

"Our Records! Where are they?" This was the skeptical enquiry made by one whose interests are bound up in the welfare of British Guiana, when a fellow-colonist spoke to him about some of the Records of the Magnificent Province. The object of this paper is to show, so far as the limits of space in *Timehri* will allow, not only where those records are, but also, what they contain.

Records of the settlements of DEMERARA, Essequibo and Berbice, before the xviii<sup>th</sup> century, must be sought for in the archives of the Netherlands; chiefly at The Hague in Holland, and at Middelburgh in Zeeland. Of the xviii<sup>th</sup> century itself, and of the present century, abundant records exist in the Public Offices of British Guiana. Those of "the most ancient colony of Berbice," are preserved from "decay's effacing fingers", at the Colony House in New Amsterdam. The records of DEMERARA and Essequibo are to be found for the most part in the Government Secretary's office at the Public Buildings, and in the Registrar's Office at the Victoria Law Courts, both offices being in the City of Georgetown.<sup>1</sup>

Some "old rubbish" is also stored in one of the two small out-buildings adjacent to the Government Offices, Georgetown, whilst the top story of the building now occupied as an office by the Chief Commissary has long been used as a place to shoot such "rubbish".

What the old records can tell us will best be learned by giving notes of their contents, as these may be gathered from Indices in English made not many years ago by two colonists knowing in the Dutch language. These experts were employed in the work of indexing the old Dutch papers, only so long as a vote of the Combined Court for the purpose lasted. When that was spent the work was discontinued. The Volumes thus indexed are preserved in the Government Secretary's Office, Georgetown. The Notes following do not pretend to give more than a mere idea of what can be learned about some of the subjects upon which information is desirable. Documents relating to the question of cutting a Canal between the Essequibo and DEMERARA Rivers abound and would, of themselves, make a book, if printed. There is also a copy of the famous Plan of Redress. These, and numberless other matters are, however, not even mentioned in the following Notes.

**THE SUPREME AUTHORITY IN HOLLAND** - On January the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1792, the King of Holland assumed the direct control over DEMERARA and Essequibo on the expiration of the Charter of the West India Company and proclamation was made that all officers were to be continued in their appointments until further orders. Up to that date, the Directors of the Company, the States General of the Netherlands, and the Stadtholders, had from time to time exercised authority over the colonists. The last named issued *Instructions* for Governors and Councilors, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1773. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1772, the sovereign issued an Ordinance with respect to persons using improper language and behaving disrespectfully towards the Courts. This was republished in the colony on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1788. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1784, the Council of Ten ordered the Director General to send to Holland every year, a certain quantity of preserves made of fruits growing in the colony.

**THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT** - The colonies were governed by a Directeur General at Head-Quarters with a subordinate officer called Commandeur, in direct charge of the sister colony. There was a Colonial Receiver of Taxes, a Secretary and Bookkeeper and a Fiscal.<sup>2</sup> The homely title of Bookkeeper appears to have originated from the keeping of the books of the West India Company's Estates in the two colonies. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1773, the Court of Policy of Essequibo prescribed the mode of keeping the colony's books (p. 325). In 1779, the Court of Directors of the Company, ordered that a yearly account of Poll and Colonial Taxes, signed by the Colonial Receiver and two members of the Court, was to be sent to the Directors. On the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1778, the Directors wrote out instruction about the rank of the Fiscal (p. 293).

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1779, 50 guilders were voted to the Marshal, BOIN, for distributing *Publications* in the Essequibo (p. 137). The administration of the colonies was reformed by Deputies of the States General, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1789, (Lo. F. No.)

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Dalton, Registrar of the Supreme Court, has been good enough to ascertain that, in Georgetown, there are Wills from 1767; Transports from 1770; Contracts of Ondertrouw from 1760; Miscellaneous Deeds from 1764.

<sup>2</sup>Matthias TINNE was appointed Receiver of the colony of DEMERARA on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1794 by the Council for the colonies. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1795, he was appointed Secretary of the colony by Governor Beaujon. When the office of Secretary was conferred by Patent upon John Sullivan, that gentleman appointed P.F. TINNE to be his Deputy on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1804. This latter as the Secretary to the Court of Policy, countersigned the Articles of Capitulation of the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1804.

THE COLONIAL LEGISLATURE – On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, 1776, the Court of Policy of Essequibo passed a Resolution as to absent Members (p. 25). On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1772, the Members of that Court protested against serving unless they were paid for doing so (p. 206.)<sup>3</sup> On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1773, ALBERTUS BACKER requested permission to resign his seat. This was granted and thanks were voted to Mr. BACKER for his services (p. 261).<sup>4</sup> On the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 1778, there is a record of the arrest of the Members of both Rivers (p. 85). This action seems hardly in consonance with a Publication of the 6<sup>th</sup> August 1776 with regard to respect for authorities (pp. 204, 213, 229). On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1779, A. THIENS applied to be excused from serving as a Member and was so excused (pp. 158, 159). The Court of Policy resolved on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1797, that any person who should be elected a Councillor Policy, was to be obliged to accept the office under a penalty of 3,000 guilders.

Then, as now, Colonists stood upon the order of their going, and even in those times the Home authorities were called upon to settle questions of precedence. A resolution of the Council of Ten, of the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1774, prescribed the Rank of Members at the Meetings (p. 170), and another Resolution of the 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1773, provided for precedence in the Combined Court of Policy for the two colonies (pp. 147 to 164). On the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1778, the Council of Ten expressed their astonishment that their instructions with regard to holding the Combined Court of Policy twice a year had not been observed (p. 281).

THE COLLEGE OF KEIZERS - On the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, 1774, J. C. BERCHEYCK was allowed to resign his rank as Captain and Elector of the Burghers on condition of his becoming Major of the Militia (p. 5). As hereinafter noted, JAN DUDONJON applied in 1746 for a Certificate of Honesty and was refused it. He was a Member of the College of Keizers. His colleagues of that College thereupon protested against sitting with him, 'as he was a dishonest man' (p. 20). There was much ado in consequence, but, as the outcome of the character given him, or taken away from him DUDONJON was, on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1746, dismissed from the Militia and from the College of Keizers (p.22). The Council of Ten defined the Powers of the College on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1776 (pp. 195, et seqs: ). On the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 1779, the College sent up two names to the Court of Policy for the election of one Member of the latter body. After one of the names had been chosen, the Election was annulled and the College was asked to make a fresh nomination (p. 62). On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1790, an election became necessary to fill the vacancy caused by the departure of CHARLES DESBARATZ (p. 13). On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1796, the Court of Policy reprimanded the College of Keizers and enjoined upon them not to refuse to serve as member of the Court of Policy when thereto elected.

GRANTS OF LAND - A Resolution as to the granting of lands was adopted by the Court of Policy on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1770 (p. 123). Information was asked for by the Court of Directors on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 1772, as to the rights and conditions of granting lands in Essequibo and DEMERARA. A resolution of the Council of Ten at Amsterdam, dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 1773, conveyed authority to make grants of land, under conditions. Instructions of the Court of Zeeland, dated 27<sup>th</sup> December 1773, regulated the same matter. The proceedings of the Court of Policy on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1773, included the question of the jurisdiction of the Court as to grants of land (p.323.) The conditions of grants of land were dealt with in Resolutions of the States General, between 14<sup>th</sup> April 1773 and the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1774 (pp. 13, 49, 57). The Court of Directors at Amsterdam had something to say upon the subject on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1794 (pp. 1 to 3). By a Resolution of the Council Ten of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1776, it was ordered that charts should be attached to applications for lands (p. 142). In the minutes of the Courts of Policy and of Civil and Criminal Justice of Essequibo and DEMERARA, there are notes of Publications of Titles to land, on the 7<sup>th</sup> May and 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1790, and on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1792. A resolution of the States General of the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1792, laid down Rules for the granting of lands (pp. 76 to 84). As to Depths, in 1752, 750 Roods was fixed. Before that year, a Depth was 500 Roods. A Resolution of the Court of Policy on the 11<sup>th</sup> August 1765, dealt with the Depths allowed behind the plantations for cutting wood (p. 5). The minutes of the Combined Court of Policy of the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1775, include the question of Measurements of lands in both Rivers; and a Resolution of the Council of Ten, at Amsterdam, of the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1766, relates to grants of lands and with regard to the difference in the length of their chains and upon other points. A Resolution was adopted with regard to the iron rod to be used for measuring lands and as to the mode of using it (p. 184). On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1772, Reports of Measurements were laid over and it was ordered that Publication be made of them (p.201). A Resolution of the Court of Policy brothers De SAFFON are frequently named. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1771, the Court of Policy interrogated the Land Surveyors on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1773 (p. 297), provided for the prevention of disputes arising through difference in the Land Measurers' Chains. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1790, the Governor and Court of Policy required all person who had obtained grants of land to exhibit the same

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<sup>3</sup> In 1773, DEMERARA was given a Court of Policy of its own.

<sup>4</sup> ALBERTUS BACKER was appointed Commandeur, *ad interim*, of Essequibo on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1787. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1789 he was appointed Governor in the room of JAN l'ESPINASSE, and was re-appointed Commandeur of Essequibo on the 31<sup>st</sup>

of March 1793. Leave of absence was granted to him, for one year, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1794 and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1796, he was re-appointed Commandeur of Essequibo on his return to the colony.

double depths (pp. 187 to 189). ON the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 1787, the Governor and Court of Policy ordained that all persons who had obtained grants of uncultivated lands, should build upon the same within six months and have such lands properly measured under penalty of having them restored to Government. A Proclamation with respect to uncultivated in Canal No. 3 was issued on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 1799. With so many transactions in land, there was, of course, need of Land Surveyors; among whom the within six months from date. On the 30<sup>th</sup> April 1792, Governor BACKER required all grantees to call for their "cards of measurement" within three months, or to forfeit the same to the West India Company on the expiration of that period.<sup>5</sup>

ACRE MONEY - In the minutes of the Court of Policy of Essequibo, at a meeting held at Fort Zeelandia on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1766, will be found a letter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1765 from their High Mightinesses with regard to Acre Money and a Resolution of the Court thereupon. In the minutes of the Combined Court of Policy held at the same place, on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1775, the introduction of Acre Money into both rivers formed a subject of deliberation. The postponement of the discussion upon the question of the introduction of Acre Money is noted in the minutes of the Court of Policy on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1778 (pp. 2, 16). In the Court of Policy, on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1779, there was a proposal "to publish" the introduction of Acre Money.

WHITES – By a Resolution of the Council of Ten, dated 30 of September 1784, it was proposed that Dutch peasants should be induced to settle in the colonies, there to breed cattle, &c. The Immigration of European farmers is contemplated in a Resolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> October following. The combined Court of Policy at Fort Zeelandia, ordered on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1774, that there should be one white man over every 30 slaves on an estate, in both Rivers. By a publication of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1784, all plantations were required to have one white man for every 50 slaves. On the 19<sup>th</sup> October 1778, a Proclamation was issued in relation to white servants and slaves. There is mention of a list of inhabitants in Essequibo in the Minutes of the Court of Policy of the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1779 (p.168).

SLAVES – The catching of escaped slaves is mentioned in the Minutes of the Court of Justice of Essequibo, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1747, and owners of slaves were forbidden to make them work on Sundays at a meeting of the same Court on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1748. The minutes of that body on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 1766 contain a request that the sinews of a runaway slave might be cut, which application is noted as postponed to next Court. The Combined Court of Policy, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1775, decided that slaves were liable to pay taxes as being "private persons". In the minutes of the Court of Policy of Essequibo, held at Fort Zeelandia on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1779, there is recorded an account rendered for plantains delivered for the use of Galley Slaves. So early as the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1769 do the Resolutions of their High Mightinesses and the Court of Directors, tell of correspondence with the Court of Madrid, with regard to the desertion of slaves to the Orinoco, which after many years resulted in the Extradition Treaty made at Aranjuez, between Spain and the Netherlands on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1791. It is somewhere stated in these records that the runaway slaves did not gain by their escape, as after promptly baptizing them, the Spaniards made them work harder than their Dutch masters had done. A decree of the States General of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1776, provided that, in the case of slaves going to Europe and returning to the colony, security should be given for any such slave leaving the colony.

The Court of Policy enacted on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1784, that all slaves were to pay the colony 100 guilders for their manumission. On the same day in 1785, it was further ordered that property left slaves at their death should belong to their master and that no person should sell any slave unless such person proved the slave to be his property. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1794, Governor GROVENSTIN, prohibited slaves to carry and fire any guns, under heavy punishment, and from the 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1795, slaves were not allowed to walk abroad, either by day or night with a special permission from their masters. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1796, Governor BEAUJON allowed the importation of slaves in Neutral vessels, and on the following 27<sup>th</sup> of July, it was forbidden to import slaves without a special license, under penalty of 1000 guilders. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1784, it was ordered that three acres of plantains should be grown on each Estate for every slave.

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<sup>5</sup> The following is an Extract from a report made to Governor Sir Henry Light, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1839 by William Hadfield, Crown Surveyor: - "The Dutch Government, on the first settlement of the Colony, gave grants of 2000 acres, and some even greater, but it was afterwards deemed advisable to limit them to 1000 acres – subsequently to 500 and lastly to 250 with a provision by which the grantee was entitled to an additional 250 acres on shewing that he had in cultivation 2/3rds the extent of his former grant. Since that they have been by the instructions of her Majesty's Government of date 5<sup>th</sup> March 1831, limited to 100 acres."

**INDIANS** - Among the Resolutions of their High Mightinesses and the Court of Directors is one dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1717, allowing the inhabitants to purchase Indian slaves in the Orinoco. Another resolution of the 16<sup>th</sup> November 1752, treats of the Trade in Indian Slaves. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1753, the Trade in Red Slaves formed a subject for the consideration of the Court of Policy of Essequibo. It was not until the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1793, that by a Proclamation of GROVENSTIN'S, it was forbidden to purchase or take Free Indians as slaves. The Council of Ten at Amsterdam, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1774, enjoined upon the Colonial authorities that the friendship of the Indians was to be cultivated. The treatment of the Indians was considered by the Combined Court of Policy on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1776. The kidnapping of Indians was before the Court of Justice of Essequibo on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1750 and that body enjoined non-interference with the Indians, at its sitting on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1755. The same Court decided upon the appointment of an Indian Interpreter on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1768. Grants of land to the Indians are dealt with in a Resolution of the Court of Directors of the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1784.

**RELIGION** - In the Minutes of the Court of Justice of Essequibo, on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1745, there is record of an application to the Court for the 1 ½ percent charged on Vendues, to be given in aid of the repairs to the Church. The court granted favourable letters to the Consistory to their High Mightinesses (p. 12). A Resolution of the Council of Ten at Amsterdam, of the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1773, treated of the building of a Church (p. 241). In the Minutes of the Court of Policy of Essequibo, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1773, there is an application from the Sexton and Precentor for payment by a fixed salary for burial of the dead. The good man also asked the money due to him for binding books in the Secretary's Office be paid to him, (p. 325). In the Minutes of the same Court, of the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1779, there is a mention of panes of glass for a church (p. 157). The Court of Policy of Essequibo, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1779, resolved that land was to be granted at Fort Island for a church (pp. 164,165). On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1780, the Court of Policy received a remonstrance from the Reverend Mr. LINGUIS against the smallness of the amount allowed for ringing the church bell (p. 391). The Council of Ten, on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1784 ordered that a church was to be erected in DEMERARA for the extension of religion (p. 47). So far back as on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1748, a day for general thanksgiving was fixed by the Court of Justice of Essequibo (p. 34). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1778, the Court of Policy ordained that a general Thanksgiving should be held on the first Wednesday in May in each year (p. 48). It speaks well for the Colonists that, so long ago as the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1771, the Court of Policy should have adopted a resolution imposing penalties upon parties detected in the ill treatment of dumb animals (p. 138).

**COURTS OF JUSTICE** – On the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1765, it was decided by the Court of Justice of Essequibo, to have prayers before the opening of the business of the Court (p. 1). On the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1769, an application from the BARON VAN GROVENSTIN, to practice before that Court was rejected (p. 249). The Baron survived this repulse and afterwards became Governor of the united colony. <sup>6</sup> A Resolution of the Council of Ten at Amsterdam, of the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1773, treats of the hearing of cases, of the nomination, election and resignation of members of the Court and of their salaries (pp. 237 to 239). A resolution of the Council of Ten of the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1784, laid down what laws, &c., were to be in force in DEMERARA and Essequibo and dealt with preferent claims, and many other important matters (pp. 26 to 28). There are Resolutions of the States General of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October 1774, relating to the Administration of Justice (pp. 165, 169). The States General, on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1774, ordered that certain law books were to be kept in use in the Courts of Justice for reference (pp. 195, 196). By a resolution of the Council of Ten at Amsterdam, of the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1774, law books were to be sent to DEMERARA. On the same date, it was decided to give an increase of table money for the DEMERARA and Essequibo Courts and the quantity of rum to be allowed to the Director General and other Officials was regulated (pp. 91 to 107). Of the punishments inflicted by the Courts, the following are instances.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1754, a mulatto slave named LON, for desertion, was sentenced to have his ears cut off. ON the same day, CESS, a free creole, for impertinence to C.F. CONNING, was ordered to be severely flogged (p. 86, 87). Somewhere

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<sup>6</sup> To carry out the Plan of Redress which had been sanctioned by the States General, the Prince of Orange appointed Baron VAN GROVENSTIN and MYNHEER BOEY, Commissioners to proceed to the colony and there inaugurate the new state of things. They arrived in the colony in May 1789. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1793, publication was made that the Prince of Orange had appointed the Baron to be Governor General and Major General of DEMERARA and Essequibo. In May 1795, VAN GROVESTIN, apparently siding with the Revolutionary Party in Holland threw up the Government and sailed for Martinique in the frigate *Zebra*. Upon this, the members of the Court of Policy formed themselves into a Provisional Government on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1795. This state of things lasted until Governor BEAUJON assumed the Government, by appointment, dated 29<sup>th</sup> June, from the States General.

between 1765 and 1769, one ROSEN was sentenced to be exposed under the gallows for an hour on a "public day" with a cord round his neck, and to be banished from the colony, whilst his property was to be confiscated to defray the expenses of the suit. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1769, PIETER, JAN, LOUIS and QUAKHOE, negro slaves charged with riot, were sentenced to be whipped, their ears and noses to be cut off, after which they were to be banished from the colony (p. 219). Upon the question of punishing by banishment, the opinion of Dutch lawyers was enclosed with a resolution of the States General of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1772 (p. 223). In the Court of Justice of Essequibo, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1769, a proposal respecting the purchase of another negro to be employed as Executioner, was referred to the Court of Policy (p. 249). Compensation was given to owners by the colony for slaves executed for crimes, until the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1795, when indemnification in such cases was abolished.

In civil matters, the working of the Courts may be illustrated by the following notes. On application to the Court of Justice of Essequibo, a certificate of good character was, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1746, issued to D. DOELENS. At the same time, the Court refused a similar certificate to JAN DUDONON. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1768, the Court granted a certificate of good character to the Baron VAN GROVENSTIN (p. 162). Letters of Protection were granted to one MOORE, in the year 1767 for ten years, for the re-establishment of his affairs (pp. 80, 95). In the Combined Court of Policy held at Fort Zeelandia on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 1774, it was resolved to have the names of persons desirous of leaving either river, published and re-published (p. 4). In the Resolutions of the States General, on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 1775, there is an opinion of Dutch lawyers respecting an appeal, pro Deo, against a sentence of the Court of DEMERARA (p. 147). The publication of claims against BOEDELs was provided for the the Combined Court on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1775 (pp. 92 to 96). The Court of Justice of Essequibo, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1766, allowed 5 per cent for the administration of Boedels (p. 41). As to intestates, there is an opinion of the Orphan Chamber on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1752 as to person dying without wills (189). ON the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1791, it was ordered the notice be given in cases of deaths of intestates (p. 200). The charges and commission of the Orphan Chamber were dealt with by the Council of Ten at Amsterdam on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1774 (p. 170). Publication as to insolvents' Boedels in DEMERARA and Essequibo was provided for by a resolution of the Sates General of the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1777 (pp. 336 to 361). It was ordered by the Council of Ten, on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1778, that no member of the Court should be a sequestrator (p. 318).

**MARRIAGE** - The Advocate TROTZ seems to have had some trouble in getting married to Mrs. SPOORS. One MILBOURNE stopped the marriage as appears by the proceedings of the Court of Justice of Essequibo on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1765 (p. 25). TROTZ thereupon brought a suit against MILBOURNE and gained it. MILBOURNE appealed and the publication of Banns was postponed in consequence (See Minutes of Court of Justice 10<sup>th</sup> December 1765 and 7<sup>th</sup> July 1766, pp. 19 to 27 and 49). In the same Court on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1766, an application was made for leave to marry the wife of a man who had left the colony some years before (p. 41). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 1768, Invariable Disunion was held to be good cause for a separation between man and wife (p. 180). In 1776, a case arose where it was desirable to publish the Banns of Marriage three times in one day. The Colonial Court granted the application on the 20<sup>th</sup> May, and the parties were married (pp. 188 to 200). The matter was reported to the Council of Ten at Amsterdam who approved of what had been done and they sent out a resolution as to publishing three Banns in one day in special cases. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1790, the Governor and Court of Policy resolved that no persons should be allowed to marry out of Church unless they paid the colony 100 guilders (L.G. No 7).

**TRANSPORTS** - On the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1771, S.C. VAN BERCHEYCH made an application to the Court of Policy of Essequibo that an error made in passing a certain transport should be rectified. The application was granted. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1772, a resolution of the Court of Policy was passed with regard to Fees for transports. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1774, the Council of Ten at Amsterdam made rules for the Passing of Transports and in May 1776, the same body fixed provisionally the charges for Transports and Mortgages. In the Combined Court, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1776, there was a discussion as to the Passing of Transports (p. 171). In the Court of Policy on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1778, there was a discussion upon Transport and Mortgages (pp. 101, 106). It was not until the British Occupation that it became requisite to advertise Transports and Mortgages intended to be passed. This was done by an order of the Court of Justice dated 7<sup>th</sup> May and published on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 1807 which required three advertisements in the *Gazette*.

**MORTGAGES** - In the Court of Justice of Essequibo and DEMERARA on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1766, a decision was given that Mortgages are preferent Claims (p. 35). On the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1769, there was an order of the Court of Justice respecting the Passing of Mortgages (p. 48). The same Court ruled on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November following, that non-production of Certificates of the Vendue Master invalidated Mortgages (p. 254). On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 16 1774, the States General forwarded an opinion of Dutch lawyers upon a question relating to Mortgages (p. 28), and on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1777, the same body dealt with the question of Mortgage as a preferent Claim (pp. 368 to 380).

SEPARATION OF DEMERARA FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF ESSEQUIBO – From its constitution as a Colony in 1745, DEMERARA was ruled by the Courts of policy and Justice of Essequibo. In 1773, the settlement of DEMERARA had become so considerable that the latter was given a Court of Policy and a Court of Justice of its own. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1773, the States General granted the Courts power to exercise certain rights over the Colonies of Essequibo and DEMERARA. Respecting the laws and regulations in force before the separation, there were resolutions of the States General dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 1774 Opp. 54, 56), and 30<sup>th</sup> May 1777 (p. 350). The Combined Court of Policy held at Fort Zeelandia on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1774 (p. 2), and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1775 (p. 55), laid down that the jurisdiction of Essequibo commenced at the Boerasirie Creek. In 1806, Governor BENTINCK proclaimed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November that from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1807, the Boundary of DEMERARA should extend beyond the Boerasirie Creek to the Bonasique Creek. The confusion in the Secretary's office of Essequibo at the time of the separation is mentioned in the Minutes of the Combined Court of the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1775 (pp. 125 to 136).

TRANSFER OF THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT FROM ESSEQUIBO TO DEMERARA – By a resolution of the Council of Ten of the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1784, it was ordered that the Headquarters of both Colonies were to be in DEMERARA and that the Director General was to reside there (p. 106). A resolution of the same body on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the same month, had ordered that "the City of DEMERARA" should be called STABROEK and that the Director General and Members of the Court of Essequibo and DEMERARA were to be informed of the same (p. 101). It seems reasonable to conclude that the name of STABROEK was given by the Council out of compliment to one of their own number, as on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1780, the Court of Policy had receive notification from the Council of the death of one of this body and the appointment in his stead of MYNHEER GEELVINCK, Lord of STABROEK (p. 7). The publication of the name thus given appears to have not been made until the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 1785,<sup>7</sup> (L.B., No 7). On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1785, the Directors of the West India Company appointed JAN L'ESPINASSE to be Governor of Essequibo and DEMERARA (L.B. No 1), and on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June following, the Governor and Court of Policy enacted the Union of the Courts of Policy of DEMERARA and Essequibo, publication of the fact being made on the same day. The union of the Courts of Justice of the two Colonies did not, however, take place until the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1812, during the British Occupation.

But for the Indices, in English, the contents of the volumes of old Dutch records would be, to most colonists, mysteries as hidden as are the meanings of the picture writings on the rock of Guiana, from which *Timehri* takes its name. With the help of the Indices, however, enquirers gifted with knowledge of Dutch may yet do something to let us learn more of the Colony's past than has hitherto been within our ken.

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<sup>7</sup> On the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 1799, Werk-en-Rust was incorporated with Stabroek. The union of Stabroek and the adjoining districts under the name of Georgetown was resolved by Governor CARMICHAEL and the Court of Policy on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1812. See the Notice in the Essequibo and DEMERARA *Royal Gazette* of the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1812.