yes, they are very generally quiet, and seem to prefer staying at home.—What is the general appearance of the interior of their houses, as to useful furniture and domestic utensils, compared to the houses of slaves? Some of them are better furnished than our negro houses, but taking them collectively they are not at all equal to them.

Friday, 11th March 1825.

THE HONBLE WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

John Lamont, Esquire, again called in; and Examined.

ARE you of opinion that the temptation of gain arising from a high price of sugar generally induces a master to work his slaves harder than when the price is low? I am sure that it can have no such effect, for such is the intense application, both mental and corporeal, on the part of the proprietor who manages a sugar estate, that when his income is increased by high prices, it is in human nature that he should relax in some degree in his exertions; and as to the fact itself, a reference to the records in the office of the commissary of population will show whether we made more sugar in this colony with a larger slave population during those years when produce was at the highest than we do at present.—In your official situation as commandant of the quarter, have you not on many occasions become acquainted with the concerns and management of estates belonging to bankrupt proprietors? Yes.—Under such circumstances were the slaves ever subjected to privations from want of food or necessaries? No, under the regulations of the colony this could not occur, the merchant having been guaranteed until lately in the payment of the necessaries required by the slaves, so that the bankruptcy of the master in no shape affected the security of the debts incurred for their maintenance and support, either in health or sickness.—As commandant of the quarter, have any aggravated cases of severe punishments ever come before you? Not one case during the nine years in which I have filled the office of commandant and acting commandant over a slave population of above two thousand.—Have you ever met with any instances in which domestic slaves preferred quitting their employment and working in the field? Many.—Do you ever meet with a slave brought up to the field, who from some particular necessity was obliged to serve for a time as a domestic, who would voluntarily remain in that employment? I have met with such cases, but they never remained voluntarily in the house.—To what do you attribute this general preference to field work? Because they are under less restraint, and have more command of their time, with better opportunity of making money; so that house servants rarely acquire their freedom but by gift or bequest, whilst the field slaves most frequently purchase it.

Wednesday, 16th March 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

Henry St. Hill, sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you resided in this colony? Nearly ten years.—What offices do you fill? I am public treasurer and commandant of the quarter of Mucurapo.—As treasurer, do not the expenses relating to the establishment of the free settlers pass through your office? I know only the amount of the expenses relating to the free Americans and the apprenticed negroes from Sir A. Cochrane's estates, but the detail of the expenditure I am unacquainted with, and the pay of the disbanded soldiers is entirely managed by the commissariat.—What is the total amount of expenditure incurred for the free Americans up to the present period? It amounts to 34,078*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.* currency, on the 31st day of December last, when the accounts were made up.—What is the present annual expenditure on their account? It amounts for the last three years to 1,287*l.* 3*s.* 7*d.* currency per annum.—How is this expense defrayed? By bills drawn by his Excellency the governor upon the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.—What is the amount of the expenditure incurred for the African apprentices who were on Sir A. Cochrane's estates, and are now under the superintendence of Mr. Peschier? The whole amount drawn upon the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to the present day is 530*l.* 6*s.* sterling, or 1,305*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.* currency.—Have you no document in your office showing the expenditure of the disbanded black soldiery? None.

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Edmonstone Hodgkinson, Esquire, again called in; sworn, and Examined.

THE Committee wish to know the relative quantity of sugar produced in this island in the years 1815 and 1816 and 1817, when that article bore the highest prices compared with 1821, 1822 and 1823, when it was at the lowest? I have brought the return with me, and it appears that the average crops of sugar in this colony, amounted in the first three years to twenty-three millions nine hundred and ninety-four thousand one hundred and fifty-four pounds, and in the last three years to thirty-four millions five hundred and eighty-five thousand and four hundred and fifty-one pounds.—What was the difference in the number of slaves in the colony during these two periods? The average number of slaves in the whole colony from 1815 to 1817, amounted to twenty-four thousand six hundred and seventy-six, and during the last three years to twenty-two thousand six hundred and eighty-five.—Was there any considerable falling off in the crops of coffee, cocoa and cotton during the latter three years? The coffee and cotton crops have always been inconsiderable in this colony; in both these articles there was a falling off, but at the same time there was an increase in the cocoa crop much more than sufficient to compensate their deficiency.

Saturday, 9th April 1825.

THE HON^{BLE} WM H. BURNLEY IN THE CHAIR.

William Wright, Esquire, sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you resided in this colony? Above nine years.—In what capacity or profession? Until June 1818 I held a commission in the Royal York Rangers, when I retired on half pay, and commenced establishing a cocoa estate.—Do you hold any official situations in the colony? Yes, I was appointed cor-regidor of the Indian mission at Arima, in July 1818, and superintendent of the disbanded African soldiers of the 3d W. India regiment, in June 1819; both of which situations I still hold.—As superintendent of the disbanded soldiers, what are the principal duties which devolve upon you? To watch over their general conduct and encourage them in useful labour; to see that they keep a portion of the public road in repair, and to administer justice in minor cases occurring amongst themselves.—

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selves.—Of what do these minor cases consist which you consider as coming under your cognizance as judge? Petty theft, quarrels and disputes, and assaults not extending to any serious injury.—Under what instructions do you exercise this jurisdiction? Instructions from his Excellency the governor.—Under these instructions what powers do you possess for the punishment of offenders? I exercise the power of imprisonment for petty offences; but in cases of theft, or more serious matters requiring corporal punishment, I assemble a court martial, consisting of two or three of the serjeants, and the culprit is judged by them.—Generally do they seem satisfied with this mode of decision? Yes, they do; but I have not been obliged to have recourse to it oftener than four or five times since I have been superintendent.—Are they then generally quiet and orderly in their behaviour? Yes, they are very much so; amongst themselves they are generally orderly and quiet; for the indifferent characters, who consist of about four, have absented themselves from the settlement; and I hold a certificate from the commandant of the quarter in which the settlements are established, dated June 1823, declaring that up to that period he had not received a single complaint from any of the inhabitants of the quarter against them.—At what period were they first settled, and what were their total number? They were first settled in June 1819; and their numbers consisted of two hundred and forty men, forty-one women, and twenty-nine children, making a total number of three hundred and ten.—Have they increased or decreased in numbers since that period? In February 1821, fifty-nine captured African women and one boy were added to the settlement; their total numbers by the last return are three hundred and fifty-five, showing a decrease of fifteen; but I think their numbers will now increase, as has been the case since December 1823, when the total number amounted only to three hundred and forty-nine.—Do these three hundred and fifty-five persons constitute the whole number at present at these settlements? They constitute the whole number settled at Cuaré; but there are five companies of the same regiment who were not disbanded until the 25th February last, amounting to three hundred and seventy-six men, thirty-five women and thirty-four children; making a total of four hundred and forty-five persons who are settled in the neighbourhood of Manzanilla, on the eastern coast.—How many villages are there in the settlement at Cuaré, and at what distance from each other? There are three villages on the banks of different rivers, laying in line, about three miles and a half distant from the first to the last.—How often do you visit these villages? Upon an average I do not visit them now above once in each month; but at the commencement I was obliged to visit them frequently; sometimes twice a week.—Under what authority or police are they kept during your absence? There are four serjeants and four corporals in each village, who retain their former rank and authority by instructions from his Excellency the governor. The men are still kept in companies as before they were disbanded, and the senior serjeant in each village has charge and authority over it.—To what extent do they exercise their authority during your absence? They have only power to imprison an offender until I have investigated the case, or to send him over to me under the charge of an alguazil.—Are the serjeants obliged to represent all these cases to you? All cases which require investigation and punishment; but in cases of drunkenness they can put the offender in the stocks, and liberate him when sober, without reference to me.—Are they much addicted to the drinking of strong liquors? The greater part of them are not; I should think about as much as amongst the same number of slaves.—What quantity of land has been granted to each individual? By the instructions, each individual with a family is allowed five quarrés, and those without families half that quantity.—Do they pay any tax or quit rent for this land? They pay nothing.—What assistance did they receive from the government at their first establishment? Temporary receiving houses were built for them in the first instance, and they received tools from government to enable them to erect others; they had soldiers rations for the first four months, and then three pounds and a half of fish and fifty plantains per week for eight months more.—Were they able to maintain themselves at the expiration of that period? No, they were not; the establishment having been commenced at an unfavourable season, which rendered it necessary to supply them with the ration of fish, without plantains, for about six months longer, at the end of which period they maintained themselves.—Have you had no applications for relief occasionally from any of them since? From none of them; they received about that time a blanket and a forage cap each, which are the last articles I delivered to them.—Do they continue to receive any pay or pension from the government?—

government? They have never received any pay or pension since they were disbanded.—Do they generally prefer working out for the planters, or cultivating their own grounds? About one half of them never work out, the remaining half upon an average do not work out above four or five months in the year; I think they give a preference to their own cultivations, as they do not work out as much as formerly.—What is the nature of the work generally performed by those who hire themselves out? They generally prefer and perform cutlass work, such as cutting down light brush, grass in the cocoa walks and in the savannahs, which they usually undertake by the job.—What proportion of high road are they obliged to keep in order? They formed and now keep in repair a road about five miles and a half in length, which constitutes a good bridle-road at all seasons.—Do you consider them generally to be of any utility or advantage to the planters in the neighbourhood? I think they have been of considerable utility to the settlers in the neighbourhood.—Have you had occasion to employ them upon your own settlement? I have occasionally five or six at a time, and found them work well.—Have you any slaves working upon your settlement?—I have a hired gang of twenty-six, of which about sixteen are working people.—Do you then find it more advantageous to hire slaves than to depend upon the free labour of these disbanded soldiers? I hired these slaves because I was not able to attend steadily to my settlement, in consequence of my being obliged to look after the disbanded soldiers at Manzanilla.—Are there any inhabitants or planters in the neighbourhood of the new establishment at Manzanilla? None nearer than Mayaro, which is about twelve miles distant.—Will these disbanded soldiers depend then entirely upon their own cultivation at Manzanilla? Entirely.—In what state are the settlers in the villages at Cuaré, with respect to the accommodation of their houses and their interior comforts, compared with the houses of slaves in general? In general their houses are much more spacious, comfortable and clean than the houses of slaves upon estates.—What does their cultivation consist of principally? They raise generally the vegetables of the country, but their principal cultivation is rice, some of them have planted coffee and cocoa trees.—How many coffee and cocoa trees are planted about the three villages? I cannot say, having yet taken no account of them, but propose doing so this year, previous to the next annual returns.—How many barrels of rice do they raise during the year? From enquiry amongst themselves, I have reason to believe that they raised last year between three and four hundred barrels, of which they probably disposed of about one half.—Is this rice in the husk or cleaned? I mean in the husk; but what they sell they previously clean in a wooden mortar.—At what price does it sell in either state? In the husk it occasionally sells at 36 s. currency, the barrel, for seed; when cleaned, it sells at about seven dollars the hundred weight, retailed in small quantities, in which way they generally dispose of it.—Do you think it would be practicable to punish their offences by laying fines upon them instead of subjecting them to corporal punishment? Not at present, they have not been long enough settled, and not being habitual cultivators, have not yet generally acquired fixed properties, and I consider it would be discouraging to those who have.—What are the present numbers of the Indians at the mission of Arima? About two hundred and eighty.—Has there been an increase or decrease since they were placed under your charge? They have decreased.—To what do you attribute this decrease? Principally to the small-pox, which carried off between thirty and forty of the young people in the year 1819.—As labourers are they more or less useful than the disbanded soldiers? They are meeker in their dispositions; the elder ones drink more than the disbanded soldiers, but in this respect I think the younger ones are improving; about a year after I took charge of the mission, two schools were established, at one of which the boys are taught to read and write, and the common rules of arithmetic; and in the other the girls are taught to read and sew, with the most useful domestic occupations.—Can these Indians at the mission of Arima, or the disbanded soldiers under your charge, at any time quit their villages and settlements without your permission? The Indians cannot quit their mission for more than a few days, without leave obtained; the settlers are required to have written passes.—What was the amount of expense incurred in settling the disbanded soldiers at Cuaré, and from what fund was it defrayed? The accounts are kept by the commissariat department in Port of Spain, I am therefore not acquainted with the exact amount, but it must have been within the limitation assigned by the Right honourable the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury for this service.—What salary do you receive as superintendent of the two settlements at

Extracts from
Minutes of Evi-
dence before
Committee of

Cuaré and Manzanilla, and from what fund is the same paid? For superintending the Cuaré settlements, 25*s.* currency per day, for superintending the Manzanilla settlement, 30*s.* currency per day, which salary is paid from the fund allowed for bearing all the expenses incident to these settlements in the hands of the commissariat department in Trinidad.

Señor Don *José Zepero*, sworn, and Examined.

HOW long have you resided in this colony?—Thirty years.—Whence did you come? From Havannah.—Do you recollect the nature of the treatment and discipline of slaves when in Havannah? When I first arrived here I was only a boy, but I returned in 1809, and remained there six years; I resided in the city of Havannah, and had every opportunity of ascertaining the treatment of the domestic slaves.—Did their treatment of their domestic slaves at all differ from the treatment of the same class in Spanish families here? Not in the least.—Had not the slaves at the Havannah some advantages in the mode in which they were permitted to acquire their freedom not practised in this colony? Yes, they had a practice there by which a slave wishing to purchase his freedom could make a bargain with his master for his price, and when he had paid a proportion of this price he was entitled to a similar proportion of his time, and so on until he had paid up the whole.—Was a slave who had made this arrangement with his master termed “coartado”? He was.—Was the master obliged by law to accede to this arrangement at the request of the slave? It was entirely optional on the part of the master to enter into this agreement or not; but having entered into it, the law then bound him to the performance of it.—Was the value of the slave fixed by tariff or by appraisement? By neither; it was entirely a matter of private agreement.—When a slave had paid the fourth or half of his value, could his master sell him? Yes, he could assign over his agreement, and the “coartado” was bound to the same terms with his new master as with his previous owner.—Did the owners of slaves in the Havannah feed, clothe, and furnish medical attendance to them, as we do in this colony? Exactly in the same way.—How then was this contract managed when the “coartado” had paid up the half of any other proportion of his value, and acquired the half of his time; were the expenses of his maintenance and medical attendance divided between him and his master? The “coartado,” in every case that I heard of, was of that class of slaves who are in the habit of working out on their own account, and maintaining themselves, paying to the master a certain fixed sum every month; he continued, therefore, the same practice, paying his master a proportionate share of this fixed sum, according to the amount of his value paid. With respect to medical attendance, that cost very little at the Havannah, compared to what it does in this colony; and as the contract was always voluntary on the part of the master to oblige a slave, I suppose that out of generosity he may have taken care of him when sick.—Did you ever hear of an agricultural slave becoming “coartado,” working a portion of the week for himself, and the remainder upon his master’s estate? I never heard of it; and I do not think it possible to make such an arrangement.—What produce do they principally cultivate at the Havannah? Principally sugar, some coffee, and a great deal of bees wax.—Is neither cocoa, cotton, nor indigo exported from thence? I believe little or none.—Were the estates cultivated by slaves, or by free people? Entirely by slaves; the estates were very large, consisting in general of three hundred to four hundred slaves; many had six to eight hundred each; and I knew one with one thousand.—Was the bees wax procured by the labour of free people, or by slaves? By slaves; and several of these establishments, I have been told, employed from three to four hundred slaves each.—Do you consider that a slave in the island of Cuba enjoys any advantage over a slave in this colony? None, with respect to his work or his time; but provisions there are much more abundant and cheap.—Had you any procurador, syndic or guardian, appointed for the slaves at the Havannah? None.—How then could the “coartado” obtain redress, should his master act unjustly towards him? The contract between him and his master was always made before an *escrivano*, who entered it in his protocol; and in the event of any difference between them, the “coartado” preferred his complaint before an *alcade*, who appointed an advocate to protect and defend him.

The Reverend *David Evans*, sworn, and Examined.

ARE the domestic servants in your establishment slaves or free persons? I have one free person, and three hired slaves.—Do you give a preference to hired slaves, or do you find a difficulty in procuring free persons? I prefer slaves, as they are generally more attentive to their work, and more obedient.—What wages do you pay these domestics? Eight dollars per month each, and find them.—Do they perform as much work as domestic servants in England? By no means; I think one servant in England would do as much as three here, and with much more comfort to the master and mistress of the family, who must in this colony attend to every thing.—How are the morals of the domestics here, compared to those in Europe? It is impossible to institute any comparison; nothing can be worse than the morals of the domestics here; they seem to have no idea of chastity; they are generally so dishonest that it is useless to discharge them on that account, as you cannot expect to find one better than another; they are not sober, and rarely tell the truth.—Do you consider it to be in the power of the masters and mistresses to correct them of these vices, by any trouble or effort on their parts? Little can be done with the present generation; by separating the infants from the mothers the next may be improved.

Council of Trini-
dad, on the Negro
Character.

TRINIDAD NEGROES.

RETURN to an Address of The Honourable House of
Commons, dated 12th June 1827 ; for

EXTRACTS

From the Minutes of Evidence taken by the
Committee of the Council of *Trinidad*, for
enquiring into the NEGRO CHARACTER.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
14 June 1827.
