

THE BRITISH SUPERINTENDENCY OF THE MOSQUITO SHORE

1749 - 1787

by

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ABSTRACT

After an informal relationship between the Indians of the Mosquito Shore and the governor and merchants of Jamaica that had lasted for nearly a hundred years, Robert Hodgson was sent to the Shore in 1740 to organise the scattered English settlers and Indians for military campaigns on the Spanish Main during the War of Jenkins' Ear. When the war ended, the Board of Trade established a superintendency on the Shore naming Hodgson as superintendent. His government (1749-1759) was punctuated by disputes between the Mosquitos, Shoremen and Spanish which nearly erupted into a new war.

The second superintendent, Richard Jones, was replaced at the outbreak of Anglo-Spanish hostilities in 1762 by Captain Joseph Otway, when it was felt that a field officer was needed on the Shore. However, the war soon ended and the Mosquito Shore during Otway's superintendency (1762-1767) experienced peace, growth and prosperity.

At Otway's death in 1767, Robert Hodgson, son of the first superintendent, was named to the office. His superintendency soon deteriorated into a series of bitter feuds with the settlers and the governors of Jamaica. In 1775 Hodgson's enemies persuaded Lord George Germain to replace him with his worst adversary, James Lawrie. Lawrie was superintendent until the evacuation of the Shore in 1787, avoiding

all attempts by Hodgson to force his removal from office.

During Lawrie's superintendency (1776-1787) the Shore was used as a base for military operations in the Anglo-Spanish conflict of 1779-1783, and then as a refuge for American loyalists. Succumbing to constant pressure by the Spanish, England abandoned the Mosquito Shore in 1786 at the signing of the Mosquito Convention. The evacuation of British settlers was terminated in June 1787, and Spanish settlements were formed on the Shore immediately thereafter.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>ABH</u>	Burdon, <u>Archives of British Honduras.</u>
AC	Archivo Colonial, Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica.
Adm	Admiralty Papers, Public Record Office (London).
AGS, Est	Archivo General de Simancas, Estado.
AGS, Guerra	Archivo General de Simancas, Guerra moderna.
AHN, Consejo	Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid), Consejo de las Indias.
AHN, Est	Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid), Estado.
<u>AHR</u>	<u>American Historical Review</u>
<u>BAGG</u>	<u>Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno</u> (Guatemala).
BDH	Biblioteca Depósito Hidrográfico... (Madrid).
BM	British Museum (London).
BN	Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid).
BFR	Biblioteca del Palacio Real (Madrid).
CC	Complimentario Colonial, Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica.
<u>CDHCR</u>	Fernández, <u>Colección de Documentos...Costa Rica.</u>
<u>CKG</u>	Fortescue, <u>Correspondence of King George III.</u>
CO	Colonial Office Archives, Public Record Office (London).
<u>CRC</u>	Peralta, <u>Costa Rica y Colombia.</u>
<u>CRM</u>	Peralta, <u>Costa Rica y Costa de Mosquitos.</u>
Cuba	Isla de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla).
<u>DGHC</u>	Cuervo, <u>Colección de Documentos...Colombia.</u>
<u>DNB</u>	Lee, <u>Dictionary of National Biography.</u>

DRH Hodgson, The Defence of Robert Hodgson.
DRN Colección de documentos...Nicaragua.
EHR English Historical Review.
FO Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office (London).
GH Peralta, Géographie Historique.
GP Germain Papers, William L. Clements Library (Ann Arbor).
GP/SDB Germain Papers/Secret Despatch Book, William L. Clements
Library (Ann Arbor).
Guat Audiencia de Guatemala, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla).
HAHR Hispanic American Historical Review.
HA/MSL Honduras Archives/Mosquito Shore Letter Book, Royal
Commonwealth Society Library (London).
Ind Gen Indiferente General, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla).
JHR Jamaica Historical Review.
JTCR Peralta, Jurisdicción territorial.
KP Kemble Papers.
LCG Aspinall, Later Correspondence of George III.
LCRC Peralta, Límites de Costa Rica y Colombia.
Mex Audiencia de México, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla).
MN Museo Naval (Madrid).
NLS National Library of Scotland (Edinburgh).
PC 2 Privy Council Office Registers, Public Record Office
(London).
PCC Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury,
Somerset House (London).
PTJ Boyd, Papers of Thomas Jefferson.

RI Revista de Indias.

Shel Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library (Ann Arbor).

SP State Papers, Public Record Office (London).

Sta Fe Audiencia de Santa Fé, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla).

Sto Dom Audiencia de Santo Domingo, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla).

T Treasury Papers, Public Record Office (London).

TCD Cantillo, Tratados, Convenios....

TS King's or Queen's Proctor Papers, Public Record Office (London).

30/8 Chatham Papers, Public Record Office (London).

30/15 Manchester Papers, Public Record Office (London).

30/47 Egremont Papers, Public Record Office (London).

30/50 Neville and Aldworth Papers, Public Record Office (London).

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Chapter I

INCURSIONS, MERCHANTS and MAROONERS:

Guerrilla Warfare and Clandestine Trade on the Spanish Main during the war of Jenkins' Ear, 1738 - 1744.¹

Seizures of English merchant vessels and contraband trade on the Spanish Main, the two major issues that split the English and Spanish crowns early in the eighteenth century, in 1739 led to the conflict known as the War of Jenkins' Ear.² War suited the purpose and temperament of each nation. England was determined to protect and encourage her commercial interests, while Spain was anxious to preserve her official trade monopoly.³

Mere suspicion of clandestine trading activities was sufficient

¹ Captain Robert Jenkins lost his ear to the commander of a Spanish guardacosta in 1731. The case was forgotten until 1738 when it was revived and became one of the culminating causes of the war, just as Jenkins' patriotic cry "I committed my soul to God, and my cause to my country" became England's wartime rallying call. DNB, xxix, 306.

² There were other important issues that helped to provoke the conflict; the asiento trade and the dispute over Georgia, for example, but they remain outside the range of this paper. For studies on the causes of the war see: H.W.V. Temperley, "The Causes of the War of Jenkins' Ear, 1739", Royal Historical Society Transactions (third series, London, 1909), iii, 197-237; Ernest G. Hildner, "The Role of the South Sea Company in the Diplomacy Leading to the War of Jenkins' Ear, 1729 - 1739", HAHR, xviii (1938), pp. 320-341; Richard Pares, War and Trade in the West Indies (Oxford, 1936), pp. 29-64.

³ Benjamin Keene, British minister plenipotentiary in Madrid, was aware of Spain's willingness to fight. In June 1739 he wrote: "...in my private Opinion I thought these people had taken a kind of Pleasure to throw Affairs out of all Hopes of Remedy...." Keene to Newcastle, 29 June 1739, SP 94/133.

ground for the seizure of English merchantmen--no matter the composition of the cargo or location and destination of the vessel.⁴ "Acts of aggression" against peaceful British traders, whose commerce in the Bay of Honduras was felt by many to be authorised by the "American" treaty (1670), and by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), hindered the growth of British trade and settlement on the logwood coast of Yucatán⁵ and on the "Island of Mosquito",⁶ where British marooners⁷ settled among the irreduced and independent Zambos Mosquitos Indians⁸ had begun to open a profitable trade throughout the provinces of the kingdom of Guatemala.⁹

Spain's major concern in the West Indies was focalised in the Bay of Honduras. The English court must surely be aware, wrote one Spanish minister, of the excesses committed by the British in their usurpations

⁴See Basil Williams, Carteret and Newcastle (Cambridge, 1943), p. 111.

⁵Vera Lee Brown, "Contraband Trade: a Factor in the Decline of Spain's Empire in America", HAHR, viii (1928), p. 184. Logwood cutting had long been notorious on the rivers Belize and Nuevo on the Yucatan peninsula, a region today known as British Honduras. Throughout the eighteenth century Spain grudgingly accepted in her own councils the English right to cut logwood. See Observations on Spanish interests, c. 1762, AGS, Est 8162. The hostile and unproductive country made trade almost impossible with the interior, consequently little Spanish gold, silver or other products of her colonies could filter out. But Spain never relinquished her claim to the region, and occasionally tried to eject the logwood cutters.

⁶The most common Spanish name for the Mosquito Shore from the latter half of the seventeenth century until c. 1739 was "Isla de Mosquitos".

⁷"Marooner" was a term used to describe the undisciplined and often lawless white settlers on the Mosquito Shore. After about 1749 they were popularly known as Shoremen: the logwood-cutters of Belize as Baymen.

⁸The Zambos Mosquitos were comprised of two major racial strains: pure blooded Indians and Zambos, the latter a mixture of Negro and Indian blood. However the two groups were culturally and linguistically one.

⁹Merchants of Kingston to Vernon, 21 January 1739, SP 42/85, f. 119.

of Spanish territory on the coasts of Guatemala and Yucatán.¹⁰ The Spanish could have pointed to more serious outrages by the British and their Mosquito allies. Incursions, robberies, burnings and kidnappings had continued unabated since at least as early as 1699.¹¹ Governor Francisco Carrandi y Menán of Costa Rica wrote in 1738: "It is a disgrace how the cold blooded Zambos, servants and assassins for the English and Dutch, bother the 400 leagues of coastline of the kingdom from Portovelo to Campeche."¹² Losses to the contrabandista were a nuisance but they were harder to measure than the precious metals and cattle stolen, lives lost, and people carried into slavery.¹³

In May 1738, the Mosquitos attacked the town of Catacamas near Comayagua, burning altar pieces in the church and taking fifty-nine prisoners.¹⁴ As a result of that raid, of the many that had preceded it, and of the fear of more to follow, extensive defensive preparations were

¹⁰ Quadra to Keene, 15/26 May 1738, SP 94/247 f. 201.

¹¹ The first well documented Mosquito raid on a Spanish community occurred on 17 August 1699. Betancourt to Berrera, 17 August 1699, Guat 299.

¹² Report by Francisco Antonio de Carrandi y Menán, 20 August 1738, LCRC, p. 65.

¹³ Governor Haya of Costa Rica reported that 2,000 people were kidnapped from Matina and Talamanca between 1710 and 1722 by the Zambos Mosquitos and sold to traders from Jamaica. Virginia Rosslyn, ed., "Arguments of Costa Rica Before the Arbitrator Hon. Edward Douglas White", Costa Rica-Panama Arbitration (Washington, 1913), p. 2. The Spanish ambassador in London in 1734, the Conde de Montijo, accused the English in Jamaica of instigating Mosquito incursions and protecting the raiders in exchange for the slaves furnished by the Indians. They had even carried off an entire Indian nation from the province of Campeche. Memorial from the Conde de Montijo, 28 October/8 November 1734, CO 324/36, f. 490.

¹⁴ Zelaya to Parga, 28 May 1738, Guat 303; Rivera to Philip V, 1 September 1738, DRN, no page reference.

carried out in the kingdom. A junta de guerra in Comayagua suggested that the militia could offer better resistance to the enemy if rifles and ammunition were distributed to the militiamen,¹⁵ while in Yucatán, detachments of men were kept at forts in Bacalar and Campeche because of the fear of the Baymen and their Mosquito allies.¹⁶ Because of the threat to Cartago, the capital of Costa Rica, and the danger of losing the rich valley of Matina (where production of cacao had already been considerably reduced by Mosquito incursions), Carrandi y Menán wanted to attack the enemy, but the royal treasury had been depleted by maintaining lookouts against the Mosquitos at the mouths of the rivers Matina, Moín, Suerre and Raventazón.¹⁷ Although the loss of Indian tribute because of epidemics and "Indian sterility" had caused a distressing shortage of funds in the kingdom, the president of the audiencia of Guatemala, Pedro de Ribera, was forced to raise two companies of soldiers for defence against the Zambos Mosquitos. The "miserable inhabitants" of Guatemala, who were "weary of the oppression and fear engendered by the tyranny" of the Mosquito Indians, longed for relief. Ribera predicted that unless the Mosquitos were exterminated, their increasing numbers and territorial expansion would soon make them "inextinguishable".¹⁸

Most infuriating to the Spanish court was word that King Edward

¹⁵Parga to the teniente of Olancho, 9 June 1738, Guat 303.

¹⁶From Manuel de Saliendo, 2 July 1738, Mex 892.

¹⁷Testimony by Francisco Antonio de Carrandi y Menán, 5 April 1738, CDHCR, ix, 303; Carrandi y Menán to Villalon, 10 April 1738, ibid., p. 281; Report by Carrandi y Menán, 20 August 1738, LCRC, p. 65.

¹⁸Ribera to Philip V, 10 September 1738, Guat 303.

of the Mosquitos had had the arrogance to propose a treaty of peace and commerce with the Spanish. The fiscal called the attempt "ridiculous and despicable", adding that Spain must put a stop to "the outrages and insults that [the Mosquitos] commit, protected by the English who live in Virginia and in Jamaica." On 8 July 1739, the Consejo de las Indias expressed its outrage at the "audacity of the Mosquitos in naming a King and pretending that Your Majesty would recognize him as such in a treaty of peace and commerce." Furthermore, "Such unspeakable and insolent effrontery was not born in them alone"; the Indians were "allied and addicted" to the English, creating a grave problem that demanded "an immediate and radical remedy". The Consejo admitted that the British settlers on the Mosquito Coast might be outlaws rather than representatives of the English government, but "How many islands of America does the crown now lack because in the beginning their occupation was only by outlaws and pirates?" To encourage the settlement of the Honduras coast, which was "deserted for fear of the frequent enemy invasions", and to stimulate trade between Campeche and Havana, which had been "entirely suspended" because of the English and Mosquitos, the Consejo recommended that forts be constructed in Truxillo and Matina. An offensive should be conducted against the enemy, with President Ribera in command of the operations and the viceroy of México responsible for constructing the necessary vessels. Finally, the Consejo suggested that Spain's envoy in London should avoid representing Spanish complaints to the English court. Their pleas would be ignored, or if the two nations became

"declared enemies, which can happen", England would probably take advantage of the Englishmen living on the Spanish Main by promoting acts of aggression against Spanish communities.¹⁹ Consequently, demands made at that time, that she relinquish all settlements made in Spanish territory since the Treaty of 1670 ignored the Mosquito Shore and Belize. Yet minor settlements--the islands of Providence, St. Catherine, Port Royal, St. Andrew, the "Fat Virgins alias Panistron", and the Turtle Islands--were listed by name.²⁰ Nevertheless, the renewed "claims to universal sovereignty in America",²¹ although weakened by the omission of the Bay settlements, helped to speed on the approaching war. Efforts were still made by both sides to solve the existing problems--but stubbornly, on harsh terms unacceptable to the other side. Anglo-Spanish discussions in London were primarily on the reparations demanded by England for unjust seizures of English merchantmen.²² In Madrid the two main issues discussed were Georgia and logwood,²³ although Keene was unaware that logwood had become subordinate in Spanish thinking to the problem of the Mosquito Indians, their friendship with the English, and the consequent invasions and clandestine trade in middle America.

¹⁹ Report on the Mosquito Coast, anon., 8 December 1775, AGS, Est 8133, folder 8a; Edward to Ribera, 20 September 1736, Guat 665; Fiscal's opinion, 22 May 1739; Consejo report, 8 July 1739, CRM, p. 98.

²⁰ Spanish memorial to Benjamin Keene, 25 June 1739NS, SP 94/133.

²¹ Pares, op.cit., p. 36.

²² Jean O. McLachlan, Trade and Peace with Old Spain, 1667 - 1750 (Cambridge, 1940), p. 119.

²³ Keene and Castres to Newcastle, 2/13 January 1739, SP 94/133.

Spain was reluctantly willing to supply England with logwood, but she could not condone the Anglo-Mosquito relationship or allow British merchandise to enter her colonies--no more than England could allow guardacostas to molest British merchantmen.

On 19 July 1739, a directive was issued to all English naval commanders in the West Indies ordering them to "commit all Sorts of Hostilities against the Spaniards".²⁴ The order was the result of Spain's refusal to pay £95,000 in reparations to which she had agreed, for the continued activity of the guardacostas, and because of the boundary problem over Carolina and Florida.²⁵ A fortnight later, Benjamin Keene was informed of King George II's decision to open hostilities and ordered to return home;²⁶ on 20 August, the English issued a declaration of reprisals against Spain.²⁷ Ten days later, King Philip V took the Consejo's advice and ordered that immediate operations be undertaken "to dislodge and exterminate these Indians [the Mosquitos] and the English and other foreigners who sustain them."²⁸

Each nation was aware that an undeclared state of war existed.²⁹ At Whitehall, Andrew Stone, an "intimate confidant" of Newcastle,³⁰

²⁴ Ministerial minutes, 8 and 15 June 1739, SP 94/248, f. 88.

²⁵ Newcastle to Keene, 14 June 1739, SP 94/134.

²⁶ Newcastle to Keene, 3 August 1739, SP 94/134.

²⁷ TCD, p. 345.

²⁸ Philip V to Ribera, 30 August 1739, Guat 391; Quintana to Ribera, 1 October 1739, Guat 303.

²⁹ Real orden, 15 October 1739, CC 5104; Quintana to Ribera, 1 October 1739, Guat 303.

³⁰ Stone, a "joint collector of papers" in Newcastle's office, was in fact Newcastle's close friend and personal secretary, and as such he had considerable influence in government. DNB, ii, 405.

suggested that war be declared openly, to prove England's resoluteness, and to retaliate against the seizures and the "violent Proceedings of the Court of Spain, in ordering all The King's Subjects to leave the Spanish Dominions...."³¹ England declared war on 19 October 1739; Spain followed a month later.³²

The Mosquito Shore was an important periphery consideration in British military planning throughout the war; use of the Mosquito Indians was considered on each of the abortive English invasions of the Spanish Main during the conflict. The Shore afforded an impregnable base of operations and a supply of aggressive Indian allies. In spite of these advantages, schemes involving the Mosquitos were seldom rationally planned or executed. The Indians were scheduled to participate in the invasion of Panamá in 1742, but the campaign was so poorly coordinated that it began, and failed, before the Mosquitos reached the rendezvous. Nevertheless, the English inflicted more damage on the Spanish during the war in guerrilla fighting conducted from the Shore than in all other campaigns combined.³³

Even before the war, Governor Edward Trelawny of Jamaica had decided to establish a semi-military government on the Mosquito Shore, a country that would be a valuable commercial entrepôt and a "place of refreshment" for the Baymen driven from Belize by the Spanish or by the rains.

³¹ Stone to Waldegrave, 4 October 1739, BM, Add 32,801, f. 290.

³² Mary Wilhelmine Williams, Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy, 1815 - 1915 (Washington, 1916), p. 17; TCD, p. 345.

³³ George Metcalf, Royal Government and Political Conflict in Jamaica, 1729 - 1783 (London, 1965), p. 74.

Furthermore, English civilisation and religion would replace the bad habits borrowed from English pirates and marooners by the savages. Trelawny, who wanted King Edward to sit as president of an Indian council of chiefs, took a personal interest in these reforms, requesting the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to send a schoolmaster to teach the young Mosquitos, and inducing four Kingston merchants each to take a Mosquito youth as an apprentice. He even took one Mosquito boy into his own home. Admiral Vernon was also attracted to the idea. Educating the Mosquitos, he wrote, would be a practical way to "render them most usefull to the enlargement of our Trade in these parts...."³⁴ It seemed certain that the Indians would respond enthusiastically to the scheme, for their loyalty to England was unquestioned. Mosquito chiefs still applied to Jamaica for their commissions as had their predecessors since 1687.³⁵

³⁴Trelawny to Newcastle, 25 November 1738 and 20 January 1740, CO 137/56, ff. 156, 279; Vernon to Trelawny, 18 September 1742, CO 137/57, f. 293; Trelawny to Vernon, 21 September 1742, CO 137/57, f. 293; C.F.Fascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., 1701-1900 (London, 1901), p. 234; Williams, Isthmian Diplomacy, p. 16.

³⁵The Duke of Albemarle, governor of Jamaica, reported in 1688 that the Mosquito Indians had visited him in Jamaica to request the protection of the English government. He wrote: "Some Indians by the name of Musketa-Indians (whose Country is calld Cape Gracias de Dios, situated 15^o20' or thereabouts) have been here with mee, have told mee they became subjects to King Charls the First of ever blessed memory, that they were never in subjection to the Spaniard or any other but the English. And that they did now earnestly desire, that the King would please to give them his speedy protection, otherwise they must fall under the French or Dutch." See Albemarle to the Board of Trade, 11 February 1688, CO 138/6, f. 85. In 1718 a Dutch visitor to the Shore said that the leaders of the settlers there were Englishmen, and that the Indian chiefs received their commissions from Jamaica. Declaration by Pedro de Fuen Cueba, 21 June 1718 Guat 302. There are numerous other reports of the close ties between the Mosquitos and the English throughout this period. See for example: Jamaica council to Lawes, 29 June 1720, CO 137/13, f. 272; King Peter of the Mosquitos to Hunter, 3 October 1729, CO 137/18, f. 68.

To establish and to command this frontier outpost, Trelawny selected Robert Hodgson, a young lieutenant who had come to his attention while serving with Trelawny's son as a subaltern in the 49th regiment of foot in Jamaica. "A discreet Man", according to the governor, "sympathetic to the needs of the Indians, and yet Courageous", Hodgson was to bring government to the Shore, although the establishment of a true colony would have to wait until the willingness and ability of the white settlers to live under civil authority were determined.³⁶

Hodgson received his final orders to proceed to the Shore on 17 February 1740, shortly after news of the declaration of war reached Jamaica. He was to assemble the Englishmen for defensive purposes, to pledge England's protection to the Mosquitos, and to assure King Edward that he would not usurp his prerogatives. The Mosquitos were to be organised for military campaigns, but Hodgson was advised to "bend and sway to the humours of the Indians", to turn them as best he could to his desires, but to have "no humour, no whim, no conceit, no favourable fancy, to which every thing must be bent...."³⁷

³⁶ Trelawny to Newcastle, 20 January 1740, CO 137/56, f. 279; Trelawny to Hodgson, 11 December 1741, CO 137/65, f. 218; Commissions for the 49th regiment of foot, 25 December 1743, SP 44/184, f. 480.

³⁷ Trelawny to Edward, 25 February 1740, Sta Fe 1261; Trelawny to Hodgson, 17 February 1740, Sta Fe 1261; Trelawny to Hodgson, 11 December 1741, CO 137/65, f. 218; Pascoe, *op.cit.*, p. 234. Three chiefs ruled over separate Mosquito provinces, or "guards". Governor Britain, "a sensible old man", ruled the pure Indians south of Sandy Bay; King Edward, very young and still "not much observed" by his people, ruled the guard of Zambos between Sandy Bay and Cape Gracias a Dios; and General Hobby governed the second guard of Zambos west to Black River. Each office was hereditary. Report by Robert Hodgson, n.d., Sta Fe 1261.

Governor Trelawny had ambitious dreams; the Spanish had reason to fear the English threat.

I should imagine we might induce, by the offer of liberty, the neighbouring Indians to revolt, & indeed I do not think it Romantick in the least to expect that we might, by supporting the Indians a little, spread the revolt from one part to another, till it should be general over the Indies, & drive the Spaniards entirely out or cut them off.³⁸

The Mosquitos were to be Trelawny's instruments to throw off "the Spanish Yoke".³⁹ He did not know how much success Hodgson might have, but he believed that it was "better to play at small game than absolutely to stand out...."⁴⁰

Soon after his arrival at Edward's home in Sandy Bay, Hodgson met with the King, Governor Britain, and most of the other principal Mosquito chiefs.

I proceeded to explain to them that, as they had long acknowledged themselves of Great Britain, the Governor of Jamaica had sent me to take possession of their country in his Majesty's name; then asked if they had anything to object. They answered [after the chiefs had consulted among themselves for two weeks] they had nothing to say against it, but were very glad I had come for that purpose; so I immediately set up the standard, and reducing what I had said into articles, I asked them, both jointly and separately, if they approved and would abide by them. They unanimously declared they would.⁴¹

The articles composed by Hodgson and accepted by the chiefs formed a comprehensive treaty of friendship and military alliance.

Article I. That he [King Edward] resigneth all his Country on each Side of Cape Gratia di Dios, and as far back as any Mosquito Indians or others that are depending upon him do inhabit to the Crown of Great Britain to be settled by Englishmen in such manner as shall be thought proper.

³⁸Trelawny to Newcastle, 20 January 1740, CO 137/56, f. 279.

³⁹Trelawny to Hodgson, 17 February 1740, Sta Fe 1261.

⁴⁰Trelawny to Wager, 26 July 1740, CO 137/56, f. 383.

⁴¹Ephraim G. Squier, The States of Central America (New York, 1858), p.635.

Article II. That he and his People do hereby become Subjects of Great Britain and desire the same Protection and to be instructed in the same Knowledge and to be governed by the same Laws as the English who shall settle amongst them.

Article III. That they desire the Assistance of Great Britain to recover the Countries of their Fathers from their Enemies the Spaniards, and they are now ready to undertake any Expedition that may be thought good for that End themselves.

Article IV. That they receive and choose Captain Robert Hodgson their Commander in Chief as appointed by the Governour of Jamaica and will obey all Orders and follow all instructions which he shall from Time to Time communicate to them from the Governour of Jamaica or the King of Great Britain.

Article V. That they will help all Indian Nations who are now in Subjection to the Spaniards to throw off the Spanish Yoke, and to recover their Ancient Liberty, and will join any Force which Great Britain shall think fit to send to the West Indies for that Purpose.

A gun was fired as each article was read to the Indians, and then the ceremony ended with a ritual "cutting up a turf" and an exchange of vows to defend the country.⁴²

Hodgson first proposed an expedition to Yucatán, however the Indians favoured attacking on the Coclés River of Panamá.⁴³ On 16 April, Hodgson, Edward, Britain, 230 Zambos-Mosquitos, and nine white marooners (most of whom were "so wicked and mischievous" that they did more harm than good), sailed for the Coclés River by way of Bocas del Toro, home of the Toxares

⁴²Declaration by King Edward, 16 March 1740, CO 123/1, f. 52; Ephraim G. Squier, Waikna; or Adventures on the Mosquito Coast (London, 1855), p. 340; L.M. Keasbey, The Nicaragua Canal and the Monroe Doctrine (London, 1896), p. 90; Pares, op.cit., p. 100.

⁴³After hundreds of their people died of small pox contacted in an otherwise successful raid on the Yucatán peninsula in 1722, the Mosquitos refused to undertake expeditions past the British logwood settlements. Description of the Mosquito Shore by Robert Hodgson, 1757, CO 123/14.

Indians, a tribe "so perfidious and savage that they took the life of any stranger who came among them". When Hodgson learned that these Indians had massacred some English traders, he implored the Mosquitos to destroy them, however because of their number and ferocity, the Mosquitos refused to attack.⁴⁴

When the expedition arrived at the Coclés River, the Mosquitos silently eliminated eight Spanish lookouts at the river's mouth. During the night, while the main force rowed quietly upstream, Mosquito scouts "intercepted the Reverend Prebend of Panama coming down with his money to [trade with] the Dutchman." They learned that the churches of Penonomé had "miraculous images and other rich Trumpery" worth 400,000 pieces of eight, while merchants in town (who were also planning to trade with the Dutch) had another 600,000. Penonomé suddenly became a more worthy goal than Santiago.

With the difficult choice of accompanying the Mosquitos or "remaining in the river"--whatever was meant by that--the priest joined the expedition, but on the condition that he be handcuffed in case he fell into the hands of his compatriots. That night Hodgson wrote, "I concerted every thing with the Father...about Surprizing the other fathers: saving ye Host & Ransoming ye Consecrated Plate." But that same night ten Mosquitos and a white marooner slipped away from camp with two "little Breeches"--Spanish prisoners. Hodgson suspected that the Mosquitos planned to beat their comrades to Penonomé, but at day-break the men inexplicably returned,

⁴⁴The Toxares were eventually exterminated by the Mosquitos.

minus one of their captives. Hodgson was furious. He demanded that Governor Britain hang the Indian captain who had led the night escapade, and he wanted to do the same with the white man, but he doubted his authority to exact such summary justice. The Zambos feared that the missing prisoner would arouse the country, and they refused to continue the expedition, although they were only hours away from "a fine Prospect of the South Sea" and rich Spanish territory. Hodgson would have taken Penonomé he said--and Panamá too-- "If I had been Master of 150 resolute English Men instead of so many Mosquito Men being Masters of me."

To "Retrieve his honour" on the return trip, Governor Britain insisted that they attack Matina, the only Spanish settlement on the Caribbean coast between Yucatán and Panamá. In July they advanced up the Matina River, "stopping at every house where we saw any Spaniards, chasing them in their cocoa walks, which afforded good Diversion." The victory was accomplished with only one death: a Spanish caballero who tried to defend his hacienda with a handful of frightened slaves. Afterwards, while their masters were obliged to fill the seroons with plundered cacao,⁴⁵ Indian mulatto and Negro prisoners "played upon their Guitars". The Mosquitos stood over them, telling the Indians "that little Breeches had made them, (to whom the Country belonged) work many a hard days work; but now they

⁴⁵The plunder taken on the expedition was moderate: approximately 60,000 pounds of cacao worth 40,000 pesos, several coins from the Spanish priest, three ingots and 103 "lumps" of gold, and about 2,500 pieces of eight. The Mosquitos also "ransomed" to Jamaican merchants at sixty pesos a head, most of the Coclés Indian captives. Hodgson to Trelawny, 28 November 1740, CO 137/57, f. 35.

were come to give them a play day." To avert a slaughter of the prisoners, Hodgson encouraged the Mosquitos "to Dance, Sing and Play, and made the Spaniards do the same to keep the Mosquito Men in good humour."

The expedition was marred from the beginning by the actions of the "Mosquito high Priest (the Zambo Sukia)" who caused the occasional displays of cowardice exhibited by the Indians, and who "Distinguish'd himself by stealing several thousand weight" of cacao at Matina and selling it to "Mirandez the Jew". In spite of the problems encountered on the expedition, Hodgson was satisfied that the Mosquitos, and other Indian nations tributary to them, "seem'd reserv'd for the English; having all rejected the Spaniards."⁴⁶

Spanish officials in Guatemala were frustrated by Hodgson's expedition, for in spite of their ardent desire to retaliate against the enemy they had not the barest means to do so.⁴⁷ Furthermore, they were humiliated by the British merchants who even traded with the Spanish in the midst of battle. While one Spanish official reported an English military threat to the fort on the San Juan,⁴⁸ another accused a British trader of forcing a commerce at Matina, only a short distance away.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Account of Hodgson's first expedition, n.d., Sta Fe 1261; Antonio to Quintana, 20 August 1740, Guat 640; Hodgson to Trelawny, 28 November 1740, CO 137/57, f. 35; Declaration by Simón de Espinoza, 10 October 1740, Guat 303.

⁴⁷ Gemmir y Lleonart to Ribera, 18 July 1740, AC 432, f. 29; Ribera to Gemmir y Lleonart, 16 August 1740, cited by Manuel Esquivel Molina, "Las Incursiones sobre la Provincia de Costa Rica por los Zambos-Mosquitos". Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Costa Rica, San José, 1956, p. 31. Report by Gemmir y Lleonart, 27 March 1740, AC 3864, f. 27.

⁴⁸ From Pedro de Ribera, 27 November 1740, Guat 448.

⁴⁹ Anon. testimony, 24 November 1740, Guat 872.

During the war the council of Jamaica tried to protect Spanish merchants desirous of trading with the English, and to shield the Mosquito Indians from unscrupulous traders.⁵⁰ Many Spaniards also hoped to improve the trade; one of them contracted with William Pitt, ^{the leading settler on the Shore,} to cut a road from Black River into the province of Comayagua.⁵¹ The involvement of Spanish officials and clergy in the clandestine trade was also notorious. Those who tried to stop the practice were never successful because of the lack of funds, the difficult terrain, and the unhealthy climate, a disinterested public, and especially the obstruction posed by other officials.⁵²

The possibility of a British invasion during the war remained the most dangerous threat to middle America. Exaggerated rumours of English plans to harass Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala, and to invade Panama with 5,000 veteran soldiers and Mosquito Indians, prompted frantic defensive preparations.⁵³ As a result of the real cédula of 20 August 1739, President Ribera ordered his provincial governors to strengthen their defences, but without more specific orders he was afraid to draw on the royal treasury to finance an offensive against the enemy.⁵⁴ The governor of

⁵⁰ Jamaica council meetings, 14, 24 and 28 April 1741, CO 140/23, ff. 559, 563 and 565; Thoves to Arana Salazar, 29 October 1742, Guat 349; Trelawny to Newcastle, 10 December 1743, CO 137/57, f. 361.

⁵¹ Description of Roatán, 20 July 1743, CO 323/11, f. 42; Herrera to Hermengildo de Arana, 12 October 1743, Guat 303.

⁵² Herrera to Hermenegildo de Arana, 26 October 1743, Guat 303; Thoves and Arana Salazar to the Sr. del Despacho Universal de Indias, 14 March 1744, Guat 303; Thoves and Arana Salazar to the alcalde mayor of San Salvador, 18 November 1743, Guat 303.

⁵³ Llanos y Ramírez to Gemmir y Lleonart, 29 September 1740, Guat 303; Parga to Ribera, 12 February 1740, Guat 303; Ribera to Philip V, 25 August 1740, Guat 665; Ribera to Philip V, 27 November 1740, Guat 448; Arada to Ribera, 7 February 1740, BAGG, ii (1940), p. 194.

⁵⁴ Ribera to Philip V, 15 December 1739, Guat 303.

Havana promised to help in an attack if he could but his first obligation was to Havana--and there was a war going on.⁵⁵ The viceroy of México openly refused to help, explaining that he lacked funds to build warships, that the English were masters of the sea, and that the Mosquitos had been building up their strength on land for seventy years.⁵⁶

Spanish plans to build badly needed forts on the Mosquito frontier also remained unexecuted.⁵⁷ The provinces of Guatemala had "for many years suffered [from the] continuous hostilities of the Zambos Mosquitos", according to Ribera, because there were only three forts to defend 650 leagues of coastline.⁵⁸ In March 1741, Philip V again ordered that forts be constructed at Matina and Truxillo "to impede the hostilities planned by the English allied with the Mosquito Indians", while vessels were to be constructed to carry the attack to the foe.⁵⁹ Antonio Benavides, the new governor of Yucatán, was to command the operations.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Gilemes y Horcasitas to Campo de Arve, 10 June 1739, CRM, p. 115.

⁵⁶ Ribera to Philip V, 15 May 1740, Guat 303.

⁵⁷ Consejo report, 17 December 1740, Guat 665.

⁵⁸ Ribera to Philip V, 15 September 1740, Guat 872. The forts were the Castillo de la Inmaculada Concepción on the San Juan River, San Felipe de Bacalar and Petén Itzá in Yucatán.

⁵⁹ Real cédula to the Duque de la Conquista, 24 March 1741, Guat 665; Reales órdenes to the president of Guatemala and to the governors of Havana and Yucatán, 24 March 1741, Guat 665; Arivinos to Quintana, 23 May 1741, Guat 665.

⁶⁰ King's resolution, 20 December 1741, Guat 303; Arivinos to Campillo, 29 March 1742, Mex 3017. The governors of Yucatán were occasionally given the responsibility for reducing or exterminating the Mosquito Indians (in spite of the great distances involved), because Spanish ministers confused the Mosquito Coast with the English logwood settlements on the eastern coast of Yucatán.

British plans to attack the Spanish were evolving more quickly. The English high command in the West Indies, encouraged by the arrival of strong reinforcements in Jamaica (Governor Trelawny said that there were thirty ships of the line and 10,000 troops), met in January 1741 to plan offensive operations. The council, Admirals Vernon and Ogle, Generals Wentworth⁶¹ and Guise, and Governor Trelawny, studied proposals by Robert Hodgson, Lieutenant Lowther, a pirate who had been commissioned in the navy for his services to the crown, and by William Lea, a former factor of the South Sea Company in Guatemala. The Mosquito Indians appeared in the plans of all three men.⁶² Lowther's scheme to strike at Panamá with 3,000 regular troops, 500 Negroes and 400 Mosquito Men excited General Wentworth, who carried the others with his enthusiasm. On the advice of Governor Trelawny, who believed that success depended on the Zambos Mosquitos, the council commissioned Pitt and Hodgson to attract them to the enterprise.⁶³ Although Trelawny insisted that the expedition begin immediately, before the troops became too sick to fight in the debilitating climate, Admiral Vernon and Wentworth, who now complained that removing the troops from Jamaica would leave the island unprotected,⁶⁴ stalled until bad weather forced its postponement.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Lord Cathcart, commander of the expedition, died before reaching Jamaica, and was replaced by General Wentworth, a man "without imagination or initiative". Basil Williams, The Whig Supremacy, 1714 - 1760 (Oxford, 1939), p. 223.

⁶² Lea to Wentworth, 3 March 1740, BM, Add 32,698, f. 145; Council of war, 8 January 1741, SP 42/92, f. 26; Squier, The States, p. 747.

⁶³ Trelawny to Pitt and Hodgson, 31 July 1741, RCS, Honduras Archives, iii. William Pitt was the grandson of a former governor of Bermuda, and probably the richest Englishman on the Spanish Main.

⁶⁴ Council of war to Vernon, 21 and 22 January 1741, SP 42/92, f. 31 32.

⁶⁵ Pares, op.cit., p. 96.

Meanwhile, Hodgson had arrived in Sandy Bay with orders to take the Mosquito Men to a rendezvous with the British expeditionary force near the Chagrés River in Panamá.⁶⁶ At first the Indians refused to go after hearing rumours that Hodgson planned to enslave them, since "they were good for nothing else".⁶⁷ Eventually convinced of his sincerity, however, a large force of Mosquitos headed south with Hodgson. They travelled without sufficient provisions and they were forced to return home before reaching Chagrés.⁶⁸ In August Hodgson reassembled the Mosquitos, divided them into three war parties, and at five day intervals sent them into the interior by different routes. Hodgson's sergeant led 200 Indians of Britain's "guard" up the Río Grande River near Bluefields; General Handyside⁶⁹ directed 200 of his father's Zambos, with 100 Patook and Paya Indian auxiliaries, up the Patook River; while Hodgson went up the Cape River with 220 Zambos from Sandy Bay. Britain's people soon retired when rough water overturned their piraguas and drowned several Indians; Handyside's force met the same fate. Only Hodgson and King Edward's Zambos were able to penetrate into Spanish territory. After crossing the peninsula and sacking San Juan de Jinotepe near Realejo on the Pacific, they returned home, experiencing great difficulties on the

⁶⁶Trelawny to Hodgson, 30 January 1741, Sta Fe 1261.

⁶⁷Hodgson to Trelawny, 15 July 1741, Sta Fe 1261.

⁶⁸Trelawny to Newcastle, 20 July 1743, CO 137/57, f. 351. A Dutch merchant estimated that Hodgson began this expedition with 4,000 men, but counting all three guards of Mosquitos--and 100 Payas and Patooks for good measure--they could not have numbered more than 1,500 men. Declaration by Captain Hoare, 22 March 1741, Adm 1/232.

⁶⁹Handyside was probably General Hobby's son.

trip. The Spanish commander at New Segovia tried to cut off their retreat by preparing an ambush on the Cape River near Pantasma Mountain. In the early hours of the morning the Spaniards opened fire on the Zambos, passing on a balsa raft, who gave a "cry of horror" because their powder was wet and useless. Hodgson raised a white flag and asked to parley, which the Spanish commander agreed to do. At dawn the Spaniards offered Hodgson's party their freedom in exchange for their prisoners and spoils. Hodgson procrastinated through the morning by agreeing to give up a small part of the loot, while bargaining for the remainder. At noon, after the besieged Indians and Englishmen had constructed a log barricade on their raft and allowed their powder to dry, they unleashed a torrent of fire on their startled adversaries and escaped downstream before the Spaniards could react. The episode prompted one Spanish official to comment: "This will give you an idea of how the people of that region may be counted on."⁷⁰

When they returned to the coast every man on Hodgson's expedition was sick; many died from the hardships of the campaign. Hodgson suffered a violent hemorrhage and was ill four months. And the strategic purpose of the mission failed because the Indians scattered during the expedition to plunder indiscriminately, giving the Spaniards time to conceal their valuables and to prepare their defences and counterattacks. As on the previous expedition to Coclés, Hodgson claimed that with soldiers to keep

⁷⁰"Tratados Varios, México", 1743, BM, Add 17,566, f. 219; Account by Robert Hodgson, n.d., Sta Fe 1261; José Dolores Gámez, Historia de la Costa de Mosquitos (hasta 1894)... (Managua, 1939), p. 93.

the Indians in line "he might have been...Master of the Country as long as he pleas'd."⁷¹

When plans for the Panamá invasion were renewed in Jamaica late in 1741, Trelawny asked Hodgson to prepare the Shoremen and Mosquitos for the expedition.⁷² But few settlers responded to Hodgson's call, and those who did made extravagant financial demands for the use of their slaves and piraguas.⁷³ Rumours circulated that other Shoremen, who carried on a "clandestine correspondence" with the Spaniards, might try to ruin the expedition.⁷⁴ Discussion of the projected attack continued sporadically through 1741, and although an expedition sailed for the Main early in 1742, sickness and disputes between the officers forced a retreat before they could do much damage to themselves or to others.

The Zambos Mosquitos remained quiet while the English council of war discussed the attack on Panamá, but by the summer of 1742, finding their inactivity too restricting, and agitated by Shoremen who depended on Indian depredations for their living,⁷⁵ they began indiscriminate attacks on widely separated communities. After a flurry of defensive

⁷¹Trelawny to Newcastle, 20 July 1743, CO 137/57, f. 351.

⁷²Wentworth, 27 March 1742, CO 5/42, vol. ii, f. 134; Articles of enlistment on the Mosquito Shore, 26 February 1742, CO 137/57, f. 177.

⁷³Articles signed by the settlers of the Mosquito Shore, 26 February 1742, CO 137/57, f. 177. Estimates of the total number of white settlers on the Shore at the time were as low as fifty so the turnout may have been relatively good. Of the forty-four men who came forward, only one, Abraham Tonoston, was still on the Shore twenty years later, indicating the transient nature of the Shoremen as well as the dangers of life on the frontier in those early years.

⁷⁴Anon. letter to Edward Trelawny, 17 December 1741, SP 42/92, f. 46.

⁷⁵The Shoremen purchased Indians captured by the Mosquitos and re-sold them to Jamaican merchants.

activity in Spanish provincial capitals, with militiamen⁷⁶ and Indian flecheros (bowmen) assembled, sentinels stationed in the mountain passes, guards doubled on the Chamelecón River and in Puerto Cavallo and temporary forts constructed, the Spaniards tensely awaited further attacks by the rumoured 10,000 Mosquitos and Englishmen throughout the frontier region, from Portovelo, Matina and the San Juan River in the south, through the mountains to the coasts of Honduras and Yucatán in the north.⁷⁷ But the Mosquitos did not follow up their attacks of 1742, undoubtedly because of a new British offensive then under consideration.

Meanwhile the long neglected Spanish project to attack the Bay of Honduras was revived. Cosairs from Campeche were scheduled to join an expedition, and intricate plans were made to cut off the retreat of the Mosquitos when the attack began. To solve the Mosquito problem after the expedition, the Indians were to be transferred to the Windward Islands.⁷⁸ Governor Benavides acknowledged his orders to guide the operations, but due to the scarcity of available vessels, 1742 ended with no action having been taken.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, the British high command in the West Indies, who insisted not only on a safe project, but on one on which they all might agree,

⁷⁶An inventory of weapons and men available in Honduras showed 221 men armed with 124 swords, forty-nine machetes, twenty-six rifles, fifteen broadswords, three cutlasses, two muskets, and two pikes. List of infantry and cavalry companies in Comayagua, 15 July 1742, Guat 665.

⁷⁷Report by Gemmir y Lleonart, 21 October 1742, AC 272, f. 11; From Tomás Hermenegildo de Arana, 6 and 13 July 1742, Guat 665; Flores to Hermenegildo 7 and 10 July 1742, Guat 665; Juntas de guerra in Comayagua, 15 July 1742 and 6 March 1743, Guat 665.

⁷⁸Ribera to Philip V, 23 November 1742, CRM, p. 117.

⁷⁹Benavides to Philip V, 22 January 1743, Guat 303; Benavides to Campillo, 21 January and 17 April 1743, Mex 3017.

found a plan by Robert Hodgson that seemed to fulfil their requirements. Roatán Island in the Bay of Honduras, he said, could be easily fortified at little cost.⁸⁰ It could serve as a base from which to enforce England's Acts of Navigation, to drive Dutch traders from the Bay, to stamp out the last vestiges of piracy, and to conduct military operations on the Main.⁸¹ Merchants at Belize and on the Shore would be protected by warships stationed at the island and they would find it easier to insure their ships and cargoes, previously difficult to do because of the threat of the guardacostas.⁸² They could also supply the Mosquitos with British manufactured goods and encourage them to open new branches of trade with the interior. Although the idea was far from the noble ambitions of 1739 and 1740, it was a project that Whitehall would approve--and a safer venture could hardly have been found.⁸³ The idea of assembling in one community "all our Vagabonds" scattered in the Bay Governor excited/Trelawny, and the means were available to carry out the scheme, for the English fleet at Jamaica was idle.

Trelawny's initial enthusiasm for the Roatán plan was dampened by

⁸⁰ Trelawny to Stone, 16 October 1742, CO 137/57, f. 273. Roatán was known by the English as "Rattan" throughout the eighteenth century.

⁸¹ Allan Christelow, "Contraband Trade Between Jamaica and the Spanish Main, and the Free Port Act of 1766", HAHR, xxii (1942), p. 316; Pares, op.cit., pp. 103, 123, 126; Trelawny to Vernon, 27 July 1741, SP 42/90, f. 317; Report by Robert Hodgson, n.d., CO 137/57, f. 175.

⁸² Philip L. White, The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce, 1647 - 1877 (New York 1956), p. 273.

⁸³ A ministerial memo early in 1739 suggested that Gibraltar be surrendered to the Spanish in exchange for Ceuta and Roatán. "And as to the Island of Roatan", the writer said, "it will be in our hands a considerable Security to our west Indian Commerce, and a far greater curb upon the Treasures, and consequently upon the Power, of Spain, than the Rock of Gibraltar." c. May 1739, 30/50/43, f. 91.

Vernon's impatience and by Wentworth's scepticism.⁸⁴ However, after Vernon reviewed the glowing advantages of the plan and Trelawny noted the lethargic state of the troops in Jamaica, the council agreed to go ahead with the scheme.⁸⁵ In July they decided to form a civil government on Roatán and commissioned William Pitt as the "Lord Chief Justice & Supreme Magistrate".⁸⁶ Pitt's "Dignity [and] approved Merit", Trelawny wrote,

has rais'd him [to the post] he having universally the best Character without dispute or rivalship, of any in these parts; & stands almost alone, civiliz'd among Savages, like the late Czar. He is much the Richest too, & Dominion being founded they say in Property, I therefore appointed him my Chief.⁸⁷

Admiral Vernon agreed that moving the Shoremen to Roatán would be beneficial noting that they were not in possession of any large branch of trade, in spite of the country being capable of holding a considerable number of people. But moving the Baymen there might be attended by "very pernicious Consequences", he said, "because it would ruin the logwood trade. However no effort was ever made to discourage the Baymen emigrating to the island.

⁸⁴ Vernon to Wentworth, 21 August 1741, SP 42/90, f. 318; Wentworth to Vernon, 22 August 1741, SP 42/90, f. 319; Vernon to Wentworth, 23 August 1741, SP 42/90, f. 320; Council of war, 26 and 29 September and 25 November 1741, SP 42/90, ff. 362, 364, 455; Vernon to Newcastle, 5 October 1741, SP 42/90, f. 329.

⁸⁵ Council of war, 28 June 1742, SP 42/93, f. 169; Wentworth to Newcastle, 29 June 1742, SP 42/92, f. 173; Vernon to Wentworth, 27 July 1742, SP 42/93, f. 202.

⁸⁶ Vernon to Cusack, 5 August 1742, CO 137/57, f. 174. The Spanish applied various titles to Pitt: "General of that coast", Parrilla to Arana, 11 February 1743, Guat 303; "Governor of Honduras and Yucatán", Declaration b Juan Thomas, 26 February 1743, Guat 665; "Governor of the Zambos" and "Governor of the Gulf of Belize and the Mainland of Honduras", Declaration by Felipe Grageda, 11 March 1743, Guat 665.

⁸⁷ Trelawny to Stone, 16 October 1742, CO 137/57, f. 273.

Captain Cusack was named commander of the expeditionary fleet, with orders to "Countenance and support" Pitt's government in every possible way."⁸⁸

In August, Governor Trelawny had another change of heart. War with France was imminent and the British troops in Jamaica were needed to balance the powerful enemy forces in Havana.⁸⁹ But the majority of the council insisted that the plan be carried out, although the timid Wentworth, whose support was secured only on Vernon's assurances that the detachment would not be exposed to any danger,⁹⁰ refused to accept the responsibility for any failure that might ensue. Trelawny reluctantly approved the scheme when the Shoremen expressed their enthusiasm, and hoped that Whitehall "would foster it with a Parental care, without fondling it, as they have done the costly & unpromising Brat Georgy." He despaired of Roatán having a proper upbringing. After Pitt requested supplies, and a report by the engineer general said that the new settlers would need a year's provisions,⁴¹ he wrote: "the Brats will be craving & I have nothing to give them. A new Colony is a many headed Monster that has whor son's appetites.... Why do they apply to me? I did not beget them!"⁹² The governor seems to have forgotten the part he played in the conception of the little scheme.

⁸⁸ Vernon to Cusack, 5 August 1742, CO 137/57, f. 174.

⁸⁹ Trelawny to Stone, 4 September 1742, CO 137/57, f. 218; Council of war, 12 August 1742, CO 137/57, f. 216.

⁹⁰ Council of war, 12 August 1742, CO 137/57, f. 216.

⁹¹ Extract of an engineer general's report to Wentworth, 16 October 1742, CO 137/57, f. 172; Extract of a letter from Pitt to Trelawny, 26 September 1742, CO 137/57, f. 172.

⁹² Trelawny to Stone, 16 October 1742, CO 137/57, f. 273.

The Roatán idea was safe, but unimaginative and unrealistic. To consider removing the Mosquito Indians and Shoremen from their nearly impregnable coastal bastion was at best ill-advised. Yet encouraging settlement on the Main was a responsibility that few men--including the governors of Jamaica and the principal secretaries of state--wished to take. Contact between Jamaica and the Shore had always been influenced more by British merchants than by the governor and council. Yet Jamaica's governors encouraged, and Whitehall countenanced, this tenuous relationship.

Whitehall was at first uncommittal about Roatán, although Trelawny was ordered to maintain and support a settlement there until further notice.⁹³ Then in February 1743, the "King most Excellent Majesty in Council" approved the recruitment of Shoremen to settle the island and the formation of a governing council under Chief Magistrate William Pitt. British and foreign protestants were encouraged by the offer of land grants to "Contract Marriages with Indian, Mulattoes or Negro women".⁹⁴

In Madrid the Consejo de las Indias studied the critical situation in the Bay of Honduras and expressed their opinion that if the English were not forced to abandon their settlements in Roatán, at Belize, and on the Mosquito Shore, it would be impossible to oblige them to do so after the war.⁹⁵ They concluded that in spite of the lack of troops, funds,

⁹³Stone to Trelawny, 19 January 1743, CO 137/57, f. 313.

⁹⁴"The King most Excellent Majesty in Council", 2 February 1743, CO 323/11, f. 36.

⁹⁵The Spanish prepared for the necessity of having to go to the conference table to eject the English from the Bay. Article ten of the Second Family Compact, a secret treaty of alliance between Spain and France, signed on 25 October 1743, called for both nations to cooperate during the peace negotiations to force the English to abandon the Bay of Honduras (the "new colony"), and to restore all places seized from Spain during the war. José Antonio Calderón Quijano, Belice, 1663(?) - 1821 (Sevilla, 1944), p. 158.

supplies, weapons and transport ships, the king must send an armada to throw the English out of the Bay and to exterminate the Zambos Mosquitos.⁹⁶ Philip followed his council's advice, and ordered President Rivera y Santa Cruz of Guatemala to aid the governor of Havana in expelling the English "from Cape Camarón and other settlements on the Main".⁹⁷

But 1743 proved to be yet another year of inaction for Spanish arms. Crown officials in Honduras, Guatemala, México and Yucatán attested to the impossibility of dislodging the English from Roatán and from their settlements on the Main simultaneously.⁹⁸ The establishment of numerous British settlements in the Bay had made it impossible to construct a fort in Truxillo, although a small wooden stockade had been thrown up at Matina.⁹⁹ Luis Díez Navarro, inspector general for the kingdom of Guatemala, felt that Omoa should replace Truxillo as the site for the new fort. Commerce at Belize and Pitt's trade in Truxillo could more easily be stopped from there, he said, thus forcing the English to abandon their settlements on the Main and frustrating "Pitt's hopes to make himself master of the whole coast".¹⁰⁰

Settlers trickled slowly into Roatán, but by the middle of 1743,

⁹⁶ Consulta from the Consejo de las Indias, 12 August 1743, Guat 303.

⁹⁷ Ibid.; Esquivel, op.cit., p. 248.

⁹⁸ Junta de guerra in Comayagua, 6 March 1743, Guat 665; Benavides to Fuenclara, 13 April 1743, Guat 303; Rivera y Santa Cruz to Philip V, 8 June 1743, Guat 303; Fuenclara to Trivino, 31 July 1743, Guat 303.

⁹⁹ Declaration by Juan de Buenaventa, 10 March 1743, Guat 665.

¹⁰⁰ Junta de guerra in Omoa, 11 March 1743, Guat 665; Testimony by Luis Díez Navarro, 17 July 1744, Guat 351.

only six or eight families had arrived, mostly "a poor and idle lot", unfit subjects for a new colony. Prospective settlers in the Windward and Virgin Islands and merchants in Jamaica expressed more interest in the Mosquito Shore than in Roatán,¹⁰¹ thus Governor Trelawny again turned his attention to the Shore. He proposed that an independent company be established there with Robert Hodgson as its commander. The governor said that the fledgling colony in Roatán would be made secure, the rich trade of Guatemala and Nicaragua would fall to the English, and order would be brought to the friendly but tempestuous and disorganised Mosquito Indians.¹⁰²

While the Board of Trade were considering Trelawny's new proposals, the governor of Havana postponed the attack on English settlements because, according to him, the English were aware of the plans.¹⁰³ In fact, the English had no intelligence of Spanish designs; the lack of leadership in Spain's Caribbean colonies matched the destitution of means to carry out the king's orders.

The lords commissioners for Trade and Plantations met in London early in 1744 to discuss Trelawny's scheme and to listen to testimony by Robert Hodgson.¹⁰⁴ On 3 May the lords of committee of council reported that they saw no reason why an independent company should not be approved for the Shore, but they were unwilling to propose a specific form of

¹⁰¹Trelawny to the lords of the Board of Trade and Plantations, 19 December 1743, CO 137/24, f. 20; Trelawny to Hodgson, 19 December 1743, Sta Fe 1261 Description of Black River, c. December 1743, CO 323/11, f. 65.

¹⁰²Trelawny to Newcastle, 20 July 1743, CO 137/57, f. 351.

¹⁰³From Francisco de Gúemes Horcasita, 28 April 1744, Sto Dom 1207; Rivera y Santa Cruz to Betancourt, 25 April 1744, Guat 303.

¹⁰⁴Report of the lords of committee, 6 February 1744, CO 323/11, f. 32.

government since they were unacquainted with the country. The Board accepted the general view of the committee, but decided against forming "a regular Establishment" at that time. Rather than raise an "Independent Company", which in essence would have guaranteed colonial status, they recommended that Trelawny send a detachment of troops to the Shore from his own regiment in Jamaica.¹⁰⁵ The decision tied the future of the Mosquito Shore to the council and governor of Jamaica; since the regiment was supported by the island, any decision to disband or to transfer it meant its withdrawal from the Shore. The Board made another critical decision when it decided to leave the funds appropriated to support the Shore in the hands of the governor, for certainly not all Jamaica governors would be as sympathetic to the Shore as Governor Trelawny.

The Board might easily have granted colonial status; the whole region could have been claimed by conquest and occupation. Even some Spanish ministers admitted privately that the Treaty of 1670 did indeed apply to British settlements in the Bay of Honduras.¹⁰⁶ But according to Sir Gerald Berkeley Hertz,

...in the West as in the East Indies, British commercialism aimed at no territorial aggrandisement. The end in view was trade not empire, the enjoyment of a monopoly without the responsibilities of government. 'Great Britain,' according to Houstoun, 'wants no castles but floating ones.'¹⁰⁷

Trelawny was ordered by the Board to allot as much money as he thought

¹⁰⁵ Report by the lords of Committee of Council to the lords of the Privy Council, 3 May 1744, CO 324/12, f. 284; Order in council, 19 July 1744, CO 123/1, f. 35, and PC 2/98, f. 442; Act in council, 14 June 1744, CO 137/69, f. 78; Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 185.

¹⁰⁶ Observations on Spanish interests, c. 1762, AGS, Est 8162.

¹⁰⁷ Gerald B. Hertz, British Imperialism in the Eighteenth Century (London 1908), p. 37.

necessary for the services on the Shore, so long as it did not exceed the sum he had originally requested, i.e., £300 a year for presents to the Mosquito Indians; £500 for contingency expenses; and £1,330 for the initial expenses of establishing and quartering the detachment on the Shore.¹⁰⁸

Government had taken a second step--Hodgson's initial commission on the Shore in 1740 being the first--towards acquiring a lasting foothold on the mainland of Spanish middle America.

¹⁰⁸Order in council, 19 July 1744, CO 123/1, f. 35.

Chapter II

THE FORMATION of BRITISH GOVERNMENT on the
MOSQUITO SHORE, 1744 - 1749

Whitehall's decision during the War of Jenkins' Ear to support an embryonic government on the Mosquito Shore encouraged the expansion of British intrigues on the Spanish Main, although France's entry into the war posed the threat of an invasion of Jamaica, and placed some restraint on these activities. According to one Spanish official, the English and their Zambo Mosquito allies acted "as if they were lords of the coast" in the Bay of Honduras and from Cape Gracias a Dios to Escudo de Veragua.¹ Truxillo was the last of the Spanish settlements in the Bay--which had included Truinfo de la Cruz, Puerto Cavello, Omoa and Santo Tomás de Castilla--that had been "liquidated" by the enemy,² while trade between Granada on Lake Nicaragua and the cities of Portovelo and Cartagena had been interrupted by the Zambos Mosquitos for the last seven years.³ Rich gold mines in Veragua were inoperative because of Mosquito raids,⁴ and the mountainous country of Honduras had been thrown into

¹Vicuña to Ensenada, 28 August 1745, Guat 873.

²Declaration by Pedro de Garaycochea, 19 January 1746, BPR, Ayala II-2817; Pares, War and Trade, p. 101.

³Description of the San Juan River by José Lacayo, September 1745, MN, 570, f. 408; Avila to the governor of Nicaragua, 25 October 1745, BN, MSS 17,606; Notes on the San Juan River by José de Meza, 14 January 1746, MN, 339, f. 77

⁴Testimony by Juan Bautista Salgado, 29 October 1746, Guat 422.

turmoil by the activities of the contraband traders and by the sacking of the important town of Sonaguera.⁵ One provincial governor said that because of the enemy incursions, the country had become "more wretched than Galicia".⁶

Meanwhile, to extend British influence on the Main, Governor Edward Trelawny generously distributed gifts to the San Blas and to other Indian nations of Darién in Panamá.⁷ There were also rumours that England planned to support the scattered marooners near Almirante Bay south of the San Juan River, a region where local Indian tribes had been exterminated by the Zambos Mosquitos, or had deteriorated into tributary appendages of the Mosquito kingdom.⁸

Early in 1745 the Spanish expected a major Anglo-Mosquito invasion of the kingdom of Guatemala by way of the San Juan River. The English plan, according to intelligence received from Jamaica, was to seize the Castillo de la Inmaculada Concepción on the San Juan, then cross the peninsula to open a trade to the South Sea.⁹ The invasion was not executed, but the threat made the Spanish aware of the dangers of foreign

⁵ Declaration of the merits of Eugenio Pérez, 6 May 1754, Guat 873; Herrera to Machado, 6 November 1746, Guat 422. While Spanish sources reveal strong enemy activity during this period, English documents make almost no mention of Mosquito incursions or of contraband trade, probably because of the extralegal nature of these activities and because of the preoccupation of the government of Jamaica with the threat of invasion.

⁶ Vera to Ensenada, 23 February 1747, Guat 455.

⁷ An account of disbursements on presents for the San Blas Indians, 1745, CO 137/57, f. 486.

⁸ Esquivel, "Las Incursiones", p. 33.

⁹ Fuenclara to Güemes y Horcasitas, 31 October 1844, BN, MSS 17,617; Navarro to Ensenada, 22 December 1844, SP 94/247, f. 126; Lacayo to Gemmir y Lleonart, 4 January 1745, AC 456; Navarro to Lacayo, 1 February 1745, Guat 827.

domination over this valuable trade route.

Although an enemy invasion of middle America was a distinct danger, Madrid was more concerned with English contraband trade, a greater threat to the most important fundamental of Spain's colonial rule: economic monopoly in the trade with her colonies. The centres of this illicit commerce were in Black River and Truxillo to the west of Cape Gracias a Dios and in Bluefields and Matina to the south. Over the "roads" recently opened from Black River into the interior passed Zambos Mosquitos --acting as middlemen and guides rather than as invaders--"Commerce" Indians,¹⁰ Spanish mulattos and mestizos, and occasional Spanish entrepreneurs. Tegucigalpa, León, Comayagua and other colonial towns benefited by receiving merchandise impossible to obtain by legitimate means. For these goods the Spaniards exchanged gold, silver, cacao, tobacco and medicinal drugs including sarsaparilla, plus cattle for the maintenance of the English troops and colonists on the coast.¹¹

Master of the commerce was William Pitt, who had established a small feudal empire on the Shore. The trade became so popular and profitable in the beginning that ferías were held in Black River similar

¹⁰Tributary tribes of the Zambos Mosquitos who acted as middlemen for English merchants and Mosquitos.

¹¹Rodríguez to Thoves and Arana, 24 September 1746, Guat 422; Thoves and Arana to Zayas, 27 November 1746, Guat 422; Isidro to Vera, 25 September 1746, Guat 873; Extracts from letters on contraband trade, 1745 - 1747 AHN, Est 3028. Mules served a double purpose for the Spanish and English traders. A larger number were needed to transport the bulkier goods from the interior than were needed for the return trip, and since the animal was valuable to the English, the trader was able to find a ready market for them.

to those held twice a year in Matina at cacao harvest time, when the inhabitants of Cartago came down to the coast to trade with the Jamaican and Dutch merchants.¹² Yet this illicit commerce, that so bothered the Spanish court, stopped increasing before the end of the War of Jenkins' Ear, and never really came up to expectations.¹³ Most merchants incorrectly blamed "some revolutions in the interior" for the poor business,¹⁴ but unknown to Pitt and the others, who believed that the kingdom of Guatemala was rich and populous, the heavy traffic over Pitt's new road had quickly glutted the small Spanish market.

Francisco de Thoves and Domingo de Arana Salazar, treasury officials in Comayagua, argued that it was now impossible to receive Spanish goods in Honduras, because of "deceitful and self-interested people in Guatemala [intent on promoting a trade monopoly in the kingdom for Guatemalan merchants], who leave the coasts of Honduras without a single fortified port" through which these goods might enter. With few register ships trading on the coast of Honduras, and Vera Cruz 500 leagues away, the colonists turned to the readily available goods supplied by foreign merchants. Thoves and Arana claimed that they had tried to stifle the illicit trade between Comayagua and Black River, but their efforts had made them the "targets of the fury" of the Comayaguans.¹⁵ Other zealous

¹²Thoves and Arana to Philip V, 30 December 1746, Guat 422.

¹³W. Pitt to J. Pitt, 20 May 1746, Sto Dom 1207; Baxter to Frayer, 22 May 1746, Sto Dom 1207.

¹⁴Costa de Silva to Silva y Méndez, 28 May 1746, Sto Dom 1207. Dutch traders from Curaçao also traded with the Spanish in the Bay of Honduras, but it is unknown how it affected the English trade at this time.

¹⁵Thoves and Arana to Ensenada, 30 December 1746, Guat 422.

officials in Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua who tried to apprehend the contrabandistas had no better luck, occasionally even finding themselves hindered in their duty by principal crown officers, civil and ecclesiastical.¹⁶ In fact, most minor officials on the frontiers --and their superiors as well--participated in the trade or accepted bribes to allow it to continue. The prelate of Comayagua and Governor Hermenegildo de Arana of Honduras, supported by the governor's father, the senior oidor of Guatemala, and by the president of the audiencia, Pedro de Ribera, had traded with Pitt since 1739. One provincial governor complained that a smuggler who he had planned to execute had taken refuge in the cathedral after being freed from prison by the bishop.¹⁷

In the spring of 1745 the Consejo de las Indias recommended that Governor Hermenegildo de Arana of Honduras be replaced by an experienced military man with the authority to alleviate the problems that afflicted the province: illicit trade and Zambo Mosquito incursions.¹⁸ Philip V decided to attack the problem by introducing radical changes in the provincial organization of the kingdom of Guatemala. On 23 August 1745, Juan de Vera was named governor of Honduras and Comandante General de las Armas in the region extending from Yucatán to Cape Gracias a Dios. A similar commission was granted to Alonso Fernández de Heredia for the

¹⁶Herrera to Machado, 6 November 1746, Guat 422.

¹⁷From Luis Machado, 31 December 1746, Guat 455; Opinion of the fiscal of Spain, 13 May 1745, Guat 303; From Thoves and Arana, 30 December 1747, Guat 422.

¹⁸Opinion of the fiscal, 13 May 1745, and resolution of the Consejo, 17 May 1745, Guat 303; Consejo to Ensenada, 14 July 1745, Guat 303; Ensenada to Montijo, 2 July 1745, Guat 422.

province of Nicaragua, with jurisdiction from the Cape to the Chagrés River in Panamá. The two governors had orders to force the English to abandon their clandestine settlements and "to attack violently the Mosquito Indians in their communities and ranches, and to devastate and punish them until they are reduced to a secure obedience to the crown." Funds and military assistance for these operations were to come from Guatemala, México, Havana and Yucatán.¹⁹

Nearly a year and a half passed before Vera and Heredia travelled to their new posts, thus further allowing the clandestine traders to strengthen their operations.²⁰ Vera blamed the delay on President Rivera y Santa Cruz of Guatemala, accusing him of obstructing him in his duties, and insinuating that he traded illicitly with the British.²¹

Governor Vera finally arrived in Comayagua on 11 February 1747. Within a fortnight he claimed to have suppressed all illegal communication between Comayagua and the English merchants on the coast, but he said that it would be impossible to remove the Shoremen from their settlements, for the coast from Campeche to Portovelo was nearly devoid of Spaniards and the fort at Bacalar served only as a "great consumer of royal funds".²²

¹⁹Instructions to Vera, 23 August 1745, Guat 641; Real cédula to Heredia, 23 August 1745, Guat 352; Reales órdenes, 23 August 1745, Guat 422; Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide, La Mosquitia: Notas documentadas para la historia territorial de este parte de Centro América (Madrid, 1910), p. 22; GH, p. 251.

²⁰From Luis Machado, 31 December 1746, Guat 455.

²¹Vera to Ensenada, 8 January 1747, Guat 455.

²²Vera to Ensenada, 23 February 1747, Guat 455.

If Vera were successful in his early attempts to stop the clandestine trade (there were accusations that he cooperated with rather than fought the enemy), he had little time to follow up his successes. Combating illicit trade and fretting over the Mosquito Indians "gave him an apoplexy" and he died five months after his arrival in Comayagua.²³

On hearing of Vera's death, Governor Heredia assumed jurisdiction over the province of Honduras, citing the exceptional nature of his commission as the authority for doing so. When he learned from Thoves and Arana that before his death Vera had "abandoned himself to the advice of the enemy [Pitt]", Heredia ordered--but apparently without success--that all correspondence between Comayagua and Black River be stopped.²⁴

The problems of illicit trade in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras were very similar. But while Pitt, acting to secure his trade with the Spanish, had restricted the offensive activities of the Mosquitos in Honduras, pressure from the Indians continued to be felt in Costa Rica and in Nicaragua. The pueblo of Muimui in the mountains of Tologalpa was attacked by the Mosquitos in 1747 for the third time since 1735; the alcalde was killed and a number of people taken prisoner. The Mosquitos also assaulted Lovaga and threatened Loviguiscas and Acoyapa in the same region. Governor Heredia, fearful of an Anglo-Mosquito invasion, had sixty loyal Indians patrolling the banks of Lake Nicaragua,²⁵

²³From Thoves and Arana, 20 September 1747, Guat 455.

²⁴Heredia to Tablada, 16 August 1747, Guat 455; Thoves and Arana to Ensenada, 15 September 1747, Guat 873.

²⁵From Alonso Fernández de Heredia, 26 October 1747, Guat 826; Heredia to Ensenada, 17 April 1747, Guat 640.

and he commissioned Baltazar Hurtado de Mendoza to construct two galliots for reconnaissance on the San Juan River, for use against the Zambos Mosquitos, and to harass contraband traders between Cape Gracias a Dios and Chagrés.²⁶ Hurtado sailed for the San Juan ready for action,²⁷ but his only success on the expedition, and perhaps the only one by Spanish arms in Guatemala during the war, was the destruction of a small English settlement at the mouth of the San Juan River.²⁸

Meanwhile, traders arriving in Black River from the interior brought reports that the Spaniards were constructing twelve galliots and many smaller craft on the San Juan to transport an army to Roatán²⁹ and the Mosquito Shore. William Pitt and Major Caulfield, commander of the small detachment of British troops in Black River, sent a patrol of Shoremen and Mosquitos to determine the truth of these reports. When they returned with confirmation of the rumours--actually exaggerated reports obtained from frightened prisoners--a plea for aid was dispatched to Jamaica. Governor Trelawny immediately asked the Jamaica council for approval to send reinforcements to the Shore, but the council denied his

²⁶ Heredia to Hurtado, 15 August 1747, Guat 826; From Alonso Fernández de Heredia, 17 August 1747, Guat 826.

²⁷ He carried a large supply of aguardiente "to cure the injured and to refresh the people when they need it in battle". List of supplies needed for the exploration of the San Juan River and the Mosquito Coast, 25 August 1747, Guat 826.

²⁸ From Heredia, 16 December 1747, Guat 826.

²⁹ Roatán was known by the British as Rattan throughout the eighteenth century.

request, afraid to weaken the island's defences. However, at their suggestion, Trelawny sent an engineer, Richard Jones, to construct a small battery in Black River and to encourage the Indians to aid in the defence of the community.

To counter the enemy plans, the Shoremen and Mosquitos set out to capture the fort on the San Juan, but the insufficient flow of water made it impossible to ascend the river and the attack was cancelled.³⁰ Hurtado had also found it expedient not to venture past the mouth of the San Juan, thus averting a confrontation between the two sides.

In the Bay of Honduras, Governor Benavides of Yucatán tried to attack the English and Mosquitos. He armed a guardacostas (at great sacrifice to the province because of the exhausted state of the treasury) which sailed for the Mosquito Coast, then fought the weather for two months and returned to Mérida without having seen the enemy.³¹

And so the initiative remained with the English and their Mosquito allies. In May 1747, they by-passed the Spanish fort of San Fernando de Matina and sacked the adjacent valley. Two prisoners were released to warn their unfortunate compatriots that the English and Mosquitos had promised to return within four months to destroy the fort.³² Shortly after noon on 12 August, while most of the garrison in Fort San Fernando

³⁰ Monson and others to Newcastle, 14 October 1747, CO 138/19, f. 77; Trelawny to the Board of Trade, 9 August 1747, CO 137/48, f. 150; Trelawny to Newcastle, 9 August 1747, T 1/333, f. 27; Jamaica Council minutes, 20 July 1747, CO 140/32; Trelawny to Newcastle, 19 January 1748, CO 137/58, f. 44.

³¹ Benavides to Philip V, 2 July 1746, Mex 3017.

³² Declaration by Francisco Rodríguez, 13 October 1747, CDHCR, ix, 439. Declaration by Antonio de Albas, 18 September 1747, ibid., p. 405.

were in the kitchen awaiting the usual meagre lunch of plantains and chocolate, a party of English soldiers and Mosquitos were gliding towards them through the swamp and high grass on the blind side of the fort. A cry suddenly arose from the gates " A las armas! A las armas! The enemy is coming!" The Spanish troops rushed from the kitchen, taking what arms they could find, as seventy-five or eighty of the enemy broke through the barricades. In the great confusion the Spanish could not turn their cannon against the enemy in the fort, and with his men falling dead and injured around him the commander cried " Buen cuartel!" - "We surrender!" The fort was in English and Mosquito hands, just as they had promised. The victors sacked and burned the wooden fort and again plundered the nearby cacao plantations.³³

The commander of Fort San Fernando, Francisco Rodríguez, was later charged with dereliction of duty in allowing the fort to fall to the enemy. Rodríguez said that he had had insufficient strength to man the fort, and the lookouts at Moín and Suerre--and still keep men out searching for food. At the time of the attack there were only twenty men fit for action. The commander was also unable to "surrender with honour" by asking for conditions; because of his inability to speak English and the chaotic conditions during the fighting, he was forced to capitulate without first discussing the matter.³⁴

³³ Declaration by Manuel de Campos, 31 August 1747, *ibid.*, p. 397;
 Declaration by Antonio de Albas, 18 September 1747, *ibid.*, p. 405;
 Declaration by Juan Montalbán, 19 September 1747, *ibid.*, p. 414;
 Declaration by Pedro Rodríguez, 20 September, 1747, *ibid.*, p. 414;
 Gámez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 95.

³⁴ Declaration by Francisco Rodríguez, 13 October 1747, CDHCR, ix, 439.

The Shoremen tried to capitalise on their victory by demanding that Governor Gemmir y Lleonart of Costa Rica approve free trade between his province and Jamaica, but the governor's death stopped this effort. Just as in Honduras at the death of Juan de Vera, Gemmir y Lleonart's vacant post was claimed by Governor Heredia, who sent Luis Díez Navarro to Cartago as interim governor, with instructions to stop the clandestine trade.³⁵

Heredia's military and administrative endeavours were not appreciated by the Consejo de las Indias; he was criticised for extravagant spending, including 170,451 pesos to prepare the castle on the San Juan for an attack, and 5,000 pesos for Hurtado's excursion on the San Juan.³⁶ They called Heredia's assumption of "absolute jurisdiction" over Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica a dangerous precedent. "To the prejudice and dishonour of the Superior Government and Royal Audiencia" of Guatemala, Heredia had been left "with no one to obey."³⁷ However he defended his actions "in the three provinces under my command", arguing that he had been ordered to spend as much as necessary to stop clandestine trade and to reduce the Mosquito Indians. As to the accusation that he had failed to send reinforcements to Matina before the enemy attack, Heredia said that the fort there "did not merit the name", and that there had been a greater need to strengthen the citadel on the San Juan.

³⁵ Heredia to Ensenada, 6 March 1748, Guat 873; Gámez, op.cit., p. 96; Rosslyn, "Arguments of Costa Rica", p. 63.

³⁶ Declaration by Francisco de Olachea, 26 February 1749, Guat 873: Account of expenditures, n.d., Guat 827.

³⁷ Consejo report, 8 November 1748, Guat 351.

Heredia also claimed responsibility for the "triumph" over the clandestine traders and for the cessation of Mosquito incursions.³⁸ He cited a declaration by one Thomas Timothy Pendet, who swore that 1747 and 1748 had been bad years for William Pitt's trade because the merchants of Honduras had stopped going to Black River, afraid of the vigilance established by Heredia.³⁹ Pendet's comments were surely written at Heredia's request, for Pitt, who would have known if Spanish officials were arresting his agents and confiscating his goods, said nothing. In any case, Heredia was too late to save his post, for he was dismissed on 10 November 1748, although many months passed before he was actually relieved of his duties.⁴⁰

President Rivera y Santa Cruz was in office an even shorter time than Heredia. He was succeeded by Alonso Arcos y Moreno, a vigorous man with definite ideas on how the Mosquito Indians should be subjected to the Spanish crown; he suggested that they go to the source of the problem, the island of Jamaica, and restore it to Spanish rule. But the war was approaching its end; Arcos y Moreno was informed that his plan, though laudable, was impractical.⁴¹

After the destruction of Fort San Fernando in the summer of 1747 neither side showed a further desire to fight on the Spanish Main. The Shoremen preferred attending to their neglected trade and plantations, while the Spanish--having neither funds, arms, nor trained men for an

³⁸ Declaration by Heredia, 16 August 1749, Guat 449.

³⁹ Declaration by Thomas Timothy Pendet, n.d., enclosed in Heredia to Ensenada, 10 March 1748, Mex 3099.

⁴⁰ Real cédula to the president and oidores of the audiencia of Guatemala, 10 November 1748, CDHCR, ix, 454.

⁴¹ Arcos y Moreno to Ensenada, 25 October 1747, BM, Add.17,583, f. 175.

offensive--made only a few uninspired efforts to dislodge their adversaries from posts among the irreduced Indians on the frontier.⁴²

Rather by inertia than by victory for either side, the War of Jenkins' Ear ended on 28 June 1748, when Spain followed the other belligerent powers, Great Britain, France and Holland, in signing the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The convention settled none of the problems centered in the Bay of Honduras; seizures and clandestine trade continued, and England retained her settlements on the Shore and at Belize.⁴³ Although the two nations had agreed to restore all territories conquered during the war, these were not new conquests--nor were they old conquests formally recognised by Spain.⁴⁴ The result was an unchanged and unsettled situation in the Bay, as each nation was left to interpret the treaty for herself.⁴⁵

At the end of the war, Englishmen were lodged in a number of meagre settlements on the Shore. The principal community of Black River had fourteen white male inhabitants, a few white women and children, and 100 negroes, mestizos and mulattos. There were twelve white men at Cape Camarón, five at Brewer's Lagoon, and a like number between Cape Gracias

⁴²From Heredia, 30 December 1747, and 21 February 1748, Guat 826; Declaration by Francisco de Olachea, 26 February 1749, Guat 873.

⁴³The English did evacuate the island of Roatán, which had proved to be a white elephant from the beginning.

⁴⁴Pares, op.cit., p. 104; Calderón, Belice, p. 139.

⁴⁵Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748, TCD, p. 49; Ensenada to the governor of Honduras, 21 May 1749, SP 94/250, f. 109; Alan Cuthbert Burns, History of the British West Indies (New York, 1965), p. 484; Trelawny to Bedford, 8 April 1749, CO 137/57, f. 524; Bedford to Trelawny, 25 November 1748, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 380; Bedford to Trelawny, 30 June 1749, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 382.

a Dios and Sandy Bay, the home of Mosquito King Edward.⁴⁶ A few more white men and slaves were settled at Bluefields and at other points between Sandy Bay and the San Juan River. The small garrison at Black River, which had been transferred from Roatán at the end of the war, brought little security to these settlements, for even as word of peace reached Black River rumours were circulating that the Spanish were lavishly supplying the Mosquitos with gifts ("its well known that they are People to be easily Gained when such Methods are taken", Pitt had written), and preparing to attack the Shore. Pitt, who was not a cowardly man, announced that he would leave the Shore in the spring unless additional troops were sent from Jamaica to defend the settlers.⁴⁷ Although no Spanish force was actually being prepared, Pitt's fears were well-founded. When Pantaleón Ybáñez Cuebas was named governor of Comayagua late in 1748, he was ordered "to suppress, pacify and reduce" the Zambos Mosquitos Indians.⁴⁸ Soon afterwards the new governor of Nicaragua was also commanded to attend to their "conquest and conversion".⁴⁹ But these orders--given to so many others without success--were for the present ignored.

On 7 October 1748, Governor Trelawny requested that the Lords of Trade consider a lasting form of government for the scattered marooners

⁴⁶ Jones to Trelawny, 22 September 1748, CO 123/3.

⁴⁷ Pitt to Trelawny, 17 July 1749, CO 137/59, f. 2.

⁴⁸ Valenciano to Ybáñez Cuebas, 21 December 1748, Guat 456.

⁴⁹ Real cédula to Pantaleón Ybáñez Cuebas, 26 April 1749, CRM, p. 145.

on the Mosquito Shore. Government protection would encourage merchants and planters to settle there, he said, and make the Shore one of the greatest British markets in the West Indies by increasing commerce with the kingdom of Guatemala and Yucatán, and by frustrating Dutch commercial schemes in the Bay of Honduras.⁵⁰

Unknown to Governor Trelawny when he sent his proposals to Whitehall, Robert Hodgson⁵¹ was in London--as he had been five years earlier--to bid for a post on the Mosquito Shore. Hodgson's reasons for supporting a government on the Shore complemented the governor's. He agreed that England's honour demanded that the marooners and Indians be protected, and ridiculed the suggestion that establishing an English government there would offend the Spaniards. It could happen, he admitted, but not "'till we were successful and were found out to be so, and then would be Time enough for the Ministry to disown them...." Furthermore, he argued, the next war would find them with much greater knowledge of the Spanish colonies on the peninsula. Hodgson proudly admitted that another motive for his petition was to promote and participate in "new Avenues of Commerce" on the Spanish Main.⁵²

⁵⁰ Rumours had reached Jamaica that a Dutch company from Curaçao intended to establish a trading post at Cape Gracias a Dios under the pretence of erecting saw mills to cut cedar and mahogany. Trelawny to the Lords of Trade, 7 October 1748, CO 123/3.

⁵¹ Hodgson, who had been sent to the Shore in 1740 (see above, p. 18) by Trelawny, spent the last years of the war in South Carolina as commander of an independent company. But the company was "lately broke", and Hodgson returned to England early in 1748. Hodgson to Aldworth, 25 July 1749, 30/50/39, f. 25.

⁵² Ibid.

On 5 October 1749, after weeks of long deliberations by the Lords of Trade, the Duke of Bedford, secretary of state for the southern department, named Captain Robert Hodgson of the 49th Regiment of Foot the first superintendent of the Mosquito Shore.

I have received His Majesty's Commands to inform you, that He has been pleased to appoint you to regulate and Superintend the Settlement upon the Mosquito Shore, which has been subsisting several Years, under the Protection of Our Friends & Allies the Mosquito Indians.

You will therefore repair forthwith to Jamaica, and put yourself under the Direction of the Governor of that Island, who is empowered to give you farther Instructions, and directed to pay you a Salary of Five hundred Pounds a Year for that Service, commencing from the Date hereof, as you will see by the inclosed Copy of my Letter to Mr. Trelawny, which I send you for your Information, and as soon as you shall have received the Orders, he may think proper to give you, you will proceed without Loss of time, to the Mosquito Shore.

You will regularly inform the Governor of Jamaica now, & for the time being of your Proceedings, and follow the Instructions he shall think proper to give you, for the Good of this particular Service.⁵³

Hodgson was instructed to:

cultivate such an Union & Friendship with the Indians in those parts, as may induce them to prefer His Maty's Alliance & Protection to that of any other Power whatever, which must at all Events be of Advantage to this Nation, but especially in Case of any future Rupture with the Crown of Spain.⁵⁴

The English superintendency on the Mosquito Shore--the first official English government on the mainland of Spanish America--had been established; Spanish reaction was to follow.

⁵³ Bedford to Hodgson, 5 October 1749, CO 324/38, f. 4.

⁵⁴ Bedford to Trelawny, 5 October 1749, CO 324/38, f. 5; Williams, Isthmian Diplomacy, p. 17; Los conflictos de Nicaragua (Managua, 1911), p. 4.

CHAPTER III

THE SUPERINTENDENCY of OBERT HODGSO the ELDER,
1749 - 1755

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle ending the War of Jenkins' Ear left the English solidly established in the Bay of Honduras and refusing to abandon their settlements or their contraband trade (the Mosquito Indians and English marooners were even unwilling to recognise the peace), and the Spanish determined to assume sovereignty throughout the area. With each nation interpreting the treaty in her own way, England and Spain remained dangerously close to a renewal of hostilities until a fragile *détente* was established in 1754.

England had no official on the Mosquito Shore immediately after the war to govern the settlers or to control the warlike activities of the Mosquitos, who made continuous attacks on Mui Mui, Comalapa, Lobaga, Boaco and other villages. Boaco, a village of forcibly reduced and discontented Indians, was attacked after a number of its unhappy inhabitants pleaded with the Zambos Mosquitos to aid them in punishing their Spanish tormentors. The Mosquitos responded by murdering a Spanish missionary in the village and enslaving seventy Indians. William Pitt, the Shore's leading settler, was accused of inciting these raids, but in at least one instance marooners from Bluefields

were responsible.¹ Robert Hodgson, who had been named the first superintendent of the Shore on 8 October 1749, was still in London, while neither Pitt nor the officer commanding the small troop in Black River seemed able or willing to govern effectively.

In June 1749, Pitt threatened the province of Honduras with a Mosquito invasion unless the murderers of a certain Dr. Dempster were punished. While the local inhabitants rushed into the hills in panic, Diego Tablada, teniente of Governor Francisco Fernández de Heredia of Nicaragua, and interim governor of Honduras, searched for a way to defend the province against the savage Mosquitos. A French merchant-adventurer, Raymond Grenier, who said that he wanted to harass English contraband traders and Mosquito Indians, had recently arrived on the Honduras coast from New Orleans in an armed vessel well supplied with French goods. Grenier and a Spanish merchant, Francisco Mateo de la Guerra y Vega, were given a corsair's commission by Tablada. Guerra purchased a small vessel with money borrowed from Pitt, hired an English captain and crew from Black River, loaded the vessel with French goods obtained from Grenier (but manifested as English merchandise), and furnished the captain with fraudulent documents signed by Governor Trelawny of Jamaica. Guerra and Grenier then "seized" Guerra's own ship in what they described as

¹Castillo to Truco, 22 May 1749, Guat 873; Cabildo of León to Ensenada, 7 October 1749, Guat 352; Heredia to Trelawny, 26 January 1750, Guat 351; Pitt to Trelawny, 8 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 544; Francisco de Paula García Peláez, Memorias para la historia del antiguo reyno de Guatemala (3 vols., Guatemala, 1851), iii, 50; Pablo Lévy, Notas geográficas y económicas sobre la República de Nicaragua.... (Paris, 1873), p. 43; Fares, War and Trade, p. 542.

a "bloody battle", and took the merchandise to Comayagua where it was declared to be a legal prize by Tablada, a decision later confirmed by Heredia. Pitt and Trelawny, Guerra, Grenier, the hired English captain and Governor Heredia, even the Honduras treasury officials Thoves and Arana--who so often ranted at the illegal commercial activities of other Spanish officials--were all involved in the scheme.²

The contraband trader did not usually go to so much trouble to peddle his wares. He was often convoyed to the Main by English men-of-war, to trade openly with Spanish merchants, even during periods of conflict. In 1751, while "some Merchants of the best Reputation" were trading in Black River, their own governor was preparing to attack the community.³

Genuine efforts to suppress the clandestine trade are more difficult to trace than efforts to promote it. Governor Pantaleón Ybáñez Cuebas of Honduras said that his predecessors, Juan de Vera, stopped the trade with thirty horse dragoons, but after Vera's death the number of dragoons diminished until the illicit trade was as strong as ever. Ybáñez claimed in 1751 that he again cut off the trade with Black River by bringing the troop complement back to normal, but he complained that President José Vázquez of Guatemala ruined his efforts by transferring the dragoons to Omoa. However a few dragoons could never have stopped a commerce on

²Pitt to Urrua, 21 June 1749, AHN, Con 20,964; Arrias to Walton, 26 September 1749, AHN, Con 20,964; Guerra to Tablada, 9 December 1749, cited by Adán Szaszdi de Nagy, "El Comercio ilícito de la provincia de Honduras", RI, lxviii (1957), p. 279; Consejo report, 9 October 1761, Guat 407.

³Keene to Bedford, 6 October 1749, SP 94/136, f. 151; Hodgson to Aldworth, 12 July 1751, CO 137/57, f. 562.

which so many people depended. Even minor efforts to hinder it were likely to generate unruly reactions. After some contrabandistas from Sonaguera were punished with "arrogance and cruelty", a militia officer was murdered in retaliation. Similar resistance was shown in Olancho and elsewhere.⁴

When Superintendent Robert Hodgson arrived in Jamaica on the way to his post in January 1750, he heard rumours that the Spanish, "flush'd with their Success against the Dutch trading Sloops on the Coast of Caraccas were preparing to attack the Mosquito Shore. Governor Trelawny, who was determined to maintain England's precarious position in the Bay of Honduras, ordered him to the Shore as quickly as possible to "take [his] Chance with the Detachment, the Settlers and the Moskito Indians."⁵

Assured of the Mosquitoes' loyalty, even that they would be rather more irritated than alarmed by the Spanish invasion menace, Hodgson was confident when he departed for Black River. He arrived on the Shore to find the rumours of a Spanish attack apparently confirmed, but he hoped to effect its postponement or cancellation with a demonstration of his sincerity. Not only would he control the Indians, he had provocative commercial proposals for Spanish merchants and officials. To forward his plans, Hodgson had brought a London educated Spaniard, Pablo Ruiz, from England as his factor. Immediately after their arrival in Black

⁴Ybáñez to Vázquez, 29 January 1752, Guat 455; Ybáñez to Ferdinand VI, 27 February 1755, Guat 873; Ybáñez to Ensenada, 6 July 1752 and 10 October 1753, Guat 455.

⁵Hodgson to Aldworth, 3 February 1750, CO 137/59, f. 10; Trelawny to Hodgson, 14 April 1750, CO 137/59, f. 28.

River, Hodgson sent Ruiz to the president of Guatemala under the pretext of demanding that the assassins of two English merchants be punished, but with private instructions to open a correspondence with Guatemalan merchants.⁶ From Comayagua, however, Ruiz was rerouted to Granada where Governor Heredia claimed that the affairs of the Mosquito Coast "belong to none but myself",⁷ and appropriated the letters addressed to President Vázquez, accusing the "pusillanimous" Vázquez of failing to expel the English or to reduce the Mosquito Indians. Heredia then demanded that all arms be taken from the Mosquitos, that Spanish Indians held in slavery by the Mosquitos be freed, and that the English evacuate Black River and Belize. In exchange he promised that

If the Zambos Mosquitos Indians will render obedience to their legitimate monarch, the King my master, I will treat them with kindness, without doing them any harm, on the condition that they accept a governor to be named by me, as well as Missionaries to reduce them to the Catholic Religion.⁸

Hodgson replied that he was always "glad to see any Gentleman at Black River who made the Propagation of the Gospel his Profession...." However, because the Zambos Mosquitos would undoubtedly rebel at finding Spanish missionaries in their territory, it was "almost certain the Consequence would be Death to any such pious Gentleman in spite of all I could do to prevent it." Hodgson promised to try to impede the Mosquito incursions, although the Indians were an independent people who declared

⁶ Ruiz believed that Hodgson's intentions did not extend beyond the mercantile; they extended far beyond. Hodgson hoped that England would assume control of the peninsula for trading purposes, but he was unable to advance this idea. Although similar schemes were proposed throughout the eighteenth century, no attempt was made to execute the dream until the American revolution. See below, p.255.

⁷ Hodgson to (probably) Aldworth, 14 November 1754, Sta Fe 1261; Declaration by Juan Sánchez Buitrago, 22 November 1751, Guat 873.

⁸ Heredia to Trelawny, 23 June 1750, CO 137/59, f. 43; Heredia to Hodgson, 22 June 1750, SP 94/250, f. 204.

themselves to be at perpetual war with the Spanish; but as to acknowledging a Spaniard as their governor, he scowled "Sir, I am already here posted among them by the Governour of Jamaica."⁹

Heredia condemned the "unjust continuance of the hostilities [by the Mosquitos] against the sad Indian pueblos, and the sale of their prisoners to the English, although they know that they were born free, vassals of his Catholic Majesty." Governor Trelawny assured Heredia that Hodgson would have suppressed this "vile Practice", except that he had been called to duty in South Carolina late in the war, and the Mosquitos, who were "Strangely bent on this inhuman Traffick", had returned to their old habits.¹⁰

Trelawny also said that England would not abandon the Mosquito Shore; her dominion over the territory was unquestioned, and based on the seventh article of the Treaty of 1670.

Moreover it is agreed that the most Serene King of Great Britain and his Heirs and Successors shall have, hold and keep and always possess in full right of Sovereignty, Seiniory, Possession and Propriety, all the Lands, Countries, Islands, Colonies and other Places, be they what they will, lying and Situate in the West Indies, or in any part of America which the said King of Great Britain and his Subjects now hold and Possess....

Furthermore, the Mosquito Indians made a voluntary cession of their country to the English crown in 1687 which was reconfirmed by Hodgson's treaty

⁹Hodgson to Heredia, 3 December 1750, CO 137/59, f. 88.

¹⁰Heredia to Hodgson, 22 June 1750, SP 94/250, f. 204; Heredia to Trelawny, 23 June 1750, CO 137/59, f. 47; Trelawny to Bedford, 15 November 1750, CO 137/59, f. 41. Hodgson to Aldworth, 10 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 550; Trelawny to Heredia, 16 October 1750, CO 137/59, f. 48.

with King Edward in 1740.¹¹ The governor ignored Heredia's demand to confiscate the arms distributed among the Mosquitos. The move would only anger them, and in any case the weapons had probably all been ruined by rust and misuse.

Observing that Heredia's major complaint was about Indian slavery rather than political dominion, and desiring to appease the brigadier, Hodgson and Trelawny sent Ruiz to collect as many Christian slaves as he could from the Mosquitos, and then to make a second visit to Heredia. At the same time Hodgson dispatched a boat to the San Juan River to meet two of Heredia's galliots. But the vessel, which carried a few Indian slaves and "gifts" for Heredia (which were probably goods intended for trade with the governor and merchants of Granada), was seized by the infamous corsair Captain "Pancho the Catalán". Rather than meeting Hodgson's party, Heredia's men encountered two Mosquito piraguas and lost one of the galliots in the ensuing skirmish. Hodgson was grieved. He believed that if the contact had succeeded, a safe commerce would have been opened with the interior, "because that chief [Heredia] desired nothing more than motives to cover up his own activities from the court."¹²

Heredia accused Hodgson of luring the galliots into a trap, but Ruiz placated him with assurances that the Mosquitos had consented to

¹¹Trelawny to Heredia, 16 October 1750, SP 94/250, f. 278; Heredia contended that the Treaty of 1670 applied only to dominions that had "from that Time maintain'd themselves in, under the Rules of Government & laws & customs." He noted that "Nothing of this has been observ'd in Rio Tinto." Rio Tinto was the Spanish name for the English settlement at Black River. Heredia to Trelawny, 30 April 1751, CO 137/59, f. 141.

¹²Hodgson to (probably) Aldworth, 14 November 1754, Sta Fe 1261.

a general peace with the Spaniards. In fact, they were already calling the Spanish their "brothers" --and asking only to be allowed to trade in Spanish territory and to fish anywhere they wished.¹³

The commercial nature of Ruiz' commission is apparent throughout the correspondence between Ruiz, Hodgson, Trelawny and Heredia. "We may henceforward obtain greater advantages", Ruiz had told Heredia, "by the continual Communication the Spaniards will have by entering amongst them [meaning the Mosquito Indians and by extension the Jamaican traders] by Sea & Land, & They amongst Us." He also hinted that the Shoremen might allow Heredia to introduce missionaries among the Mosquito Indians. (Unknown to Ruiz, a Spanish missionary representing one of Heredia's fellow governors had already arrived in Black River and had been allowed to stay--if only temporarily.)¹⁴ To silence the suspicions about his illicit trading interests, Heredia encouraged rumours that the liberation of Indian slaves by the English was his pretext for allowing the foreigners to remain on the Mosquito Coast.¹⁵

¹³The Mosquito king (El Rey Quín--pronounced keen--alias "Chache" to the Spanish) had an additional request: that Heredia release his brother-in-law who had been captured during a raid on Boaco. Heredia promised to free the captive, but it is unknown if he actually did so.

¹⁴See below, p. 65.

¹⁵Ruiz to Heredia, 7 March 1751, CO 137/59, f. 127; Declaration by Juan Sánchez, 22 November 1751, Guat 873; Trelawny to Bedford, 17 July 1751, CO 137/59, f. 112. Ruiz quoted Heredia as saying: "It is marvelous how the English will run such great risks for the illicit trade of a little wood, sarsaparilla and turtle, when they could easily obtain a licence to cut wood and to sell goods anywhere on the coast between Truxillo and the San Juan, as well as for the introduction of Negroes, who are much needed for the work in the mines of Guatemala." The governor had 50,000 pesos to invest,"but it was too dangerous to do so until he became president of Guatemala." Hodgson to (probably) Aldworth 14 November 1754, Sta Fe 1261.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand VI responded to the solicitations of numerous officials by issuing a real cédula on 22 September 1750 designed to eliminate the problem of Mosquito incursions and clandestine trade. If the English refused to evacuate the Coast they were to be thrown out; if the Zambos Mosquitos denied their vassalage ^{and} obedience to Ferdinand they were also to be ejected.¹⁶ When Heredia received the cédula, he claimed that he would have long since dislodged the English and reduced the Indians except for President Vázquez' opposition and obstruction.¹⁷

for want of Foresight, & Understanding in the Presidt. of Guatemala, Every Military Operation here will miscarry; Since, over & above his known Dislike Jealousy & Opposition to People of Our Profession, as he is so regular in his Fiscal Schemes, his Council Votes, and Assemblies concerning the King's Estate, he benumms ^[sic] every Disposition that has either Zeal or Activity.¹⁸

Heredia also accused Vázquez of maliciously conspiring to frame him at court on the Guerra-Grenier contraband plot, but his apparent belligerent ways were tempered by his contacts with Trelawny and Hodgson. He asked the Marqués de la Ensenada, secretary of the four departments of finance, war, marine and Indies, for an interpretation of the Treaty of 1670 as it applied to the English settlement in Roatán, which he was considering attacking, making no mention of the far more important communities of Black River and Belize. Yet knowing that he must demonstrate his intention

¹⁶The actual intention of the Spanish ministry at this time, as indicated by subsequent dispatches, was to reduce or to exterminate the Mosquitos rather than to expel them from the Mosquito Shore.

¹⁷Real cédula, 22 September 1750, Guat 406; Heredia to Iscar, 12 January 1751, CO 137/59, f. 137; Hodgson to Aldworth, 10 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 550; Pitt to Trelawny, 8 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 544; Heredia to Ensenada, 12 April 1751, CO 137/59, f. 133.

¹⁸Heredia to the viceroy of México, 30 April 1751, English trans., CO 137/59, f. 137.

to carry out the royal commands, Heredia requested funds and military equipment from the presidents of Guatemala and Panamá, and the viceroy of México. Perhaps he would have attacked the Coast if he had received the support he requested; but he did not receive it; he probably did not expect to.¹⁹

The cédula of 22 September gave equal responsibility for operations against the Mosquito Shore to the governor of Yucatán, the Marqués de Iscar. Iscar, amazed as the governors of Yucatán usually were at receiving this remote responsibility, said that it was impossible for him to attend personally to the conquest, but he promised to help as best he could.²⁰

Left confused and leaderless by the absence of their superintendent, who was in Jamaica, and fearful that the small number of disease-ridden British soldiers on the Shore would goad the Spanish into action, the Shoremen requested the removal of the troops. They preferred to rely on the Mosquito Indians for protection. Governor Trelawny publicly agreed to remove the detachment of twenty men, but privately he promised Hodgson to replace them with forty "King's Negroes" and fifty veterans (dressed as marooners so as not to anger the Spanish).²¹

Although Ferdinand's intention to reduce the Mosquitos and to expel the Shoremen was explicit, the use of force was dependent upon the failure

¹⁹Heredia to Iscar, 26 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 572; Heredia to Ensenada, 26 April 1751, SP 94/251, f. 5; Heredia to Navarro, 5 April 1751, Guat 874.

²⁰Isicar to Ferdinand VI, 8 March 1751, Mex 3017.

²¹Trelawny to Bedford, 7 December 1750, CO 137/59, f. 58; Trelawny to Bedford, 8 December 1750, CO 137/59, f. 60; Trelawny to Bedford, 17 July 1751, CO 137/59, f. 112; Hodgson to Aldworth, 11 July 1751, CO 137/57, f. 559.

of more peaceful means. At the end of the war, José González Rancaño, who had been named to replace Heredia as governor of Nicaragua, but who was still in Spain, requested permission to send a missionary to the Coast to reduce the Mosquitos "by the cross rather than by the sword". Ferdinand approved the plan. Even if it were unsuccessful, the knowledge acquired would be valuable in the future. The priest González proposed to use, Juan de Solís y Miranda, was already known in Black River. Early in the war he had been shipwrecked on the Coast, where he was well treated by Pitt and the Indians, and then opened a commerce between Black River and Guatemala; González undoubtedly hoped to profit by a renewed contact with the Coast--with the king's unknowing permission--thus explaining his objection to the use of force to convert the Mosquitos.²² When the two men finally arrived in Nicaragua after a further long delay in Spain, González' relationship with Heredia immediately erupted into a contentious rivalry. González corroborated Hodgson's remarks that Heredia trafficked with the English and that his apparent support of force against the English and Mosquitos was merely a pretence to pass some large bills on the public accounts and procure future access to the royal treasury.²³

In May 1751, while Hodgson was in Jamaica to discuss Ruiz' first journey to Granada--and to recover his health ("Fevers, Dysenteries, and

²²Declaration by Juan de Solís y Miranda, 26 February 1743, Guat 665; Real cédula to José González Rancaño, 26 April 1759, CRM, p. 145; Ensenada to González, 26 April 1759, Guat 873.

²³Paradoxically, Solís accused Heredia of using influential friends at court to promote the extermination of the Mosquitos by sangre y fuego. See González to Heredia, 21 November 1751, AGI, Guat 873.

pleuritick Pains, having been my chief Amusements since my landing at Black River")²⁴ -- Solís arrived in Black River. His first responsibility was to gain William Pitt's confidence, hopefully by conversion to the Church, and then to work through him to reduce the Indians, and finally to move them inland away from the "pernicious influence" of the English.²⁵

Solís was greeted with great civility in Black River; his presence was a form of protection against invasion and an instrument to promote a trade with the interior. "Thro' the assistance & connivance of Mr Pitt",²⁵ who hoped to obtain permission to move his family and slaves into Spanish territory, Solís was allowed to remain in Black River until Governor Trelawny was consulted.²⁷

Solís had considerable early success with the Mosquitos. King Edward accepted baptism for himself and his people and asked the missionary to come to Sandy Bay to teach the young Mosquitos, although he again demanded the freedom to fish, hunt and trade in Spanish territory. To demonstrate his "vassalage and obedience" to Ferdinand, Edward promised to pay a symbolic yearly tribute of one tortoise shell, a masorca of cacao and a bunch of bananas, representing everything that the Indians needed for

²⁴Hodgson to Aldworth, 10 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 550.

²⁵González to Solís, 5 and 7 March 1751, Guat 873; Declaration by José González Rancaño, 20 and 22 November 1751, Guat 873; González to Heredia, 21 November 1751, Guat 873; González to Ferdinand VI, 2 December 1751, Guat 873; Jones and Lawrie to Trelawny, 9 April 1751, CO 137/59, f. 149.

²⁶Solís to González, 26 May 1751, Guat 873; Pitt to Trelawny, 8 April 1751, CO 137/59, f. 117.

²⁷Trelawny to Holderness, 25 November 1751, CO 137/59, f. 163.

subsistence. González was jubilant with Solís' success and requested additional money and missionaries to enlarge the work on the Coast.²⁸

But in the midst of the rainy season Solís' edifice began to crumble. Hodgson returned to Black River and Solís lost an opportunity to gain his support by telling him that "there was not the least doubt that these territories were the seigniories and dominions of my Catholic King", reasoning illogically that the country "belongs to the king of Spain because they are his own dominions."²⁹ Still, Hodgson was wary of acting too hastily against the missionary for fear of offering the Spanish an easy annexation of the Shore by widening the dissension between those settlers favouring Solís and those opposed.

The reaction of the obstreperous and independent General Handyside to Edward's conversion gave Hodgson an opportunity to act. Handyside forced the king to denounce his relationship with Solís by threatening a civil war. A delegation of Zambos even asked Hodgson for permission to kill the missionary. "The Fellow's Impudence, Dishonesty and desperate Zeal have richly deserv'd it", he wrote, but he denied their request in spite of the temptation. Hodgson informed Trelawny of Solís' subversive activities, which included a conspiracy to massacre all the English and Indians on the Shore who did not adhere to his teachings. Trelawny ordered Solís to be brought to Jamaica to answer charges that he had been sent to the Shore "to pervert & bring over the Indians to the

²⁸Solís to González, 3 July and 23 August 1751, Guat 873; Hodgson to Aldworth, 12 July 1751, CO 137/57, f. 562; González to Ferdinand VI, 29 July 1751, Guat 873.

²⁹Solís to Hodgson, 26 July 1751, Guat 873.

Catholick Religion & the King of Spain's obedience."³⁰ When Solís arrived in Jamaica, Governor Trelawny took him into his own home, promising that he could return to Nicaragua when he proved that he had a commission from his king. But Solís, who was in debt to an English merchant from an earlier trading venture, was recognised in the streets of Kingston and imprisoned; then, to Hodgson's horror, he died in gaol ("in cruel chains", according to González). "The Clergy of Guatimala", Hodgson wrote, "are all in a ferment about Father Solis, and load one liberally with their Anathemas, and when they hear of his death, I make no doubt will propogate a Belief that I have got him Murdered...."³¹

When González arrived in Nicaragua, Heredia was transferred to Comayagua as governor of Honduras. Solís claimed that he took 2,000 small arms with him, and was now recruiting 3,000 men to invade the Shore. Richard Jones and Lt. James Lawrie³² reported that a Spanish fleet in the Gulf of Dulce would join with galliots from Lake Nicaragua in the invasion. Hodgson heard that five privateers commanded by Pancho the Catalán had orders to attack Black River, and a North American merchant

³⁰Trelawny to Holderness, 25 November 1751, CO 137/59, f. 163. Hodgson's desire to remove Solís may have been for the expressed reason that he was trying to corrupt the Mosquitos, but it is more likely that, as the middle man in the commerce between González and Pitt, Solís represented a threat to the trade that Hodgson was trying to develop with Heredia.

³¹Hodgson to Aldworth, 12 July 1751, CO 137/57, f. 562; Trelawny to Heredia, 15 May 1752, CO 137/59, f. 218; Hodgson to Knowles, 19 January 1753, CO 137/60, f. 25; Log of H.M.S. Queenborough, Captain Robert Duff, 25 August 1751, Adm 51/755; Hodgson to Halifax, 22 February 1752, CO 137/48, f. 225; Declaration by González, 26 November 1751, Guat 873; González to Arriaga, 26 April 1755, Guat 456.

³²Both men, together with Hodgson's son, served under Captain Hodgson.

said that sixteen vessels had sailed from Havana, St. Augustine and Campeche to blockade the British settlements in the Bay. Hodgson was overwhelmed with these worries and others; his health was failing and his son was missing; the Spanish corsairs were using Roatán, off the leeward Shore, as a rendezvous, while the French were reportedly planning to settle Old Providence, off the windward Shore. He was also dissatisfied with his dependency on William Pitt, his friend and business rival, who was the only person on the Shore with a sufficient number of slaves "to carry on the King's service".³³ Furthermore, the seizure of his vessel had delayed a rapprochement with Heredia, and Hodgson was angry with Commodore Townshend, commander of the Jamaica station, for refusing to send warships to the Shore. Hodgson blamed Townshend for his apparent failure with Heredia. If his vessel had been convoyed to the mouth of the San Juan, he argued, it would not have been seized, and the Shore would not be awaiting an invasion. He found Townshend's reasons for not assisting him incomprehensible; the commodore had a "particular dislike" for the idea, and would do nothing without specific orders from home. Spanish "insolence" had forced him to retain every vessel under his immediate command, "which methinks is an odd Reason for exposing us to more [insolence]", Hodgson retorted.

Rather than fall prey to a monstrous invasion force, the Shoremen

³³Pitt to Trelawny, 8 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 544; Jones and Lawrie to Trelawny, 9 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 546; Hodgson to Aldworth, 10 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 550; Solís to González, 26 May 1751, Guat 873.

³⁴Hodgson to Aldworth, 10 April 1751, CO 137/57, f. 550.

sent a piragua to reconnoitre the harbours and islands in the Bay of Honduras. They found no sign of Spanish military preparations, but on a stormy night near Omoa a flash of lightning revealed a nearby vessel which they immediately boarded and found to be a Spanish mail packet carrying official dispatches from Heredia. The capture became an act of piracy when the Shoremen seized a considerable quantity of doubloons, silver and pieces of eight, then abandoned the crew on a deserted beach and sank the vessel. The dispatches were taken to Black River, where they were studied by Pitt and by Hodgson, who had returned from Jamaica. Although the documents proved Spain's aggressive intentions towards the Shore, Heredia's request for an interpretation of the Treaty of 1670 promised a long respite. The seizure of the mailboat might have caused an Anglo-Spanish rupture, but Whitehall disavowed the act and the Spanish court accepted the indirect apology.³⁵

In their official correspondence, Trelawny and Heredia arrived at a kind of truce which concealed whatever private arrangement Ruiz had reached with the Spanish governor. Heredia continued to call for the complete evacuation of Roatán, but while refuting English claims to the Mosquito Shore he no longer demanded that the Shoremen evacuate their settlements. Nevertheless, in spite of the harmony between the two governors, the gentle methods of González, and the inaction of Vázquez, the Shoremen were not relieved from harassment or future danger. Corsair

³⁵Hodgson to Aldworth, 11 July 1751, CO 137/57, f. 559; Hodgson to Aldworth, 12 July 1751, CO 137/57, f. 562; Trelawny to Bedford, 17 July 1751, CO 137/59, f. 112; Ensenada to Wall, 24 January 1752, AHN, Est 4267, vol. ii.

commissions were easy to obtain and many unscrupulous men took advantage of this licenced piracy to prey on shipping in the Bay of Honduras. Furthermore, complaints were still reaching the Spanish court of English contraband trade and Mosquito slave raids. To remedy these evils, President Vázquez was again ordered to reduce the Mosquitos and to dislodge the English.³⁶ But Vázquez was not anxious to initiate such a dangerous enterprise, which he said demanded more time and care, and suggested that an attack on Belize would be easier. The Marqués de la Ensenada called Vázquez' suggestion impetuous and unwarranted; Belize was not even within his jurisdiction. He repeated the order for Vázquez to "personally direct the enterprize of dislodging the English, and the Zambos Mosquito Indians from the coast of Honduras." Corsairs and guardacostas from Omoa would join with others from Panamá to assault the enemy, while the armada de barlovento (windward fleet) would sail from Havana to block communication between Jamaica and the Coast. But the admiral of the armada did not obey his orders, and when English reinforcements were sent to the Shore to repulse an invasion, Vázquez decided to correspond with Trelawny. English troops were "violently occupying the Territories belonging to His Majesty", he wrote. "Such behaviour...might be the beginning of complete breaks between the two crowns." If he had to use force, Vázquez added, the Shoremen would be "treated with that Severity...which Pirates & disturbers of the publick quiet are deserving of, being Usurpers of

³⁶ Heredia to Trelawny, 30 April 1751, CO 137/59, f. 141; Ensenada to Vázquez, 25 April 1751, Guat 448; Unsigned minute, 31 October 1752, Guat 448; Vázquez' original assignment to the presidency of the audiencia of Guatemala had been primarily for the purpose of expelling the English from the Mosquito Shore. Ensenada to Vázquez, 26 June 1752, Mex 3099.

the Rights of the Princes of the Earth, to whom the greatest veneration & respect is due." Vázquez further denied British claims to the Bay of Honduras and refused to recognise the Trelawny-Heredia truce.³⁷

notwithstanding the Agreement you imagined that Brigadier Heredia had made with Your Excy (the w:ch my Small knowledge can't comprehend upon), [by]...a positive order from the King my Master,...he Should use his endeavours with the Officers that Commanded at the Island of Rattan, the Places adjacent & Black River on the Coast of Honduras, to the end that they Should evacuate & leave them free as they were before the War.³⁸

President Vázquez had neither the desire nor the means to carry out his orders or his threats. And according to Heredia, "For want of foresight and understanding in the president...every military operation will miscarry.' The question was left to the two courts to decide, although for many years it was not resolved, and each succeeding ministry approached the issue anew. Every few years English and Spanish under-secretaries had to search through poorly-kept archives to compile brief histories of the dispute. Spain's determination to expel the English from the coasts of Honduras and Yucatán never weakened, but her efforts to do so were blundering and intermittent. England had no regular policy towards those settlements, unless it was to protect English commerce by preserving the status quo. English ministers were poorly acquainted with the Bay of Honduras. Ambassador Keene, when ordered to persuade Ensenada to

³⁷ Heredia to the viceroy of México, 30 April 1751, CO 137/59, f. 141; From Vázquez, 1 April 1752, AGS, Est 8133, folder 8a; Consejo report approved by Ferdinand VI, 21 May 1752, AGS, Est 8133, folder 8a; Reales Órdenes to Vázquez, 9 September 1752, AGS, Est 8133, folder 8a; Ensenada to Vázquez, 26 June 1752 and 24 September 1752, Mex 3099; Trelawny to Heredia, 15 May 1752, CO 137/59, f. 218; Trelawny to Holderness, 25 May 1752, CO 137/59, f. 197. To guard against a more insidious invasion, Hodgson was told not "to allow any Papist Missionary to reside on the said Shore on any account whatever." Trelawny to Hodgson, 20 May 1752, CO 137/59, f. 216.

³⁸ Vázquez to Trelawny, 25 November 1752, English trans., CO 137/25, vol.iii, f. 336.

cancel his offensive schemes against the Mosquito Shore, admitted his ignorance of British rights there. He understood that "one Capt. Hogson [sic] [was assigned to the Shore] in order to make further Discoveries up into the Inland Countries, and to be better Situated as to the Ports for carrying on the Logwood Trade from the Bay of Campeachy."³⁹ The Bay of Campeche is hundreds of miles from Belize and even farther from the Mosquito Shore. Unfortunately Keene turned to Newcastle for illumination, and no English minister in the eighteenth century was more obscure on the subject than he. Keene's comments on the Mosquito settlements gave the king some concern, Newcastle remarked. "If it relates to the Right of cutting Logwood", he added uncertainly (it did not), then "the claim of His Maty's Subjects to it seems well founded." Then later: "Your paragraph about the Mosquito Shore gives me real concern. The right our people pretend to of cutting logwood [not a stick grew on the Shore], and the absolute disallowance of it on the part of Spain, is I apprehend the source of all our difficulties...."⁴⁰

Spanish ministers were no more knowledgeable about the region. Englishmen had been living in the Bay for more than 100 years, yet José de Carvajal y Lancaster, minister of state, told Wall: "They say that there are Englishmen established on the Mosquito Coast, a country belonging to the king, and nobody can establish himself there without the king's licence." The Spanish seldom faltered in their claim to absolute dominion

³⁹Keene to Newcastle, 30 August 1752, SP 94/142, f. 237.

⁴⁰Carvajal to Wall, 10 January 1752, AHN, Est 4277; Keene to Holderness, 17 January 1752, SP 94/141, f.20; Newcastle to Keene, 26 July/6 August 1752, printed in Richard Lodge, ed., The Private Correspondence of Sir Benjamin Keene, K.B. (Cambridge, 1933), p. 28.

over the Bay of Honduras, nor in their right to seize all foreign ships in the Bay. Of the many encounters between British ships and Spanish guardacostas at this time, two especially were viewed critically by Whitehall. After a visit to the Mosquito Shore, H.M.S. Ferret was threatened with destruction by Spanish corsairs, but she was released when the Ferret's captain swore that she carried no contraband.

Nevertheless, the Spanish commander later remarked that the vessel "had ^{else} nothing/to do there than to introduce or run goods." Neither the Admiralty nor Whitehall wanted to discuss a case that might expose clandestine trading activities by the English navy. Yet there were eleven seizures in 1750, most of which were made on or near the Mosquito Shore, about which complaints could be made. The most important was that of the Mosquito, the flagship of William Pitt's little fleet. Governor Trelawny told the Duke of Bedford that the Mosquito was seized when "going from one part of His Majesty's Dominions [Jamaica] to another [the Mosquito Shore]", but he was afraid to meddle "in so delicate a matter untill I have His Majesty's directions how to proceed."⁴¹

When the complaints reached Ambassador Keene, with the order to condemn these outrages, he advised Carvajal that serious consequences would ensue unless the Spanish abstained from seizing English vessels. Keene's mild representation was not answered, and the following year

⁴¹ Log of the Ferret, Captain Carr Scrope, 2-15 January 1751, Adm 51/3831; Navarro to Torres, 22 March 1752, CO 137/59, f. 253; Trelawny to Bedford, 5 July 1750, SP 94/138, f. 195; Affidavit by Andrew Connel, 30 April 1750, SP 94/138, f. 201; From Francisco Cagigal de la Vega, 29 May 1750, AGS, Est 8133; Jean O. MacLachlan, "The Seven Years' Peace and the West Indian Policy of Carvajal and Wall", EHR, liii (1938), p. 463.

the Earl of Holderness, the new Secretary of State for the Southern Department, ordered Keene to renew the complaint about the seizures. Keene was concerned that Spain would reply by reviving her complaints against British subjects on the Mosquito Shore; but Holderness was persistent, explaining that the maintenance of peace depended on the speedy alleviation of the problem. In February and again in March 1752, he ordered Keene to lodge strong complaints with the Spanish court. Holderness also considered the greatest fear of the British settlers in the Bay of Honduras: Spanish military action. "What is of still greater consequence", he wrote, was a "Design of interrupting His Majesty's Subjects in their Settlement, upon the Mosquito Shore."⁴² The "State of Affairs in America between the two Crowns", Keene replied unhappily, "has been the uneasiness of my Life."⁴³ Carvajal had not the authority to treat of these problems and Ensenada was too busy. Keene discovered yet another problem that might endanger the peace: a Spanish plan to establish a trading and logwood company in San Andrés, an island near the Mosquito Shore occupied by British settlers.⁴⁴

Keene admitted that he had not discussed England's rights to the Mosquito Shore with the Spanish (again acknowledging that he did not know what those rights were), and claimed that doing so would "neither

⁴² Holderness to Keene, 5 March 1752, SP 94/141, f. 83.

⁴³ Keene to Holderness, 21 March 1752, SP 94/141, f. 135.

⁴⁴ Keene to Carvajal, 23 December 1750, SP 94/139, f. 3; Holderness to Keene, 9 December 1751, referred to in Keene to Holderness, 17 January 1752, SP 94/141, f. 20.

procure Satisfaction for the past, nor hope to correct Abuses for the future", while it would end all chances to regulate other disputes. The "Utility and Value" of the Shore, he said, should be "weighed against [the] Consequences, which would infallibly follow" English representations to the Spanish court.⁴⁵

The situation also remained serious in the West Indies during the summer of 1752. Corsairs operated promiscuously against British merchantmen and a massive invasion force was reportedly poised to strike against the British settlements in the Bay of Honduras. Unless these "thorns in the British side" were removed, Holdernesse commented, war might erupt. But Ensenada pushed the thorns deeper when he declared the Mosquito to be a legal prize, although he agreed to reconsider the sentence if new evidence were presented.⁴⁶

Then late in 1752 another rash of seizures, including three more vessels belonging to Pitt, occurred near the Mosquito Shore. Angered by the intelligence that the crews of the corsairs were mostly English and Irish, Hodgson suggested that "a little hanging for these Renegades ...would be extremely wholesome." However his request for men-of-war with which to attack the corsair base at Omoa was denied for fear of provoking a conflict.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Keene to Newcastle, 4 July 1752, SP 94/142, f. 107.

⁴⁶Keene to Newcastle, 30 August 1752, SP 94/142, f. 237; Holdernesse to Keene, 15 January 1753, SP 94/143, f. 234; Ensenada to Keene, 22 February 1753, SP 94/143, f. 61; Holdernesse to Keene, 26 May 1753, SP 95/143, f. 280.

⁴⁷Hodgson to Knowles, 19 December 1752, CO 137/60, f. 19; Knowles to Vázquez, 20 March 1753, CO 137/60, f. 39.

During the winter of 1752-3 the insecurity of the Shoremen heightened after Solís' death, and as Whitehall's interest in the problems in the Bay of Honduras declined. Furthermore, Admiral Charles Knowles, who had replaced Trelawny as governor of Jamaica, inherited neither his interest in the Shore nor his fondness for Robert Hodgson. In fact, he quickly acquired a strong aversion to both. At first Knowles continued the policy initiated by Trelawny, but he soon became suspicious of the superintendent's heavy bills, and noted that Hodgson (Knowles sometimes called him Hudson) had received £2,759 more than he had receipts for. He also suspected that Hodgson turned the Indian presents to his own use, and concluded that the superintendent's salary could "be spared very safely". He wrote derisively of the "delusive Schemes" of the interested persons there and of the "Chimerical Advantages this Pigmy settlement [the Shoremen preferred 'infant colony'] will be to the State."⁴⁸ Knowles blamed Hodgson for every problem in the Bay of Honduras, including the activities of the guardacostas. Even an Anglo-Spanish rupture would be his responsibility; "if Captain Hodgson is not checqued in his exploits he will soon involve the Nation in difficultys...." A suggestion by Hodgson that England's hold on the Shore be strengthened only managed to "shew the Absurdity of the undertaking...much as the madness of the undertaker." Knowles also reasoned that the Solís episode was Hodgson's fault. If Hodgson had not gone to the Shore, Solís would not have been sent there, and the Mosquito Indians would not have been tormented and

confused by the conflicting offers of the two men.⁴⁸

Hodgson did little to relieve Knowles' suspicions. He made a further claim for £300, saying that he would exceed his yearly allowance more than expected, and justifying his heavy expenditure by insisting that the French would spend four times as much on a similar venture. Knowles refused to pay these "extraordinary" claims and pressed Holderness to dismiss Hodgson. The superintendent replied heatedly to Knowles' accusations and insinuations. He was distressed to find his motives questioned, especially since Governor Trelawny had thought him "worthy of a discretionary power, without which I could not execute his Orders."⁴⁹ If Knowles had any case against Hodgson it collapses under the weight of his prejudices and intemperate accusations. Hodgson was in Jamaica when Solís was permitted to remain in Black River, and the bills Hodgson presented were for sums spent by others before he had arrived on the Shore. Knowles' request to remove Hodgson was considered by the Board of Trade, who let the matter drop.⁵⁰

Governor Knowles retained his enmity towards Hodgson. When Matina was sacked in May 1753 by Mosquitos and Shoremen, the governor, convinced that Hodgson had approved the raid, and calling his conduct "such a breach of...Instructions as deserves the severest Censure, and [which] may be attended with fatal Consequences",⁵¹ sent Captain William Galbraith

⁴⁸ Knowles to Holderness, 29 October 1752, CO 137/59, f. 221; Hodgson to Knowles, 19 December 1752, CO 137/60, f. 19; Knowles to Holderness, 10 January and 26 March 1753, CO 137/60, ff. 1, 17; Metcalf, Royal Government, p. 115.

⁴⁹ Hodgson to Knowles, 19 January and 9 February 1753, CO 137/60, ff. 25, 27; Knowles to Holderness, 10 January and 26 March 1753, CO 137/60, ff. 1, 17; Knowles to Hodgson, 24 January 1753, CO 137/60, f. 23.

⁵⁰ Holderness to Board of Trade, 28 June 1753, CO 137/48, f. 252; Board of Trade to Holderness, 9 July 1753, CO 137/48, f. 255.

⁵¹ Knowles to Hodgson, 8 October 1753, CO 137/60, f. 55.

to the Shore to investigate. Galbraith reported that the raid was inconsequential; Hodgson had even tried to return the stolen cacao, although several Shoremen had proved to be "greater Rogues than the Mosquito Indians", by appropriating most of the booty for their own use.⁵²

Hodgson accused Galbraith of assuming his duties in an angry note to Knowles that the governor called "the most insolent as well as scurrilous Letter...that I believe ever was penn'd and for which I shall order him to be tryed by a Court Martial."⁵³ However Knowles did not follow up his threat, preferring to make another plea to Whitehall for his removal. ^{Sir} Thomas Robinson, who had replaced Holdernessee, replied that Hodgson should remain at his post until current fears of a Spanish invasion of Belize diminished.⁵⁴ But the attack had already been made, and in October 1754, Knowles named Galbraith superintendent of the Mosquito Shore, with orders to return the Baymen to their settlements and "to Protect and defend them [the British settlers throughout the Bay of Honduras] in their Rights and Possessions and to repell Force by Force in case any attempts should be made against them, either upon the Mosquito Shore or at the River Belise."⁵⁵ Hodgson sailed to Jamaica after Galbraith's arrival in Black River, but soon

⁵²Anon. declaration, 27 May 1753, AC 504; To Juan Antonio Velarde Cienfuegos. 2 March 1754, Guat 448; Knowles to Holdernessee, 13 October 1753 and 12 January 1754, CO 137/60, ff. 53, 66.

⁵³Knowles to Holdernessee, 12 January 1754, CO 137/60, f. 66.

⁵⁴Robinson to Knowles, 8 July 1754, CO 123/3; Knowles to Robinson, 11 December 1754, CO 137/60, f. 126.

⁵⁵Knowles to Galbraith, 13 November 1754, CO 137/60, f. 128.

afterwards he returned to his duties because Galbraith had "succeeded so unexpectedly" in his assignment, according to Knowles. With the crisis over, the governor seemed to infer, Hodgson could probably do little damage at his post. Galbraith, who apparently had not received further orders, soon found himself idle and bored in Black River, and returned to Jamaica; Knowles made no further attempts to remove Hodgson.⁵⁶

Early in 1754, while the Hodgson - Knowles feud was moving towards its climax, Alonso de Arcos y Moreno, who had assumed the presidency of the audiencia of Guatemala at the death of José Vázquez Prego, received instructions from the Marqués de la Ensenada to command an invasion of the Mosquito Coast. But at the suggestion of the oidor decano of Guatemala, and approved by Arcos y Moreno and the viceroy of México, the Conde de Revillagigedo, it was decided to unite the armada de barlovento with vessels from Bacalar for the massed attack on Belize, to be followed by one on Black River.⁵⁷ Intelligence of the Spanish plans disturbed poor Newcastle. "I am frightened out of my Wits at these Ensenada Orders", he wrote to Wall. "If I know Knowles, he will already have tried to repulse force with force." "For the love of God", he pleaded, "where will that place us? You and me, we will certainly be the victims."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Galbraith to Knowles, 15 April 1755, CO 137/60, f. 158; Knowles to Robinson, 13 January and 12 July 1755, CO 137/60, ff. 132, 214.

⁵⁷ Ensenada to Arcos y Moreno, 2 February 1754, Guat 448, Revillagigedo to Ensenada, 18 May 1754, Mex 3099; Keene to Robinson, 17 June 1754, SP 94/14 f. 12; Newcastle to Albemarle, 1 August 1754, BM, Add 32,850.

⁵⁸ Newcastle to all, 4 July 1754, cited by Lawrence H. Gipson, "British Diplomacy in the Light of Anglo-Spanish New world Issues", AHR, li (1946), p. 632.

Ens nada's aggressive plan was coupled with a fanciful scheme to conquer the Mosquito Coast from within. During the summer of 1753, Ambassador Keene received a visitor with the "feigned name" of Richard Dranover. In exchange for a promise of secrecy and a reward, Dranover divulged the details of a Spanish project for driving the English from the Mosquito Shore. In February 1750, a Spanish merchant by the name of Pedro Flores de Silva arrived in Black River, where he was treated "civilly and familiarly" by the "English Governor", William Pitt. Flores de Silva had made the trip in spite of

Having so frequently heard and lamented the barbarous Outrages, and execrable Abominations, which the Zambos, supported, in Peace and in War, by the English, commit in plundering the Provinces of Honduras, by profaning the Churches, defiling the Images and holy Vessels, and the insuperable Difficulties which seem to oppose every Remedy that can be thought of for such crying Evils.

During his stay in Black River, Flores studied the settlement, its government and its defence. The forts at Black River were two "ill contrived castles", and there were only eleven armed Englishmen in the community, although a like number used the settlement as a base for commercial operations; about 150 Negro families and a few Indian slaves were dependent upon the white settlers. Yet in spite of its weaknesses, the country was "morally impossible to attack...by land" and "rather Madness than Bravery" to do so by sea. Nevertheless, Flores said, the expulsion of the English was "necessary for the succouring those Provinces, for defending the Churches from Insults, for putting a Stop to the Counterband [sic] Trade, and to the Extraction of our Treasures by Strangers"--and to open the rich mines in the country

without danger of interruption by the English and Mosquitos.

Flores had three alternate plans for driving the English from the Coast "without Expence to His Majesty, without the Noise of War, and without Danger to the Lives of his Subjects." He proposed to introduce 200 or 300 men onto the Coast singly and in small groups as carriers on mule teams loaded with bulky products such as tobacco, cacao and dye-wood. The ruse should fool the Zambos Mosquitos, he thought, because the Indians were often impressed by Pitt into this unappealing labour and they would be happy to see others doing the work.

The easy success Flores envisaged depended on the Shoremen's habit of manning the fortifications in Black River on the weekend to allow the regular garrison--comprised principally of Negro slaves--time to work their provision grounds.

The English, in this Country, are used to spend the Day over the weekend in Merriment and Drinking from twelve o'clock at Noon, to twelve at Night, till Drunkenness renders them stupid and defenceless. It would be an easy Matter, therefore, to fall upon them in this Situation; and to become Masters of the Castles, and bind them, without drawing a Sword, or firing a Gun.

Flores' second plan involved the Negroes and mestizos of Sonaguera, Olancho and the other frontier towns in Honduras and Nicaragua, who went to Black River every few months in companies of forty or fifty men to make cordage, to cut sarsaparilla, and to perform other tasks. Flores hoped to cultivate the friendship of these people and then to induce them to attack their English employers.

The third idea was to introduce men individually as private

adventurers, ostensibly to cut wood, to gather sarsaparilla, and to do other odd jobs. At a prearranged time they would assault the English.

After the expected victory, Flores planned to tell the Paya and other irreduced Indian nations in the mountains--the "Xicaques" of Honduras and the "Caribs" of Nicaragua--"that the Christians have again got Possession of that Country", and to assure them of Spain's "Friendship and Protection". If the Zambos Mosquitos did not acknowledge their obedience to the Spanish King, "They shall, without Distinction of Age or Sex, be put to the Sword, as a just Punishment for the Mischiefs they had done in His Majesty's Dominions." Abandoned by their English friends and surrounded on land and by sea, they "would immediately surrender, and offer to be baptised; This being the Way, by which they soonest hope to appease the Anger of the Christians." Although Flores' scheme was approved by the Spanish court, he died before it could be implemented; however Ensenada's more practical invasion plans were pushed forward.⁵⁹

Secretary of State Robinson reacted more calmly to the intelligence of Ensenada's plans than did Newcastle. "You will see", he said, "how precarious the peace is in America." Ensenada, he said, should "plainly see the absolute Necessity, (if they intend to preserve Harmony between the Two Crowns,) of finishing this Affair amicably, and expeditiously." The English ministry searched for ways to settle the perpetual quarrels

⁵⁹Flores to Ensenada, n.d., trans. inclosed in Keene's dispatch of 30 June 1753, SP 94/143, f. 169; Flores to Ferdinand VI, 1752, BPR, Ayala VI-2821, f. 293. Keene to Holderness, 30 June 1753, SP 94/143, f. 164.

in the Bay of Honduras. The king, Robinson said, wants to arrange an agreement "between the Two Courts for Settling all Disputes relating to the Mosquito Shore, and the Cutting of Logwood...."⁶⁰ But in that summer of 1754, serious conversations on the problems relating to the Bay of Honduras were still far in the future.

When notice of the Spanish attack plans were received on the Shore by William Pitt, he advised the Baymen of the danger, prompting 500 of them to flee to the secure confines of the Mosquito Shore.⁶¹ To bolster the defences of Black River, superintendent Hodgson brought in the small troop of soldiers stationed at Cape Gracias a Dios and also asked the Mosquito chiefs to gather forces there. But his plan to assemble the Indians was "render'd fruitless by the Cowardice or Treachery of that Villain Handyside",⁶² who had again demonstrated his independence of both British and Spanish influence.

Soon after the Baymen arrived in Black River a report circulated that the "Spanish attack" was a scheme by Pitt to acquire an advantage in that season's London logwood market. Approximately 100 Baymen returned to Belize--where they blundered into the large Spanish invasion fleet.⁶³ Belize was captured without a fight, but it was a hollow

⁶⁰ Robinson to Knowles, 8 July 1754, CO 123/3; Robinson to Keene, 8 July 1754, SP 94/147, f. 17; Lodge, *op.cit.*, p. 336.

⁶¹ Pitt to Knowles, 1 August 1754, CO 137/60, f. 111; Petition of the Shoremen to Knowles, 5 September 1754, CO 137/60, f. 117; Memorial from Andrew Reid on behalf of Robert Hodgson and the Shoremen, n.d., CO 137/60, f. 136.

⁶² Hodgson to Reed, 3 August 1754, CO 137/60, f. 115.

⁶³ Affidavit by William Allison, 5 September 1754, CO 137/60, f. 113; Another letter from a merchant trading on the Mosquito Shore, 16 December 1754, BM, Add 33,029, f. 152; Pitt to Hall, 9 January 1755, CO 137/60, f. 142.

victory; the Spanish found only a few miserable huts to destroy, and most of the wood was already cut, under water, and impossible to burn. The invaders deserted Belize as being "only fit for the English".⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the distraught Shoremen and the Baymen who remained in Black River frantically prepared their defenses against an expected attack. Probably because of the large number of armed men on the Shore, however, the armada retired to Omoa, divided the scanty spoils taken at Belize, and returned to their own provinces.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the English court was applying strong pressure on Spain to stop all offensive activity in the Bay of Honduras. But the menace of a renewed offensive would surely continue so long as Ensenada remained the virtual dictator of Spanish policy. In July 1754, however, with the threat to the Shore at its greatest and war imminent, Ensenada's enemies--with valuable assistance from Ambassador Keene--caused his⁶⁶ downfall. He was replaced by friar Julián de Arriaga, a few months after the French-born Irish general, Ricardo Wall, had become minister

⁶⁴ Spanish intelligence report, 4 April 1755, in Keene's dispatch of 24 July 1755, SP 94/150, f. 101; Knowles to Robinson, 13 April 1755, CO 137/60, f. 144.

⁶⁵ Cokes to Cleveland, 14 November 1754, Adm 1/235; Knowles to Robinson, 13 April 1755, CO 137/60, f. 144; Revillagigedo to Ensenada, 19 October 1754, Mex 3099.

⁶⁶ Richard Lodge, "Sir Benjamin Keene, K.B. A Study in Anglo-Spanish Relations", Royal Historical Society Transactions (fourth series, London, 1932), xv, pp. 27-29. The charges that brought about Ensenada's dismissal were that he had secret correspondence with friends in Italy, and that he had ordered Spanish officials in America to seize English ships carrying logwood, and to eject by force British settlers living on the Mosquito Shore, hoping that these acts would lead to a European war. Antonio Rodríguez Villa, Do Cenón de Somodevilla, arqués de la Ensenada (Madrid, 187), p. 262.

of state. An immediate relaxation of Spain's belligerent policy accompanied the change of personnel. On 4 September 1754, Ferdinand ordered a suspension of plans to dislodge the English from the Bay of Honduras, and later he withdrew all corsair commissions in the Bay. The king expressed his "firm Persuasion...that all such Points, as deserve to be discussed, will be amicably adjusted with the King of Great Britain." Although he still maintained that it was the duty of Spanish governors "not to suffer Foreigners to make any Settlements, in those Parts of the King's Dominions which are entrusted to their Care", yet Ensenada's militant policy was repudiated and war was averted.⁶⁷

After the changes in the Spanish ministry and policy, Governor Knowles was informed that there was "no reason at present to apprehend that the Spaniards will revive in America such Hostilities as were intended some Months ago..." Nevertheless, his instructions to repel force by force if necessary remained,⁶⁸ and although "His Majesty has not yet thought proper to establish any fixed Plan of Government" on the Mosquito Shore, the status quo, meaning effective English sovereignty, was not to be altered.⁶⁹

Tensions now subsided in the Indies, but remained strained in

⁶⁷ Wall to Keene, 15 September 1754, SP 94/147, f. 232; Robinson to Knowles, 26 October 1754, CO 123/3; Real orden to Vázquez, 1 September 1754, AGS, Est 8133, folder 8a; Calderón, Relice, p. 147.

⁶⁸ Robinson to Knowles, 26 October 1754, CO 123/3; Robinson to Keene, 12 December 1754, SP 94/147, f. 312.

⁶⁹ Knowles to Galbraith, 13 November 1754, CO 137/60, f. 128.

Europe. Believing that the Shoremen had been driven from Black River, Keene informed the Spanish court that "this act of aggression must be stopped in order to maintain the harmony between the two crowns", and demanded that the Shoremen be allowed to return to their homes.⁷⁰

In response to Keene's heated representation, Arriaga reconfirmed his conciliatory orders of the previous September forbidding the use of force to support "the King's Rights against the English". Provincial governors were ordered to restore all vessels taken in the Bay and to make reparations for damages--even for acts which occurred before September.⁷¹ But Arriaga refused to issue orders allowing the Shoremen and logwood cutters to return to their homes (only the logwood cutters had actually been expelled from their settlements). Keene suggested that such an order would have been a virtual acknowledgement of British sovereignty in the Bay of Honduras, and added that a suspicion of Anglomania in Wall had actually worked to England's detriment; the Irishman was forced to present a stern front to England to soothe the shrill hostility of his opposition.⁷²

In spite of the change in Spain's attitude, the Shoremen were nervous

⁷⁰Robinson to Keene, 12 December 1754, SP 94/147, f. 312; Keene to Wall, 3 January 1755, SP 94/148, f. 7; Robinson to Keene, 27 January 1755, P 94/148, f. 32; Lodge, *op.cit.*, p. xix.

⁷¹Arriaga to Arcos y Moreno, 5 January 1755, SP 94/252, f. 3; Arriaga to Navarrete, 5 January 1755, SP 94/148, f. 13.

⁷²Keene to Robinson, 12 and 24 January 1755, SP 94/148, ff. 5, 53. French ministers even complained that Wall was being bribed by the English, which was certainly not so. Allan Christelow, "Economic Background of the Anglo-Spanish War of 1762", Journal of Modern History, xviii (1946), p. 22.

about a renewal of hostilities. They were reassured by a demonstration of their inherent defensive strength, however, when a ship sent to their relief was driven onto the Mosquito reefs by the violent winter northers. And by February 1755, it became apparent to them that the Spanish had postponed their aggressive plans. To prove his good intentions towards the Spaniards, Hodgson sent the Mosquitos off on a peaceful turtling expedition, and returned the cacao seized by them in a recent raid on Matina. Spanish colonial officials also promoted this new feeling of harmony by freeing all English prisoners in Omoa. The crisis of 1754 was over, but new problems and disputes were to arise almost immediately.⁷³

⁷³ Knowles to Keene, 13 January 1755, SP 94/149, f. 33; Knowles to Robinson, 13 January 1755, CO 137/60, f. 132; Cayetano to Hodgson, 19 February 1755, CO 137/60, f. 190; Hodgson to Knowles, 16 March 1755, CO 137/60, f. 162; Knowles to Robinson, 25 February 1755, CO 137/60, f. 140; Hodgson to Knowles, 16 April 1755, 30/47/17.

Chapter IV

HODGSON, GOVERNOR KNOWLES and the
GALBRAITH "SUPERINTENDENCY", 1754 - 1759

George I, brother of Edward, son of Jeremy II, grandson of Jeremy I and great-grandson of Oldman, was crowned king of the Mosquito nation in Sandy Bay in February 1755.¹ The situation on the Mosquito Shore and at Belize was much the same as it had been at the beginning of the British superintendency five and a half years earlier. William Pitt, with his plantation on Black River notorious for its size, number of slaves (approximately 400), and "harem" of sixty women, was still the leading settler and the patriarch of all British colonists in the Bay of Honduras. The logwood settlements at Belize remained dependent upon the Mosquito Shore, which offered the protective security of the Mosquito Indians, the only fresh provisions closer than Jamaica, and a secure asylum against the threat of invasion and the rainy season. Furthermore, it was the headquarters of the sole British official in the Bay of Honduras.

As Belize was dependent upon the Mosquito Shore, both settlements were the wards of the governor and council of Jamaica. Without an independent company, immigration to the Shore was hindered and the

¹Memorial from Joseph Smith Speer, January 1755, CO 325/2; Lawrie to Robertson, 10 November 1774, NLS, Robertson-Macdonald Papers, MS 3942, f. 173; Keasbey, Nicaragua Canal, p. 82. King Edward's eldest son was still a child at his father's death. Consequently the Mosquito chiefs elected Edward's brother to succeed him.

threat of a Spanish invasion always pre ent. Nevertheless, the establishment of the superintendency did encourage some development there. Black River now had two small forts which guarded the ocean bar and community of 213 houses, most of which were temporary thatched-roof dwellings. Practically, the Shore was as secure as Jamaica, because of its natural defences, the wretched state of Spanish arms in the Indies, and the friendship of the stalwart Indians. "They are so skillful", wrote one Spanish official, "that only the Veteran troops of Europe can equal them."²

The beginning of Mosquito King George I's long reign coincided with the dismissal of the disgraced Marqués de la Ensenada, and^{with} an agreement between England and Spain to resolve their disputes over the Bay of Honduras by peaceful means.³ The most important issues were Mosquito incursions instigated by Shoremen and Jamaicanslave dealers, the seizure of English merchant ships,⁴ the presence of English settlements on the Main, and the contraband activities on the coasts of Yucatán (Belize) and Honduras (the Mosquito Shore).

An eventual Anglo-Spanish conflict seemed certain, in spite of a mutual desire to resolve their differences. Successive English ministers were willing to accede to Spanish demands, but only in exchange for

²Oropesa to Arcos y Moreno, 20 November 1755, Guat 449.

³The right to fish on the Newfoundland banks was the only major issue at this time between England and Spain not directly related to the Mosquito Shore and Belize.

⁴Most of these seizures occurred near the Mosquito Shore; at least four of the vessels belonged to William Pitt.

equivalent concessions; Spain would only debate the form that England's concessions would take, holding stubbornly to her claim to dominion over the Bay of Honduras, and to the king's sovereignty over the Mosquito Indians: "legitimate vassals of the Crown of Spain--although obstinate rebels." Consequently, Spain demanded the evacuation of all English settlements in the Bay prior to discussing the questions of logwood and seizures; England rejected the demand; she had already begun to fortify Belize and Black River after the Spanish raid on the former in September 1754, eliciting a Spanish complaint that England failed to maintain the status quo in the Bay. Distrust of the British was heightened by certain undiplomatic gestures, such as the personal attack on the Spanish king by the governor of Jamaica, Admiral Knowles.⁵

Nevertheless, the immediate threat of a Spanish invasion of the Mosquito Shore ended with Ensenada's removal and the accompanying Anglo-Spanish truce. Superintendent Robert Hodgson, whose bitter feud with Governor Knowles had also ended at this time with Knowles' recall, now turned his attention to the other problems on the Shore, such as the escape (the Shoremen called it "seduction") of Negro slaves into Spanish territory. The profession of faith and the dangers of flight were a

⁵Keene to Robinson, 22 September 1755, SP 94/149, f. 157; Keene to Holderness, 24 July 1755, SP 94/149, f. 27; Robinson to Knowles, 28 August 1755, CO 137/60, f. 184; Wall to Abréu, 15 October 1755, AHN, Est 4273, vol. i; Vicente Palacio Atard, Las Embajadas de Abréu y Fuentes en Londres, 1754 - 1761 (Valladolid, 1950), p. 5. British "encroachments" in the Bay of Honduras were of such consequence that they became one of the primary motives in Charles III's decision to initiate the Bourbon reforms. Other factors leading to this administrative revolution were the influence of the modern economic theorists, and pressure from France to reform all branches of administration. See John Lynch, Spanish Colonial Administration, 172 - 1810 ... (London, 1958), p.11.

small price to pay for the freedom promised by numerous royal cédulas. The result was a shortage of badly needed labourers on the Shore and the fear of a slave rebellion. The situation angered and frightened the Shoremen who told the Spaniards through Superintendent Hodgson that if they did not stop encouraging this practice the Zambos Mosquitos would be unleashed on them. The threat was relatively hollow, however, for Hodgson had orders to maintain the existing peace--and to do so the Indians had to be restrained.^{5^a} The problem was to remain unsolved throughout the period of the superintendency.

Hodgson faced other pressing problems, such as the commercial activities of the Dutch in the Bay of Honduras and the seizure of English ships. The enterprising Dutch had acquired a near monopoly in the logwood trade; one English merchant estimated that of the 17,000 tons of logwood cut yearly, 15,000 went to Holland. Few Dutch ships were directly involved in the commerce, which was probably carried on by North Americans and Jamaicans, who exchanged the wood for Dutch and East Indian goods, which were then traded at Belize, the Shore, England and North America.⁶

^{5^a} Hodgson to Knowles, 16 March 1755, CO 137/60, f. 162; Cárdenas to Hodgson, 10 May 1755, CO 137/60, f. 200; Hodgson to Cárdenas, 26 May 1755, CO 137/60, f. 204; Hodgson to Cárdenas, 24 March 1755, CO 137/48, f. 270; Hodgson to Knowles, 16 April 1755, 30/47/17; From Fulgencio García de Solís, 2 November 1757, Guat 456; Testimony by escaped English slaves, 11 March 1758, Guat 456

⁶ Hodgson to Knowles, 16 March 1755, CO 137/60, f. 162; Declaration by Martin Murphy, c. 1755, 30/47/17. This would explain why Spanish documents make almost no mention of Dutch participation in the logwood trade. A table of logwood exported from Belize in 1755 lends support to this theory. Although it does not indicate where the exchange of cargoes took place, it was probably in Curacao. From a map of the Bay of Honduras and the Mosquito Shore, MN, Ba. XI - ca.B - u^o 1. Logwood, in tons, shipped from Belize in 1755, as listed by ship registration:

Jamaica	2,746	South Carolina	60	New York	3,750
London	1,785	Rhode Island	1,875	Bristol	400
Boston	810	Philadelphia	360	Holland	1,771
Loughorn	120			TOTAL:	13,672

Hodgson was unable to hinder this trade, but the problem was not as serious as he believed because American and Jamaican traders profited by it as did the logwood cutters.

The seizure of English ships, however, was serious. As part of the Anglo-Spanish truce agreement of 1754, Spanish governors in America were ordered to stop issuing corsair commissions. But the seizures continued, and when complaints were made to the Spanish court, Ferdinand VI declared that all foreign vessels taken in the Bay of Honduras were legal prizes. He even encouraged stronger measures by harshly rebuking royal officers who had released one English vessel on the complaints of the owners, after it had been captured when carrying wood and turtle from the Mosquito Shore to Jamaica.⁷

While the English complained about seizures, the Spanish fumed over the enslavement of Hispanicised Indians, who were "bought and sold...as if they were Negroes" by the Mosquitos and Jamaican traders. Aware of Spain's aversion to this practice, Hodgson knew that he must try to control the Mosquitos, yet he also knew that this was an almost impossible task, for he alone patrolled the great expanse of Mosquito territory, and most of the raids were incited by British settlers on the windward Shore such

⁷Navarrete to Arriaga, 22 June 1755, Mex 3099; Real orden to Melchor de Navarrete, 4 September 1754, Mex 3099; Ferdinand VI to Arcos y Moreno, 12 August 1756, AGS, Est 8133, folder 8a; Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 22 April 1757, Guat 884; To Alonso de Arcos y Moreno, 21 May 1757, Guat 884; Anon. memorial, c. 1758, AGS, Est 6962. On 1 April 1756, guardacostas from Omoa seized a vessel belonging to William Pitt, James Lawrie and Henry and John Crugger. Pitt was the leading merchant in the Bay of Honduras, Lawrie commanded the small English garrison at Belize, and the Cruggers were merchants from New York. The partnership demonstrates the close ties between merchants from the Mosquito Shore, Belize and North America. Affidavit by David Young and three others, 9 June 1756, CO 137/60, f. 233.

as Henry Corrin in Bluefields and Abraham Tonoston in Pearl Key Lagoon. Hodgson also lacked sufficient responsibility to stop the trade, and tacitly allowed the sale of certain classes of Indians. One man, he declared, "had the Impudence" to sell "a Bluefield Indian for a wild one before my face...."⁸

The Mosquitos often entered Panamá and Costa Rica in their search for slaves. In October 1755, eighty Indians, including their chief, were enslaved at Bocas del Toro. The next year an attack was made on San Francisco del Terraba in Veragua, sixty leagues from the coast, with the whole population being marched into slavery. The Mosquitos returned to Bocas del Toro in 1757, drove away the few Spaniards living there and carried away another tribe.⁹ One Mosquito incursion particularly outraged the Spaniards, and gave momentum to the race towards war that six years of blundering diplomacy failed to halt. Early in 1756 the Shoremen and Mosquitos planned to destroy the Spanish fortifications then under construction in Omoa, but the timely arrival of an armed Spanish xebec¹⁰ forced them to alter their plan. They sailed to Matina, where Governor Francisco Fernández de la Pastora of Costa Rica was awaiting a supply of arms intended for the defence of the province against the Mosquitos. Pastora was at the new fort in Matina (the previous one had been destroyed

⁸ Hodgson to Knowles, 16 March 1755, CO 137/60, f. 162; Oropesa to Arcos y Moreno, 20 November 1757, Guat 449.

⁹ From Francisco Fernández de la Pastora, 10 November 1755, Guat 874; González to Arcos y Moreno, 10 September 1757, Guat 874; Report by Joseph Smith Speer, n.d., c. 1758, 30/8/98, vol. ii, p. 405.

¹⁰ A sleek, three-masted Mediterranean sailing vessel.

by the Mosquitos in 1747) when the Indians arrived. They lured the governor and his teniente from the fort, abducted them and then murdered them on a nearby beach. The whole garrison witnessed the capture of the governor, but afraid to leave the fort, they did nothing to save him. When word of the kidnapping reached Cartago, fifty militiamen were mustered to go to his aid--at their own expense, for there was no money in the treasury.¹¹

President Arcos y Moreno of Guatemala reacted to Pastora's murder by calling for the extermination of the Zambos Mosquitos and the Shoremen, the destruction of their haciendas, and the suppression of illicit trade with Jamaica.¹² Pastora's replacement, José González Rancaño, was even more outspoken, accusing the English king of approving the atrocious acts instigated by Englishmen in order to humiliate the "honor and greatness" of the Spanish crown. If the enemy were not all "put to the Sword", he added, the whole kingdom of Guatemala would be in danger of conquest.¹³ A French minister agreed with González: "Spain knows not, What she does, when She allows the English to set their Feet into America."¹⁴

Shortly after Pastora's murder, the Mosquitos clashed with a Spanish party reconnoitering Bluefields. The encounter was described in a New

¹¹ José Luis Coto Conde, "Un Personaje de la Colonia", Revista de los Archivos Nacionales, nos. 7-12 (1953), p. 237; From Alonso de Arcos y Moreno, 30 March, 20 September and 26 November 1756, Guat 874; Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 26 May 1756, Guat 831.

¹² Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 26 November 1756 and 10 February 1757, Guat 874.

¹³ González to Arcos y Moreno, 10 September 1757, Guat 874.

¹⁴ Keene to Robinson, 3 March 1755, SP 94/148, f. 132.

York newspaper.

the Spaniards, apprehensive of being overpowered, beat a Parly, which the Indians consented to, but while they were parlying, the Spaniards treacherously endeavoured to surround them, and cut them off. The Indians, armed with their Lancets, and seeing Death before them, resolutely fell upon the Spaniards, cut two thirds of them to Pieces, and took three of their Principals Prisoners, putting the others to Flight. The Indians afterwards towed across Bluefield River, the three Prisoners at the stern of their Canoes, and then tied them to Trees, and shot at them with their blunt Arrows, gradually to put them to Death.¹⁵

The Spaniards faced another threat at Bluefields, a region "governed" by Henry Corrin under a land-grant from Mosquito King George I. Styling himself Capitán Comandante de la Costa, according to the Spanish, "Corriente" was reportedly fortifying Bluefields, thereby threatening the security of Fort Inmaculada Concepción on the San Juan and the communities in the interior. Although "Corrin's fort" was nothing more than a suggestion made to the governor of Jamaica, its rumoured existence elicited heavy defence expenditures that neither the Spanish colonists nor the crown could afford.¹⁶ Unable to draw on the royal treasury-- "there is not a real in it"¹⁷-- the Costaricans did their best to put their province into a defensive posture, but fortunately for them their defence was not put to a test.

The panicky fear of Spanish officials in Guatemala over Corrin's fort and the English settlements on the Coast elicited Ferdinand VI's sarcastic

¹⁵ Clipping from an unnamed New York newspaper, 13 December 1756, Adm 1/2009.

¹⁶ Abalos to Oropesa, 19 January 1757, Guat 874; Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 10 February 1757, Guat 874; Lorca y Villena to Arriaga, 12 April 1757, Guat 874; Vargas to Ferdinand VI, 12 May 1757, Guat 874; George I to Corrin, 4 April 1757, FO 53/44, f. 301; Oropesa to Arcos y Moreno, 20 May 1757, Guat 665.

¹⁷ Crown officials to Ferdinand VI, 10 September 1758, Guat 456.

comment that with only 200 to 400 foreigners scattered over that immense territory, things could not be too bad. With the promise to send arms (admitting that this was all that he could do) and the advice that Spanish colonists be taught how to use them, Ferdinand suggested that the governors of the affected provinces unite to punish the enemy.¹⁸

The Zambos Mosquitos thwarted the Spaniards in yet another way by maintaining a commerce with the "Xicaques" Indians of the "Province of Tologalpa",¹⁹ which "perverted" them and caused the failure of their reduction. The Franciscans had attempted to reduce the Indians of Tologalpa in 1696, but they abandoned the province because of the lack of funds, the work already being done among the Talamancas of Panamá and the Lacandones of México, and the murder of a missionary stationed in Tologalpa. Another attempt was begun in 1744, but the Zambos Mosquitos constantly harassed the region, finally destroying one of the new reductions in 1749, killing a missionary and thirteen Indian inhabitants, and enslaving seventy more. Until the threat of the Zambos and English was eliminated, according to friar Francisco Xavier Ortiz, the guardián (Father Superior) of the Franciscan order in Guatemala, missionary work in Tologalpa would never succeed. Each missionary in the province needed a military escort of twenty-five or thirty men. How could they gain the confidence of the Indians, he asked, when they were "seized with horror at seeing the Padres accompanied by soldiers?"²⁰ In 1755 the Franciscans reluctantly

¹⁸ Ferdinand VI to Vidal de Lorca, 30 September 1758, Guat 874.

¹⁹ The "Province of Tologalpa" was the mountainous country between Matazalpa and the province of Tilarigua and the beaches of the North Sea: the windward Shore.

²⁰ Report by friar Antonio, 16 May 1754, Guat 385; Declaration by José Lanzas, 26 May 1754, Guat 385; Report by friar Francisco Xavier Ortiz, c. 29 December, 1754, BAG, iii (1940), p. 236; From friar Francisco Xavier Ortiz, 12 July 1753, Guat 385.

discontinued their work in Tologalpa, praying that the Xicaques would not unite with the Zambos Mosquitos to "make war on the Christian lands".²¹

The issue that most concerned the Spanish crown was illicit trade, which centred in Black River, "the most modern, the most unjust, and the most detrimental of any foreign settlement in America."²²

Guardacostas had some success against the contrabandistas in the Bay of Honduras, but patrolling the land was more difficult. There were only two companies of dragoons in the kingdom of Guatemala, one of which was fully, though ineffectually, occupied in combatting the trade and defending the kingdom against the Zambos Mosquitos.²³ The English often sent "Commerce" Indians to Spanish villages with offers of friendship and trade and a few gifts as tokens of their sincerity.²⁴ The corregidor of Matagalpa used the same pretext as former governor Heredia of Nicaragua to trade with the English: the receipt of Indian slaves freed by the English or Zambos Mosquitos.²⁵

²¹ Declaration by military officers of Yoro, 12 February 1754, Guat 385; Declaration by Félix de Garay, 8 March 1754, Guat 385; Xavier to Arcos y Moreno, c. 10 March 1755, BAGG,iii (1940), p. 245; Arcos y Moreno to Ferdinand VI, 17 September 1755, Guat 385; Real cédula to Arcos y Moreno, 30 November 1756, JTCR, p. 359; Ferdinand VI to president of Guatemala, 30 November 1756, BAGG,iii (1940), p. 267.

²² To Ferdinand VI, 30 August 1756, Mex 3099. Black River was the administrative centre of the superintendency. Consequently, most of the available documentation concerns trade there, although Bluefields and Pearl Key Lagoon on the windward Shore were also centres of illicit trade.

²³ Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 30 November 1758, Guat 874.

²⁴ Declaration by Bartolomé de Zepeda, 14 October 1756, DRN, no page reference

²⁵ Abalos to Oropesa, 19 January 1757, Guat 874.

There were rare victories over the contrabandista. Late in August 1759 two merchant ships from Curaçao and a third from Jamaica were at anchor at Matina, when a large Spanish force commanded by the lugarteniente of Matina ambushed and killed two of the traders and a number of Mosquito Indians who were accompanying them. The Spaniards confiscated the illicit merchandise and released fifteen Bocas del Toro Indians who had been captured by the Mosquitos.²⁷ The surprising victory was profitable for the governor of Costa Rica and for the president of Guatemala, each of whom was entitled to a sizeable percentage of the spoils. Ferdinand VI, understandably pleased with the triumph, ordered that an extra share of the booty be given to the family of each Spaniard killed in the battle.²⁷

The only way to stop illicit trade and Indian incursions was generally thought to be an attack on its source, the English and Mosquito settlements on the Mosquito Shore.²⁸ The Consejo de las Indias said in March 1758 that unless the English were immediately ejected from Black River the cost to expel them would climb from several thousand pesos to several million.²⁹ In 1759 Governor Melchor Vidal de Lorca y Villena of Nicaragua offered to command such an attack if he were given the necessary means.

²⁶ Declaration by Peter Stewart, 8 November 1759, CO 137/31, f. 7; Galiano to Soler, 3 and 5 September 1759, CRM, pp. 164, 166; Moore to the Board of Trade, 10 November 1759, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 255; Moore to Arcos y Moreno, 26 April 1760, Guat 641.

²⁷ Soler to Arcos y Moreno, 10 September 1759, CRM, p. 162; Arcos y Moreno to Soler, 10 October 1759, CRM, p. 160; Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 12 October 1759, CRM, p. 159; Real orden to Arcos y Moreno, 21 October 1760, CRM, p. 170.

²⁸ It was suggested by some that the origin of the problem was the British control of Jamaica. Thoves and Arana to Ensenada, 30 December 1746, Guat 42

²⁹ From Pastora, 10 November 1755, Guat 874; Lorca y Villena to Arriaga, 1 October 1757, Guat 874; González to Arcos y Moreno, 10 September 1757, Guat 874; Consejo report, 18 March 1758, Guat 406.

The king praised Lorca's good intentions, but denied his request for assistance, explaining that they could not be expected to garrison all of America with the available troops.³⁰ The only other way to solve these problems was by negotiation, a method that had proved impossible after Ensenada's dismissal in 1755 because of the intransigent stand taken by each nation. In August 1756, Ferdinand VI approved a plan to conclude a convention with England for the evacuation of Black River. He was optimistic that the English "might be disposed to giving the Spanish satisfaction regarding the settlements and territory at Belize and Black River." The Spanish ambassador in London, Félix Abréu, agreed, and predicted that England would accommodate Spain when she was assured that her dye-wood needs would be filled. But Ricardo Wall was afraid that the scattered marooners on the Coast "would receive the orders of England [to abandon their settlements] as indifferently as they would orders from Constantinople. He emphasised, however, that whether by treaty or by force, they must be ejected."³¹ By the autumn of 1756, Wall had become optimistic that the English court would order the evacuation of the Mosquito Coast; to assure obedience to the expected orders he suggested that Spain send a frigate to the Coast and establish a garrison of 100 men in Black River until every "English vagabond" was gone.³²

³⁰ Real orden to Melchor Vidal de Lorca y Villena, 23 March 1759, CRM, p.158; Lorca y Villena to Arriaga, 30 April 1758, CRM, p. 152.

³¹ Ferdinand VI to Arcos y Moreno, 10 and 12 August 1756, AGS, Est 8133, folder 8a; Navarrete to Arriaga, 25 August 1756, cited by Calderón, Belice, p.165. Spanish governors in America had already been ordered to be prepared for an invasion of the Mosquito Shore if its peaceful evacuation could not be arranged. Arriaga to Navarrete, 10 January 1756, Mex 3099.

³² Arriaga to Wall, 6 and 25 August 1756, cited by Calderón, Belice, pp.169, 167; Wall to Arriaga, n.d., c.1756, ibid., p. 167; Abréu to Wall, 5 October 1756, AHN, Est 3515; Observations by Ricardo Wall, 25 October 1756, Mex 3099; wall to Arriaga, 29 October 1756, Mex 3099.

However the English would not evacuate the Shore without previously discussing the terms, and they renewed the argument that the Treaty of 1670 sanctioned English settlements on the Mosquito Shore. The capable and reasonable friar Julián de Arriaga admitted that a few English "outlaws" had been living among the Mosquito Indians in 1670, but he denied that the clandestine settlements of the vassals of one monarch on the territories of another were a sufficient basis on which to claim dominion. Furthermore, they had not formed towns and had neither political unity nor the protection of their king; in fact, he said, they were all fugitives from English justice. Regarding the English claim that the Mosquito Shore was a grant from its native inhabitants, Arriaga said that the land was not theirs to cede and that the Mosquitos Indians were not vassals of the English king. Existing treaties, he added without elaborating, conferred the dominion of all of America to Spain--including the Mosquito Coast.³³

Spain pressed for a settlement of Anglo-Spanish disputes in America early in the Seven Years' War; England joined the discussions, but abstractly, her thoughts on the burgeoning conflict with France. But as the fighting that had broken out in the backwoods of North America spread to Europe, and fared badly for England, English ministers looked more closely at Spanish demands. The elder Pitt thought that Spain might be drawn into the conflict as an ally, if England would acknowledge Spanish claims in the Bay of Honduras and make an even greater concession:

³³Arriaga to Wall, 31 August 1756, Mex 3099. Arriaga's arguments were very similar to those expressed to Superintendent Hodson by Governor Heredia five years earlier.

the exchange of Gibraltar for Minorca.³⁴

Wall discussed Anglo-Spanish differences with Benjamin Keene, British minister plenipotentiary in Madrid, early in September 1756, demanding satisfaction for Spain's many complaints against the English on the Mosquito Shore and at Belize. Keene did not think that the Spanish would take advantage of England's current difficulties to settle their differences by force, yet "so weighty a Matter as This...could not be left any longer neglected, and in Silence." He recommended that England yield to Spanish demands "as well for the Sake of Justice, as of our Regard for the Friendly Conduct of Spain in such Circumstances as the Present." While many obstacles remained, Spanish officials felt that they could

Satisfy Mr. Pitt, or others, who under any Directions or Protections from the Crown, may have expended any Sums of their own private Property in this illicite Establishment; Some Considerations, may easily be made to content Them, by admitting Them to certain Advantages, in the future carrying on the Trade of Log-wood.³⁵

Meanwhile, in London, Abréu complained to the English court about the construction of the two forts at Black River, and as a prerequisite to further discussion, demanded its evacuation as well as that of Belize and Bluefields. In spite of a desire to accommodate the Spanish, England insisted that the questions of logwood and evacuation be discussed simultaneously.³⁶

³⁴ Pitt to Bristol, 1 August 1758, SP 94/158, f. 10; José Luis Mendoza, Inglaterra y sus pactos sobre Belice (Guatemala, 1942), p. 29; Pitt to Keene, 23 August 1757, SP 94/155, f. 227; Basil Williams, The Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (2 vols., London, 1913), i, 339.

³⁵ Keene to Fox, 8 September 1756, SP 94/153, f. 153.

³⁶ Abréu to Fox, 25 September 1756, 30/8/92, f. 236; Abréu to Wall, 5 October 1756, AHN, Lst 3515.

According to Henry Fox, secretary of state for the Southern department, Abréu

had not sufficiently separated what relates to our Settlements, made under the Direction of the Governor of Jamaica, since the year 1744, on the Mosquito Shore, Rio Tinto [Black River], and River Valis, from the Disputes, that have subsisted, for near a Century past, between the Two Nations, concerning the Logwood trade, in the Bay of Honduras, and Campeachy.

Fox was willing to give "ample and immediate satisfaction; Especially, as it is supposed, their Desire of Evacuation really extends to Them [the Shore, Black River and Belize] only",³⁷ unaware that these were the only establishments that England had in middle America, or that they were considerably older than twelve years, or even that Belize was the heart of the wood-cutting operations; to abandon Belize was to abandon the logwood trade. When Arriaga read Fox's comments he noted derisively that the English government "does not seem to know anything about the place or even the names of the establishments on the Spanish coast."³⁸ Yet Arriaga was no clearer when he told Abréu "not to use the term Bay of Honduras, but rather Black River on the Coast of Honduras, because it is outside that which is called the Gulf of Honduras."³⁹ Spanish

³⁷ Fox to Keene, 5 October 1756, SP 94/153, f. 173.

³⁸ Arriaga to Wall, 25 October 1756, Mex 3099. As a preliminary to further discussions, Newcastle suggested that England agree to evacuate the settlements in the Bay of Honduras, but he opposed abandoning Laguna de Terminos and Cabo de Catoche--settlements made before the Treaty of 1670--not realising that both settlements had been evacuated by the English many years before. Wall politely informed Keene of the incredible inaccuracies in British knowledge about the region. Keene commented in an embarrassed and ruffled tone: Wall "imagines we do not understand one another, as to what we think we are in Possession of...." Keene to Fox, 10 November 1756, SP 94/153 f. 254.

³⁹ Arriaga to Wall, 18 October 1757, cited by Calderón, Belice, p. 155.

officials in the Indies exhibited the same confusion. The president of Guatemala sent an envoy to Black River to complain of English logwood cutting activities. Hodgson listened to the complaint, then told the messenger that he had no idea why he had come to him, commenting that "they didn't cut dyewood here".⁴⁰

Abréu, incognisant of how close the British ministry was to acceding to his demands, was frustrated by a lack of specific directions from Madrid to guide him in the discussions that had already lasted three years--and might last "a lifetime". He advised his court to allow English settlers to remain in the Bay of Honduras in exchange for the evacuation of the "modern establishments" of Black River and Belize, to occupy English forts in both settlements with the agreement to reimburse England for their construction costs, and to form a Spanish company to supply English dyewood needs.⁴¹

At the same time, Wall and Arriaga were becoming increasingly pessimistic about Spain's future in the Bay. Even if the British marooners were evacuated, they would soon return because of Spain's inability to defend that immense territory with so few available troops. Arriaga was sceptical that the Shoremen would move in the first place, with or without orders from their government, and both men wondered how they might practically supply England with logwood.⁴² But further

⁴⁰ Extract of a letter from the Bay of Honduras, 6 September 1756, AHN, Est 3515.

⁴¹ Abréu to all, 5 October 1756, AHN, Est 3515; Wall to Arriaga, 21 October 1756, Mex 3099. all suggested that the English be allowed to cut the wood themselves in exchange for relinquishing their forts in the Bay. Wall to Arriaga, 29 October 1756, Mex 3099.

⁴² Arriaga to Wall, 25 October 1756, Mex 3099; Wall to Arriaga, 29 October 1756, Mex 3099.

talks were delayed as England plunged deeper into the crisis of war and convulsions wracked the English cabinet. When talks were resumed in London in February 1757, Pitt, who had replaced Fox, wanted to terminate the vexing issues, but he refused to fulfil the promise that Fox had apparently made to evacuate the English settlements in the Bay, explaining that the previous ministry had not understood the issue.⁴³ But now Pitt became the victim of the continuing ministerial spasms, and the negotiations were again postponed.

Pitt returned to the cabinet in July, in time to receive renewed demands from Abréu that the English withdraw from the Mosquito Shore. The Spanish envoy's irregular contacts with a series of English ministers, and the inconsistency of their policies explain the contemporary aura of pessimism in his dispatches.⁴⁴

I am engaged anew more warmly than ever in my Ne_gociation for the Evacuation of the Bay of Honduras. I have presented a very strong Memorial, & They are determind to support my Threats at Our Court; I hope to succeed well, but cannot assure it, because they say sometimes one thing, & sometimes the contrary.⁴⁵

Abréu's English counterpart in Madrid, Benjamin Keene, was even more apprehensive over the secret machinations of Wall, who was in "great Acrimony, Mystery & Disgust of Business".

I fear something has been hatching with regard to the Points of the Musquito Shore, and the Bay of Campeachy, tho' I have no particular Information. The other Ministers have met at

⁴³ Abréu to Wall, 25 February 1757, AHN, Est 3515.

⁴⁴ Pitt to Abréu, 9 September 1757, SP 94/156, f. 44.

⁴⁵ Abréu to Grimaldi, 5 July 1757, PRO 30/8/92, vol. ii, f. 243.

Genl. Wall's Apartment since his Return to Madrid, more in the Air of Business, than barely to enquire after his Health, which, indeed, is very bad.⁴⁶

Pitt agreed that these mysterious meetings were probably detrimental to British interests, and interpreted them to represent Spain's fall into the hands of the French, whose successes in the war were alarming. "In this violent & dangerous Crisis", he wrote, extreme measures were needed to gain "a more intimate Union with the Crown of Spain." Keene was authorised to offer Gibraltar in exchange for Minorca and was told that:

Their Lordships are further of Opinion, that Satisfaction should be given to Spain on their Complaints, touching Establishments made, by the Subjects of England, on the Mosquito Shore, and in the Bay of Honduras, since the Treaty, concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle, in October 1748, in order that all Establishments so made be evacuated.⁴⁷

Pitt was as ignorant of the history and geography of the Bay of Honduras as Newcastle or Fox. Satisfaction given by evacuating all settlements made since 1748 meant no satisfaction at all; all important British settlements in the Bay outdated the treaty by at least fifteen years. Either Pitt had no intention of drawing Spain into the war as an ally (by offering nothing)--certainly a doubtful conclusion--or his rare awkward diplomacy helped to obtain that unintentional effect. When Ruvigny de Cosne, who became England's interim emissary in Madrid after Keene's death, explained to Wall that Abréu himself had said that Ferdinand would be content with the evacuation of the settlements made since the

⁴⁶Keene to Holderness, 21 July 1757, SP 94/155, f. 207.

⁴⁷Pitt to Keene, 23 August 1757, NLS, MS 5528, f. 39. Italics my own.

Treaty, the Irishman exploded: "What do I care for what Mor. d'Abreu may have said by Word of Mouth; It is what is written; and that Alone; That must be answered."⁴⁸ Wall ordered Abréu to return Pitt's letter, which was "filled with Restrictions & Reservations, but no Satisfaction given." "In England", he told De Cosne, "many fair Words were often given on Complaints, but None of Them had yet been followed by good Effects." But Pitt, who failed to understand the "extraordinary and haughty manner of Treating" the situation by the Spanish, was still hoping to reopen the negotiations.⁴⁹

Aware of England's wartime difficulties and^{of} her fear of a Franco-Spanish alliance, as well as of the advantages that Spain might gain by continued negotiations, Arriaga and Wall were also anxious for the talks to continue. The Consejo de las Indias recommended that Spain demand the evacuation of all English settlements made on the Spanish Main since the Treaty of Utrecht. Wall, Arriaga and the Consejo considered the settlement at Black River to be more important than Belize, which was why they were willing to compromise on the logwood issue, but not on evacuation. Black River, Arriaga wrote, "opens a road impossible from Belize by which the English there can make themselves masters of the commerce of Guatemala."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Pitt to Abréu, 9 September 1757, SP 94/156, f. 44; De Cosne to Pitt, 26 December 1757, SP 94/156, f. 337.

⁴⁹ Keene to Pitt, 26 September 1757, SP 94/156, f. 107; De Cosne to Pitt, 3 October 1757, SP 94/156, f. 163; Pitt to Keene, 29 November 1757, SP 94/156, f. 220.

⁵⁰ Arriaga to Wall, 18 October 1757, cited by Calderón, Belice, p. 155.

After Pitt's imprudent proposals to Abréu, his hope of renewing negotiations leading to an Anglo-Spanish alliance was delayed by Keene's death in December 1757, and then virtually ended by Ferdinand's hopeless and pitiful insanity. No Spanish minister was willing to pursue an active foreign policy without the approbation of the king.⁵¹ Consequently, England turned her full attention to the war. Then in the spring of 1758, Pitt again became interested in promoting an alliance with Spain by offering to evacuate the Bay of Honduras. He directed De Cosne to broach the subject unofficially to Wall. Wall took the bait--and broke the line; he was more uncompromising than ever. "If England really meant to give Spain the just satisfaction she had Reason to expect", he said (though "It could never be believed"), "it was too plain of itself to need any [discussion]...." "If England did not think fit to do them Right, it must be left to Time & Circumstances for them to procure it." Wall added

with Warmth, & a seeming Regret, that he totally despaired and had given up, all Thoughts of connecting the two Courts in that close & solid Union that would be for the Interest of both, & which he had passionately desired to see effected; but that the conduct of Great Britain, since the present War, had entirely destroyed the Seeds of it.⁵²

In March 1758, the Consejo again discussed the Mosquito question and reviewed the numerous Spanish complaints relating to the Bay of Honduras: the piracy trial of a commissioned Spanish corsair; the imprisonment and death of friar Juan de Solís; the menacing letters

⁵¹De Cosne to Pitt, 16 December 1757, SP 94/156, f. 326.

⁵²De Cosne to Pitt, 24 April 1758, SP 94/157, f. 162.

from English commanders on the Mosquito Shore and in Jamaica to the governors of Havana and Guatemala; and the exaggerated complaints against Spanish guardacostas by Benjamin Keene. Far from giving satisfaction to the English, they said, Spain must support her own demands.

On the advice of the Consejo, orders were issued to President Arcos y Moreno of Guatemala in April 1758 to conquer the Zambos Mosquitos. But Arcos y Moreno, who traded with the British merchants of Black River, delayed taking action against the Mosquito Coast for an indeterminate period of time by asking the governors of Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica for suggestions on how to reduce the Mosquitos. He promised to forward the replies to Madrid when they were received and await further orders.⁵³

Nevertheless, Arcos y Moreno did take steps to stop the incursions of the Zambos Mosquitos and to combat illicit trade. While construction work was continued on the fort in Omoa, 40,000 militiamen were reportedly being trained in the kingdom of Guatemala. Vigías (watch towers) were built in Matagalpa and armed piraguas were constructed in Costa Rica. Great sums were expended on these projects, far more than the kingdom could afford, while disease and hunger killed hundreds, possibly thousands, of labourers. As workers became scarce at Omoa, the king even approved the acquisition of 100 Negroes from "foreign colonies...for one time only." The purchase was arranged through Pitt and Hodgson in Black River, the very enemies against whom the Spanish were constructing the

⁵³ Consejo report, 18 March 1758, Guat 406; From Alonso de Arcos y Moreno 30 November 1758, Guat 449.

fort.⁵⁴ This terrible physical and financial drain on Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras kept these provinces in a virtual state of bankruptcy to the end of the eighteenth century.⁵⁵

In the summer of 1758, with England beginning to gain an advantage in the war, Pitt decided that it was no longer necessary to court Spanish favour. He told the Earl of Bristol, Keene's permanent replacement:

It is His Majesty's Pleasure, that your Excy do consider that Idea [the evacuation of British settlements in the Bay of Honduras] as totally at an End; And that you should not, on any Occasion whatever, touch upon this Subject, or appear to be, in the least, informed, that such a Thought had ever existed.⁵⁶

The Zambos Mosquitos and Shoremen were not so reticent; in April 1759, after the Indians had destroyed a Spanish village, Governor Haldane of Jamaica wrote:

⁵⁴ Ensenada told José Vázquez Prego in 1752 that "it was the king's opinion that in order to remove the English from Black River and the other establishments, and to destroy the English and the Zambos Mosquitos, there was no more excellent way than by the construction of a fort or castle in the port of Omoa." Ensenada to Vázquez, 26 June 1752, Mex 3099. The Spanish also sought Pitt's assistance for "secret" reconnaissance missions on the Mosquito Coast. Juan de Lara y Ortega reconnoitred the Coast in 1759 in a piragua rented from him. From Lara y Ortega, 30 August 1759, Guat 459.

⁵⁵ To Arcos y Moreno, 16 June 1758, Guat 874; Arriaga to Arcos y Moreno, 1 October 1757, Guat 873; Juntas de guerra in Guatemala, 13 and 30 March 1756, Guat 874; From Luis Díez Navarro, 3 April 1756, Guat 874; Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 30 April 1756 and 19 April 1757, Guat 874; José de Casas 14 June 1758, Guat 874; To Melchor Vidal de Lorca, 5 September 1758, Guat 874; Arriaga to Arcos y Moreno, 5 September 1755, Guat 875; Hall to Arcos y Moreno, 15 May 1756, Guat 875; Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 15 May 1758; Guat 875; Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 22 April 1757, Guat 875; Real orden to Arcos y Moreno, 29 March 1757, CRM, p. 149; Troy S. Floyd, 'Bourbon Palliatives and the Central American Mining Industry, 1765-1800', The Americas, xviii (1961), p. 106.

⁵⁶ Pitt to Bristol, 1 August 1758, SP 94/158, f. 10.

the Reason they Assign for such Violence is in revenge to the Spaniards for having kill'd one of their chiefs; but there is greater room to believe that they are instigated by those of His Majesty's Subjects, who carry on a Pyratic l and Smugling Trade from these parts.⁵⁷

Afraid of further disruptions in the tense Anglo-Spanish relations, Haldane ordered Hodgson to try to restrain the Mosquitos, yet he had no hope that the superintendent would succeed, for he believed that Hodgson was responsible for the disorderly behaviour of the Indians and settlers.

The Mosketto Indians disobedience is entirely owing as I suspected to the bad Conduct of Captain Hodgson, I have therefore sent an Officer with presents to the Indians in order to reconcile matters with them, and to enquire particularly into the Affair, if upon his Report I shall find Captain Hodgson guilty of neglecting his [duties] and applying the Money allowed for supporting his Majesty's ... [a few words are illegible here] ...recall him, and appoint some other Person....⁵⁸

Like Governor Knowlés before him, Haldane was unacquainted with the actual situation on the Shore. He "accused" Hodgson of residing in Black River rather than among the Mosquito Indians, although Black River had long been the principal English community on the Shore and it was located in the centre of the territory ruled by the Zambo Mosquito general. He was also unaware that Hodgson, as superintendent of the Mosquito Shore, was governor of the white settlers as well as superintendent of Indian affairs. In addition, Hodgson was accused of building a home for himself with money allotted for the construction of fortifications. In fact, he lived in a fortified building that served as Black River's civil and

⁵⁷Haldane to Pitt, 23 April 1759, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 229; Haldane to Board of Trade, 11 May 1759, CO 137/30, f. 191.

⁵⁸Haldane to Pitt, 20 July 1759, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 239.

military headquarters.⁵⁹ Captain Douglas, who was sent to the Shore with orders for the superintendent, returned to Jamaica with further petty complaints against him. No doubt some of the many complaints were true, but none were ever substantiated.

Lt. Governor Henry Moore, who replaced Haldane at the latter's death, was so impressed with Captain Douglas that he sent him to London to report to the Board of Trade. Moore noted that

the Inhabitants of the Musketto-shore seem vastly prejudiced in favour of Mr. Douglas, therefore if Your Lordships have no objection, they would be extremely happy to have him appointed in the room of Captain Hodgson who is willing to resign.⁶⁰

In the early autumn of 1759, before Douglas could present his report to the Board, Superintendent Hodgson died. Moore, unwilling to leave the Mosquito Shore without a governor for long, appointed Richard Jones, an engineer stationed in Jamaica, as its second superintendent. Thus Captain Douglas, the heir apparent to Hodgson's post, lost the superintendency because of his absence from Jamaica.⁶¹

The government of the first British superintendent of the Mosquito Shore, that of Captain Robert Hodgson, which began in 1749 at the conclusion of the War of Jenkins' Ear, ended ten years later during the Seven Years' War. The short government of the taciturn Richard Jones was to witness the uncontrollable slide to renewed Anglo-Spanish hostilities.

⁵⁹ Haldane to the Board of Trade, 20 July 1759, CO 123/3; Declaration by Juan de Lara y Ortega, 18 September 1759, BAGG, ii (1940), p. 147.

⁶⁰ Moore to the Board of Trade, 28 August 1759, CO 137/30, f. 237; Hodgson was ill at this time and undoubtedly suspected that he was dying, for he made out his last will and testament on 12 March 1759. PCC, Rushworth, f. 333.

⁶¹ Moore to the Board of Trade, 10 November 1759, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 255; Board of Trade to Pitt, 28 November 1759, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 225; Moore to (probably) Pitt, 4 December 1759, CO 137/60, f. 292; Board of Trade to Pitt, 16 November 1759, CO 137/48, f. 286; Governor Moore's accounts, 31 December 1759, CO 137/32, f. 159.

Chapter V

THE SECOND SUPERINTENDENCY:

Richard Jones, 1759 - 1762.

The death of the senior Robert Hodgson late in 1759 left a vacuum on the Mosquito Shore that was only partially filled by the hurried appointment of Richard Jones to the superintendency by Lt. Governor Moore of Jamaica, who feared that the Mosquitos would think themselves abandoned and seek vengeance on the Shoremen. Jones was a poor selection. He had little enthusiasm for the work, and wrote just one dispatch--to announce his arrival in Black River--during twenty-eight months as superintendent.¹

Jones arrived on the Shore as rumours were circulating that Spanish invasion forces were poised on the Mosquito frontier, the same rumours that Hodgson had heard ten years earlier at the beginning of the superintendency. The Shoremen claimed that the construction of fortifications in Omoa and at Matina were "effectively muzzling and confining us, and threaten even from Merida utterly to dislodge us, in these parts...." Their anxieties were strengthened by the evacuation to Jamaica of some of the troops stationed in Black River, and by a recent Mosquito "declaration of war" against the Spaniards. When the Indians attacked Spanish settlements, it was the Shoremen who had "just

¹From Henry Moore, 4 December 1759, CO 137/60, f. 292; Jamaica accounts, 31 December 1759, CO 137/32, f. 159.

reason to fear the dismal effects of their Savage heat and rancour...."²

The deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations in the West Indies had become pronounced by the winter of 1759 - 1760. The ambush and slaughter of many British and Dutch traders and Mosquitos at Matina in August 1759, evoked a heated correspondence between Moore and President Alonso Arcos y Morena of Guatemala. Moore accused the attackers of acting with "greater inhumanity than any of the savage nations of Africa"; many innocent people might suffer by the Mosquitos' indiscriminate acts of revenge. Arcos y Moreno denied that the Spanish attacked from ambush at Matina, and then denounced the murder of Governor Fernández de la Pastora³ and the Mosquito raids, which were incessant at this time. One party drove a Spanish guardacostas from the mouth of the San Juan River early in 1760, while another was raiding Lovaga in the mountains. Far to the south, the Mosquitos, "dextrous in their activities by land and sea", and "monstrous in the art of shrinking human heads",⁴ had stopped production in the rich mines of Veragua.⁵

²Shoremen to Moore, 12 January 1760, BM, Add 32,901, f. 219.

³See above, p. 94.

⁴Description of the east coast of America Meridional by Dionisio de Alcedo y Herrera, 30 September 1761, BPR, Ayala II-2817, f. 177. This is the only reference yet found to indicate that the Mosquito Indians practised head-shrinking. Although it is certain that they did not actually do so, the rumour is indicative of the terror they engendered.

⁵Moore to Arcos y Morena, 26 April 1760, CDHCR, ix, 531. Arcos y Morena to Moore, 29 May 1760, ibid., p. 533. Arcos y Morena to Arriaga, 30 June 1760, ibid., p. 530; the three preceding documents are in Guat 641. Diary of a trip to the San Juan River by José Cabantas, 5 March - 15 May 1760, Guat 875; García Peláez, Memorias, ii, 162.

In reaction to these offences, King Charles III reaffirmed his determination not to allow foreigners to trade or reside in the Spanish colonies,⁶ and ordered guardacostas commanders to broaden their activities so as to "contain the piracies of the Mosquitos", to protect the expanding trade of Cartagena and Portovelo, and to study the coast of the Mosquito territory, which he said was "as unknown...as that of Japan."⁷ Secret orders were issued to dislodge the English from Black River because of the fortifications being erected there and because of the interminable delays by the English court in discussing its evacuation.⁸ Brigadier Alonso Fernández de Heredia, the former governor of Nicaragua and clandestine trading correspondent with Pitt and Hodgson, and most recently the governor of Campeche, was appointed president of the audiencia of Guatemala⁹ to guide these operations, which were to include the conquest or extermination of the Mosquito Indians. Heredia, who accused his predecessors, José Vázquez Prego and Alonso Arcos y Moreno, of permitting the English to trade openly in Guatemala, initiated his government with a campaign against illicit commerce, claiming to have confiscated considerable contraband merchandise from Black River during the first few months of his presidency. Yet Pitt and the merchants of Jamaica and Black River did not complain of increased harassment by the

⁶ Superior despacho 1 February 1760, AC 546.

⁷ Charles III to Bermudes, 14 November 1760, Guat 875.

⁸ Instructions to Juan Antonio de la Colina, 16 December 1760, AGS, Est 8133, folder 9c.

⁹ There is no indication that Heredia ever invested the 50,000 pesos in illicit trade as he had intimated he would do as soon as he became president of Guatemala. See above, p. 62n.

Spaniards at this time. In fact, the meagre figures available actually indicate a growth of trade.¹⁰ When Heredia planned to attack the English and Mosquito Indians, as he had been ordered to do, rather than using the forces available to him, he requested ships and men from Havana and Cartagena. The usual long delay due to the exchange of correspondence followed.¹¹ One can conclude that Heredia's own interests precluded acting against British merchants in the Bay of Honduras.

¹⁰ According to unofficial trade figures for 1761, imports in Black River "had risen" to a value of £25,800. The exports, worth £23,317, did not include those from Bluefields or Pearl Key Lagoon on the windward Shore, or trade with the Dutch and other foreigners, or clandestine trade with English colonies. The leading exports:

sarsaparilla	150,000 pounds	£7,500
mahogany	446,000 feet	5,575
turtle shell	12,600 pounds	3,150
gold and silver		2,100
mules	150	1,200
indigo	3,000 pounds	937
cacao	4,400 pounds	220
horses	23	148
raw-hides	750	141
deer skins	1,400	131

Extract of exports from the Mosquito Shore in 1761, Sta Fe 1261

How much more trade was carried on unnoticed would be nearly impossible to estimate. The English traders on the Mosquito Shore were deeply involved in illicit commerce with the Spanish colonies, yet according to this table the commerce with the Spaniards amounted only to about 45,000 pesos a year. A Spanish report in 1761 noted that the illicit trade between the English and Spanish in America was worth annually more than 6,000,000 pesos. Obviously very little of the total trade from the Shore was reported. See Clarence H. Haring, The Spanish Empire in America (New York, 1947), p. 311.

¹¹ Instructions to Alonso Fernández de Heredia, 11 November 1760, AGS, Est 8133 folder 9c; Heredia to Arriaga, 30 September 1761, nos. 11 and 12, Guat 641; Heredia to Arriaga, 25 November 1761, Guat 641; Heredia to Arriaga, 30 September 1761, no. 16, Guat 449.

In spite of the apparent confirmation of rumours of Spanish plans to invade the Mosquito Shore, Whitehall saw little danger in the situation. The Treaty of Utrecht was England's legal claim to the Bay of Honduras, according to ~~Secretary of State~~ Holles-Newcastle, who intimated that the treaty protected the Shore against attack. Furthermore, he added, Charles III was much too interested in Italy and too dependent on English support there to quarrel over America.¹² Newcastle underestimated the importance that Spain attached to her American empire, and seemed unaware of the Spanish fear of Mosquito depredations, clandestine trade, and the future consequences of the Anglo-Mosquito alliance.¹³

Spanish representations concerning the "Logwood Coasts"¹⁴ reached the English court from the Conde de Fuentes, Abréu's replacement as Spain's ambassador in London. The harsh tone of the complaints, which were "pressed with such uncommon Vehemence, and Warmth", angered the elder Pitt, and elicited his caustic observation that the Mosquito Indians were unenthusiastic about pledging their allegiance to Spain.¹⁵ Even Newcastle, who wanted no quarrel with Spain and who had earlier

¹²Newcastle to York, 29 May 1760, BM, Add 32,906, f. 350; Memo. from Holles-Newcastle, 25 July 1760, BM, Add 32,909, f. 47; Pares, War and Trade, p. 560.

¹³Fuentes to Wall, 12 September and 26 October 1760, AHN, Est 4266, vol. ii; Fuentes to Wall, 23 September 1760, AHN, Est 4266, vol. i; Fuentes to Wall, 23 September 1760, no. 3, AGS, Est 6947; Gámez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 101.

¹⁴Often used to describe the Mosquito Shore as well as the coast of Yucatán.

¹⁵Fuentes to Pitt, 9 September 1760, AHN, Est 4266, vol. i; Fuentes to Wall, 12 September 1760, AHN, Est 4266, vol. ii; Fuentes to Wall, 23 September 1760, AGS, Est 6947; Pitt to Bristol, 26 September 1760, SP 94/162; Kate Hotblack, Chatham's Colonial Policy: a study in the fiscal and economic implications of the colonial policy of the elder Pitt (London, 1917), p. 129.

favoured granting Spanish demands without reciprocal concessions, called Fuentes' remarks "very strong, & peremptory in Stile; And, I wish I could think, They were not too much so, in Fact & Reason; Especially, as to The Logwood, & our Establishments in the Bay of Honduras." Newcastle prophesied that "The Answer to these Memorials ...may determine our Fate with Spain...."¹⁶

Pitt's angry rebuttal incensed Fuentes, who accused the English of stalling while they strengthened their fortifications in the "Country of the Mosquitos", actions which he said were "against the dignity of the King and manifestly wicked."¹⁷ But England wanted to ensure Spanish neutrality and was still willing to accommodate Spanish demands. The Earl of Bristol, the British envoy in Madrid, was instructed to inform the Spanish court of England's readiness "to give all just Satisfaction to the Catholick King, with regard to Fortifications and Establishments erected there." Since England still insisted on an equivalent exchange however, and Pitt said that ^{Ricardo}Wall's stubbornness left no room for negotiations,¹⁸ the offer was of little practical value.

Yet each side had an important advantage to be gained, and felt that an attempt must be made to settle the issue. England dreamed of a Spanish alliance; Spain wanted to secure her American colonies from the foreign threat. In January 1761, Bristol and Wall renewed talks

¹⁶Newcastle to Hardwicke, 13 September 1760, BM, Add 32,911, f. 269.

¹⁷Fuentes to Wall, 26 October 1760, AHN, Est 4266, vol. ii; Fuentes to Wall, 23 September 1760, printed in Palacio, Las Embajadas, p. 57.

¹⁸Pitt to Bristol, 26 September 1760, SP 94/162.

that for all practical purposes had been abandoned at Sir Benjamin Keene's death late in 1757. Wall asserted that Spain had taken no steps to support her just claims to fishing rights at Newfoundland, while England had busily and perniciously thrown up fortifications on the Mosquito Coast. He conceded that Charles III did not mean to deprive British industry of the dyewood they badly needed,¹⁹ however he insisted that England must first abandon her settlements in the Bay of Honduras,^{and} then rely on Charles' benevolence to settle the logwood question equitably.²⁰ Bristol believed that the Spanish minister was as sincere in his proposals as he was stubborn in his demands.

'till the Time some Agreement could be compleatly made for regulating to mutual Satisfaction our Enjoyment of the Logwood Trade, the Settlers, already fix'd in Huts upon that Vast Extent of Coast, wherever they were employed in cutting the Wood, should, upon no Pretence whatever, be interrupted either on the Shore, or Molested at Sea, when they were carrying off a Commodity, which His Excellency acknowledg'd, We should never be deprived of in some Shape or other.²¹

Except for the Spanish concession on the logwood question, neither side would compromise further. In London, Fuentes saw no hope for a settlement, and in Madrid, Wall told Bristol that only a demonstration of good faith by the evacuation of the Bay of Honduras and the dismantling of all

¹⁹Wall had made a similar observation in 1756 which Whitehall ignored. See above, p. 102.

²⁰Bristol to Pitt, 19 January 1761, SP 94/163; Wall to Bristol, 24 January 1761, BM, Add 32,918, f. 97.

²¹Bristol to Pitt, 20 May 1761, SP 94/163. Italics my own. Wall was as uncertain about the geography and history of the Bay as the other English and Spanish ministers in Europe, which promised new difficulties in future negotiations. The offer not to molest British logwood cutters, "wherever they were employed in cutting the Wood", defined only the Belize settlements, because there was no logwood on the Mosquito Coast, but he implied the whole coast when he said that "the English Settlers upon the Logwood Coasts, had chiefly been fortifying themselves in Black River."

fortifications could avert a war. "He wished not to leave Spain in a War with England", Bristol quoted Wall, "but...the court of London seemed to be driving everything that way."²²

Meanwhile, Pitt received with pleasure the news of Spain's willingness to compromise on the logwood question, stating that England would consider "any just overtures on the part of his Catholic Majesty for amicably adjusting" their difficulties.²³ But a serious new problem arose. Feeling that "He could gain no Ground upon the British Court by having this Business transacted directly", Charles III virtually declared war on England by accepting a ludicrous French offer to mediate their differences. If she could not gain her objectives peacefully, Spain was willing to do so through a French alliance and war; her intentions were confirmed almost immediately by the signing of the Third Family Compact on 15 August 1761.²⁴

However Spain still hoped that war would be unnecessary. Until the two courts resolved their disputes, the Spanish promised not to disturb the settlers on the "logwood coast", including the Mosquito Shore, or the English traders involved in the logwood trade. The concession was incomprehensible, for it would have licensed the hated contrabandistas. Because of the distrust engendered by the French

²²Fuentes to Wall, 23 January 1761, BM, Add 32,918, f. 27; Bristol to Pitt, 28 January 1761, BM, Add 32,918, f. 94; Marginal note by the Conde de Fuentes, dated 6 May 1761, on a despatch from Abréu to Wall, 5 October 1756, AHN, Est 3515.

²³Pitt to Bristol, 28 July 1761, ABH, i, p. 86.

²⁴Bristol to Pitt, 6 August 1761, SP 94/164; Fuentes to Wall, 17 November 1761, AGS, Est 6950; the Third Family Compact between France and Spain, 15 August 1761, Alfred Bourguet, Le Duc de Choiseul et l'Alliance Française (Paris, 1906), p. 239.

mediation offer and by the Family Compact, the English did not respond, and continued to exercise effective territorial sovereignty throughout the Bay of Honduras, treating the Mosquito Shore "as if it were one of their own colonies".²⁵

In October 1761, Bristol reported that the Spanish were preparing an expedition against the Bay settlements. Considering this threat and many other complaints against Spain, especially the renewal of the Family Compact, Pitt called for a Spanish war (which George III called "Mr. Pitt's black scheme"). Despite the provocative Spanish actions, he received little support from the cabinet and none from the king, who had recently commented that they must get rid of "that mad Pitt", and was forced to resign.²⁶

The Spanish were as angry with the English as Pitt was with them. Fuentes again accused England of strengthening the fortifications in the Mosquito establishments. However, while England made no practical concessions in the negotiations, she was guided by a stern but honest policy rather than by ulterior motives.²⁷

Wall made his last pre-war proposal early in December 1761, promising

²⁵Fuentes to Wall, 18 September and 17 November 1761, AGS, Est 6950; Bristol to Pitt, 28 September 1761, SP 94/164.

²⁶Bristol to Egremont, 9 November 1761, SP 94/164; Bristol to Egremont, 6 December 1761, SP 94/164; Extract of a letter from Bristol, 6 December 1761, BM, Add 36,807, f. 183; Hotblack, *op.cit.*, p. 134; George III to Bute, 19 September 1761, printed in Romney Sedgwick, ed., Letters from George III to Lord Bute, 1756-1766 (London, 1939), p. 63.

²⁷Fuentes to Wall, 17 November 1761, AGS, Est 6950. Fuentes had a radical plan to solve Spain's problems in the Bay of Honduras. First eject the English settlers, then "burn and lay waste to the whole region" so that the English would have no further reason for settling there. His idea was not acted upon, nor were similar suggestions made later by others, including King Charles III. See below, p.148.

not to disturb the logwood cutters if the English would dismantle their forts on the Mosquito Coast. This offer seemed insincere, since the Family Compact was already signed and orders to attack the enemy had already been issued. In his last conversation with Bristol, the unhappy Spanish minister seemed resigned to a conflict.

Was it an amicable Proceeding, His Excy said, to profess a Friendship for a Power, And to be gradually invading their Dominions, to usurp their Coasts, And then to persevere in maintaining an unjust Possession of what We had no Right to hold, but seemed determined to keep.²⁸

England might have averted war--but only by acceding to all Spanish demands.

The failure in the negotiations led to the final staccato steps ending in a rupture. On 6 December 1761, Fuentes officially informed the Earl of Egremont, who had replaced Pitt as the secretary of state for the southern department, of the signing of the Family Compact; a few days later Bristol was asked to leave Spain. England declared war on 4 January 1762; Spain issued her own declaration a fortnight later.²⁹

On 4 February, France and Spain signed an alliance to guide them in the conduct of the war, a conflict which they considered to be necessary because England "obstinately refused to restore the usurpations made... in the Spanish dominions in America." Spain pledged to fight for a reasonable peace while France promised to work for the restoration of prizes taken by England during the war, to gain fishing rights for Spain

²⁸Bristol to Egremont, 6 December 1761, SP 94/146; Pares, *op.cit.*, p. 555; Captured French documents, 9 - 16 January 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 60-61.

²⁹TCD, p. 495.

on the Newfoundland banks, and to effect the evacuation of all English settlers from Spanish America.³⁰

Meanwhile, to furnish protection for English settlers in the Bay of Honduras, Lt. Gov. Moore sent a company of the 49th regiment of foot commanded by Captain Joseph Otway to the Mosquito Shore. Believing that a field officer should govern on the Shore during this critical period, Moore also named him to replace Richard Jones as superintendent. England had thus stated her determination to retain her settlements on the Spanish Main,³¹ even as Spain was preparing to expel them by force.

³⁰ Franco-Spanish alliance, 4 February 1762, TCD, p. 482.

³¹ Orders to Captain Joseph Otway, c. 1 February 1762, WO 17/162, vol. i; Lyttelton to Egremont, 12 May 1762, CO 137/61, f. 117; James McLeish, "British Activities in Yucatan and on the Mosquito Shore in the Eighteenth Century", Unpublished M.A. dissertation, London University, 1926, p. 240.

Chapter VI

PEACE and PROGRESS in the BAY of HONDURAS:

Joseph Otway, 1762 - 1767

Joseph Otway, a captain in His Majesty's 49th regiment of foot, and a quiet, unobtrusive man, replaced Richard Jones as superintendent of the Mosquito Shore on 20 April 1762. Otway had not requested the post, nor does it appear that he was as well qualified as three lieutenants in the regiment who did: Joseph Smith Speer, the younger Robert Hodgson and James Lawrie.

Lawrie, who was an occasional trading partner of William Pitt, was popular with the Shoremen for his "happy temper and disposition of mind". However, his petition for the superintendency only indicated a desire to avoid the frequent and expensive transfers between the Shore and Jamaica that he had experienced in military service, and thus it failed to gain government approval.¹ Lieutenant Hodgson was "groomed for the responsibility" ("Tho' his Prospect was very fair, he was suffered to think of the Mosquito Shore only"²--a preoccupation that was responsible for this being his eleventh year as a lieutenant.) and had the support of Under-Secretary of State Robert Wood, who said that it was "manifest propriety" that he replace his father as superintendent.³ Speer became

¹Lawrie to Newcastle, 9 June 1760, BM, Add 32,901, f. 218; Shoremen to Moore, 12 January 1760, BM, Add 32,901, f. 219.

²The younger Hodgson usually referred to himself in the third person.

³Hodgson to Newcastle, n.d., BM, Add 33,055, f. 294; Wood to Hodgson, 24 July 1762, DRH, appendix p. 2.

interested in the superintendency while commanding a small fort at Black River, but he had few ties on the Shore and spent very little time there.⁴ Although two of these men eventually became superintendent, their bids were now denied, principally because Otway outranked them.⁵

The Shoremen feared a "new and possibly disinterested" superintendent when they learned that Jones was to be replaced. Henry Corrin, the leading settler in Bluefields, was concerned that Otway would not bother to visit the more remote settlements south of Cape Gracias a Dios, "Especially when there are some persons at Black River whose intent it is to Endeavour to dissuade him from Coming this way."⁶ Corrin left unsaid his worry that Otway would interrupt the profitable Indian slave trade.

In spite of the internal rivalries and the usual war-time anxieties, the situation on the Shore at the beginning of Otway's superintendency was encouraging. The chance of a Spanish offensive was slight: the possibility of a victory if they did attack almost nil. The Mosquitos, the Shoremen and their slaves, and the company of the 49th regiment stationed on the Shore, constituted a formidable defensive unit. During the short period of Anglo-Spanish hostilities in the Seven Years War, they carried the combat to the enemy almost without respite. In June 1762, they sacked Matina; the next month they assaulted Lobiguisca, burning the church and carrying a number of Indian inhabitants into

⁴ Military commission to Joseph Smith Speer, 7 August 1761, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 423.

⁵ Lyttelton to Egremont, 12 May 1762, CO 137/61, f. 117; War Office memorandum, 1 February 1762, WO 17/162, vol. i, f. 1; McLeish, "British Activities", p. 240; Burns, British est Indies, p. 505.

⁶ Corrin to Jones, 20 July 1762, CO 140/42.

slavery; a week later they attacked the castle on the San Juan,⁷ but decided against besieging the fort because they had no cannon; and three months later they returned to wreak havoc throughout the frontier region. The Mosquitos also captured a register ship, which they armed, and with which they audaciously, but unsuccessfully, assaulted Omoa.⁸ Mosquito plans to invade the Costa Rican highlands were only cancelled because of the conclusion of the war.⁹

Less than nine months after Spain entered the Seven Years War,

⁷ A heroine of Nicaraguan folk-history, Rafaela Herrera, is reputed to have taken command of the fort during the assault. According to Rafaela, the enemy decided to attack when they heard of the death of her father, the commander of the fort. Refusing to surrender, she turned a cannon on the headquarters of the English commander and killed him with a single shot, forcing the enemy to retire in disgrace. Petition from Rafaela Herrera y Sotomayor for a government pension, 16 March 1780, Guat 465. But there is almost no supporting evidence for her tale. She claimed that she was thirteen at the time; other sources say that she was nineteen. She also said that the attack occurred in August 1764, yet the only attack on the fort during this period was in July 1762, and there is not a single account of Rafaela's deed by anyone either defending or attacking the fort. Lyle McAlister suggests that Nicaraguan historians greatly magnified the story "from patriotic motives". See Lyle N. McAlister, "British Interest in the Nicaraguan Transisthmian Route, 1648 - 1798", Unpublished MA dissertation, 1947. University of California, Bancroft Library, p. 75; Sofonías Salvatierra, Contribución a la historia Centroamericana (2 vols., Managua, 1940), i, 478.

⁸ Vidal to Charles III, 30 June 1766, Guat 456; Vidal to Arriaga, 1 March 1763, Guat 456; From Melchor Vidal, 30 December 1762, Guat 449; Merits of José Antonio de Vargas, 20 July 1771, Guat 600; Heredia to Arriaga, 30 April 1763, nos. 9, 11, Guat 641; Cayetano Alcázar Molina, Los virreinos en el siglo xviii. Vol. XIII of Historia de América y de los pueblos americanos. (Barcelona-Buenos Aires, 1945), 219; García Peláez, Memorias, III, 50.

⁹ Report by José Antonio de Oriamuno, 3 November 1762, AC 557; Esquivel Molina, "Las Incursiones", p. 248; Juez de prevención of Matina to Oriamuno, 27 January 1763, AC 558.

officials representing Spain, France and England met to discuss peace. The English commissioner, the Duke of Bedford, was instructed to agree to the evacuation of the Mosquito Shore in exchange for logwood-cutting rights on the east coast of Yucatán.¹⁰ In an early proposal Bedford assured the Comte de Choiseul, the French envoy who also represented Spain at the talks, that England would evacuate Black River.¹¹ Choiseul said that Spain must "insist with warmth" on her rights to the Mosquito Coast, since from their settlements there the English controlled illicit commerce with Veragua, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras, as well as the mouth of the San Juan River, which was the old invasion route of the filibusters. Any concession to England, Choiseul said, would lead "to new discussions and a new rupture".¹² But with the fall of Havana, Spain lost her strong bargaining position, and consequently, neither the preliminary nor definitive treaties made any mention of Black River or the Mosquito Shore. Article seventeen of the definitive treaty read:

His Britannick Majesty shall cause to be demolished all the Fortifications which His Subjects shall have erected in the Bay of Honduras, and other Places of the Territory of Spain in that Part of the World, four Months after the Ratification of the present Treaty: And His Catholick Majesty shall not permit His Britannick Majesty's Subjects, or their Workmen, to be disturbed, or molested, under any Pretence whatsoever, in the said Places, in their Occupation of Cutting, Loading, and Carrying away Logwood: And for this Purpose, they may build without Hindrance, and occupy without Interruption, the Houses and Magazines which are necessary for Them, for their Families, and for their Effects: And His Catholick Majesty assures to them, by this Article, the full Enjoyment

¹⁰ Instructions to the Duke of Bedford, 4 September 1762, 30/50/54, f. 20.

¹¹ Project of articles for the preliminary treaty of peace, article thirteen, Bedford to Choiseul, 24 September 1762, 30/50/54, f. 29.

¹² Unsigned memorial, c. 1763, AGS, Est 8162.

of those Advantages, and Powers, on the Spanish Coasts and Territories, as above stipulated, immediately after the Ratification of the present Treaty.¹³

This article was intended to resolve the Anglo-Spanish dispute in the Bay of Honduras, however while it conceded a tenuous legality to the logwood settlement, it only confused the question of the Mosquito Shore. The English, giving a literal and unsophisticated interpretation to the article, issued orders to "demolish all fortifications constructed by His Majesty's subjects in the Bay of Honduras and on other places of Spanish territory in that part of the world...." Not until British officials in the West Indies questioned the interpretation of the article did Whitehall look at it more closely. The Spanish, on the other hand, gave the article an extremely loose interpretation. Demolishing the fortifications in the Bay, they claimed, automatically referred that the settlements there would be evacuated. This divergent interpretation, with the attendant danger of another Anglo-Spanish confrontation, was the main concern of Joseph Otway and the Shoremen during Otway's superintendency.

The Treaty of 1763 did not change the occupations of the Shoremen,¹⁴ except to discourage heavy investments in slaves or clearing new land, because the fear remained that government might eventually withdraw its protection. But the passage of the Sugar Act of 1764 offered the possibilities of an improved economic situation there by promoting

¹³The Definitive Treaty of Peace and Friendship, Between his Britannick Majesty, the Most Christian King, and the King of Spain. 10 February 1763 (London, 1763), p. 20; TCD, p. 491.

¹⁴Mahogany cutting, turtling, sugar production, the Indian slave trade and commerce with the Spanish and Mosquitos remained the leading occupations.

settlement and industry. Benjamin Franklin, who had close family ties with Otway,¹⁵ showed an active interest in the Shore. Because of insufficient land in the sugar colonies, he prophesied that prices would rise as foreign sugar was eliminated from the English market, "unless Plantations are admitted on the Mosquito Shore, where I am told there is plenty of suitable Land; and Numbers ready to go and plant there, if the Crown will allow it and protect them." Franklin asked Richard Jackson, agent for Pennsylvania in London, to probe government willingness to support a colonising enterprise on the Shore. But Jackson replied that he did not think that government would "choose to meddle" in the matter.¹⁶

Rumours of a Spanish invasion continued to sweep the Shore after the signing of the definitive treaty. In May word reached Black River that the Spanish were massing troops on the frontier and bringing warships to the Bay from Havana, Vera Cruz and Campeche. To avert an attack, Otway sent Joseph Smith Speer to Omoa with a copy of the preliminary treaty, and orders "to demand...satisfaction, and reparation, for captures made by the Spaniards after the time limited for cessation of Hostilities." But the Spanish commander at Omoa, Francisco Aybar, "Treated His Majesty's Authority and Name with Great Insolence". He

¹⁵Otway's wife's brother was Franklin's son-in-law.

¹⁶Franklin to Jackson, 25 June 1764, printed in Carl Van Doren, Letters and Papers of Benjamin Franklin and Richard Jackson 1753 - 1785 (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 168; Jackson to Franklin, 11 August 1764, ibid.

charged Speer with combining illicit trade with his official duties and detained him for five months. Nevertheless, if plans were underway to invade the Shore at this time, they were abandoned.¹⁷

To fulfil the terms of the treaty, the Earl of Egremont, secretary of state for the southern department, issued a special commission to Lieutenant Robert Hodgson "to repair to the Bay of the Logwood Cutters [Bay of Honduras]", to dismantle all British-built fortifications, and to bring away all troops and military stores.¹⁸ Few men knew the region as intimately as Hodgson, who had been given responsible assignments there during his father's superintendency, but there was an intimation that he was not a judicious choice. In 1753, Governor Knowles of Jamaica said that his activities on the Shore had angered many settlers.¹⁹ Hodgson received specific instructions from Governor Lyttelton to carry out his commission, with additional orders to bring away the troops from the Mosquito Shore--or so Lyttelton seemed to imply.

¹⁷ Quiros to Cristobol, 19 April 1763, CO 137/61, f. 215; Declaration by Joseph Smith Speer, 21 August 1765, CO 137/33, f. 236; Declaration by Christian Boom, 13 May 1763, 30/8/98, vol. ii, f. 424; Lyttelton to Ellis, 15 July 1764, WO 1/49; Jamaica council minutes, 21 November 1765, Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations (14 vols., London, 1920-1938), xii, 225.

¹⁸ Egremont to Hodgson, 16 March 1763, CO 137/61, f. 53. The warrant was inscribed "Robert Hodgson the Commanders of Our Troops or Garrisons in the Bay of Honduras, and other Places of the Territory of Spain, in that part of the World; and to all others, whom it may concern."

¹⁹ The elder Hodgson to the younger Hodgson, 14 May 1755, CO 137/48, f. 265; Knowles to Hodgson, 8 October 1753, CO 132/60, f. 55; Lyttelton to Hodgson, 19 August 1763, CO 123/1, f. 46; Egremont to Lyttelton, 26 April 1763, CO 123/1, f. 46; Egremont to Lyttelton, 26 April 1763, CO 137/61, f. 167. Knowles did not explain the nature of the complaints against the younger Hodgson.

altho' you are directed by the Orders in the first part of this Letter to repair to the Bay of Honduras and other Parts of the Spanish Coasts frequented by the Logwood Cutters, you will nevertheless understand that those Orders do not restrain you from demolishing the Fortifications erected by His Majesty's Subjects and bringing away any Troops Artillery &c. from any Place where you shall be when you receive this Letter.²⁰

A master of double-talk, Hodgson demonstrated his flair for resisting distasteful and irresolute orders by assuming a posture of confused innocence. "Your Excellency has not ordered me to divest this Country of Military Protection, it rather seems to me as if Your Excellency did not choose to order it; but yet, Sir, You go so very near to the doing so...." He then asked a question that higher officials than the governor had been unable to answer. Was the Mosquito Shore part of Spanish territory? Hodgson contended that it was not, and delayed carrying out his instructions, explaining that "any Mistake of mine may occasion more Discussion between the two Courts than my Life can atone for...."²¹

The military evacuation was retarded still further when Hodgson sent the transport vessel back to Jamaica with a presumptuous note to Lyttelton.²² If the governor really did intend to remove the company and stores, he said, then the transport should be returned. Hodgson then sailed to Belize, where he informed the wood-cutters of the orders to destroy their fortifications and to bring away their troops. In

²⁰ Lyttelton to Hodgson, 19 August 1763, CO 137/61, f. 180; Hodgson to Lyttelton, 6 August 1764, CO 137/61, f. 323. Hodgson was at Black River when he received his orders.

²¹ Hodgson to Lyttelton, 13 September 1763, CO 137/61, f. 195.

²² Hodgson to Lyttelton, 20 February 1764, CO 137/61, f. 329.

fact, the tropic climate had obliterated all traces of the fort constructed in 1755, and there was not a red coat within 250 miles.²³

When Lyttelton received Hodgson's impudent note, he sent the sloop back to the Shore with explicit orders to convey the troops and stores to Jamaica. Joseph Otway, who was commander of the contingent of the 49th regiment on the Shore as well as superintendent, was ordered to remain in Black River. Lyttelton felt less assurance than he demonstrated however, and asked Lord Halifax, who had replaced Egremont, if he had been correct in bringing away the troops, and if he should also recall Otway.²⁴ Halifax turned the problem over to the Board of Trade who decided on 2 December 1763 to retain the superintendency, thus effectively upholding Hodgson's interpretation of the treaty, and relieving him of the responsibility for not having immediately carried out his orders. The ruling also confirmed the continuation of the status quo in the Bay of Honduras, although it made no mention of what was to be done with the fortifications or the troops.²⁵ Before these instructions

²³Proclamation by Robert Hodgson, 7 October 1763, CO 137/61, f. 325.

²⁴Hodgson to Germain, 1 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 207, Lyttelton to Hodgson, 2 November 1763, CO 137/61, f. 199; Lyttelton to Otway, 2 November 1763, CO 137/61, f. 203; Lyttelton to Halifax, 18 November 1763, CO 137/61, f. 193

²⁵Halifax to Board of Trade, 12 November 1763, 30/8/96, f. 321; Minutes of the Board of Trade, 28 November and 1 December 1763, Journal of the Commissioners, xii, 413, 416; To the Earl of Egremont, 6 June 1763, 30/50/49, f. 211; Hillsborough to Halifax, 2 December 1763, CO 137/61, f. 184; Board of Trade to Halifax, 2 December 1763, 30/8/96, f. 323. The Board's decision was transmitted to Otway and Lyttelton by Lord Halifax, who also reviewed the duties of the superintendent: he was to improve commerce, retain a strict friendship with the Indians, keep the public peace, compile statistics on population and the volume of trade, and transmit information of future commercial interest to the governor of Jamaica. Halifax to Lyttelton, 9 December 1763, CO 137/61, f. 186; Halifax to Otway, 9 December 1763, CO 137/61, f. 188.

reached Lyttelton, he accused Hodgson of purposely delaying the execution of his orders.

It is supposed also that he had a further motive to induce him to remain so long at the Mosquito Shore - that being engaged in Traffick at that place, and the Bay of Honduras, he required a longer time to adjust his Affairs and settle the accompts of monies due to him in those parts, than would have been consistent with a prompt obedience to His Majesty's Commands.²⁶

When the troop transport arrived on the Shore, Hodgson told Lyttelton that: "The Artillery and Stores are scarcely worth in Value the Expence to the Crown of hiring a Transport for them". Furthermore: "I forgot to mention the important point that the Commander of the vessel said that there was enough room only for the troops and not for the stores, etc., and that is why there is all this fuss."²⁷ The stores remained, but the troops finally sailed for Jamaica in February. They fought the heavy seas and northers for three weeks, when to the great surprise of the passengers and crew, and to the chagrin and embarrassment of the captain, they again found themselves off the bar at Black River. With the need to repair a leaky bottom, they then sailed to Bonaca-- where a chance wave capsized the ship. Few of the troops were on board at the time, and eventually a private vessel successfully transported the unit to Kingston.²⁸

News of the decision to retain the superintendency arrived too late to countermand the orders to evacuate the troops from the Shore

²⁶ Lyttelton to Halifax, 13 September 1764, CO 137/61, f. 319.

²⁷ Hodgson to Lyttelton, 20 February 1764, CO 137/61, f. 329.

²⁸ Vanriell to Otway, 27 March 1764, CO 137/61, f. 256.

In any case there were reasons to withdraw them besides the stipulations of article seventeen. The council of Jamaica refused to continue to support the company. "They were reduced to a Necessity of returning," Hodgson reported, "their subsisting being impracticable without...Pay." Furthermore the regiment was transferred to Ireland. Yet the Shoremen accused Lyttelton of abandoning the Shore, and thereby criminally interpreting the treaty in favour of the Spaniards.²⁹

In the autumn of 1763, intelligence was received from a priest in Sonaguera that 350 dragoons were in Truxillo awaiting Spanish ships of war from Havana, to attack the Shore. Otway pleaded with Lyttelton for instructions, but knowing that he could not afford to wait for advice, he sent Bartholomew Gilibert, "a Sardinian who spoke barely understandable English", according to Hodgson, on a mission similar to that undertaken by Speer earlier in the year. On his journey through Honduras, Gilibert encountered two companies of regular Spanish troops and a large body of poorly-trained militia, proof to him of Spanish intentions. In Olanchito, he informed the Spanish governor that the Mosquito Indians were flooding into Black River (an exaggerated Spanish report estimated their number to be 10,000); it would be almost impossible to restrain them from retaliating against "acts of cruelty". Furthermore, Gilibert said, he had information that the Mosquitos would allow the Spaniards to pass into their territory, then cut off their retreat and massacre every

²⁹ Lyttelton to Halifax, 4 April 1764, CO 137/61, f. 245; Declaration by Robert Hodgson, 23 December 1766, CO 123/1, f. 111; Shoremen to George III, 31 May 1766, CO 123/1, f. 88; Memorials from the Shoremen, 8 and 12 April 1781, CO 123/3, vol. ii.

man caught in the trap. On hearing this intelligence the greater part of the undisciplined militia dispersed in terror.³⁰

When Spanish officials in Honduras learned of the defensive preparations on the Shore, they ordered the commander of the small garrison in Truxillo, Eugenio Pérez, to reassure the Shoremen of Spain's peaceful intentions. Pérez' arrival in Black River pleased the Shoremen, "but the Mosquitos were so exasperated at seeing Spaniards in their Country", according to Gilibert, who had recently returned to Black River, "that they were resolved to murder them & even forced me to secrete myself for some time."³¹

Luis Díez Navarro, who was commissioned to verify the execution of article seventeen, also left for the Shore in October 1763,³² but a series of incidents delayed his arrival in Black River until April

³⁰ Jimenes to Pitt, 27 October 1763, CO 137/61, f. 213; Otway to Lyttelton, 11 November 1763, CO 137/61, f. 217; Otway to Pérez, 11 November 1763, CO 137/61, f. 209; Declaration by Bartholomew Gilibert, 12 March 1770, CO 137/65, f. 212; From Joseph Otway, 7 January 1764, CO 137/65, f. 213; Declaration by William Pitt, James Lawrie and Daniel Hewlett, 12 March 1770, CO 137/65, f. 214; Calbo to Sáenz, 23 January 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1.

³¹ Sáenz to Pérez, 2 February 1764, Guat 875; Pérez to Navarro, March 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; To Pedro Mesia de la Cerda, 28 May 1763, Guat 665; To Alonso Fernández de Heredia, 30 May 1763, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; Instructions to Antonio Oyaritide, 23 September 1763, Guat 665; Declaration by Bartholomew Gilibert, 12 March 1770, CO 137/65, f. 212.

³² Navarro was scheduled to take 200 militiamen to Black River to force the fulfilment of the article if necessary, but Pérez convinced him that this would be unwise. Navarro to Sáenz, 6 February 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1.

1764, just five days after word of the English decision to retain the superintendency had reached there.³³ Luis Díez Navarro's little fleet of three piraguas was greeted by cannon fire from batteries manned by the Mosquitos, but he was eventually allowed to come ashore with some of his men, but blindfolded so that they could not see the English fortifications. An "indescribable" scene, a "comedy sketch" staged by General Tempest's Zambos confronted Díez Navarro when he reached Otway's house. Marching towards him was "a great troop of armed Zambos [one report said 400, another 2,000] in lines four abreast, with drummers leading, the head of each file carrying lances flying the English banner." The Indians, gaudily painted in hideous designs, filed by with drums beating. "With his loin cloth trailing behind him [and wearing] a military coat and a bright red three peaked hat", Tempest approached Díez Navarro and exclaimed loudly "God damn you Spaniard", and indicated his desire to seize him, as the man who "was going to cut off their heads and take their lands." Only a guard of mestizos and Pitt's Negroes saved the Spanish commissioner from the same fate experienced by Governor Pastora eight years before.³⁴

³³ Navarro to Sáenz, 6 February 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; Navarro to Otway, 11 February 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; Heredia to Navarro, 3 October 1763, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1. After a month on the trail to the coast, Navarro was hindered by rains, the lack of transportation, the seasonal northers, a fire that destroyed the sails of a vessel he had planned to use, and finally by a typhoid epidemic that swept his party and killed his own family. Report by Luis Díez Navarro, 14 June 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; Aguirre to Navarro, 18 March 1764, Guat 665.

³⁴ Navarro to Cerda, 26 April 1764, Guat 665; Report by Luis Díez Navarro, 14 June 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; Otway to Navarro, 27 March 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; Testimony by Manuel de Ibarra, 15 January 1766, Guat 875; Heredia to Arriaga, 30 September 1764, Guat 875. See above, p.94.

After Tempest had been soothed by the assurance that the Spanish had no arms with them, Díez Navarro turned to the purpose of his mission. He asked Otway and Hodgson if the English order to destroy the forts in the Bay of Honduras had been obeyed. Hodgson refused to reply, so Díez Navarro turned to Pitt and the other principal inhabitants present to inquire if they intended to remain. Otway interrupted to assert that the Shoremen were under England's protection. But Díez Navarro persisted; his king wanted the settlers and merchants in Black River to move to Belize or Jamaica. Is this an order, or was he merely asking? Otway queried. Merely asking, Díez Navarro seemed to reply, for having no way to support his demands, he dropped the subject and left Black River with nothing more than an affidavit from Otway to prove that he had been there.³⁵

Shortly after Díez Navarro's departure, and nine months after having received orders to demolish the British fortifications in the Bay of Honduras, Hodgson was still in Black River--and the fortifications were still standing. On 10 May, Lyttelton confirmed the orders to demolish the forts and to return the military stores. The governor, Hodgson said, sounded "as if he thought that Country was part of the Spanish Territories", and was attempting "to have the Mosquito Shore compleatly dismantled."³⁶

The sundry equipment that Hodgson reluctantly shipped to Jamaica

³⁵Otway to Halifax, 25 April 1764, CO 137/61, f. 275; Declaration by Robert Hodgson, 23 December 1766, CO 123/1, f.111; Gámez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 105.

³⁶Lyttelton to Hodgson, 10 May 1764, CO 137/61, f. 255; Lyttelton to Halifax, 31 May 1764, CO 137/61, f. 251; Hodgson to Germain, 1 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 207.

in the summer of 1764 included "13 old muskets (useless), four Useless Pistols, 50 Old Bayonets, one Half barrel Gun Powder, two old Powder horns..." and other odds and ends. Hodgson suggested that the stores were not worth the expense of transporting them back to Jamaica.³⁷

Nor were they worth the perilous and unpleasant duty for the crew of H.M.S. Nautilus, which received the stores. Captain Locker noted in his log:

- 8 June 1764 - sent a lieutenant and 25 men ashore...fresh Gales and Hazy Weather....
- 16 June - Modr Gales with much Rain A man was drown'd by the Boats Oversetting in the Surff.
- 17 June - Fresh Gales and Cloudy Weather with Thunder Lighting and Rain. ...diserted from their Duty on Shore James Sheridan, William Williams and John Crawford.
- 24 June - a man drowned on duty at Black River...Mod Breezes....
- 26 June - diserted from their Duty on Shore James Henderson Peter Peterson Wm Bobb & Joseph Disdell...Mod and Clou
- 1 July - diserted from their Duty on Shore James Even and William Noyse Marines...Mod and Cloudy.
- 2 July - came on Board a lieutenant with the Remainder of the Men. Fresh Gales and Cloudy Weather with Small Rain Thunder and Lightning.³⁸

In Hodgson's report on his commission, he said that he had obeyed Lyttelton's orders only because he was his superior officer. "He never understood those Orders in anywise to relate or concern his Duty in executing the 17th Article of the Peace", which applied to Spanish territory in the Bay of Honduras.³⁹ Lyttelton's report on the operation

³⁷ Inventory of military stores, 28 June 1764, CO 137/61, f. 290.

³⁸ Log of H.M.S. Nautilus, Captain Locker, 1764, Adm 51/630.

³⁹ Hodgson to Lyttelton, 6 August 1764, CO 137/61, f. 323; Hodgson to Germain, 1 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 207.

was mainly an indictment of Hodgson, who he said had probably "framed pretexts for delaying the accomplishment of the Service he has been entrusted with" to increase the amount of his stipend. The governor wanted Hodgson's allowance for his stay in the Bay to correspond to the time that he was "employed in the execution of his Orders, and not for the Term during which he lay under various pretexts in a state of total inaction at the Mosquito Shore."⁴⁰

Lyttelton's denunciations were unsupported, and Hodgson was absolved from any responsibility for his extended stay on the Shore. "Such Delay", according to Henry Conway, secretary of state for the southern department, "seems rather to have been owing to a Want of Explicitness in the Instructions He received, than to a View of gaining Time & prolonging his Commission."⁴¹ Another British official said that Hodgson did "essential Service, in not hastily executing Orders which...[even] the Governor...thought proper to require an Explanation...."⁴² Lord Halifax and the Board of Trade seemed to accept Hodgson's claim that he had "saved the Mosquito Shore to the Crown."⁴³

After Díez Navarro's visit to Black River, Spanish officials

⁴⁰ Lyttelton to Halifax, 31 May and 13 September 1764, CO 137/61, ff. 251, 319.

⁴¹ Conway to Treasury, 10 February 1766, SP 37/22, f. 36.

⁴² Burke to Cooper, 12 March 1766, SP 37/22, f. 46.

⁴³ From Robert Hodgson, 21 December 1765, SP 37/4, f. 42; Conway to Treasury, 12 March 1766, DRH, appendix p. 3.

abandoned all immediate hopes of satisfying their demands in the Bay of Honduras and concentrated on courting the Mosquito chiefs and luring the Negro slaves away from the Shore.⁴⁴ Spanish traders visited Mosquito King George I early in 1765, and when Superintendent Otway saw George shortly afterwards, he

could not forbear observing some Trifles among them which I am certain they must either have received or taken from the Spaniards, the King, in particular, had a Cane with a Gold Head, one of his Chiefs had a long silver Cross which he wore about his Neck, and there were divers other Things distributed among the rest of his People.⁴⁵

Yet the loyalty of the Mosquitos was not seriously doubted; the slave issue, however, had become a vexation. Authorised and encouraged by various reales cédulas, the Spanish succeeded in attracting many slaves away from their English and Mosquito owners.⁴⁶ On the night of 16 August 1765, seven slaves slipped across the dangerous bar at Black River in a stolen piragua and made their way to Omoa. Two of them, Pompey and Blow, were government property and particularly valuable to Otway, who sent John Christopherz, a merchant of Black River, to demand their return. En route, Christopherz was courteously treated by Spanish officials, but he was unfortunate to encounter a man of Aybar's temperament at Omoa. The Spaniard heaped abuse on the Shoremen, those "Harbourers of Robbers and Villains", and refused to recognise Christopherz as the representative of a British official, using "the extraordinary Subterfuge of denying

⁴⁴ Arriaga to Grimaldi, 18 April 1765, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1.

⁴⁵ Otway to the Board of Trade, 12 July 1765, CO 137/33, f. 232; Testimony by Manuel de Ibarra, 15 January 1766, Guat 875.

⁴⁶ Mosquito chiefs and even lesser warriors owned considerable numbers of Negro, Indian, mestizo and Spanish slaves.

His Majesty had any Settlement or Officer" on the Mosquito Shore.⁴⁷

The astonished British emissary was then placed under armed guard, given "two small Pieces of jirked Pork, very rusty, and ten small mouldy nay rotten Biscuits", placed on a horse and driven from Omoa after being told that he should "Thank God you aren't being sent in irons to Guatemala." During his short stay the only satisfaction he received was an admission that the escaped slaves had been sent away "to be instructed in the Christian principals", and that neither the slaves nor the piragua would be returned.⁴⁸

When Otway informed Whitehall about Christopherz' treatment at Omoa, Louis Devisme, the British representative in Madrid, was ordered

to convince the Spanish Ministers, how necessary it is that effectual Instructions be given to the Governors & Officers of the Catholick King, for conducting Themselves towards His Majesty's Officers and Subjects upon all Occasions, in a manner suitable to the Friendship and Harmony subsisting between the Two Nations.⁴⁹

Devisme reported that the Marqués de Grimaldi "seemed much offended at the Mosquito Complaint, saying it was an Imposition, & that we had no right to be there". Spain had not the force to take a strong stand, however, and so orders were issued to return the seven slaves and the piragua and to reprimand Aybar.⁵⁰ But the English must be expelled

⁴⁷ Otway to Board of Trade, 20 January 1766, CO 137/34, f. 11.

⁴⁸ Otway to Aybar, 2 September 1765, CO 137/62, f. 192; Truxillo to Aybar, 25 August 1765, AGS, Est 6963; Aybar to Otway, 19 January 1763, CO 137/61, f. 190; Report by John Christopherz, 10 January 1766, CO 137/62, f. 194; Otway to Halifax, 20 January 1766, CO 137/62, f. 188.

⁴⁹ Richmond to Devisme, 4 July 1766, SP 94/174.

⁵⁰ Devisme to Richmond, 28 July 1766, SP 94/174; From friar Julián de Arriaga, 19 November 1766, AGS, Est 6963; Devisme to Grimaldi, 1 August 1766, SP 94/175.

from the Mosquito Coast, as well as from all other settlements in Spanish territory, Grimaldi exclaimed, "It would be intolerable to sacrifice [Spanish rights] for the conservation of peace."⁵¹

Consequently the Spanish reopened discussions on the question of the Mosquito Coast which had been neglected since Díez Navarro's visit to Black River. Grimaldi directed the Spanish ambassador in London, the Conde de Masserano, to complain of the excesses caused by the continued British presence in the Bay of Honduras that had afflicted the kingdom of Guatemala and to a lesser extent Panamá, Santa Fé and México since the seventeenth century.⁵² The Mosquito Indians and English "outlaws" had been an agonising plague to Guatemala, an inherited catastrophe to each succeeding captain general by their pillaging of towns and plantations, burning and sacking of churches, murdering priests and secular officials, hindering missionary work and enslaving or driving reduced Indians into the mountains, and seizing Spanish vessels--and then multiplying the humiliation by trading with the Spaniards when they were not plundering them. To a certain extent, Anglo-Mosquito incursions masked illicit trade, yet more often suffering accompanied their visits. "The surprises of the Zambos Mosquitos Indians

⁵¹Arriaga called Black River the most important English establishment on the extensive coast between the Crinoco River and Florida. Antonio Calderón Quijano, "Un incidente militar on los establecimientos Ingleses en el Río Tinto (Honduras) en 1782", Anuario de estudios Americanos, ii (1945), p. 761.

⁵²Grimaldi to Masserano, 20 January 1767, AHN, Est 4269, vol. i.

have been the principal reason for the abandonment of the cities that used to be on the vast coast [of the kingdom of Guatemala]", wrote Pedro de Salazar, president of Guatemala, when demanding that the Indians be "exterminated by blood and fire".⁵³ The tragic call on the lives and miserable fortunes of the ladino and Indian population and even on the Creole and Spanish classes resulted in a degrading and relentless poverty throughout the kingdom from which Central America has never fully recovered. Mines remained inoperative and fields unworked as endless numbers of men were conscripted to serve--and to perish--in frontier garrisons. To avoid the labour on the massive fort of San Fernando de Omoa, entire male populations of frontier pueblos went into the bush. The cost of constructing the fort was staggering: 1,117,591 pesos and thousands of lives by 1765, with the end not yet in sight and the fort a failure. Even the town of Candelaria, which because of its proximity furnished most of the workers for the fort, remained exposed to the raids of the Zambos Mosquitos.⁵⁴

Because the Mosquitos never grasped the significance of the difference between war and peace, there was seldom great variation in the frequency of their raids. Only four months after the signing of the Treaty of 1763, they fell on the tormented valley of Matina. After

⁵³Salazar to Arriaga, 31 August 1766, Guat 875; From Pedro de Salazar, 11 December 1765, Guat 876.

⁵⁴To José Sáenz, 29 January 1769, BAGG, iv (1940), p. 317; Ortiz to Salazar, 28 September 1769, Guat 423; Report by Pedro de Salazar, 1 November 1768, Guat 408. Fort Omoa was built primarily to withstand the raids of the Zambos Mosquitos, to counter illicit trade, and eventually to act as a base for operations against the Mosquito Coast and Belize settlements. See above, p. 109.

the attack King George I offered the Spanish peace in the future in exchange for two silver-handled swords, some shirts and socks, 150 pesos and an annual tribute of cacao and plantains. If the gifts were not immediately forthcoming he threatened to destroy the valley. The governor of Costa Rica accepted the offer; the price was small enough in view of the province's weak defences. The truce lasted just three years, then in the summer of 1766, 300 Mosquitos arrived in Matina to demand the fantastic sum of 1,000 quintales (slightly over 100,000 pounds) of cacao in tribute. Although it was over half the annual produce of the valley, the harassed growers paid, or so they claimed to explain the loss of such a large sum of taxable cacao. Undoubtedly most of it was carried away peacefully by Jamaican traders.⁵⁵

The occasional periods of truce at Matina never affected Mosquito activities elsewhere. They sacked Comoapa and burned its church in 1767, enslaving fourteen women after chasing their men into the hills. The governor of Nicaragua reacted angrily against the "poor Wretches" of these frontier towns who panicked on "hearing the name of the enemy". The Mosquitos then returned to Comoapa early the next year to seize many prisoners, each of whom was offered for ransom at 100 pesos, a cow, a horse and a mule. As on other occasions numerous ladinos and Indians

⁵⁵The Costa Rican historian, Manuel Esquivel Molina, considers this raid to have been the origin of the tribute-paying tradition that continued into the nineteenth century. However the Mosquitos had extracted tribute in various forms from the Spaniards and Indians of middle America and Yucatán since the seventeenth century. See Esquivel, "Las Incursiones"; Gámez, op.cit., p. 104.

travelled to the coast to search for their wives, but they either lacked enough money or goods to pay the ransom, or the women had already been shipped away on Jamaican slavers. Even when the Spanish showed some initiative, it was usually of no avail. Eighty men pursued the assailants after the raid on Comoapa in 1767, but they had no arms, and they could do no more than watch the enemy escape with their captives.⁵⁶

Against Mosquito incursions the Spanish could afford no adequate defence. Forts in Guatemala were under-manned and in poor repair and provincial militias were untrained and unarmed.⁵⁷ It was suggested that presidios internos, such as those used successfully against the savage Chichimecs in the desert wastes of northern México, be tried, but most officials realised that this would not work against the Mosquitos, who were agile mountain men as well as skilful sailors, dextrous in the use of modern weapons, and whose settlements were widely dispersed over rugged inhospitable terrain. The governors of Costa Rica,

⁵⁶Serna to Cabello, 16 January 1767, BAGG, iii (1940), p. 214; Cavello to Serna, 18 January 1767, ibid., p. 215; Serna to Salazar, 22 January 1767, ibid., p. 218; Ramiro to Salazar, 14 December 1768, ibid., p. 141; Declaration by Captain Yarrinsen (Garrison), 9 September 1768, Guat 460; Questions of law relating to trade with the Mosquito Indians (and indirectly to the ransoming of captives) were not answered by the Recopilación de los Leyes. Hispano-Mosquito trade was apparently made legal by the first and ninth laws, title four, book four. Yet the fiscal of Guatemala, Romana, considered the case of the Mosquitos to be unique. "The laws speak of another class of Indians, one who has not had intercourse with the nations of Europe, who cannot handle firearms or the other European means of defending themselves, and who have not prevented Spanish domination." The Mosquitos do all of these things, he pointed out, insinuating that they were rather closer to being an independent nation than a tribe of irreduced savages. Romana to Salazar, 11 November 1769, BAGG, iv (1936), p. 381.

⁵⁷Cavello to Arriaga, 25 April 1765, Guat 456; Cavello to Salazar, 31 March 1767, Guat 876; Opinion of the Consejo, 27 June 1771, Guat 408; Salazar to the commanding officer at Havana, 18 May 1767, Guat 642.

Nicaragua and Honduras were asked for their opinions on how to contain or exterminate the Zambos Mosquitos, but their replies were not particularly adaptable. Governor Nava of Costa Rica suggested that a fort be constructed at Bluefields to stop incursions at Matina and Talamanca. Governor Cavello of Nicaragua, who said that his two most important jobs were to establish the real renta del tabaco and to defend his province against the Mosquitos, believed that it was "indispensable that a bloody war be carried to the Zambos Mosquitos without giving them any quarter", but the cost would be prohibitive and he would need 3,000 trained and well-armed men, he added, a number impossible to draw from the insufficient and dwindling labour force of the kingdom. Governor Hermenegildo de Arana of Honduras only commented that it would be impossible to contain the Mosquitos or to eject the English from the coast as long as they were protected by the Indians. Spanish inhabitants on the frontier, he said, were "fat and stalwart at sleeping in the shade", while "the Zambo wolves have famous dispositions and bodies, [and are] capable and robust for every type of difficult labour." They were invincible on their incursions encumbered only by a loin-cloth, short sword, rifle, cartridges and powder-flask. President Salazar had a pet plan for extinguishing the race. He would remove all Mosquito women from the coast, "taking great care in so doing to avoid the opposition that the Mosquito Men might offer to the separation." Salazar saw only one disadvantage to his plan; it would take time.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Romana to Salazar, 10 December 1768, BAJ, iii (1940), p. 231; Nava to Salazar, 14 July 1769, BAGG, iv (1940), p. 319; Cavello to Salazar, 20 January 1770, ibid., p. 330; Merits of Domingo Cavello, 30 January 1773, Guat 456; Declaration by Tomás Hermenegildo de Arana, 30 May 1764, BFR, Ayala VIII-2823, f. 117; Echeandia to Leguinazabal, 16 October 1764, BPR, Ayala IV-2819, f. 19; Salazar to Charles III, 13 August 1768, Guat 874.

Spanish officials occasionally moved frontier Indian reductions to interior regions for greater security,⁵⁹ and also attempted to counter the enemy by attracting Mosquito chiefs and their Indian allies away from the English. Captain Garrison, chief of the Woolwa Indians near Pearl Key Lagoon, had one commission from the British and another from the Spanish. It was Garrison who captured the notorious Zambo Fángil, "a horrible man of gigantic bulk",⁶⁰ and later killed the minor Mosquito chief Captain Avocado. But Garrison (known as Yarrinsen or Yarrisen to the Spaniards) also participated in Mosquito raids and fought for the English during the Seven Years War and in the Anglo-Spanish war of 1779. These displays of bad faith cost him his life. He was arrested on a visit to Granada after the American revolution, accused of having participated in the English invasion of Nicaragua,⁶¹ and then

⁵⁹These migrations helped to destroy the work of the Franciscan missionaries in the mountains of Matagalpa and Tologalpa by eliminating the strong base of reduced Indians from which further advances into the frontier could have been made. Furthermore, as President Salazar noted, for the missions to succeed "it is indispensable first that the Zambos Mosquitos be conquered." Opinion of the Consejo, 10 May 1770, Guat 408; Mello to the president of Guatemala, 24 December 1764, BAGG, iii (1940), p. 210; García Peláez, *op.cit.*, p. 75. The padre guardián of the order in Guatemala, citing Romana's comment that it would be inconvenient to form reductions on towns in Chontales because of the Mosquitos, commented that "it would be no more convenient to form cities". Ramiro to Salazar, 14 December 1768, BAGG, iii (1940), p. 229; Archivo General del Gobierno of Guatemala, Al.12-17, 6056/53630. I am indebted to Dr. Murdo J. Macleod for supplying me with this information.

⁶⁰Declaration by Antonio Hernández, 9 September 1768, Guat 460. The name Fángil (occasionally Pabón) is obviously a corruption of an unknown English name.

⁶¹See below, p. 255.

strangled in the public square.⁶²

A more vexing problem to Madrid than Indian incursions was the expanding illicit trade. Roads had been opened between Black River and the Spanish towns of Olancho el Viejo and Agalta, and from Cape Gracias a Dios to Matagalpa, while Matina and Truxillo still received numerous English and Dutch merchantmen.⁶³ And the wood products of the Mosquito Shore were becoming popular in Europe and North America. An advertisement in a New York newspaper announced that "A Parcel of Musquito-Shore MAHOGANY" was for sale at Joris Brinkerhoff's, "opposite Coenties Market".⁶⁴ To frustrate English trade in Guatemala, Charles III even

proposed to burn all the Logwood Trees in that Part of the World, to prevent all possible Connection with us there, which Scheme, tho' a very wild one, proves how prepossessed They are of our People's carrying on an illicit Trade, under the Pretence of Cutting Logwood.⁶⁵

Spanish merchants in Guatemala were more interested in the clandestine trade than in the legal. According to Luis Díez Navarro, Spaniards were unwilling to invest in legal commerce because of crushing taxes. The English profited not only from this extensive trade, but also from the rich mines of Tegucigalpa, which in the latter half of the eighteenth

⁶² Pérez to Arriaga, 30 August 1767, Guat 642; Petition from the fiscal of Guatemala, 12 January 1768, Guat 460; Vargas to Cavello, 15 April 1768, Guat 460; Declaration by Captain Yarrinsen, 9 September 1768, Guat 460; Ramiro to Salazar, 14 December 1768, BAGG, iii (1940), p. 229; Diary of Robert Hogsden, 28 December 1769, CO 137/65, f. 239.

⁶³ Report by William Lyttelton, 9 July 1763, CO 123/4, f. 56; Thover to Arriaga, 15 April 1764, Guat 641; Truxillo to Aybar, 25 August 1765, AGS, Est 6963.

⁶⁴ New York Gazette, 10 February 1766.

⁶⁵ Rochford to Halifax, 6 August 1764, SP 94/168.

century produced annually about 230,000 pesos worth of gold and silver. Mine owners and operators avoided paying much of their quinto duties by a "collusion between treasury officials and miners, and by smuggling with the British".⁶⁶ Governor Hermenegildo de Arana, who claimed that his province was impoverished by the contraband trade with the English of Black River (in fact, Spanish merchants prospered by the illicit commerce), said that: "It is well known that for every four parts of gold, silver and other goods of these provinces they carry away two." English traders," he continued, "own not only the territory in which the Zambos Mosquitos live, but also the whole province of Honduras...[and]they possess the hearts of the inhabitants, the great and the small...."⁶⁷

Nearly everyone participated in the trade. The little man from Sonaguera, Yoro and other frontier communities made his living by carrying sarsaparilla and other wood products to Black River, where they were exchanged for English merchandise, or by transporting English goods into the interior for Spanish merchants who sent down cattle, indigo, cacao, tobacco and other products. He occasionally joined large gangs to work for the English on the coast, clearing land, cutting wood, harvesting sugar and doing various other jobs.⁶⁸ Most Spanish officials also

⁶⁶Floyd, "Bourbon Palliatives", p. 103.

⁶⁷Declaration by Tom's Hermenegildo de Arana, 30 May 1764, BPR, Ayala VIII-2823, f. 177; From Luis Díez Navarro, 10 September 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1.

⁶⁸To the president of Guatemala, n.d., 1764, Guat 449.

traded with the English, some openly and others by subterfuge. José Gamboa, commander of Fort Omoa, absconded to the Mosquito Shore with the garrison's pay, then established a trading post on the frontier and acted as a middleman in the Anglo-Spanish trade, while provincial officials were unable or unwilling to impede his activities.⁶⁹ Alonso Fernández de Heredia, who had become president of the audiencia of Guatemala, was active in the commerce on an even greater scale, but although his opponents were noisier, they were no more effective in stopping him. When Heredia's replacement died before taking office, Grimaldi was prompted to remark: "This Devil of a Governor is in Power again until we can send to reimplace him"; Navarro noted that efforts to stifle the trade with Pitt at Black River were abandoned by Heredia "for personal ends"; and the escribano (notary) of the audiencia of Guatemala suggested that the only way to stop the illicit trade was to replace Heredia with a man who had no other ambition than to serve the king.⁷⁰

The Spanish made sporadic efforts to obstruct the illicit trade. Guardacostas and corsairs occasionally seized English merchant vessels, but they were inclined to resort to piracy if legal prey were not available, or to participate in clandestine trade if greater profit were to be found there. Efforts to crush the trade in the interior

⁶⁹ Testimony by escaped slaves, 7 November 1765, AGS, Est 6963; Declaration by Tom's Hermenegildo de Arana, 30 May 1764, Ayala VIII-2823, f. 177.

⁷⁰ Rochford to Halifax, 29 August 1764, SP 94/168; From Luis Díez Navarro, 10 September 1764, AGS, Est 8133, folder 1; Guiraola to Charles III, 30 September 1763, Guat 641.

were also unsuccessful. Liberal rewards for informers could not overcome the fear of retaliation by the Mosquitos and by the English and Spanish contrabandists, while the occasional orders to execute everyone involved in it could not inhibit the profitable and relatively safe trade.⁷¹

In January 1766, complaining that they were the only British subjects to lose the protection of the crown as a result of the Seven Years War,⁷² The Shoremen requested "the happiness of being immediately made a civil government, entirely independent of Jamaica."⁷³ To support their request they sent George Hewm to London, accompanied by General Tempest. In that same summer of 1766, Robert Hodgson and Joseph Smith Speer were also in London, each promoting his personal interests. In a memorial to the Earl of Dartmouth, Speer outlined the advantages of securing the Mosquito Shore to the British crown, and asked to be named surveyor general for

⁷¹ Declaration by William Reid, n.d., SP 94/183, Quito to Cristobol, 19 April 1763, CO 137/61, f. 215; Petition to Augustus Keppel, 1 July 1763, Adm 1/237.

⁷² At this time the Shoremen asked for permission to construct a block house, in Black River for defence against the Spanish and against their own slaves, but Otway refused to use the Mosquito Shore contingent funds to construct fortifications, as being contrary to the 17th article of the treaty. Shoremen to Pitt, 31 May 1766, DRH, appendix p. 4.

⁷³ Shoremen to Pitt, 31 May 1766, DRH, appendix p. 4; Squire, The States, p. 747. The signers of the petition were men who played long-standing roles in the history of the Shore: William Pitt, Bartholomew Gilibert, Daniel Hewlett, George Hewm, John Bourke, William Stotesbury, Thomas Merriot Perkins, Philip Bode, John Lawrie (James Lawrie's brother) and Bryan McDaniel.

that part of Spanish America to prepare the Shore for large-scale immigration. Hodgson was in London to marry one of the three daughters of the merchant Pitt, and to petition for a large allowance due to him for his services on the Shore in 1764.⁷⁴

Hewm bruised Lord Shelburne's feelings when he arrived in London by first taking General Tempest to meet the elder Pitt. When Hodgson heard of this slight (and of the Shoremen's memorial) he went to Hewm to inquire why the Shoremen had not requested him to present their petition to the government. Hewm said that they did not know that he was in England, and happily turned the responsibility of the project over to him.⁷⁵ Hodgson then presented the settlers' petition to Shelburne (including his own diagram for an independent company which he offered to command),⁷⁶ after explaining that General Tempest had been

recommended in a particular manner to Lord Chatham, by all the principal Inhabitants of the Mosquito Shore, as a brave, honest, and worthy Man, of the greatest Power of any Native in the Country, and whose Protection of the Settlement there was very essential.

Pitt had refused to see Tempest, Hodgson said, "for Reasons not for me to investigate." Too obvious a slight might have disastrous consequences, he added, especially since the unsophisticated chief might blame the

⁷⁴Speer to Board of Trade, 22 July 1766, CO 123/1, f. 90. Speer's petition received no reply from the government. The third petitioner for the superintendency after the death of the elder Hodgson, James Lawrie, was stationed in Jamaica at this time.

⁷⁵Hewm to Hodgson, 9 August 1766, DRH, appendix p. 6. Hodgson explained that he accepted the responsibility for the commission because he had property on the Shore, and because Tempest had fed him when it was his "Fate to be the Stranger". Hodgson to Conway, 9 November 1765, SP 37/4.

⁷⁶Memorial from Robert Hodgson, 12 October 1766, CO 123/1, f. 109.

English for an illness that he was then suffering.⁷⁷

Early in 1767 Joseph Otway became seriously ill and sailed for his family home in New York, but while still at sea, on 11 May, he died. Otway had conducted himself admirably during his four years in Black River, notwithstanding Spanish pressure and the difficulties of retaining the friendship of the various parties of Zambos Mosquitos while still restraining their incursions, and of controlling the motley British, Spanish, Negro and mulatto populace.⁷⁸ During his superintendency there was a slight decrease in population on the Shore as many adventurers migrated to Belize because the Treaty of 1763 legalised logwood cutting there. Because of the close ties between the Bay settlements, however, the overall result was economic growth, and Belize continued to rely on the Shore. In fact many Baymen maintained their plantations on the Mosquito Shore while cutting wood at Belize.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Hodgson to Shelburne, 29 August 1766, CO 123/1, f. 107.

⁷⁸Elletson to Davis, 16 July 1767, H.P. Jacob, ed., "Roger Hope Elletson", JHR, ii (1952), p. 86.

⁷⁹Speer to Conway, 2 September 1765, CO 123/1, f. 93; Otway to Board of Trade, 12 July 1765, CO 137/33, f. 232; Declaration by Pedro Antonio Alejandro de Valasco, 25 April 1771, printed in Antonio B. Cuervo, Colección de documentos inéditos sobre la geografía y la historia de Colombia (Bogotá, 1891), p. 360; Anon., The Present State of the West Indies (London, 1778), p. 50. The number of white settlers on the Mosquito Shore at this time was 201, mestizos 120 and slaves 970. Otway noted that there was little difference between whites and mestizos, both groups being English, Christian and property owners. Exports during his superintendency varied little from before the war. The following are average export figures at this time:

mahogany	650,000 feet
sarsaparilla	110,000 pounds
turtle shell	8,000 pounds
mules	150

plus small amounts of cotton, indigo and cacao. Otway to Lords of Trade, 25 April 1764, CO 137/33, f. 167.

Life on the Shore during Otway's superintendency was much the same as it had been during the two preceding superintendencies. The contingent fund was used for the same bizarre purposes: the purchase of a Negro slave named Prince for King George and a barrel of pork "to victual two Gangs of Mosquito Indians"; the payment of £5 to Henry Tonoston for a month's carpentry work on Otway's home. Otway entertained the Mosquito chiefs and warriors who annually came to Black River in October for the customary distribution of gifts. At the same time, the community was the scene of a trade fair, the town acquiring the appearance of an Indian congress, bazaar and Octoberfest. The bank swarmed with Indians, Negroes and mestizos; white traders from Jamaica, Curaçao, New York, Philadelphia, London and Guatemala; and the Shoremen and Baymen. Gifts distributed among the Mosquitos during the fair of 1766 included three dozen blue and red spotted silk handkerchiefs, six dozen highly polished silver ear bobs, two dozen silver rings set with stones, three dozen ivory combs, four dozen jews-harps, forty pounds of small glass beads, seven gold and five silver laced hats, twelve fine ruffled shirts for the chiefs, and 226 gallons of rum.⁸⁰

On 16 July 1767, with Hodgson, Speer and Lawrie all anxious and

⁸⁰ Account of the Mosquito Shore contingent expenses by Joseph Otway, 25 February 1767, CO 137/63, f. 20; Invoice of merchandise shipped by David Milner for the annual presents to the Mosquito Indians, 16 April 1767, CO 137/63, f. 18. Indian presents were usually distributed on the Mosquito Shore in October and November after the hurricanes but before the northers and heavy seas of winter, when the Indians brought turtle shell to Black River to trade with the Shoremen and the Jamaican traders.

available for the superintendency, Richard Jones was again appointed superintendent. But only two weeks later, Lord Shelburne named Robert Hodgson the younger to the post, superseding Jones' nomination.⁸¹

⁸¹ Elletson to Otway, 28 March 1767, "Roger Hope Elletson", *JHR*, ii (1949), p. 99; Elletson to Treasury, 16 July 1767, "Roger Hope Elletson", *JHR*, ii (1952), p. 86; Shelburne to Hodgson, 31 July 1767, CO 123/1, f. 33. Before Jones left Jamaica for the Shore, word of Hodgson's appointment arrived in Kingston. Jones remained on the island and the Mosquito Shore was without a superintendent for more than a year.

Cha ter VII

THE S P INTENDENCY of ROBERT HODGSON the YOUNGER:
1767 - 1771

After the de th of superintendent Joseph Otway, the Mos uito Shore floundered without government or def nce, and the Shoremen were frightened that Spain would take advantage of the situation to force her claims in the Bay of onduras. Then suddenly and unexpectedly the settlers faced catastrophe from within. Rumours of a plot ag inst Mosquito King George I by General Tempest almost led to a massacre of the white settlers on the Shore. Geor believed th t T pe t had gone to London in 1766 "to get made king in his ead", and was now scheming to make his royal aspirations a reality by as sinating him and selling his wives and children into slavery. The king pr pared a counter-plot to eize or execute a fe Shoremen who ere reportedly involved in the conspiracy and sought the aid of Gov rnor Briton of ebuppy, the principal Mos uito Indi n chief, and of Admi al Dilson of Fe rl Key Lagoon, head of the south rn party of Mos uito . But the scheme disintegrated when Dilson refused to support him and Bri on and George could not gree on a plan of ctio . The Shoreme , nowever, were una re that George's plot h d coll psed, nd plea ed with ov rnor Elletson for aid.¹

¹Deposition by Henry Corrin, 28 M y 176 , C 137/63, f. 56.

Since Otway's successor, Robert Hodgson, had still not arrived from England, Elletson commissioned Richard Jones as interim superintendent to investigate the situation. When Jones arrived on the Shore he told King George that if he were found guilty of this "icked and ungrateful plot", he would be deposed and a new king elected. George burst into tears and swore that he never intended to hurt any white person; he only meant to thwart Tempest. Softening before the king's tears, Jones reasoned that someone must have invented the tale to put everyone at odds, and that George had acted from fear rather than from malice. The whole affair seemed highly improbable, although "to this poor illiterate, unreflecting King it seemed very real."²

Jones sailed from Jamaica just about the time that Hodgson arrived there from England, nearly a year after being named superintendent. Initially, Hodgson's commission granted him powers exceeding those exercised by any previous superintendent. He had been appointed "Superintendent, Agent and Commander in Chief" of the Mosquito Shore to discharge his duties "by doing and performing all and all Manner of Things thereunto belonging". His orders were to come from the principal secretaries of state and from the governors of Jamaica, the latter "for the Time being" only, confirming Shelburne's intention to raise the political status of the Shore.³ But when Lord Hillsborough replaced

²Elletson to Hillsborough, 24 June 1768, CO 137/63, f. 54. Jones to Elletson, 25 July 1768, CO 137/64, f. 3; Elletson to Farry, 28 May 1768, 'Log of Hope Elletson', JHR, iii (1953), p.69.

³Hodgson's commission read: "George the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Duke of Brunswick Lunenburg, Arch Treasurer of the Holy Roman Empire, an Prince Elector &c. To Our Trusty and beloved Robert Hodgson Esq^r; Greeting, We, being desirous to cultivate a strict Union and Friendship between Our Indian and
(continued on next page)

Shelburne as secretary of state for the southern department, he modified the commission to give Hodgson "no other Powers and Authorities than had been given to his Predecessors in that office".⁴

³ (continued from previous page)

and Our other Subjects resident in Our Settlement on the Musqueto Shore, by promoting the Prosperity, and improving the Commerical Advantage thereof, do by these Presents constitute and appoint You to be Superintendant, Agent and Commander in Chief in Our said Settlement, You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the Duty of Superintendant, Agent and Commander in Chief, by doing and performing all and all Manner of Things thereunto belonging. And You are to observe and follow such Orders and Directions from Time to Time as You shall receive from Us, One of Our Principal Secretaries of State, or the Governors of Our Island of Jamaica for the Time being; And for so doing this shall be Your Warrant Given at Our Court at St. James's.... Shelburne to Hodgson, 31 July 1767, CO 123/1, f. 33.

⁴ Hodgson's commission from Lord Hillsborough was less formal and emphasised the practical aspect of his duties. "The King having judged it expedient for His Service, and the national Interests, to continue the Establishment of a Superintendant of the Settlements on the Mosquito Shore; His Majesty has been graciously pleased, upon the Death of captain Otway to direct that You should be entrusted with that Service. You will therefore fit yourself with all convenient Speed, & forthwith repair to the said Shore, and apply Yourself with all Zeal & Diligence to establish good Order among the Inhabitants; To promote the Prosperity of the Settlement; To improve the commercial Advantages which may be derived from It; And to cultivate a strict Union and Friendship with the Indians in those Parts; But in exerting Your Endeavours for these good Purposes, His Majesty's Intentions are, that You should make it the constant Object of Your Care, not only to observe the Engagements of the late Definitive Treaty, but to prevent any Attempt which might tend to disturb the public Peace, whether it should arise, on the One hand, - from any irregular Conduct of His Majesty's Subjects, or, on the Other, from the Enmity said to be entertained by the Mosquito Indians, to the Spaniards. I am further to acquaint You with His Majesty's Pleasure, that You should forthwith transmit to me, thro' the Hands of the Governor of Jamaica, an accurate Account of the Settlement entrusted to Your Care, specifying It's Extent, the Number of its Inhabitants, the nature and Amount of It's present Trade; and what farther commercial Advantages it is Capable of affording.

You are also in like Manner to transmit to me, from Time to Time, every particular of useful Information which may relate to the internal State of the Settlement; And as it is of great Importance that His Majesty should be exactly & punctually informed of every Transaction which may occur with any Persons acting under the Authority of any Foreign Prince or State, You will be particularly careful to transmit to me, thro' the Hands of the Governor of Jamaica, an Account of such Transaction, as also the most particular & exact Accounts which can be procured, from Time to Time, of the State of the Settlements of any foreign Power in the Neighbourhood of the Mosquito Shore.

His Majesty having been graciously pleased to direct, that You should have the same Allowance as has been made to former Superintendants; I have accordingly signified His Majesty's Commands to the Governor of Jamaica for that purpose." Hillsborough to Hodgson, 20 February 1768, CO 137/63, f. 1.

There were numerous reasons for the long delay in Hodgson's departure from England: government debate over the future of British rule on the Mosquito Shore, Hodgson's desire to obtain the money due to him for previous services, and his wish to contact commercial correspondents. By this delay Hodgson missed an opportunity to carry out Shelburne's strong commission, and the Shoremen became more accustomed to their independence.

Although his instructions were clear, Hodgson was to wage an unending battle over their interpretation with the Shoremen and the governors of Jamaica. The principal settlers, who were already aware of Hodgson's unsympathetic and arrogant manner, disapproved of his nomination even before he arrived on the Shore, and feared that his rule would be autocratic, in contrast to Joseph Otway's laissez-faire government. Furthermore, they no longer desired an autonomous government, and they were now alarmed that the superintendent would be unaccountable to the governor of Jamaica. Consequently, the Shoremen threatened to abandon their plantations, or if necessary even "Proceed to Violences which may Involve the Colony."⁵

Hodgson's difficulties began the day he arrived in Jamaica. Although he knew that he could not be effective at his post without the countenance of both the governor of Jamaica ("who held the purse string") and the commander of the Jamaica naval station, he aroused Governor Elletts' ire and suspicions about his honesty, and belittled Admiral Farry's

⁵Jones to Elliston, 3 August 1768, CO 137/64, f. 9.

competence by complaining that there had been only a "very slender assertion of authority" on the warship that had brought him to Jamaica. He presented bills to Elletson for items that he had purchased in London for use on the Shore (explaining that this had been the accepted practice during the previous superintendencies), but the governor refused to honour them because they were improperly presented.⁶ After telling Elletson that this decision could cripple him in the "present alarming juncture" on the Shore, Hodgson berated him for naming Jones as interim superintendent.

I beg Your Honor would be pleased to furnish me with a Dispatch to him for him to surcease all Authority on my Arrival on the Mosquito Shore as it may at once prevent any illtimed and unnecessary Discussion.

Jones was sent to the Shore only to "prevent and put a Stop to a Conspiracy formed amongst the Indians to destroy the white People there", Elletson replied; his investigations would surely be over before Hodgson arrived.⁷

Without having reconciled his differences with Farry and Elletson, Hodgson left for the Shore in July 1768, determined to establish a government independent of Jamaica and under his strict supervision. He publicly read his instructions from Hillsborough and announced that there would be no immediate change in the existing government on the Shore, a move which helped him to gain the superficial confidence of

⁶ Hodgson to Hillsborough, 10 July 1768, CO 137/66, f. 241; Hodgson to Farry, 14 July 1768, CO 137/64, f. 171; Hodgson to Elletson, 10 July 1768, CO 137/66, f. 245; Elletson to Hodgson, 11 July 1768, CO 137/66, f. 247. Hodgson pressed further claims for reimbursement the following year with Governor Sir William Trelawny, but for some unknown reason Trelawny even refused to reimburse him for purchases made on the governor's own orders. Hodgson to Trelawny, 31 May 1769, CO 137/64, f. 151; Hodgson to Hillsborough, 23 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 167.

⁷ Hodgson to Elletson, 10 July 1768, CO 137/66, f. 245; Elletson to Hodgson, 11 July 1768, CO 137/66, f. 247.

the Shore en. But before this trust could develop, he published a highly controversial proclamation.

It has been thought expedient that a council should be elected for the forming of laws, and the better inducing peace, policy, and good order among the different inhabitants of the Mosquito Shore, the said council, to consist of twelve persons, one half thereof, at the least, to be chosen by the free voice of the people.⁸

The leading Shoremen complained vehemently of this tyrannical effort to dominate the council, forcing Hodgson to announce that elections were to be held to select a council "of twelve men elected by the whole people."⁹ But the Shoremen now refused to accept even this concession. Late in February 1769, after the election had twice been delayed, Hodgson wrote: "In general the inhabitants either through Fear, Ignorance, or Presumption, are little inclined to any degree of Controul"; he despaired that such men could benefit the Mosquito Shore or England.¹⁰

While Hodgson bemoaned the obdurate nature of the Shoremen, the leader of his opposition, James Lawrie, was endeavouring to establish an identity as Hodgson's successor by undermining his reputation with the new governor of Jamaica, Sir William Trelawny, and by offering "to render ...any service in my power at this place."¹¹

⁸ Proclamations by Robert Hodgson, 25 July and c. August 1768, DRH, appendix p. 7; Hodgson's reply to the "State of Facts", n.d., CO 137/69, f. 28.

⁹ The "whole people" were composed of about 200 white men; other races, including the Mosquito Indians, were excluded from voting.

¹⁰ Hodgson to Hillsborough, 24 February 1769, CO 137/64, f. 88; Proclamation by Robert Hodgson, 9 and 18 February 1769, DRH, appendix pp. 9, 10.

¹¹ Sir William Trelawny was the cousin of Edward Trelawny, former governor of Jamaica, and the benefactor of Hodgson's father.

We have a Person who calls himself our Commanding Officer, tho' I have seen nothing yet that gives him that right; he also informs some that we are independant of Jamaica which if so, gives us much concern, and in that case must look upon ourselves, as abandoned by all the world.¹²

Governor Trelawny consciously, almost openly, aggravated the settlers' discontent by demonstrating his sympathy for them. "Any grievances that you have suffered from or any misrepresentations which have been made by Hodgson relative to the independency of the Mosquito shore from this Government", he said, should be reported. The Shoremen were ordered to obey Hodgson as their superintendent while the affair was being investigated, but Trelawny's letter left no doubt that they need not fear the superintendent or his mysterious commission. Robert White, agent for the Mosquito Shore, said that it was Governor Trelawny who had convinced the Shoremen not to support Hodgson.¹³

Unaware that he would be sailing into a maelstrom, Hodgson decided to go to Jamaica "to court the Governor" and to discuss the problems of the Shore. He received a cool reception and was informed of Lawrie's insinuation that his instructions had never been made public.¹⁴ Henry Corrin said that: "with regard to us here and those that expect to Govern us I hope his Excellency will take us into his consideration and not suffer us to be tyrannized over." The same fear that had caused Corrin to oppose Otway's appointment in 1762, that the Indian slave trade would suffer under a strong administration, motivated him now.¹⁵ And Trelawny

¹² Lawrie to Trelawny, 25 February 1769, CO 137/64, f. 181.

¹³ Trelawny to Lawrie, 12 May 1769, CO 137/64, f. 122; "Facts or Proofs" against Robert Hodgson, White to Lords of the Board of Trade, 11 November 1773, p. 23, in CO 123/2, vol. ii.

¹⁴ Hodgson to Hillsborough, 23 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 167; Hodgson to Trelawny, 25 May 1769, CO 137/64, f. 183; Affidavits in support of Robert Hodgson, 7-9 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 212.

¹⁵ Corrin to Jones, 13 April 1769, CO 137/64, f. 143. See above, p. 125.

accused Hodgson of ridiculing the governor's authority by transmitting his dispatches to Whitehall, "through the Hands of the Governor of Jamaica" as required, but sealed.¹⁶

Some accusations against Hodgson had more substance, especially the charge that he used the superintendency to promote his trade and to acquire vast tracts of land. Hodgson admitted that he had large land holdings on the Shore, but explained that the grants had been obtained from his friends the Mosquito chiefs for his services. The warmth of this camaraderie, Hodgson's enemies suggested, was rather the sultry glow of rum. The suggestion that he wished to extend his empire to the off-shore islands made Hodgson laugh. "As for my getting a Patent for Sn. Anreas and old Providence I regard it as meant to imply that among my other Unhappinesses I was a Fool."¹⁷ He already owned most of Greater Corn Island, one of the many small islands off the coast, ^{if} and this island was typical of the others, indeed he would have been a fool to have wished more of the same. His agent on the island wrote:

My anxiety to be gone from this place is heightened... (more and more every day) and nothing adds to it more than the infamy of the Neighbour which is now grown to such a Pitch as to exceed all description. You had scarce left us before the Island was quite in an uproar, new parties were formed, and a General Engagement took place between all colours...the Negro Ned was Ran thro' the Belly by Thomas¹⁸ with a Sword tyed to a Stick, one or two of his Ribbs broke by J^{no} Fowler. ...soon after this...each Party ask'd afresh for Revnge. The second uproar lasted much longer than the first, and I think it possible carried on with more Acrimony,

¹⁶ Hodgson to Trelawny, 10 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 128; Trelawny to Hillsborough, 25 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 112; Hillsborough to Hodgson, 20 February 1768, CO 137/63, f. 1.

¹⁷ Hodgson testimony, 27 May 1769, CO 137/64, f. 137

¹⁸ Probably Georg Thomas.

the Parties were now somewhat afraid of each other and nothing but scrimishes took place. Tho' in this the Negro old Cato had like to have been shot, Smith having discharged his Gun at him three several times because he would not Box him like a Man as he term'd it. I had scarce got Ned upon his Legs again before Oronoco...bit off his right Ear. As this came immediately home to myself I punished him very smartly and Cutt off half of his own Ear - I fear it possible the frays will be worse than ever as Christmas draws near and there is worse Ruin come to the Island.¹⁹

Hodgson was also denounced for trading with the Spanish, but he denied that he traded with anyone except to exchange goods occasionally for things he needed. Years later, however, he inadvertently admitted the charge by publishing a letter from Abraham Tonoston, his agent at Bluefields: "Sir, according to your desire, I am in a fair way of settling a trade at Blewfields River." Hodgson also employed numerous factors in his trade with the Spanish, and gave them his full support. "I will take all the care I can that your interest shall not suffer", he wrote to ^{one of} his agents, "and as to the Jury...they must either alter their opinion, or there shall be no jury." Hodgson was not the first superintendent to trade on the Shore or with the Spanish; all of his predecessors had done so, and with no stigma attached to these ventures.²¹

A ridiculous incident on Corn Island between Hodgson and an old woman squatter on his property formed the basis for still another complaint. The woman's common-law husband, George Thomas, charged the "avaricious" Hodgson with using cruel methods to evict her from her

¹⁹ Rur to Hodgson, 18 November 1775, RCS, HA/MSL, xii.

²⁰ "Facts or Troof", p. 58. Hodgson's father first applied for the superintendency partly on the basis of the trade that he proposed to establish on the Shore. See above p. 53. Tonoston to Hodgson, 16 September 1769, DRH, appendix p. 16.

shack.²¹ Hodgson did not deny the charge, but said that the accusation was built on hearsay evidence, and therefore inadmissible in law; Thomas' account was merely "Scenery for the Pathetic Tale that follows...." As for the woman: "I found her in it [the shack] she remained in it while I staid on the Island I left her in it she remained in it till I came again she still staid in it while I staid and I again left her in it...." As usual Hodgson had witnesses to support him, including Patt Poulson, a hard-drinking Philadelphia grocer brought to the Shore by "misfortune", who later challenged him to a duel in another dispute.²²

Although Hodgson wanted to discuss the charges against him with Governor Trelawny, the governor avoided an early conference, explaining that certain unnamed Shoremen with more accusations against him were expected in Jamaica. The situation had become "very disagreeable and rather alarming" to Hodgson, who had come to Jamaica without the means to defend himself against "irresponsible charges". Trelawny was treating him as if the unknown charges were true, and Hodgson feared that he might perhaps even be contemplating his dismissal from the superintendency. Therefore, he decided that the trying duty on the Shore was referable to an unpleasant encounter with his accusers, and when the arrival of the "scret party" was delayed, he told Trelawny that it would be improper to postpone his return to Black River.²³

²¹ Thomas had another complaint: Hodgson planned to bring "about 50 very unrul Negroes" to Corn Island who would terrorise the few poor settlers there. Hodgson relied hastily that he did not "keep Negroes that are not to be ruled". Declaration by George Thomas, 13 May 1769, CO 137/64, f. 133; Hodgson to Trelawny, 27 May 1769, CO 137/64, f. 137

²² Affidavits by Patt Poulson and others, 15 September 1769, CO 137/66, f. 78; Hodgson to Trelawny, 27 May 1769, CO 137/64, f. 137.

²³ Hodgson to Hillsborough, 23 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 167; Trelawny to Hodgson, 29 July 1769, CO 137/64, f. 149; Hodgson to Trelawny, 25 and 31 May 1760, CO 137/64, ff. 183, 151.

Hodgson's disrespectful attitude angered Trelawny, who demanded a reply to the charges already made against him, as well as an explanation why he had published election notices on the Shore. But Hodgson ignored these demands and repeated that he saw no reason for remaining away from his post. One of Governor Trelawny's relatives, Harry Trelawny, responded for the governor.

your return to the Mosquito shore in the Quality of its Superintendant will depend upon the opinion of his Excellency, and of his Majesty's Council of this Island, that you have exculpated yourself from the charges brought against you.

If Hodgson left Jamaica before the charges were explained, he was to be suspended from the superintendency.²⁴ Demanding to know the accusations against him, Hodgson said that: "The Rule of my Conduct in these Affairs is drawn from the Letter of the Earl of Hillsborough to me bearing date Whitehall February the 20th 1768...." He refused to appear before the Jamaica council, as it would offend the honour of His Majesty's appointment, the secretary of state who authorised the instructions, and his own reputation as a gentleman. Probably because his accusers had failed to come to Jamaica, Hodgson returned to the Shore with his commission intact.²⁵ Trelawny's frustration burst into a stream of invective charges against the superintendent in a long and tortuous tirade to Lord Hillsborough.²⁶

²⁴Trelawny to Hodgson, 3 and 5 June 1769, CO 137/64, ff. 153, 157; Hodgson to Trelawny, 4 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 155.

²⁵Hodgson to Trelawny, 10 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 128; Hodgson to Hillsborough, 23 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 167.

²⁶Trelawny to Hillsborough, 25 June 1769, CO 137/64, f. 112; Hillsborough to Trelawny, 4 November 1769, CO 137/64, f. 249.

While Hodgson was in Jamaica a dangerous situation was evolving on the Shore. As part of a Spanish plan to reduce the Mosquitos and to expel the king's "inveterate Enemies" (the English) from the Coast, Governor Joaquin de Nava of Costa Rica commissioned Mosquito Admiral Alparis Dilson as Spain's commanding general on the Mosquito Coast. Nava reported that the Indians were anxious to recognise Spanish sovereignty, but that the English had awed them with tales of Spanish cruelty. At the invitation of Governor Nava, Dilson sent a delegation to Cartago headed by his brother Jaspas Hall, who pledged the Mosquitos' allegiance to Spain (according to Nava) and promised to allow the young Mosquitos to be taught the Spanish language and the precepts of the Doctrina Cristiana in exchange for rich land at Matina on which to grow cacao, the right to transport their produce into the interior, and a guarantee of protection from the British -- but with the freedom to trade with them.²⁷ Governor Nava was suspicious of the Mosquitos' sincerity, since they had often accepted gifts and privileges in exchange for worthless promises of peace and alliance, but he saw no other way to stop their depredations or to reduce them to Spanish rule. At that, Nava would only treat with the reputedly more reliable pure Indian Mosquitos of the south: Zambo Mosquitos were still barred from Matina and all other communities in Costa Rica.²⁸

The rumours of an Hispano-Mosquito alliance terrified the Shoremen,

²⁷ Nava to Dilson, 23 May 1769, CO 137/65, f. 1; CDHCR, ix, 15; Nava to Salazar, 14 July 1769, BA 7, iv (1940), p. 319.

²⁸ Nava to Salazar, 14 July 1769, AG, iv (1940), p. 319; Dilson to Hodgson, 16 September 1769, CO 137/65, f. 260.

who irresponsibly and incorrectly blamed it on Hodgson. Naval commander Forrest said that "The cause (as I am informed) is owing to Mr. Hudson [sic], Superintendant upon the Shore, who has assumed an oppressive & arbitrary power amongst them...by which he has made himself obnoxious to the whole Shore." Forest did not explain how this tied Hodgson to the conspiracy.²⁹

Even if Dilson did unite with the Spanish, the Shore faced no immediate threat, since the other Mosquito chiefs would not support him, and no Spanish governor could undertake such a project without approval. Nava sent a copy of the proposed treaty to President Salazar, who thought that the document was "significant", although he turned to Madrid for instructions when two old men with considerable experience in treating with the problem of the Mosquito Coast, Alonso Fernández d Heredia and Luis Díez Navarro, expressed serious doubts that the Mosquitos could be trusted. "It is not possible to subject the Mosquitos to our Christian and honorable customs [except] by force of arms", Heredia said. He had once offered them even better terms, but his efforts had failed because of the Anglo-Mosquito alliance and the bellicosity of the Indians. Heredia also opposed the use of aguardiente to attract the Indians ("These people are much inclined to this drink and denying it disgusts them.") because it would lead to "a thousand scandals".³⁰ Navarro, who suggested

²⁹ Shoremen to Tr lawny, 7 October 1769, CO 137/65, f. 12; Forrest to Stephens, 8 October 1769, CO 137/64, f. 263; Patterson to Hodgson, 11 September 1769, DRH, appendix p. 14; Tonoston to Hodgson, 16 September 1769, DRH, appendix p. 16.

³⁰ Report by Pedro de Salazar, 29 December 1769, AGS Est 8133, folder 7; Heredia to Salazar, 24 November 1769, BAG, iv (1936), p. 385.

that perhaps the whole thing was an English plot, opposed granting land to the Mosquitos or giving them access to the interior. They would harvest everyone else's cacao, and probably use their knowledge of the country to conquer the whole province.³¹

When Governor Trelawny learned that the Mosquitos had "entered into a Treaty with the Subjects of some foreign Potentate", he again ordered Richard Jones to the Shore to investigate these rumours and to contact Hodgson who was to "afford him all the Aid and Assistance in [his]... power towards conciliating the Affections of the Mosquito Indians...." Trelawny also named Hodgson's implacable enemy, James Lawrie, to serve with Jones on a special commission of the peace, thus further weakening Hodgson's authority among the Shoremen.³²

Meanwhile, Hodgson had learned of the Dilson-Nava pact and had decided to investigate it. He left Black River for the windward Shore on the same day that Jones arrived at Cape Gracias a Dios. Jones remained for weeks at the Cape "because of the violence of the north winds and by other Impediments, treating with the Moskito Indians and Settling and Adjusting sundry differences betwixt them and the White Inhabitants"-- and incidentally taking advantage of his stay to investigate Hodgson's conduct. Hodgson had a simpler explanation for Jones' long stay at the Cape, which Jones later admitted; he had been incapacitated by a severe attack of gout.³³

³¹From Luiz Diez Navarro, 4 December 1760, BAGG, iv (1936), p. 386.

³²Minutes of the council of Jamaica, 8 November 1769, CO 137/65, f. 41; Trelawny to Jones, 2 November 1769, CO 137/65, f. 14; Trelawny to Hodgson, 20 November 1769, CO 137/66, f. 127.

³³Hodgson to Hillsborough, 14 November 1769 and 2 March 1770, CO 137/65, ff. 111, 239; Jones to Trelawny, 4 April 1770, CO 137/65, f. 183; Hodgson's diary, 17 December 1769 - 2 March 1770, inclose in Hodgson to Hillsborough, 2 March 1770, CO 137/65, f. 239.

On 22 Dec b r o gson visited Governor Briton, who promised that he would act ag in t Dilson if t ere should be need for "violent measures". Two d ys later H dgson met Dilson an accu ed him of bein a "rogue, rascal, and v'llain". "The admiral, whose "Behaviour wore the air of Embarrassment and appreh nsion, took some pains to e culpate himself", and accus d George ana Briton of "having injured him by false Reports and Sug estions". He explained that h had taken edvant ge of Nava's invitation to open a tr e with the interior, arguin_ that if the English could trade with the Spanish during times of peace, the Mosquito Men should have the same freedom. Hodgson tacitly approved Dilson's commercial plans, but he warned him never to speak disrespectfully about the English, unaware that had he "not been an Englishman Dilson would have thrown a Lance thro' him' for his intemperate remarks."³⁴

odgson later conferred with Admiral Israel, one of Dilson's closest allies, and tried to en ure his loyalty by renewing his commission with as much pomp as w s possible on a tropic beach. Soon afterwards Hodgson met the lugarteniente at Matina, a humb e subordinat who Hodgson described as a "destitute mul to", telling him th t he was bringing letters r ther than Dilson's head only because the t o nations were at peace. He was stationed on the Shore to pres rve that peace, Hodgson s id, and he thr atened to unleash the M s uitos if the Spanish tamp red with them. The lugarteniente apologis d for trying to sed ce he

³⁴ Hodgson to Dilson, 9 October 1769, DHR, app n ix p. 21; J nes t Trelawny, 4 April 1770, CO 137/65, f. 183; Ho gso 's diary, 1 Dec ber 1769 - 2 M rch 1770, inclo ed in Hodgson to Hillsborough, 2 M rch 1770, C 137/65, f. 239.

Mosquitos, and promised to keep the peace if the English would only retrain the Indians from "plundering and ill-using the Spaniards".³⁵

When Hodgson left Matina he believed that he had crushed the Dilson conspiracy, but he suspected that Jasper Hall and two of his friends might still be "deluded" by Spanish gifts, prompting the chilling remark: "I fear it will be necessary to put them out of the way." But it was two others who were to suffer the execution of his threat. "Israel the Mosquito Admiral died", Hodgson wrote in his diary on 25 March; a few days later he noted that he was "much concerned at being disappointed by [Dilson's] Death." Dilson had been "a spirited leading Man but his Duplicity of Conduct rendered his Allegiance rather dubious to the last." Governor Nava, depressed by his failure with the Mosquitos, wrote: "I do not lack suspicions that the English cut short his life. It appears that the time has not arrived [for their reduction], nor has the All Powerful reserved for me that duty."³⁶

³⁵Hodgson to Nava, 23 January 1770, CO 137/65, f. 246; Warren to Hodgson, 1 February 1770, CO 137/65, f. 256; Hodgson to Gill, 20 February 1770, CO 137/65, f. 270; Arlegui to Nava, 3 February 1770, BAGG, i (1940), p. 15. The lugart niente had earlier written a rather pitiful letter to Dilson begging for a respite from the attacks by the Indians. Its tone was so abject that it fooled the commander of the Jamaica naval station into believing that it was "a Blind under which they hope to carry their point with Admiral Dilson and his Brothers." Forrest to Trelawny, 9 November 1769, CO 137/65, f. 181.

³⁶Hodgson's diary, 17 December 1769 - 2 March 1770, inclosed in Hodgson to Hillsborough, 2 March 1770, CO 137/65, f. 239. Hodgson read the burial service for Admiral Israel, "a good and brave Mosquito Man", and probably the first Mosquito chief buried as a Christian, and commissioned young Tylas to succeed Dilson. Hodgson to Hillsborough, 7 October 1770, CO 137/60, f. 100; Nava to Salazar, 15 September 1771, BAGG, i (1940), p. 18.

While Hodgson was travelling on the windward Shore, Jones was still at the Cape conferring with various Shoremen and Mosquito chiefs, including King George. If the Mosquitos did not prove their fidelity, he told George, it must be assumed that they intended to support Dilson in his treason. The king interrupted to demand that Dilson be hanged and offered to perform the execution himself. However with George's loyalty assured, Jones politely refused the offer and sailed south to see Dilson. Jones met the admiral just before his death, and "ply'd him with a little Strong punch", before asking why he had corresponded with the Spaniards knowing that the priests would take his favourite wives and daughters and his people enslaved. Dilson recited the story of the conspiracy.

Some years agoe the Spaniards of Carpenters River (or Matina) most Treacherously Murdered One of his Brothers, several other Moskito Men and several White People, whom they had invited there to Trade with them, that in Revenge of this Masacray, he some time afterwards went and took a small, Spanish Fort in that River, and destroyed and brought away several Spaniards Etc. however not thinking this sufficient Satisfaction for the former Injury, he sometimes afterwards plundered that River Again and Carried away a Quantity of Cocoa, etc., but did no Other Injury, on which the Spaniards Entered into an Agreement to pay him 20 Seroons of Cocoa every Year provided he would for the future refrain him self and also prevent any other of the Moskito Indians from Plundering them in that River, this Proposal he Accepted of, and the Spaniards paid the Tribute pretty Regular for several Years and then by Degrees fell off, till their Payments became so Irregular and Uncertain that he sent them word, that if they did not make good their Payments Agreeable to their Contract he would One time or Other pay them another Visit and Compell them to do it. This so far alarmed them, that it came to the ears of the Governor of Carthago and soon after a Message and presents was sent to Dillson Promising him good Plantations and great honors and Riches if he would forsake the English and come over to the Spanish Interests....

The attention paid to Dilson worked on his vanity and he sent his brother

to parley with Nava. In Cartago

the priests and Governor De Nava [adv'ed the Indians] to cut off all the English hereticks, whom God Almighty despis'd so much, that he would no sooner have one of their Souls, than he would those of the Mules and Horses, therefore they might see there was no harm in Murthering them....

Dilson replied to Nava's letter with Jones' help. He thanked the governor for his pledge of peace, and promised that the Mosquitos would "always observe and keep the times of Peace and Warr with the English and Spaniards" (though he accused them of being always the first aggressors). He also reproached Nava for planning to build forts on the Shore to keep the Mosquitos from their turtle fishing grounds. "How your Excellency will effect your purpose here", he added, "without permission first obtain'd from the Governor of [Jamaica] time alone must show."³⁷

The prying activities of Richard Jones on the Shore incited an enduring feud with Hodgson, who was enraged when he heard that Jones had told the Shoremen "that Captain Hodgson had no sort of authority, that he was only to be considered as a private Gentleman". That a man of such "Folly and Malignity" could be commissioned to go to the Shore in the first place disgusted Hodgson. His "bodily Infirmities alone rendered him unfit for such an Undertaking."³⁸

Lord Hillsborough supported Hodgson. Jones had no business on the Shore in an official capacity while a crown officer was stationed there. But Governor Trelawny defended Jones' commission, since the grievances there were the result of Hodgson's misconduct and since Hodgson was

³⁷Jones to Trelawny, 4 April 1770, CO 137/65, f. 183; Dilson to Nava, c. February 1770, CO 137/65, f. 192.

³⁸Hodgson's diary, 17 December 1769 - 2 March 1770, inclosed in Hodgson to Hillsborough, 2 March 1770, CO 137/65, f. 239.

not yet at his post when the Dilson crisis first arose, he argued, contradicting himself, it had been necessary to send someone to the Shore without delay. Furthermore, Hodgson

in peremptory terms refuses to attend officially me and his Majesty's Council of this Island, asserting his Authority to be totally independent of them and his correspondence to be confined to your Lordships department alone.³⁹

The Mosquito Shore was slow to return to its peculiar brand of normalcy. Two Indian intrigues in two years had left the Shoremen nervous -- and their feud with Hodgson unsettled.⁴⁰ The magistrates and most of the settlers had been further alienated from the superintendent just before the Dilson conspiracy by a dispute between Hodgson and Francis Weaver, a tailor by trade and bound to Hodgson as a servant. Late in August 1769, magistrates Daniel Hewlett and William Pitt received identical notes from Hodgson that seemed to indicate a serious problem.

Sir, a Matter of consequence to the Legislative Authority in this Settlement having late happened, makes it necessary for me in the Kings name to desire you will be at the Kings house [a fortified three-storey building that also served as Hodgson's home] at 9 O'Clock this forenoon, in order to judge of and determine the most expedient Measures to be taken thereupon.

In response to Hodgson's call, Hewlett met him and the two men were on their way to Pitt's home when they encountered the town constable.

³⁹Hillsborough to Trelawny, 23 February 1770, CO 137/65, f.83; Trelawny to Hillsborough, 28 May 1770, CO 137/65, f. 173.

⁴⁰Forrest to Stephens, 12 June 1770, Adm 1/2481. In September 1770, unaware of Dilson's death, Charles III confirmed his commission as governor of the Mosquito Coast and approved most of the other articles of Nava's "treaty", although he refused to allow the Mosquitos to use the San Juan River or to establish cacao plantations at Matina. Re 1 or en, 17 September 1770, BGG, ii (190), p. 145.

"Weaver refused coming with him on [your] Warrant", the constable told Hodgson, "as it was not Signed by a Justice of the Peace, else he would obey it...."

Hodgson's reply, "we are two Magistrates", astonished Hewlett, who asked Hodgson if he were also a magistrate.

"Chief Magistrate", responded Hodgson, who had sent the constable back to fetch Weaver.

At Pitt's house, after a table and chairs were hurriedly set up, Hodgson took the centre seat and asked Pitt, his father-in-law, and Hewlett, who was also Pitt's son-in-law, to sit beside him.

When a bystander chanced to sit down at the same table, Hodgson cried out "Sir, we must not allow this, we are now a bench of Justices...."

After the reprimanded citizen had moved to the back of the room, Hodgson produced a warrant for Weaver's arrest and an affidavit from the constable stating that he had refused to obey it.

"If Weaver was his Servant", Pitt commented dryly, "he might have come without a Warrant."

"That was confounding two questions in one", Hodgson replied, "the contempt he shewed to his Warrant was what he was then on."

Weaver was brought before the table and testified that he had not worked out his time for Hodgson because the superintendent had threatened to beat him.

Hodgson called out "Shall such a Fuppy contemn my Authority and warrant, Look at him doth he look like one that will dispute my Authority?"

By God I would make a broath of him first, but by his looks it would be Poiso ." Furthermore, if the const ble refused to carry out his orders he might beat him as well. "N y", he went on, "in such a Case as this...A Magistrate's Authority was very gr at and...he could have answered Killing him and the Taylor to."

Forgetting Weaver for a moment, Hodgson claimed to be chief justice, with the po er to supersede Hewlett or any other officer on tne Shore. He ad itted that his authority did not come from Jamaica (Hewlett and Pitt served under a grand commission from the governor of Jamaica, and there was a general belief among the Shoremen that the superintendent's commission must also come from the governor), but he said that it was from the king and thus "three times" greater than that of any previous superintendent. "He has never yet produced any commission to the Inhabitants", Hewlett later swore before the governor.

Fitt and Hewlett refused to support Hodgson against Weaver. "It was now tne general Opinion of the People", Pitt said angrily, "that he could not be a Magistrate till he was qualified", and therefore he had no authority to sit with them. "If he insisted to be a Magistrate he might set by himself...."

A large number f curious spectators had gathered during the debate. Much "was their Surprize and Contempt for the author of it", according to Hewlett, " hen they found nothing greater had happened than a quarrel betw en Mr. Hodgson and his Taylor." "Mr. Hodgs n's Ludicrous

d'scourse...made him the laughing Stock of the place...."⁴¹

Hodgson laboured to reconcile the Shoremen to his rule, arguing that his influence with Lord Hillsborough would bring them security, prosperity and independence. In October 1769, fearful of a slave uprising and of the inconsistent behaviour of the Mosquitos, the Shoremen, including Pitt, Hewlett, Hewm, Bode and Lawrie, reached an understanding with Hodgson, affirming that "we are certain that no Gentleman whatever knows better than Yourself what a very valuable Country this is, & the great importance thereof in several respects to Great Britain", they asked Hodgson to help them obtain "An established Mode of Constitutional Government, supported with two Independent Companies...."⁴² As requested Hodgson supported the settlers' petition, but he also asked that his own commission be enlarged and that the Mosquito Shore be separated from Jamaican authority to strengthen the civil government there. He even offered to raise an independent company and transport it to the Shore at his own expense. But with no one willing to take the responsibility for any innovation, Whitehall decided not to change the existing form of government.⁴³

In spite of the numerous difficulties, the English settlements on

⁴¹ Hodgson to Hewlett and Pitt, 20 August 1769, in Hewlett to Jones, 1 October 1769, CO 137/65, f. 210; Hodgson to Hillsborough, 9 August 1769, CO 137/64, f. 276.

⁴² Speech of Robert Hodgson to the Shoremen, 7 August 1769, DRH, appendix p. 12; Lawrie to Hodgson, 8 August 1769, RH, appendix p. 14; Petition from the Shoremen, 17 October 1769, CO 137/65, f. 73; Shoremen to Hodgson, 27 October 1769, CO 137/69, f. 256.

⁴³ Hodgson to Hillsborough, 19 October 1769, CO 137/65, f. 70; Regulations proposed by Robert Hodgson for the government of the Mosquito Shore, 19 October 1769, CO 137/35, f. 23.

the Mosquito Shore and at Belize flourished. To avoid high English duties on tortoise shell and sarsaparilla, and because of the availability and quality of inexpensive Dutch goods and their captive Dutch market for logwood and mahogany, a profitable trade was carried on with the Dutch of Curaçao. But the most important reason for this prosperity was the new legal status of the logwood settlements on Yucatán. Black River became a way-station for merchant vessels going to and from the Bay, and many Spaniards traded with the Baymen or had gangs cutting wood at Belize. Furthermore, the Shore supplied Belize with all of its fresh meat and most of its fresh vegetables. Finally, there was a growing feeling among the Spaniards that the Treaty of 1763 gave them the same legal status as that enjoyed by the Baymen. If support could be obtained from the government of the British colony in the Bay of Honduras promise further, perhaps spectacular, growth.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Hodgson to Hillsborough, 3 September 1768, CO 137/65, f. 68; Vargas to Salazar, c. 15 January 1769, Guat 459. Exports from the Mosquito Shore in 1769 were worth £61,048 sterling. The most important official exports were:

Mahogany	789,000 feet	£19,737
Sarsaparilla	195,300 pounds	17,902
Tortoise shell	9,600 pounds	3,840
Cacao	122,500 pounds	12,250
Mules and horses	250	2,000
Spanish coin, gold and silver bullion		3,500

Small amounts of beef hides, deer skins, cotton, coffee and indigo were also exported from the Shore. There was also a considerable unrecorded trade in Negro slaves with the Spaniards and Indian slaves with Jamaica, Belize and North America, as well as the trade with the Dutch. But there are neither exact figures nor estimates on this trade. Jones to Trelawny, 4 April 1770, CO 137/65, f. 183.

Chapter VIII

THE HODGSON-SETTLER CONTROVERSY:
The First and Second Revolts, 1771 - 1775

Frustrating the Dilson conspiracy did not ease tension in middle America. The Mosquito Indians continued their incessant incursions, and Spanish missionaries expanded their operations towards the Mosquito Shore, where the Hodgson - settler dispute was becoming ever more strident, and various parties of Zambos Mosquitos had begun jealous squabbles among themselves. And hovering over all was the threat of another war as Spain and England argued over the possession of the Falkland Islands. "War with our Neighbours the Spaniards is daily expected", the Shoremen cried early in 1771. There were rumours that invasion preparations were being made; in Nicaragua, Governor Cavello had recently called for a "bloody war" to destroy the Zambos Mosquitos, and in Costa Rica, Governor Nava had told Robert Hodgson that: "I intend to destroy some of the English [on the Mosquito Shore] who ought to be considered Pirates."¹

¹Shoremen to Trelawny, 29 January 1771, CO 137/66, f. 221; Nava to Hodgson, 12 February 1770, CO 137/66, f. 119. Cavello to president of Guatemala, 20 January 1770, BGG, iv (1940), p. 330; for comprehensive studies of the Falkland Island dispute see Octavio Illunilla, "Ivinas. El conflicto Anglo-Español de 1770", Aur' o de estudio Americano, iv (1947), pp. 267-422, and Julius Goebel, The Struggle for the Falkland Islands (Yale, 1927).

Spanish colonists also feared a rupture. In the north, 600 Englishmen and 300 Mosquitos were expected to invade Yucatán, and Cavello reported similar enemy plans for Nicaragua. A Junta de guerra in Panamá in June decided that it was impossible to reinforce the garrison on the San Juan because "the coasts are...inundated with Mosquito Indians." In May 1771, as both sides waited apprehensively for the outbreak of hostilities, the Mosquitos looted and burned a Spanish vessel at the mouth of the San Juan which was carrying supplies to Fort Inmaculada.² Colvill Cairns, an Irishman who had established a plantation near Governor Briton's home at Tebuppy, had instigated the attack, and then spread the rumours that the Spanish had been the aggressors. He encouraged the Indians to "retaliate" by assaulting Matina, but they were dissuaded from doing so by other Shoremen and the immediate crisis was averted.³ Then with the news that the Anglo-Spanish controversy over the Falkland Islands had been resolved, the apprehension of a conflict once again subsided.⁴

²Three prisoners taken by the Mosquitos in the seizure were ransomed by Thomas L'Estrange, who, according to the Spanish, had become English corregidor at Bluefields at the death of Henry Corrin. Charles III rebuked Governor Olaziregui of Panamá for corresponding with L'Estrange, calling it a partial recognition of the English settlements on the Mosquito Coast. Quitero to Charles III, 6 June 1771, Guat 665; Olaziregui to Arriaga, 18 June and 12 July 1771, Guat 665; Mosquito control of the mouth of the San Juan River at this time was so complete that the Spanish were obliged to send garrison replacements for Fort Inmaculada across the peninsula from Portovel, up the Pacific Coast and then back across Nicaragua.

³Cairns also encouraged the Mosquito to seize a Spanish supply vessel at the mouth of the San Juan in 1774 and then loaded his own schooner with the plunder. He owned thirty piraguas which he loaned to the Indians for their turtling and raiding expeditions, and was perhaps the worst offender in the peculiar form of debt peonage practised by English traders on the Shore.

⁴Junta de guerra, 11 June 1771, Guat 665; Fernández to Chávez, 6 October 1771, Guat 855; Oliver to Arriaga, 11 May 1771, Mex 3099; Cavello to Arriaga, 20 May 1771, Guat 461; Calderón, Relice, p. 215.

In spite of the relaxation of international tensions, Mosquito incursions continued, especially into Costa Rica, Talamanca and Panamá, where the populous Indian villages offered an endless supply of slaves.⁵ After the Mosquitos had extirpated the coastal tribes near Bocas del Toro in the 1740s, they were forced to extend their operations as far south as Portovelo, and to carry their raids deep into the populous Talamanca region. Mosquito depredations continued elsewhere, however. In the summer of 1771 on the leeward Shore, Zambo General Tempest seized three Spanish mulattos and the sarsaparilla that they had been hired to gather for John Christopherz. Tempest then sold the sarsaparilla and kept the Spaniards as slaves. Christopherz refused to ransom them, arguing that it would merely encourage the Indians to similar future mischief and frighten Spanish traders from coming to the Shore.⁶

The English and Spanish officials used various techniques to restrain the Mosquitos. Governor Trelawny ordered that a plan be prepared for their cultural and political advancement. Superintendent Hodgson suggested that King George I strengthen his rule by holding court several times a year to listen to the complaints of his subjects and by using public games to give them "more ample Notions of Social Virtues". George ignored the suggestions, however, and there was no change in the Mosquito behaviour.⁷ Two years later Hodgson met with Indian Governor Timothy Briton at Tebuppy to advise him to accept an offer from the

⁵Hodgson to Hillsborough, 15 December 1772, CO 137/69, f. 71.

⁶Christopherz to Hodgson, 4 August 1771, DRH, p. 41; Nava to president of Guatemala, 15 September 1771, A3G, i (1940), p. 18.

⁷Trelawny to Hodgson, 8 January 1772, CO 137/67, f. 36; Diary of Robert Hodgson, 16 February 1772, CO 137/67, f. 195.

Spanish at Matina to pay the Mosquitos forty seroons of cacao a year in exchange for a "perpetual Reconciliation". While it would be hard for the Spanish "to pay for living in their own Country", Hodgson said it was preferable to the Indian incursions and to the "little Pilferings" which stifled commerce. Briton promised to accept the proposal, and Hodgson sailed for Matina to inform the Spaniards of the decision, first stopping at the San Juan River to pick up the stripped and partly burned hulk of the Spanish supply boat recently seized by the Mosquitos. He towed it to Matina, and beached it a few feet from the lugarteniente's shack. The Spaniards there pleaded with Hodgson to take it elsewhere, since it was the king's boat. If guardacostas came from Cartagena to retrieve it, they said, the illicit trade at Matina would surely be exposed; the discovery would mean their ruin, and perhaps their death. Although Hodgson refused to move the boat, the Matinos were able to dispose of it before the arrival of inquisitive officials.⁸

Mosquito incursions were more feared in Guatemala than was illicit commerce⁹ and even the Consejo de las Indias occasionally agreed that

⁸Terry to Hodgson, 13 March 1774, CO 137/69, f. 209; Diary of Robert Hodgson, 1 April 1774, CO 137/69, f. 209; Hodgson to Dartmouth, 24 July 1775, CO 137/70, f. 161.

⁹King Charles III erroneously believed that the geographical location of Guatemala was sufficient protection against the Mosquitos and the English, but after a punishing series of raids, President Martín de Mayorga said that he was "far from the belief" that this "advantage" had hindered the English and their "infidel" friends; in fact, he noted, their insolence was increasing daily. Declaration by Bartolo Reyes, n.d., 1772, BAGG, i (1940), p. 20; Mayorga to Arriaga, 30 October 1773, printed in García Paláez, Memoria, ii, 168.

preventing these was a more pressing need than stopping the trade. In 1770, José Antonio de Vargas, who owned a plantation in the mountains of Matagalpa, was accused of trading with the Mosquito. However the fiel of Guatemala defended Vargas because he acted as a safeguard against Mosquito raids and had attracted the famous Moolwa Captain Yarrison (Garrison) to the Spanish cause. For these services Vargas was acquitted of the charges against him (although they were proven), and even awarded the title of capitán de las conquistas by Charles III. His accuser was ordered to pay all expenses in the case, plus 200 pesos to Vargas for having maligned his honour.¹⁰

Spanish missionaries on the frontier tried to counter these raids by giving títulos de paz to the Mosquitos to permit them to enter reduced villages such as San Francisco, Boruca and Atirro (thus allowing the introduction of illicit merchandise from Jamaica and Curaçao). They would come in whether peacefully or by force, the priests argued, so they might as well take advantage of this contact to proselyte them, yet there are no signs that this tactic was ever successful.¹¹

Spanish missionary enterprises during this period were part of a broader campaign to stop Mosquito incursions and illicit trade, preparatory to ejecting the British from the coasts of Guatemala and

¹⁰ Testimony by the fiel, 24 October 1770, Guat 856; Declaration by Gabriel de Espinosa, 16 May 1771, Guat 600; Opinion of the Consejo, 27 June 1771, Guat 408; Charles III to García, 16 January 1771, Guat 68.

¹¹ Report by the Consejo de Indias, 10 May 1770, Guat 48; Declaration by Marcelo Sarrat, n.d., CD CR, x, 41; Obadilla to the Junta of Guatemala, 1 July 1775, CC, p. 202; Barranto to the ayuntamiento, 15 September 1775, RC, p. 205.

to reducing the mosquito Indian. However the missionaries received little support and even much vilification from Spanish colonists and officials who feared the English mosquito reaction. Even Governor Cavello refused to sanction an attempt to reduce the Indians of Tologalpa because of the incidents "pernicious to the Royal Service" which might ensue. Nevertheless, the missionaries penetrated down the banks of the river towards Cape Gracias a Dios, frightening the English settlers on the coast. The Mosquitos and Shoremen struggled unceasingly against the missionary influence, especially among the "Commerce" Indians, who were valuable as intermediaries and porters in the contraband trade, and as tributary Indians and spies.¹² Indian chiefs who succumbed to the Spanish attractions were punished, churches burned and village priest murdered. Reduced Indians were impelled to flee from their guardians into the mountains by mosquitos who entered their villages at night. The reaction of British officials to missionary activities was indirect and less brutal. Hodgson asked the Church of England to send a missionary to the Shore and received funds from the governor of Jamaica to support a chaplain in Black River. Admiral George Rodney brought King George I and several other chiefs to Jamaica in 1774 to offset the "tampering of an Irish priest". The result of this general opposition to the Spanish missionaries was a failure in their work in Tologalpa and in Matagalpa,

¹²Hodgson to Hillsborough, 7 October 1770, CO 13/66, f. 100; Estabon to the Council of Guatemala, 19 April 1773, AGG, ii (1942), p. 114; Cavello to Charles III, 7 September 1774, Gu t 600; Opinion of the Consejo de Indias, 4 March 1776, Gu t 409.

as well as in the more distant reductions of Talaanca and Peten, prompting one Franciscan friar to remark that: "There was no hope of reduction, either among the apostate or among the infidel."¹³

The domestic squabbles on the Shore were just a bitter though less sanguinary. Hodgson's determination to rule again collided with the obstinacy of the settlers, many of whom had become his lasting enemies. Yet he did not face an angry multitude alone. He was supported by the catechist of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Black River, Christian Frederick Post (a man of "extraordinary character"), and by Philip Bode (who, like Hewlett and Hodgson, was married to one of Pitt's illegitimate daughters), and by Pitt's popular son, John.¹⁴ But Hodgson's enemies were more numerous and far more vociferous than his friends, and they took advantage of Richard Jones' recent visit¹⁵ to voice numerous petty complaints: that he had impressed men for duty in the king's name--and then used them in his own service; that he had given a militia officer's commission to Abraham Tonoston, not only Hodgson's business associate, but a mestizo as well; that he had claimed

¹³ Chamorro to the guardian of the Colegio de Cristo in Guatemala, 20 November 1774, Guat 450; Hodgson to Trelawny, 8 April 1772, CO 137/68, f. 17; Rodney to Stephens, 1 October 1774, ADM 1/239.

¹⁴ Hodgson to Trelawny, 15 November 1772, CO 137/68, f. 13; Hodgson to Hillsborough, 7 October 1770, CO 137/66, f. 74; Shorement Jones, 12 March 1770, CO 137/65, f. 208; All of Pitt's children were illegitimate, which carried little stigma on the Mosquito Shore or anywhere on the frontier. According to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Warren, a missionary sent to the Shore by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, "Cohabitation ... is very prevailing in those parts, and I find great difficulty to recommend marriage." Warren to S.P.G., n.d. 1770, printed in An Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Annual Report, 1777 (London, 1771), p. 31. William Pitt's last will and testament, 12 May 1770, FCC, MSS, f. 436.

¹⁵ See above, p. 169.

ownership over vast tracts of unused land on the Shore; and finally, that he had sanctioned the slavery of friendly "Commerce" Indians¹⁶

Disputes over Indian land grants most deeply split Hodgson and the Shoremen, and led to what Hodgson described as the "first and second revolts". In April 1770, he decreed that all grants must be recorded and that new grants must have his certification. A month later he induced Mosquito King George I to issue him a new grant and to reconfirm his old ones. Since Hodgson already held more land than anyone else on the shore, the angry reaction of the Shoremen was not surprising.¹⁷ In "open Defiance" of Hodgson, but on the strength of the special commission of the peace from Governor Trelawny, James Lawrie sat as a justice at court in Black River. The superintendent saw his authority crumbling before the "Licentious Irregularity" of his enemies. "The Civil Power, the only Power here", he told Hillsborough, "has got out of all Rule and Controul, and the Hindura Spirit and Impatience of rebuke is daily increasing." Even the magistrates, he said, were "mostly people of abandoned Character."¹⁸

¹⁶ Shoremen memorial, January 1770, CO 137/65, f. 202; Potts to Jones, c. February 1770, CO 137/65, f. 198, John Potts, a settler at Bluefields, accused Hodgson of transferring Cookeraw Indians, who had been subject to Henry Crin until his death, to Abraham Tonoston. Although Hodgson was guilty of this accusation, a few years later he brought a tribe of Rama Indians back to the coast after they had been mistreated and driven into the interior by wind-ravaged Shoremen. Mosquito Shore contingent expenses, 23 October 1772, T 1/504, f. 213.

¹⁷ Indian land grant decree, 5 April 1770, CO 137/69, f. 258; Land grant from George I to Hodgson, 17 March 1771, FO 53/44, f. 255.

¹⁸ Lawrie to Hodgson, 25 September 1771, DRH, p. 3; Hodgson to Trelawny, 22 February 1771, CO 137/66, f. 227.

Hoping to re-stabilise his rule and to punish his opposition, Hodgson wrote a conciliatory letter to Governor Trelawny asking him to withdraw all magistrates' commissions on the Shore. Trelawny rescinded the old commission, as requested, but then he appointed Hodgson's worst enemies, James Lawrie, Daniel Lett and George Hewm, as the new magistrates. Even the key positions in the militia went to his adversaries. Hodgson was amazed by the new commission, which he said was "calculated to set every thing in a flame, absolutely." The only bright spot for him was the selection of his father-in-law, William Pitt, as custos and keeper of the records. And even that advantage was about to be lost. On 14 April Hodgson wrote that Pitt, whose life "does honour to uncultivated Nature", had taken to his bed; the old man was dying.¹⁹

Hodgson^{had} acted too quickly when he pressed Trelawny to revoke the magistrate's commission, for when Hillsborough responded to his complaints by instructing Trelawny to reprimand the magistrates serving under the old commission and to give Hodgson the power to supersede them if they persisted in their revolt, Trelawny had already issued the new commission, and he ignored Hillsborough's orders.²⁰

In the summer of 1771, Trelawny sent the quietus (release) for the old commission and the deputation (authority) for the new to Pitt, but

¹⁹Hodgson to Trelawny, 2 February and 14 April 1771, CO 137, ff. 227, 23; Trelawny to Hodgson, 8 April 1771, CO 137/66, f. 229; Hodgson to Trelawny, 29 January 1771, CO 137/69, f. 234; Trelawny to Pitt, 6 April 1771, CO 137/69, f. 271.

²⁰Hillsborough to Trelawny, 4 May 1771, CO 137/66, f. 136.

Fitt die before the new commission could be brought into operation. Taking advantage of the confused situation, the Sheriff forced Hodgson to give up the quietus (which he had taken at Fitt's death), and as a result at Robert Stotebury's election, and elected the 'Conservators of the Peace'. According to Hodgson, these men had finally established the "deposite Union".

When I look round me for matter hereon to exercise His Majesty's Instructions, I find none left, and I am thereby forced to begin to think it is almost time for me to quit this Scene of Confusion and leave the Country to its Catastrophe.²¹

Trelawny now admitted that some of the magistrates in Black River had fallen into "irregularities", but he effectively exonerated them by extending most of their commissions (George Hewm was dismissed from office, and then only temporarily), explaining that "violent measures would put the Settlement in a flame." The governor then rebuked Hodgson for being partially responsible for the disturbances on the Shore, and said that he hoped that the "petty Disorders" would yield to "the many important objects of Indian Policy on the Mosquito Shore." Thus, he agreed with the settlers who claimed that Hodgson should have no authority other than that of "Superintendent of Indian Affairs".²²

Hodgson denied that the jurisdiction of the superintendent was limited to Indian Affairs, and although he seemed momentarily resigned

²¹Journal of the "First Revolt" on the Mosquito Shore, 25 June 1771, CO 137/69, f. 269; Hodgson to Lynn, 24 and 28 September 1771, CO 137/67, ff. 51, 47; Rodney to Stephens, 4 December 1771, SP 94/19.

²²Trelawny to Hodgson, 8 January 1772, CO 137/67, f. 36; Gefrina to Hewlett, 8 January 1772, CO 137/69, f. 69.

to the new arrangement on the Shore, he still longed for effective power, and planned to continue his struggle against the Shoremen. "The People dropped the legislative Authority they had assumed to themselves, & the Settlement is somewhat at rest", he said, "but I doubt it's continuing so", for a "certain licentious spirit [existed] that was ready to burst forth at any time."²³ Hodgson's bitter feud with Trelawny was renewed at this time when he accused the governor of crippling him in his job. "If your Excellency wishes me to do much, You must begin with affording me full Countenance and Support." In response, Trelawny accused Hodgson of being primarily responsible for the problems on the Shore.

Litigation Evasion or Delay await every measure respecting the Mosquito Shore which does not originate from yourself;...even the Decorum of expression you speak of preserving...is so irksome that you seize the first opportunity of indirectly conveying illiberal reflections on my Conduct.²⁴

"I must take leave to mention to Your Excellency", Hodgson retorted, "that it is my well considered opinion [that the disorders on the Shore] ...are owing to your Excellency's discountenancing the Authority the King intended me to exercise here...." "The Settlement in Your Excellency's hands is become a Seat of Anarchy and distress."²⁵ These comments might have earned Hodgson a court-martial, but he had the last word; before he could act, Governor Sir William Trelawny died.²⁶

²³Hodgson to Hillsborough, 15 December 1772, CO 137/69, f. 71; Hodgson to Hillsborough, 9 April 1772, CO 137/67, f. 91.

²⁴Trelawny to Hodgson, 15 November 1772, CO 137/68, f. 21; Hodgson to Trelawny, April 1772, CO 137/68, f. 17.

²⁵Hodgson to Trelawny, 15 December 1772, CO 137/69, f. 73.

²⁶Dalling to Hillsborough, 19 December 1772, CO 137/68, f. 25. Hodgson's father had been threatened by Governor Knowles with a court-martial for similar remarks many years before. See above p. 79.

After Trelawny's death neither the Shoremen nor Hodgson were anxious to resume a dispute that offered so little profit. Recognising the need for an effective government, they resolved their differences, and the Shoremen petitioned Trelawny's temporary replacement, John Dalling, for an elective council. "We leave much of these matters, as also the State of Our Militia, to be represented...by the Superintendent," the settlers said. Dalling responded by approving their request but he also approved Hodgson's private solicitation by appointing him chief magistrate and keeper of the records, posts which previous superintendents had held and which Hodgson claimed by right, but which neither Trelawny nor the Shoremen had been willing to grant him. The organisation of the militia and the power to dissolve the council were also entrusted to Hodgson, while the Shoremen were commanded to offer "a due, and proper, Subordination" to him.²⁷

Hodgson was now convinced that he could "deal with the Multitude", but his victory was so complete that it "defeated every hope and expectation of the colony", and the "coalition" began to break up even before the council were selected. The election was delayed when Hodgson was injured, and then the Shoremen decided to hold it without him, forming a "Council of the People" that Hodgson called a 'Presumptious'

²⁷ Shoremen to Dalling, 29 January 1773, CO 137/69, f. 3; Dalling to Shoremen, 19 April 1773, CO 137/69, f. 5; Shoremen to Hodgson, 26 January 1773, DRH, p. 46; Dalling to Hodgson, 19 April 1773, DRH, p. 55; "Facts or Proofs" against Robert Hodgson, White to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 11 November 1773, p. 16, in CO 123/2, vol. ii.

and illegal a sumption of power.²⁸

N matter what decisions Dalling might have made, the Hod son - settler coalition was doomed from the beginning because of a fanciful investment scheme. Early in 1771 an unknown settler discovered an abandoned Spanish gold mine in the mountainous frontier r gion near Black River. Soon afterwards, a group of Shoremen, including Lawrie, Hewlett and Gilibert, received a huge grant of land near Blac River from George I, extending thirty miles inland from the sea. To assure control of the area, which became known as the Alberapoyer Estate, a similar grant was obtained from Captain Philip, chief of the lower Paya Indians who inhabited the region. In April 1772, a company was formed and divided into twenty-two equal shares, with Allan Auld and James Lawrie being named steward and factor, respectively, in London and on the Mosquito Shore.²⁹ The Alberapoyer agents then requested government protection, and received a promise of "effectual support" from Hillsborough. But Hodgson opposed the scheme, which he called "iniquitous" because it would injure the wandering Shoremen who worked the region for its sarsaparilla and wood products; Lawrie explained Hodgson's

²⁸ Public notices post d at Black River by Robert Hodgson, 22 May and 5 June 1773, CO 137/69, ff. 14, 20; Hodgson to Dalling, 9 July 1773, CO137/69, f. 9; McLeish, "British Activities", p. 253. In later years Hodgs n's enemies claimed that he had promised not to accept any commission from Dalling. However, there are no documents available to support the contention, which Hodgson vigorously denied. White to Pownall, 26 June 1775, CO 137/70, f. 53; "Facts or Proofs", p. 70.

²⁹ Land grants from King George I, 21 May 1771 and 4 November 1772, FO 53/44, ff. 263, 266. Land grant from Captain Philip, 29 June 1771, FO 53/44, f. 259; Rules and dir ctions for the Estate of Alberapoyer, 2 April 1772, TS 11/989/3665. George received fiv shillings worth of goods in exchange for the grant.

antagonism differently; he had not been invited into the scheme. Because of the threat that Hodgson posed to their plans, the Alberapoyer investors decided to force his removal from office. He "will never have done disturbing this Settlement", they wrote. "Its hard we cannot be relieved from a Man, who is so disagreeable & has the Interest of this poor Shore, so little at heart...." Lord Dartmouth, who had replaced Hillsborough, ordered the new governor of Jamaica, Sir Basil Keith, to inquire into the complaints against the superintendent, as well as "to give due encouragement to such undertakings [Alberapoyer] as you think may be of Advantage to the Commerce and Interest of the Kingdom."³⁰

The election on the Mosquito Shore in June 1773 indicated the strength of Hodgson's opposition: only one of his friends, John Pitt, was elected to the council, while three of his strongest enemies, Burke, Hewm and Lawrie, received more votes than any other candidate.³¹ The new councilmen composed an oath which they asked Hodgson to administer. Its preamble had a certain independent flavour.

Whereas it 's directly Contra y to the Principles of the British Constitution for British Subjects in any Settlement to be there bound by Laws made by an Assembly in any other Settlement or Collony, when the said Subjects so bound... have no legal Representatives of their own Electing in the Assembly of Such other Settlement....³²

Hodgson refused to read this "patched-up oath" to the "Revolutionary

³⁰ Shoremen to Dartmouth, 30 June 1773, TS 11/989/3665; Hodgson to Shoremen, 27 March 1773, C 137/69, f. 85; Shoremen to Hodgson, 1 February 1773, CO 137/69, f. 83; Lawrie to Jones, 2 February 1773, CO 137/70, f. 114, Dartmouth to Keith, 27 October 1773, CO 137/68, f. 101.

³¹ Black River election returns, 12 June 1773, CO 137/69, f. 22.

³² Council to Hodgson, 3 July 1773, CO 137/69, f. 28.

Council", telling them that "the moment I swear You...into Business I swear myself out, which You know that I must not do." The new council members declined to accept an alternate oath that Hodgson had prepared, but they refused to swear themselves into office, as suggested by a committee of Shoremen, afraid of being accused of open rebellion against the crown.³³ But late in September, after the harvest season, they boldly acceded to the request of the settlers; the "second revolt" had begun. Hodgson wrote excitedly:

I have barely time to acquaint Your Honor that the leading Inhabitants of this Country have broke out into such open acts of opposition to Government that I am under a necessity of representing them to you as in a State of Revolt.³⁴

He pleaded with Dalling for troops (sixty red coats should "bring the Settlement into order") and for a condemnation of the Shoremen's actions. They had not proceeded from a "spirit of proud, ignorant Licentiousness", Hodgson said, but rather from the influence of "rebellious Principles". Their leaders had offered "the Allurement of natural Liberty to the vicious and ignorant"; they had established a government and were "alluring foreign Strength" to their "new erected State".³⁵

The Shoremen assumed all civil and juridical power on the Shore,

³³Declaration by Robert Hodgson, 21 June 1773, CO 137/70, f. 123; Hodgson to Council, 17 July 1773, CO 137/69, f. 106.

³⁴Hodgson to Dalling, 26 September 1773, CO 137/69, f. 30.

³⁵Hodgson to Dalling, 8 October 1773, CO 137/69, f. 108; Hodgson to Dartmouth, 9 November 1773, CO 137/69, f. 65. Hodgson never enlarged on these open accusations of revolt and treason. However, one is tempted to suggest that he was referring to North America, for the Shoremen's closest commercial ties were with New York and Philadelphia.

although Hodgson tried to counter them by establishing an opposing court with himself, William Walker and Christian Frederick Post³⁶ as magistrates. But declaring that Post was a foreigner and Hodgson's commission a "phony piece of paper", the council elected magistrates on 2 October independent of both Hodgson and the governor of Jamaica. The Shore had, indeed, experienced a bloodless revolt, for if the council election in June had been lawful (which Hodgson denied), their election of magistrates certainly was not.³⁷

In November the Jamaica council discussed the situation on the Mosquito Shore. They saw no chance for Dalling's plan of government to succeed, although they felt that Hodgson "should even possess a greater degree of authority under proper restrictions, than he has hitherto enjoyed", and they advised the governor to interpose his own authority there. "Nothing can be more derogatory to the Commission His Majesty has been pleased to Honor [Hodgson with than the]...unworthy struggle for Independent power" by the settlers. Dalling responded by

³⁶ Post was born in Polish Prussia in 1710 and spent many dangerous years as a missionary among the Indians of North America. In 1745 he was arrested on a false charge of inciting the Iroquois Indians to raids in New York. During the Seven Years War, Post detached the Delaware Indians from their alliance with the French after Braddock's defeat, thus forcing the French to abandon Fort Duquesne and retreat from the region. In 1761, he was reputed to have built the first white man's house within the boundaries of the present state of Ohio. He was sent to the Mosquito Shore by the Moravians in 1764 and spent the next twenty years there. He died in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1785. Post's fascinating journals are printed in Reuben Gold Thwaites, Early Western Travels 1741 - 1746 (Cleveland, 1904), pp. 177-291 and in Anon., A Inquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Iroquois Indian from the British Interest.... (London, 1759), pp. 130-171.

³⁷ Declaration by Joshua Stoddart, 20 November 1773, CO 137/69, f. 32; Anon. report from Black River, n.d., CO 137/70, f. 110; Public notice at Black River, 29 September 1773, CO 137/70, f. 108; Note to Pownall, 9 July 1774 CO 137/69, f. 180. The Shoremen later admitted that their behaviour had been questionable, but asserted that they had acted for "Self

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by dissolving the Mos uito Shore council on 23 Novemoer 1773, and by forbidding the S oremen to hold new elections until instructions were received from London. But the Shoremen ignored Dalling's orders, knowing that he wa about to be replaced by someone whom they hoped would be more amenable to their desires. In fact, the new governor, Sir Basil Keith, had already received orders from Dartmouth to investigate Hodgson's conduct and "to establish such Regulations and Reform as Shall appear...necessary and expedient."³⁸

When Keith arrived in Kingston he was informed that the Shoremen had been forced to form a government for the "Peace Folicy good order & Government as well [as for] the Pre ervation of the Colony." Convinced that Hod son was largely responsible for the problems there, he only mildly rebuked the Shoremen. Yet in spite of his sympathetic tone, the settlers disclaimed Keith's authority just as they had Hodgson's. Only the king or parliament, they maintained, could settle a permanent form of government for them.³⁹

Meanwhile, Hodgson's enemies, the "revolutionary Rabel" with their "desperate Cause to defend", had construed the silence from Whitehall

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Preservation". Robert white admitted that it was a "revolt", but not one against the crown or the governor of Jamaica, but rather "against the illegal, arbitrary, assumed powers and authority of Mr. Hodson". "Facts or Proofs", p. 47.

³⁸ Jamaica council report, 23 November 1773, CO 137/69, f. 34; Dalling to Shoremen, 23 November 1773, CO 137/69, f. 316; Dartmouth to Keith, 27 October 1773, CO 137/68, f. 101.

³⁹ Shoremen to Keith, 4 March 1774, CO 137/69, f. 163; Keith to Shoremen, 5 April 1774, CO 137/69, f. 165; Keith to Dartmouth, 2 Septe ber and 4 October 1774, CO 137/69, ff. 318, 344.

and Dartmouth's open support of the Alberpoyer scheme as encouragement. The council had attempted to serve a warrant on him, Hodgson said, and they had even begun to construct a jail "into which they very likely will put all those who oppose their sort of Democracy". According to Keith, who looked upon the events on the Shore in wonder, the settlers there were "well satisfied with their own temporary scheme of Polity."⁴⁰

Whitehall's policy towards the Mosquito Shore during this turbulent period in Hodgson's superintendency was vague. While England's possession of Belize was "limited and circumscribed by the Treaty of Paris", Lord Hillsborough wrote in 1770, the Shore was one of the Possessions of [George III's] crown", and the king was anxious "to counteract and defeat any Views that may be formed to the Prejudice of them". If the question had been left to the governors of Jamaica--especially Lyttelton, Keith and William Trelawny--the Shore would have been abandoned. When refusing to grant military protection to the Shoremen in 1771, Trelawny wrote:

You will easily conceive that every Governor would necessarily think himself happy, if the connection between him and the Superintendant could, without detriment to His Majestys Service, and welfare of his Subjects, be dissolved.⁴¹

The Shoremen deplored their limited relationship with England, while Hodgson described the Mosquito Shore as "not absolutely part of the

⁴⁰Hodgson to Dartmouth, 31 July 1773, CO 137/69, f. 314; Keith to Dartmouth, 19 November 1774, CO 137/70, f. 3.

⁴¹Trelawny to Hillsborough, 28 May 1770, CO 137/65, f. 173; Hillsborough to Forrest, 23 February 1770, CO 137/65, f. 88; Hillsborough to Trelawny, 23 February 1770, CO 137/65, f. 3; Hillsborough to Admiralty, 23 February 1770, CO 137/65, f. 80, Trelawny to Hillsborough, 3 June 1771, CO 137/66, f. 213.

Realm but rather in t e Kings Hand only."⁴²

Before Whitehall could decide how to resolve the curious situation on the Mosquito Shore, England's diplomatic policy was distorted by the evolving events in her American colonies. Any move that might incite foreign diplomatic or military controversy was deemed inexpedient. Therefore, the English cabinet opposed all "new Arrangements" or any "Act of Power" by the superintendent on the Shore which might lead to "Discussions of Right"; a strong response to the Shoremen's opposition to the crown's authority, as represented by the superintendent or by the governor and council of Jamaica, had to give way to the exigencies of England's policy. Hodgson's "Influence" with the settlers was to be derived from the "Goodwill and Affection of the People and not in the exertion of Authority & Act of Power".⁴³ In December 1774, however, the critical situation in North America impressed the government with the need to resolve rather than to ignore the problems of the Mosquito Shore, "an object of great importance tho' involved in much difficulty". Yet Whitehall did nothing, and when revolution erupted in the North American colonies, the situation on the Mosquito Shore remained unchanged, and only an occasional vessel sent down from Jamaica to observe the activities there interrupted the capricious behaviour of the Shoremen and Superintendent Hodgson.⁴⁴

⁴²Hodgson to Dalling, 26 September 1773, CO 137/69, f. 30.

⁴³Dartmouth to Keith, 4 June and 6 July 1774, CO 137/69, ff. 157, 178.

⁴⁴Dartmouth to Keith, 10 December 1774, CO 137/69, f. 353; Rodney to Douglas, 25 June 1774, Adm 1/24, f. 20.

Chapter IX

THE MOSQUITO SHORE DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION:

James Lawrie, 1775 - 1779

From his appointment as superintendent of the Mosquito Shore in 1768 until the outbreak of the American Revolution, Robert Hodgson was engaged in tempestuous squabbles with the Shoremen and with the governors of Jamaica. Then in August 1775, three weeks before George III issued the proclamation for the suppression of rebellion and sedition in the colonies, Lord Dartmouth recalled Hodgson, explaining his decision to Sir Basil Keith, governor of Jamaica.

It is impossible in taking a full view of Mr. Hodgson's Conduct not to see that a great deal is to be attributed to his misbehaviour in many instances; at the same time I do not think that his Errors are imputable to a want of Integrity but to a consummate Vanity and a mistaken Idea of Importance that does not belong to his situation.

But Dartmouth realised that Hodgson was not entirely responsible for the disorders on the Shore.

I think it is chiefly owing to the restless & ungovernable Spirit & Temper of its Inhabitants, which have manifested themselves in acts of usurpation very little short of open Rebellion against the King's Government....

Governor Keith was ordered to appoint a person "to superintend the Settlement upon the Mosquito Shore during Mr. Hodgson's absence...."¹
The choice of words was unfortunate, for it led to a dispute between

¹Dartmouth to Keith, 2 August 1775, CO 137/70, f. 67. Italics my own.

Hodgson and John Ferguson, appointed as his temporary replacement. When Ferguson crossed the ocean bar at Black River, he argued that his duties were to begin immediately, but Hodgson refused to relinquish his authority. Encouraged by James Lawrie and other principal settlers, however, Ferguson began to implement the instructions he had received from Keith, and Hodgson prudently desisted from quarrelling further, satisfying himself by composing a note of protest to Lord George Germain, secretary of state for the American colonies.²

Ferguson's first responsibility was to strengthen the civil administration on the Shore. Lord Dartmouth, Germain's predecessor, suggested that the plan of government prepared by Lt. Gov. John Dalling for the Mosquito Shore in 1773 be adapted to the present situation, and he reprimanded the Shoremen for their impertinent refusal to acknowledge Jamaican jurisdiction. "It is the King's Intention that the Affairs of the Shore should continue to be, as they ever have been, under the Controul & Direction of His Governors of Jamaica, with the Advice of the Council." Germain later approved this measure as the best civil arrangement possible.³

²Dartmouth to Hodgson, 2 August 1775, CO 137/70, f. 72; Lords of Trade to George III, 3 June 1776, CO 324/21, f. 419; Keith to Hodgson, 29 December 1775, DRH, p. 73; Hodgson to Germain, 10 March 1776, CO 137/71, f. 136; Ferguson to Keith, 18 April 1776, CO 137/71, f. 176; Minutes of the council of the Mosquito Shore, 23 September 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, f. 141; Council to White, 23 April and 24 July 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, ff. 116, 117.

³Dartmouth to Keith, 2 August 1775, CO 137/70, f. 67; Keith to Ferguson 29 December 1775, CO 123/14; Germain to Keith, 3 April 1776, CO 137/71, f. 64.

A few days after he arrived in Black River, Ferguson read his instructions to the Shoremen, who expressed their satisfaction over the same articles that they had refused to accept three years earlier. On 1 March 1776, they elected a council of twelve members, five of whom, including Lawrie, were then in London representing the settlers' case against Hodgson.⁴

Hodgson's relationship with the settlers further degenerated before he left for England. Because of "the Intemperance of a Multitude", he said, "the more Truth I write the more I enrage."⁵ One man whom he had mistakenly accused of perjury demanded an apology or a duel; he apologised.⁶ Another, Bartholomew Gilibert, read the following comments about him by Hodgson:

It will be time enough for me to speak of Mr. Bartholomew Gilibert's merit when I think he has any; at present I look upon him to be a worse man than the moderation I mean to adhere to will allow me to express. I can scarcely understand him in English....⁷

Gilibert replied by calling Hodgson "a coward, a liar, a villain, and a disgrace to the commission he formerly bore."⁸

Like his arrival on the Shore, Hodgson's departure seemed perpetually

⁴Ferguson to Keith, 18 April 1776, CO 137/71, f. 176; Mosquito Shore council to Keith, 20 April 1776, CO 137/71, f. 187; Mosquito Shore council to White, 23 April 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, p. 116; Keith to Germain, 14 June 1776, CO 137/71, p.171.

⁵Hodgson to Germain, 10 March 1776, CO 137/71, f. 136.

⁶Reid to Hodgson, 2 March 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, f. 136; Hodgson to Reid, 3 March 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, f. 136.

⁷Gilibert to Hodgson, 6 May 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, f. 138; Hodgson to Gilibert, 5 May 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, f. 138. In contrast, Robert White said that Gilibert was "universally esteemed by all the settlement", for his "good-humour, sincere friendship, high honour, strict probity, manly spirit, and every worthy accomplishment." "Facts or Proof", p. 90.

⁸Published notice by Bartholomew Gilibert, 19 May 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, f.106.

delayed; the vessel that had brought Ferguson sailed too soon to allow him to prepare for the voyage; a promised passage failed to materialise because of a missed rendezvous; and his own sloop was beached for weeks on a nearby island. Hodgson was aware of the suspicions, which evidence supports,⁹ that he delayed his departure for commercial reasons. He countered ineffectually: "However strange my Delay may seem, I have done all Man could do to obey His Majesty's Commands...."¹⁰ Not until June 1777, nearly two years after his recall, did he arrive in England.

Competition to succeed Hodgson was nearly as severe as the endeavours to remove him had been. The post offered prestige and opportunities to augment the lucrative but fixed salary by commercial ventures. Among the contenders was Jeremiah Terry, a tall, amiable merchant adventurer from Virginia, blind in one eye but with a kind face.¹¹ Terry arrived on the Shore just before Hodgson's recall--in time to win the distrust of both sides by remaining neutral in the controversy. James Lawrie said that he was

a common Adventurer...[who] Affected a Misterious reserved Conduct, sometimes hinting that he was employed by a set of Private Gentlemen¹² in England to Examine the Shore, with Respect to the Propriety of establishing a large settlement, and at Other times that he was an Agent from Administration....¹³

⁹"Facts or Proofs", p. 111.

¹⁰Hodgson to Germain, 10 March, 2 May and 25 July 1776, CO 137/71, ff. 136, 205, 219; Affidavit by Robert Hodgson, n.d., CO 123/3, vol. ii.

¹¹Chavarria to Perié, 24 August 1778, Guat 464.

¹²"The"private Gentlemen" were Alexander Blair and Dr. Charles Irving. See below, p.211. Lawrie to Robertson, 10 November 1774, NLS, MS 3942, f. 173.

¹³Lawrie to Dalling, 23 October 1776, CO 137/74, f. 126.

As a representative, perhaps even a partner, in an ambitious colonisation project for the Shore, Terry's commercial interests were threatened by the unstable relationship between Hodgson and the settlers, and by the Mosquitos' odious habit of seizing Spanish Indians and selling them as slaves.¹⁴

Indian slavery had been outlawed by a Jamaican law in 1741, but the decree was ignored on the Mosquito Shore, where even the superintendents engaged in the traffic.¹⁵ Hodgson's participation in it was instrumental in Dartmouth's decision to recall him.

What seems most blameable in Mr. Hodgson's Conduct, is the contemptuous manner in which I find he treats the Mosquito Men and his encouraging by his own example, the Inhuman & in every light unjustifiable practice of making Slaves of the Neighbouring Indians & sending them off the Coast for sale, a Practice which, in his Situation, it was his duty to have discountenanced, by every Means in his Power.¹⁶

Hoping to end this evil, Terry persuaded Mosquito King George I to name three of his subjects, including the heir to the throne, as members of a commission headed by Duke Isaac, brother of the king, to accompany

¹⁴When the governor of Veragua called for the reduction of the Talamanca Indians of Costa Rica and Panamá in September 1775, his purpose was to rid the coast of the Zambos Mosquitos and English "who cause grave damage not only to that province, & the kingdom of Guatemala, but also to...Tierra Firme and...the whole coast of Veragua...carrying away unnumbered Indian prisoners." Bejarano to the ayuntamiento of Guatemala, 15 September 1775, CRC, p. 205.

¹⁵Petition from Jeremiah Terry to the House of Commons, n.d., T 1/527; Jacobs, "Roger Hope Elletson", JHR, ii (1953), p. 48; Diary of Juan Antonio de Gastelu, 21 February - 11 July 1776, Guat 665. Paradoxically, Terry's closest friend, Colvill Cairns, was the most notorious dealer in Indian slaves on the Shore.

¹⁶Dartmouth to Keith, 2 August 1775, CO 137/70, f. 67.

him to England.¹⁷ The plan enraged Hodgson, whose displeasure fell most heavily upon Isaac, "one of the most wicked and vicious of his whole nation", and who he had "once marked...out for capital Punishment...."¹⁸ But Terry ignored these imputations. In November 1774, he sailed with the Indians to London, where their reception was polite, but hardly enthusiastic. Hodgson's denunciations had arrived before them, and one of the Indians had contracted small pox on the voyage. Nevertheless they were successful; Dartmouth issued orders

forbidding all persons, under pain of His Majestys highest Displeasure, from making Slaves of the native Indians & sending them off the Coast for Sale, as a Practice irreconcilable with every Principle of Justice, good Policy and Humanity.¹⁹

Terry petitioned for the superintendency soon after Hodgson's dismissal. Realising that others wanted the position, he requested support from his friends on the Shore. "A petition from the King [of the Mosquito Indians] to his Majesty here...may be of service to me", he wrote, adding "I have beat the Bush it is hard another should catch the Bird...." Then: "I am no Scotchman [as were Lawrie and many Shoremen] consequently of the wrong side of the hedge except Rectitude

¹⁷ Other members of the commission were Mosquito Admiral Dick Richards and Captain John of the tributary Woolwa tribe. George I reportedly sent a barrel of Mosquito Shore soil to his "brother" king, George III, with a pledge of 5,000 Mosquito warriors, if necessary, to put down any revolt that might erupt in the North American colonies. Declaration by José Guilbot, 29 July 1776, Guat 665.

¹⁸ Hodgson to Dartmouth, 16 November 1774, CO 137/70, f. 1; Hodgson executed similar threats against Mosquito chiefs Dilson and Israel in 1770. See above, p. 171.

¹⁹ Dartmouth to Keith, 2 August 1775, CO 137/70, f. 67; Pownall to Irving, 13 October 1775, CO 137/70, f. 153.

of principal carries me over."²⁰ Terry counted on a declaration in his behalf from his friend and associate, Dr. Charles Irving,²¹ but unknown to him, Irving also sought the post, and had the support of the heir to the Mosquito crown, Prince George, who wrote:

Wee likewise Consider ourselves much Obliged by the directing Mr Irving to take care and Conduct us to our Native home. He has always treated us with great kindness and in whose House We have Resided for some Months, And with Submission We apprehend he is well Qualified to Succeed the present Intendant [Hodgson] who is so Obnoxious to every Mosquitto Man that we dread the Consequence Should he be Continued in Office.²²

A perennial candidate for the superintendency was Captain Joseph Smith Speer, who volunteered to serve on the Mosquito Shore to exploit its rich resources. Speer possessed personal and imperial ambition, but he was perhaps too honourable for a post demanding machiavellian cunning for dealing with the Shoremen, the Mosquitos, their Spanish neighbours and the governor and council of Jamaica.²³

A memorial "respecting the Sentiments of the people on the Shore in favour of Capt. Lawrie" for the superintendency was presented to Germain in March 1776.²⁴ According to the petitioners, James Lawrie's twenty-five years as a respected colonist and friend of the Indians had ^{earned} / the position for him.

Of all the candidates the most obvious successor was John Ferguson,

²⁰Terry to Cairns, 1 November 1775, CO 137/74, f. 130.

²¹Irving was the celebrated discoverer of a desalinisation process.

²²George to Dartmouth, 10 November 1775, CO 137/70, f. 155. Although Terry brought the Indians to London, Irving was their host during much of their stay.

²³Petition from Joseph Smith Speer, 11 February 1776, CO 5/248, f. 119.

²⁴Hewm to Germain, 31 March 1776, CO 137/71, f. 71. The document was heavily padded with signatures of Belize merchants, demonstrating the ties binding the two settlements, as well as a certain lack of scruples among Lawrie's friends.

popular among the Shoremen, and Sir Basil Keith's protégé. Keith described Ferguson's "Discretion, Integrity, and Activity, [as] fitting such an Employment." "I venture boldly to ask your Protection for Him", he wrote to Germain, "In case Mr. Hodgson is not to return again as His Majestys Superintendant on the Mosquito Shore."²⁵ In London, however, Lawrie and his friends convinced Germain of the urgent need to replace Hodgson, and Lawrie was named the fifth English superintendent of the Shore. His selection was made without consulting Governor Keith; all previous superintendents except the younger Hodgson had been appointed by the governors of Jamaica.²⁶

Lawrie's arrival in Black River on 29 August 1776 "had an amazing effect on the spirits of every individual...[in the] settlement, after being dispirited by the oppressive and abominable practices of Mr. H--, tending to the total destruction of the colony."²⁷

As auspicious as Lawrie's presence seemed to be, the settlers' problems remained. The news from North America was discouraging, and the fear that had so often afflicted them in the past, that a Spanish

²⁵Keith to Germain, 26 June 1776, CO 137/71, f. 169; Keith to Shoremen, 15 June 1776, HA/MSL, f. 24.

²⁶Germain to Lawrie, 17 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 75.

²⁷Lawrie to Germain, 7 October 1776, CO 137/72, f. 55; Mosquito Shore council to White, 10 October 1776, CO 123/2, vol. ii, f. 118. The community of Black River at this time was composed of forty-two houses, each with its provision garden, on a long main road parallel to the sea, and twenty-three houses on another street running towards the mountains, where most of the mulatto and Negro inhabitants lived. According to a Spanish visitor, the houses were built on stilts because of the marshy land, and were colourfully painted and neatly kept. Diary of José Estes Sierra, 21 August - 23 December 1776, Guat 450.

invasion was imminent, and that the Mosquito Indians might ally themselves with the enemy, again distressed them. The Shoremen^{were} also threatened with a slave revolt, and plagued by the enticement of their Negroes by the Spanish. Nor had the Indian slave problem been resolved, in spite of Dartmouth's ruling. Superintendent Lawrie, who was held responsible by Sir Basil Keith for the enslavement of the Indians, despaired of eliminating the trade, for it would be necessary to control the Jamaican merchants who financed it and the "lower class of people" who encouraged Mosquito depredations.²⁸ Nevertheless the Mosquito Shore council passed an act in August 1776 abolishing the Indian slave trade, although Indians enslaved before 22 October 1776 were not affected by the ruling.²⁹ Three months passed before the decree was published on the Shore in a curious proclamation from the Indian governor, Colvill Briton. Briton prohibited the "future" enslavement of Indians and forbade English traders to give them further credit, a practice which had led many Mosquitos into debt bondage. But he opened the way to abuse by ruling that: "All my Men who are indebted to the British Subjects are to go out to the Southward and Strike their Debts [by turtle fishing], whenever their employers may order them without giving them or me any trouble...." And he further demonstrated his contempt for the decree by offering "a Young able Indian Slave" for information leading to the apprehension

²⁸ Lawrie to Keith, 15 and 27 January 1777, CO 137/72, ff. 94, 97; Keith to Lawrie, 28 February 1777, CO 137/72, f. 110.

²⁹ "An Act for recovering and extending the Trade with the Indian Tribes", 22 August 1776, CO 137/154.

of anyone illegally selling tortoise shell.³⁰

Late in 1777 Lawrie recommended that all Indian slaves on the Mosquito Shore be purchased with government funds and returned to their own tribes. He estimated that £3,000 sterling distributed among the slave owners (of whom he was one) should cover the expense.³¹

John Dalling, Keith's replacement as governor, rejected Lawrie's proposal, remarking that the Mosquitos have "an inveterate habit of getting those Indians into their possession by force or fraud, and employing them in all servile offices." The purchase of these slaves could become an endless form of ransom.³²

Yet a more immediate threat than the Indian slave problem, both to the economy and to the security of the Shoremen, was their rebellious Negro slaves, most of whom were expert in handling fire arms, and who greatly outnumbered the whites.³³ In November 1775, a large number of slaves, frustrated in a legal claim to freedom, fled into the vast

³⁰ Proclamation by Colvill Briton, 29 November 1776, CO 123/31; Proclamation by Sir Basil Keith, 29 December 1775, CO 123/31.

³¹ Lawrie to Germain, 29 August 1777, CO 137/73, f. 19; Registry of Indian slaves, 24 February to 20 August 1777, CO 123/31. Every influential Shoreman had at least one Indian slave. James Lawrie and his brother John owned eleven. Robert Hodgson had a well-distributed "harem" of Indian women slaves; Loraina, age 20, was at Cape Gracias a Dios; Dinas, 25, and Nelly, 13, were in Black River; and Jemimo, 30, was in Corn Island.

³² Dalling to Germain, 14 November 1777, CO 137/73, f. 11. The Indian slave issue was ignored in the turbulent years after 1777 and it was not resolved until the general emancipation at Belize in 1833.

³³ Hodgson disagreed with the established theory that Europeans could not do physical labour in the tropics, and gave warning that the settlers should not rely too heavily on their slaves, for they would some day be without their services. The Dutch, by their labours in the salt beds of Araya off the coast of Cumaná had long since proved the fallacy of the theory. Hodgson to Germain, 10 March 1776, CO 137/71, f. 136.

savannah and pine-forested frontier country.³⁴ The new claimant to their services, John McHarg, accused Spanish officials of enticing the slaves away, and demanded their restitution. But in reply, President Vargas of Guatemala accused the Shoremen of habitually giving refuge to Spanish outlaws and ruled that fugitive slaves desirous of embracing the church were to be granted their freedom.³⁵ Ferguson threatened to send armed vessels to Omoa to demand the return of the runaways, but without assistance from the governor of Jamaica, whose hands were tied by the refusal of the council to send arms or troops to the Shore,³⁶ he was unable to fulfill his warning.³⁷ Every effort to capture the slaves "and reduce them to Obedience" failed,³⁸ but the expected revolt did not take place.

³⁴The slaves were originally the property of Henry Corrin at Bluefields.

³⁵McHarg to Balarde, 5 February 1776, BAGG, i (1940), p. 72; McHarg to Barase, 5 February 1776, ibid; Saavedra to Mayorga, 13 April 1776, ibid.; Vargas to Cavello, 13 November 1775, ibid., p. 41; Sánchez to Ferguson, 6 February 1776, Guat 450; Opinion of the fiscal, 15 February 1776, Guat 450; To support his refusal to return the fugitive slaves, Vargas cited the reales cédulas of 1 July 1704, 19 December 1739 and 19 September 1774. Chatfield to Palmerston, 20 May 1849, FO 252/41. Frederick Chatfield, who became British chargé d'affaires in Central America in 1849, quoted extensively from the manuscript of the history of Guatemala by Archbishop Francisco García de Peláez in dispatches to Palmerston.

³⁶Lawrie to Keith, 11 October and 9 December 1776, CO 137/72, ff. 49, 92; Petition from the Mosquito Shore council, 10 October 1776, CO 137/72, f. 57; Lawrie to Germain, 7 October 1776, CO 137/72, f. 55; Keith to Lawrie, 23 December 1776, CO 137/72, f. 51; Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations", p. 356. Vera Lee Brown enumerates the contemporary critical problem in Jamaica which persuaded the council to refuse aid to the Shoremen.

³⁷Mayorga to Arriaga, 22 February 1776, Guat 450.

³⁸Lawrie to Keith, 15 January 1777, CO 137/72, f. 94. The Zambos Mosquitos of General Tempest made an unsuccessful search for the runaways. Their employment was reminiscent of the use of the Indians in Jamaica during the maroon uprisings late in the seventeenth century and again in 1720 and 1737.

Seizures by guardacostas and the fear of invasion created apprehension on the Shore ranging from restlessness to despair. The Anglo-Spanish wars were so frequent and the periods of peace so short that the scattered settlers were forced to maintain an expensive armed vigilance. Since the Spanish never recognised the legality of these settlements, and the English government was loath to offer the security of colonial status, the Shoremen were not even secure in peacetime.

England's preoccupation with the revolt in America furnished Spain with an ideal opportunity to acquire territories previously lost, or provinces which she claimed but which she had never effectively governed, such as the Mosquito Coast.³⁹ Spain's involvement in the American revolution is not well-known, for she acted unilaterally and without consideration for the Americans; the support she gave to them before 1779 was economic rather than military: a few pesos through Franklin's mission in Paris and refuge and a market for rebel privateers operating

³⁹ Prior to 1782 there had never been a Spanish settlement between the mouth of the San Juan River and Cape Honduras, although numerous reales cédulas in the sixteenth century called for the conquest and colonisation of the Mosquito Coast--variously known as Veragua, Cartago, Castilla del Oro and the provinces of Taguzgalpa and Tologalpa. The attempts to occupy the Coast in the seventeenth century were limited to several unsuccessful missionary efforts. But not until the eighteenth century did Spain attempt to eject the British settlers and reduce or exterminate the Mosquito Indians. See, for example, the collection of inedited documents on early Nicaraguara historia in Documentos para la historia de Nicaragua Colección Somoza (17 vols., Managua, 1954); Description of the provinces of Honduras and Higueras, Academia de la Historia, Colección Muñoz A/66, f. 130; Ponce de León to crown, 26 May 1584, CRM, p. 30; Guerra de Ayala to crown, 30 December 1608, Guat 39; Report by Andrés de Arbieta Ocüeta, 9 April 1654, Colección de documentos referentes a la historia colonial de la Independencia (Managua, 1921), p. 136.

in European waters.⁴⁰ There is an appearance of *naveté*, even of paradox, in Spain's support of the Americans, yet she did not favour independence for England's American colonies, and merely used the rebel cause to implement her own policy.⁴¹ The Conde de Floridablanca commented that:

The Most immediate utility that Spain can make of the war between the English and her colonies is to see if they can be flung out of Florida, and then from el seno Mexicano, and to destroy her establishments on Campeche, Mosquitos, etc.⁴²

Later, Floridablanca raised Spanish aspirations by adding Gibraltar and Minorca to his list, while retaining the Mosquito Coast as before.⁴³ English policy/^{towards Spain under}~~during the ministries of~~ Weymouth, secretary of state for the southern department, and Germain, was guided by a blind desire for Spanish neutrality; the time was ideal for Spain to present her demands to the English court. But she failed to do so, for Spanish ministers were inclined rather to react to than to initiate events. Nor did the English skilfully implement their policy, because they were unaware of the sweeping concessions necessary to do so. English

⁴⁰ A well-documented study of Spain's role in the America Revolution is Juan Francisco Yela y Utrilla, España ante la independencia de los EE.UU (2 vols., Lerida, 1925).

⁴¹ Grimaldi to Charles III, 14 November 1775, AGS, Est 8133, folder 9a. The Marqués de Grimaldi was afraid of the consequences if England should solve her quarrel with her colonies too quickly. Spain, he said, should help the American colonies to maintain the struggle, but not help them to bring it to a successful conclusion.

⁴² Memorial from the Conde de Floridablanca, March 1777, AHN, Est 4199.

⁴³ Floridablanca to Aranda, 4 April 1778, printed in Yela y Utrilla, op.cit., ii, 249.

ministers even supported projects detrimental to Spanish interests, and only in regard to England's own valid complaints did they appear willing to bend in deference to the Spanish; Germain deliberately misinterpreted evidence of Spanish deprivations in the Indies so as not to endanger Anglo-Spanish relations.

One of the best examples of support given to projects prejudicial to Spanish interests was a colonisation scheme by Dr. Charles Irving which made the Spanish permanently aware of the "value" of the Mosquito Coast and of the dangers of its being in foreign hands, and also aware that the region was as unknown as the most obscure territory in America; Floridablanca was unable to extract even the barest shred of reliable information about the Coast from the mass of letters, dispatches and memorials in the archives. There was not even positive proof that the English had settlements on the Coast. But the apparent danger was too serious to ignore. Gradually, Floridablanca prophesied, contraband merchandise would flow to the Pacific and into every corner of the empire; English settlements would spread like a blight across the lush forests and savannahs of the isthmus, and eventually the English would unite with the Indians to embrace all of America.⁴⁴ A few diaphanous Englishmen and their Zambo Mosquito friends seemed to threaten the continued existence of Spain's colonial empire.

Dr. Irving proposed to take possession of the Mosquito Shore in the name of George III. However the boldness of his plan made Lord

⁴⁴ Report by the Conde de Floridablanca, 26 November 1775, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i.

Dartmouth uneasy, and he refused to sanction it openly, although he privately offered some financial support, and promised a governorship to Irving if it were a success. Dartmouth stipulated that all acquisitions of land be obtained by grant from the king of the Mosquito Indians. But whether by private enterprise or government sponsorship, the effect on the Spanish court was the same.⁴⁵

Charles Irving, a "man of great talents, with much fire and drive", was not representative of the common merchant adventurers who scoured the Caribbean for a share of the fabled Spanish wealth. But he was garrulous and careless in his choice of confidants. He bragged to the Comte de Guines, French ambassador to the Court of St. James, that he envisaged a colony of thirty or forty-thousand inhabitants industriously harvesting the riches of the Mosquito Shore and introducing the treasures of England's factories to Spanish America. Irving admitted that the political object of his venture was the establishment of a crown colony, a foothold that might one day bring "radical changes" to America. "One could feel the consequence of that power on the Spanish continent", Guines said, especially when compared with the effect on Spain's commerce in the Indies by a few trading companies in Jamaica.⁴⁶ Guines reported the subject of this conversation to Vergennes, the French minister of foreign affairs, who carried an exaggerated version of the tale to the

⁴⁵Pownall to Irving, 13 October 1775, CO 137/70, f. 153.

⁴⁶Guines to Vergennes, 13 October 1775, cited by Esquivel, "Las Incursiones", p. 57; Masserano to Grimaldi, 13 October 1775, AGS, Est 8133, folder 12a.

Conde de Aranda, Spanish ambassador in Paris; the 30,000 colonists had now become 60,000. Suggesting that the promise of a governorship to Irving proved the malevolent designs of the English court, Aranda noted that "Each time I look over the map, Irving's object appears to be of greater consequence." A British foothold on the Mosquito Coast, he said, could cut all communications between México, Havana, Yucatán and Honduras with Cartagena, Caracas and Portovelo, and lead to unforeseen future catastrophes. "The Mosquito enterprize unquestionably would be a mortal blow"; Spain must do everything in her power to crush it.⁴⁷

Aranda saw a solution to the problem. The expedition could hardly be under the auspices of the English king, he reasoned, for "that would be too unjust, a veritable declaration of war", therefore Irving and the colonists could be considered pirates, and the Spanish need not fear interference or retaliation for measures taken against them.⁴⁸

Grimaldi agreed that Spain must act quickly, although he was convinced that England would counter with a declaration of war. "The recent example of the Falkland Islands", he said, "an object incomparably less important than that of Mosquito, proves this belief."⁴⁹ With the king's approval the governors of Panamá, Portovelo and Veragua in the viceroyalty

⁴⁷ Vergennes to Aranda, 17 October 1775, AGS, Est 8133; Masserano to Grimaldi, 31 January 1777, AHN, Est 4284, vol. i; Aranda to Grimaldi, 23 October 1775, Guat 665; Aranda to Grimaldi, 6 November 1775, AGS, Est 8133, folder 11b; Esquivel, op.cit., p. 59.

⁴⁸ Aranda to Grimaldi, 20 and 23 October 1775, Guat 665; Grimaldi to Masserano, 18 December 1775, AHN, Est 4280, vol. ii.

⁴⁹ Grimaldi to Charles III, 14 November 1775, AGS, Est 8133, folder 9a; Masserano to Grimaldi, 24 November and 1 December 1775, AGS, Est 8133, folder 12.

of Santa Fé, and Nicaragua, Comayagua and Costa Rica in the audiencia of Guatemala, were ordered to dispatch guardacostas to intercept Irving's vessel, the Morning Star, to detain the Mosquito princes, and to imprison Irving and his crew. Failing that, they were to locate and destroy the new colony.⁵⁰

In response to these orders, Manuel Flores, the viceroy of Santa Fé, ordered two guardacostas, the Pacífica and the Recurso, to search for Irving's vessel, but he said that he had neither the force nor the funds to attack the enemy settlements.⁵¹ Other provincial officials experienced the same difficulties. Governor Quiroga of Nicaragua, complained that the provincial defences were too weak to repulse an enemy attack, and that consequently the Nicaraguans lived in perpetual fear. The president of the audiencia of Guatemala, Martín de Mayorga, said that the enemy could not be conquered, nor their illicit trade suppressed.⁵² While officials in America hesitated to take action against the enemy, Spanish ministers, who declared that the question of war or peace was "useless in this discussion", adopted a variation

⁵⁰ Real orden, 22 November 1775, CRM, p. 176.

⁵¹ Agreement between the viceroys of Perú and Santa Fé, 12 February 1776, printed in Somarriba-Salazar, Les Limites, p. 213; Flores compared the Mosquitos with the Moors of North Africa, though "I find this difference, that the Moors have war with other nations of Africa, and sometimes with those of Europe; but the Mosquito Indians...only make war against Spanish settlements." Flores to Arriaga, 13 February 1776, Guat 665.

⁵² Flores to Gálvez, 30 July 1776, Guat 665; Mayorga to Gálvez, 7 June 1776, Guat 878; Saavedra to Mayorga, 17 June 1776, Guat 463; From Domingo Cavello, 30 January 1776, Guat 463.

of a plan by Luis Díez Navarro to expel the English from the Mosquito Coast.⁵³ The plan was not carried out, but rumours of it discouraged English colonists from moving to the Shore, and even prompted some established settlers to leave.

Meanwhile, Prince Masserano was directed to complain to the British court that the Irving scheme was a violation of the Treaty of 1763. Masserano felt that such a move would be an acknowledgement of Spain's inability to control her own territories, but he reluctantly approached Dartmouth, who candidly admitted that he had spoken to Irving. This news removed any doubt in Madrid that the English government had sanctioned Irving's venture, and it resulted in the real orden of 28 February 1776 which called for the expulsion of the English settlers and the reduction or extermination of the Mosquito Indians.⁵⁴

The Morning Star sailed from London on 13 November 1775, with Dr. Irving, his partner Alexander Blair, and their three Indian passengers unaware of the turmoil that their journey was causing. Early in April, Irving disembarked at Great River on the windward Shore to prepare for the future arrival of colonists. The Indians were then landed at Cape Gracias a Dios, and on 26 April 1776 the vessel anchored off the bar at Black River. Four days later, after Blair and most of the crew had

⁵³ Report by the Conde de Floridablanca, 26 November 1775, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i.

⁵⁴ Grimaldi to Masserano, 25 December 1775, AHN, Est 4280, vol. ii; Masserano to Grimaldi, 26 January 1776, AGS, Est 6993; Real orden to the president of Guatemala and the governors of Panamá and Portovelo, 28 February 1776, CRM, p. 180.

gone ashore, the Pacífica and the Recurso, flying Dutch colours, drew alongside the Morning Star. The Dutch flags were lowered, Spanish banners raised, and the Morning Star was boarded, and soon afterwards, as the frantic witnesses on the Shore ran about helplessly, she sailed away in company with the guardacostas. Hodgson, who was still searching for transportation back to England, penned an angry note to the anonymous Spanish commander complaining of

so great an Outrage on the Harmony that seemed to subsist between our Kings.... Such an act of Violation & Depradation ...[demonstrates] that the Motives on which you have hazarded this Transaction have occasioned you to regard Public Faith & National Peace of little Import.⁵⁵

The Spaniards accomplished two important objectives by the daring raid: suppression of the projected colony and a powerful discouragement to similar schemes.⁵⁶

The Shoremen expected an invasion after the seizure of the Morning Star (the most serious encounter between the English and the Spanish near Black River in twelve years), and feared the seizure of supply vessels expected momentarily from North America. (A hurricane had ravaged the Shore in November and provisions were badly needed.) Letters and memorials requesting military aid and supplies poured out of Black

⁵⁵Hodgson to the commander of the guardacostas, 1 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 211; Affidavit by Thomas Archdeacon, 3 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 182; Testimony by John Patterson, 21 June 1776, Guat 665; Diary of Juan Antonio de Gastelu, 21 February to 11 July 1776, Guat 665; Flores to Gastelu, 20 February 1776, Guat 665.

⁵⁶Masserano to Grimaldi, 31 January 1777, AHN, Est 4284, vol. i; Blair to Germain, 17 July 1776, CO 137/71, f. 221; Testimony by José Guilbot, 29 July 1776, Guat 665.

River after the guardacostas visit, and nothing could have stopped the settlers from flight if the Spanish had returned.⁵⁷

Governor Keith called the seizure an open act of piracy, "supposedly" committed by the Spaniards. But the "improbability that the Spaniards would at once by so flagrant an Act of Hostility Violate the last Treaties of Peace", and testimony that the guardacostas never came within 200 leagues of the Shore, led Keith to suspect American rebel privateers. Germain, who had replaced Dartmouth three days before the Morning Star sailed from England, recoiled in disbelief at the suggestion that Spanish vessels were involved. Prince Masserano was elated at the Spanish success, and encouraged the rumours that the Americans were to blame, since it relieved him of the unpleasant duty of making explanations.⁵⁸

Alexander Blair returned to London in September and pleaded with Whitehall to request the Spanish to make reparations for the seizure of the Morning Star. "In this critical juncture in England's history", Germain told Blair, how could England protest to Spain, especially when he and Governor Keith doubted that the Spanish were guilty? By December, Blair had conclusive proof from a crew member of the Morning Star, who had escaped from Cartagena, that the Spanish had seized the ship, but Germain still refused to do anything that might disturb Spanish neutrality.

⁵⁷ Hodgson to Germain, 2 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 205; Shoremen to Gayton, 4 May 1776, Adm 1 240, f. 219; Shoremen to Keith, 4 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 189; Ferguson to Keith, 4 May 1776, CO 137/71, f. 180; Shoremen to Gaddes, 4 May 1776, HA/MSL, f. 15; Bouke to Garrison, 8 June 1776, HA/MSL, f. 20.

⁵⁸ Keith to Germain, 14 June 1776, CO 137/71, f. 171; Gayton to Shoremen, 15 June 1776, HA/MSL, f. 22.

⁵⁹ Germain to Keith, 5 September 1776, CO 137/71, f. 217; Masserano to Grimaldi, 12 July 1776, AHN, Est 4281, vol. ii; Masserano to Grimaldi, 19 July 1776, Guat 665.

Lord Weymouth, however, was more receptive to Blair's representation and sent various documents on the case to Lord Grantham in Madrid. There was no response from the Spanish, so Blair then took the case to the House of Commons which refused to act in his behalf. In despair of being granted justice by either nation, he wrote an open letter to London newspapers: "The English flag was insulted", he exclaimed, "English sailors made captive in a most cruel & ignominious way, & a colony, which could become as flowering as any other entirely ruined."⁶⁰

Spanish officials in the Indies deflected complaints on the Morning Star. The governor of Cartagena admitted the seizure, but denied that he had the authority or the power to restore the vessel to her owners. He promised to forward complaints and petitions from Governor Keith and the owners of the vessel to "Superior Tribunals", a favourite artifice used by colonial officers to shift responsibility and to avoid making decisions.⁶¹

The winter of 1776-1777 was difficult for the inhabitants of the

⁶⁰ Published letter from Alexander Blair, in Masserano to Floridablanca, 14 March 1777, AGS, Est 6996; The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature, For the Year 1777 (London, 1778), p. 255; Affidavit by Frederick Sund, 20 September 1776, CO 137/71, f. 391; Affidavit by Charles Irving, 21 September 1776, CO 137/72, f. 22; Weymouth to Grantham, 31 January 1777, SP 94/203. Irving and Blair continued to press their claims for years, but they were never reimbursed for their loss, even though their ship did not carry contraband goods, logwood or other Spanish produce. Blair to Germain, 17 July and 17 December 1776, CO 137/71, ff. 221, 389; Masserano to Floridablanca, 14 March 1777, AGS, Est 6996; Blair to Weymouth, 1 March 1779, SP 94/207, f. 239; Blair to Weymouth, 30 December 1777, SP 94/204; Grantham to Weymouth, 1 May 1777, FO 95/7, Weymouth, to Grantham, 20 January 1779, SP 94/254.

⁶¹ Keith to Pimienta, 15 October 1776, CO 137/72, f. 26; Pimienta to Keith, 2 November 1776, CO 137/72, f. 29.

Mosquito Shore, who awaited an invasion or a slave revolt while experiencing privations because of the increasing difficulty of obtaining provisions from North America. And unknown to them, a leading settler on the windward Shore was carrying on a treasonable correspondence with the Spanish that threatened to turn the Indians against them. In the summer of 1775 Governor Pedro Carbonell of Panamá had the "rare surprize" of receiving three letters from Sandy Bay on the windward Shore. The notes were signed by the old Mosquito king George I, the Indian governor, Timothy Briton, and that irascible Irish merchant-trader-Indian slave dealer, Colvill Cairns. They revealed a barely veiled scheme by Cairns to establish a personal empire extending from the Mosquito Shore into Panamá, with the unofficial approval of the Spaniards. A fourth document (which the Spanish never saw but with the same date), was a land grant from George and Briton, allotting to Cairns:

all the Lands belonging and appertaining to the island called Bocca Tora [Bocas del Toro], formerly inhabited, but since conquered by the above mentioned King and Governor, laying near the Lattitude of nine and ten degrees North, and also all the Islands and Kays...including the Cherokee [Chiriqui] Lagoon and the Islands and Keys also thereunto belonging, with ten leagues up the Main Land... and three Leagues to the other side of the Cherokee Lagoon
....⁶²

In spite of his extensive new land holdings, Cairns' position was insecure as long as his Indian employees remained alienated from the Spaniards. Consequently he solicited a treaty of peace and commerce with the

⁶²Land grant from George I and Timothy Briton to Cairns, 10 August 1775, FO 53/44, f. 284; Testimony by Juan de la Cruz, 15 July 1776, Guat 665.

Spaniards in the name of the Mosquito chiefs. In exchange for an agreement by the Mosquitos not to molest the Spaniards working the gold mines of Veragua, Cairns asked that the Mosquitos be granted the freedom to fish along the coast of Panamá south of Bocas del Toro.⁶³ Cairns' overture created nearly as much excitement as did the Irving expedition. With the opportunity to reduce the Mosquito Indians thrown gratuitously into his lap, and with the real orden of 28 February as his authority, the viceroy of Santa Fé authorised Carbonell to contact Cairns and the Mosquito chiefs.⁶⁴ A small fleet commanded by Francisco Navas and comprised of the Pacífica and the Pastora (the Morning Star in her now role as a guardacostas) were sent to Cairns' plantation at Bocas del Toro to "ratify the Preliminary Articles [of friendship] with the King & Governor of the Mosquito Shore." Navas had secret orders to chart the coast in case it should become necessary to use force against the English there.⁶⁵

Navas arrived at Bocas del Toro nineteen months after Cairns' original correspondence with Carbonell to discover that the old king and governor were dead and that Cairns was at his residence in Tebuppy.⁶⁶

⁶³George I to Carbonell, 10 August 1775, Beltran y Rozpide, La Mosquitia, no page reference; Declaration by Thorivio de Carmen Espinosa, 6 June 1776, Guat 665; Lawrie to Germain, 3 May 1777, CO 137/72, f. 164; Cairns to Lawrie, 10 May 1777, CO 137/73, f. 197.

⁶⁴Carbonell to Cairns, 8 February 1777, CO 137/72, f. 182; Carbonell to Briton, 8 February 1777, CO 137/72, f. 180; Carbonell to Gálvez, 31 July 1776, Guat 665.

⁶⁵Lortia to Flores, 26 June 1776, Guat 665; Irving to Blair, 10 January 1777, SP 94/203.

⁶⁶The two chiefs died during a small-pox epidemic.

But a messenger reported that the young successors to George I and Briton, King George II and Governor Colvill Briton, were anxious for a rapprochement with the Spaniards. With renewed optimism the Spaniards sailed for Tebuppy where they were greeted courteously, but with signs that the young chiefs were not as pliable to Cairns' wishes as their fathers had been. They obstinately refused to break their ancient alliance with the English, and would only agree to an entente cordiale, while still demanding the right to fish along the coast of Panamá. Navas knew that further discussion was useless and after hurriedly bestowing a few gifts on the Indians, the Spaniards withdrew.

The failure of the negotiations can be attributed to King George II, whose year in England had made him a lasting friend of the English, and to Colvill Briton, whose independent nature Cairns was chary of testing too quickly.⁶⁷

Rumours reaching Black River distorted Navas' visit into a full-scale invasion by land and sea. The Zambos Mosquitos of General Tempest, usually anxious for a fight with the Spaniards, retreated 100 miles into the back country, while many Shoremen fled to Jamaica.⁶⁸ When Lawrie learned of the true nature of the mission his relief did not weaken his determination to punish Cairns, who had inadvertently divulged his

⁶⁷Diary of Javier de Vargas, 23 January - 10 May 1777, MN 324; DGHC, p. 43; Cairns to Carbonell, 15 April 1776, Guat 665; Iturrate to Carbonell, 15 July 1776, Guat 665; Carbonell to Navas, 8 February 1777, Guat 665.

⁶⁸Lawrie to Germain, 3 May 1777, CO 137/72, f. 164; Shoreman to Keith, 26 January 1777, HA/MSL, f. 33; Report by Thomas Davey, 18 July 1777, Adm 51/250.

duplicity by acknowledging certain incriminating letters from Carbonell.

Lawrie said:

your Lordship will perceive that Cairns (who does not understand Spanish) did not know the Contents of the Spanish letters, otherwise I dare say he never would have given me an opportunity of seeing them especially as the Governor of Panama declares in his letter to Cairns 'that the proposals made by him, Cairns, are the best that ever came to his knowledge.'⁶⁹

The rumours of Spanish depredations along the windward Shore proved to be true. On their return voyage to Cartagena, the Spanish commissioners, angry at the snub by the Indians, retaliated by attacking English settlements, seizing two sloops and burning a third. Greater damage was prevented by Zambos Mosquitos who shadowed the Spaniards and ambushed them while they were harvesting the Shoremen's provision patch at Bluefields and drove them from the coast.⁷⁰

Colvill Cairns reacted angrily to the "piracies of the perfidious Spaniards" by proposing that 500 Mosquito Men be armed and set on Spanish settlements. He was also indignant at the "ungenerous conjectures" of his fellow settlers. While admitting that he had communicated with the enemy, he swore that he had been urged to do so by the old king and governor, and that his intentions had been honourable. Cairns escaped punishment (except for a small fine) because Lawrie was too preoccupied with the greater problem of chasing the Spanish from the coast. Lawrie left Black River with seventy white men and twelve piraguas full

⁶⁹Lawrie to Germain, 3 May 1777, CO 137/72, f. 164.

⁷⁰Lawrie to Germain, 24 May 1777, SF 94/204; Affidavit by John McHarg, 29 September 1777, CO 137/73, f. 23.

of Zambos to aid the Indians and Shoremen. But when the party reached the windward Shore, the Spaniards had already left and the chase was abandoned.⁷¹

Soon after the Spanish visit to Tebuppy, rumours again swept the Shore that the Spanish planned to invade.⁷² Bartholomew Gilibert reported in July 1777 that

The Country aback is all in motion, I dread the Fate of the Shore and likewise of the Musquito Men. we shall certainly be attack'd next August. the Spaniards are making the greatest preparations both by Sea and Land.⁷³

John McDaniel, who carried on a clandestine trade in the interior, said that 1,500 Spaniards, supported by two large men-of-war, were going to attack the leeward Shore in August.⁷⁴ But no attack came.

Superintendent Lawrie announced that the enemy had postponed the invasion until spring, an assertion that drew a sarcastic comment from Governor Dalling. "It is with pleasure I observe the Clouds, which appeared...to be gathering in August, are not in your opinion likely to burst till the Spring."⁷⁵ The Shoremen's repetitious cries of

⁷¹ Cairns to Lawrie, 10 May 1777, CO 137/73, f. 197; Sierra to Mayorga, 31 August 1777, Guat 665. The Spanish experienced some bad moments when they heard of Lawrie's expedition. Governor Fernández of Costa Rica sent a troop of militia to Matina to defend against an invasion of Costa Rica. Fernández to Mayorga, 15 October 1777, Guat 464.

⁷² Cairns to Lawrie, 3 April 1777, CO 137/72, f. 170; George II to Keith, 12 April 1777, CO 137/73, f. 205; Lawrie to Germain, 3 May 1777, SP 94/204.

⁷³ Gilibert to Lawrie, 1 July 1777, CO 137/72, f. 227.

⁷⁴ Affidavit by John McDaniel, 12 July 1777, CO 137/72, f. 233; Lawrie to Dalling, 4 August 1777, CO 137/72, f. 221.

⁷⁵ Dalling to Lawrie, 8 November 1777, CO 137/73, f. 15.

"invasion" had wearied Governor Keith and his successor John Dalling, and now elicited irritation rather than concern. When a naval intelligence report failed to mention any Spanish armament in the Bay of Honduras, Dalling told Lawrie that he no longer gave any credit to the settlers' fears, and then told Germain that those "very extraordinary Letter ^S from Mr. Lawrie", were full of childish and groundless expressions of fear and without analysis or opinion.⁷⁶ In fact, the Spanish had been preparing to invade the Shore, but their preparations had failed to keep pace with their plans, and the dangers of the winter northers had moved them to postpone the attack.

In response to the incessant clamouring by the Shoremen for government recognition and greater protection, Dalling reiterated the traditional English policy towards the Shore.

However warm in the interests of the Mosquito Shore, I can neither do, nor authorise any thing to be done that may tend to accelerate the discussion of a question which Government has uniformly, within my memory, wished to decline. The territorial claim of the English to the Shore has been considered of too delicate a decision to be delegated either to a Governor of Jamaica or Superintendant of the Shore.

Lawrie should be aware, Dalling added, that the time and manner of raising

⁷⁶ Dalling to Germain, 14 November 1777, CO 137/73, f. 11; Lawrie to Germain, 29 September 1777, CO 137/73, f. 19; Germain to Dalling, 7 January 1778, CO 137/73, f. 9. Dalling proposed the preposterous theory that Spanish depredations resulted from the seizure of the sloop Nicaragua by the Mosquitos many years before. To placate the Spaniards, Dalling ordered that full reparations be made to its owners, a move enthusiastically approved by Germain. The incident had no bearing on events developing either in Spain or in the Indies, but Dalling and Germain both seized upon it as an easy way to relieve the tension between the two nations. Dalling to Germain, 24 October 1777, CO 137/72, f. 219.

the point of colonial status was for the government to decide, since he had been repeatedly instructed to excite no jealousies over the matter. Dalling recalled that efforts by the younger Hodgson to acquire an independent company for the Mosquito Shore had caused the prohibition of all correspondence by His Majesty's representatives on the Shore with Spanish officials.⁷⁷

Lawrie's official functions, Dalling said, were restricted by the articles of the Treaty of 1763; the superintendent's request for military aid was a violation of the 17th article of the treaty, indicating that he did not understand the nature of his commission. The question of colonial status was shuttled aside at this time by Germain. How can anyone, he wrote, "imagine that by these Injunctions [Lawrie's instructions] it was intended to convey an Idea that it was the Purpose or Wish of the Crown to establish a Colony or erect a Legislature on the Mosquito Shore"? Every British citizen, he added, comes under the protection of British law, and whenever a specific need arises on the Shore, the Jamaica council can supply a temporary ordinance as needed. "It is His Majesty's Intention that the affairs of the Mosquito Shore should continue to be as they ever have been, under the Controul of His Governor and Council of Jamaica."⁷⁸

⁷⁷Dalling to Lawrie, 8 November 1777, CO 137/73, f. 15; Dalling's predecessor, Sir Basil Keith, was the first governor to order that the superintendent should not correspond with the Spanish governors without prior approval from Jamaica. Dalling expanded the policy by ordering that all correspondence with the Spanish be made from Jamaica.

⁷⁸Germain to Keith, 4 June 1777, CO 123/3.

In spite of their more pressing problems, the Shoremen were experiencing the common vicissitudes of civil administration. The court of common pleas was at a standstill because the chief judge had resigned; some officials had left the Shore and others were dead-- including Hodgson's old foe George Hewm.⁷⁹ But the feud between Hodgson and Lawrie continued and coursed so strongly through their correspondence with Dalling that it was

a matter of severe search and labour to come at their meaning. Their private views and interest mix themselves so much with matters of publick concern as to render a just separation and inference extremely difficult.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Shoremen to Keith, 3 June 1777, HA/MSL, f. 40. In 1840 an English adventurer stumbled onto a flat stone partially hidden by the tropic undergrowth that had conquered the town of Black River. On the stone were the words

Time was I stood as thou dost stand,
And viewed the dead as thou dost me;
'Ere long thoul't lay as low as I,
And others stand and gaze at thee.

Underneath the poem was engraved the name of George Hewm, who died on 20 April 1777. Thomas Young, Narrative of a Residence on the Mosquito Shore, with an Account of Truxillo, and the Adjacent Islands of Roatan and Bonacca (London, 1842), p. 55. The Shoremen were often eccentric. Philip Bode left $\frac{3}{4}$ of a shilling for church services at his burial. "I know the Law will give it them therefore I allow it", he wrote in his last will and testament, "but I abominate it nothing but a parcel of Damn's Stuff." Last will and testament of Philip Bode, 25 April 1778, PCC, Cornwallis, f. 328.

⁸⁰ Dalling to Germain, 14 November 1777, CO 137/73, f. 11; Dalling to Germain, 24 October 1777, CO 137/72, f. 219. The main subject of the feud at this time was over the responsibility for the seizure of the Spanish sloop Nicaragua in 1770, which Lawrie blamed on Hodgson.

The dispatches and letters that made life difficult for Dalling were no easier for Germain, whose task of evaluating them was complicated by the distortions of time and distance and by his unswerving desire for Spanish neutrality. The rumours of an impending Spanish attack on the Mosquito Shore would have been alarming, he admitted, if there were any proof to corroborate them. But considerable evidence of Spanish perfidy did reach Germain in the summer and autumn of 1777. Lord Weymouth claimed that the Spanish court was aiding the American rebels through the merchant house of Gardoqui in Bilbao,⁸¹ while American tobacco was being allowed into Spain duty-free.⁸² The English consul at Cadiz reported that a battalion of troops had recently sailed for the Bay of Honduras. "The Officers of this Batalion", he wrote, "have extraordinary encouragement, given them to go on this service."⁸³ This disquieting intelligence induced Germain to ask Dalling for "an exact and authentic account of the real State and Condition of the Settlement [on the Mosquito Shore]."⁸⁴ But little else was done by the English ministers in the winter of 1777, and England's diplomacy remained timid. Few words of England's well-founded complaints reached the Spanish ministers through Grantham, and while Germain authorised excessive reparations to the owners of the Nicaragua, Floridablanca

⁸¹Weymouth to Grantham, 25 July 1777, SP 94/204; Floridablanca to Muzquiz, 30 July 1778, Yela y Utrilla, op.cit., 1, 382.

⁸²Weymouth to Grantham, 1 August 1777, SP 94/204.

⁸³Hardy to Weymouth, 16 September 1777, SP 94/204.

⁸⁴Germain to Keith, 4 June 1777, CO 123/3; Germain to Dalling, 3 December 1777, CO 137/72, f. 203.

skilfully parried Grantham's weak representations on the Morning Star, a case founded far more in equity.

Meanwhile, on the Shore, the settlers relaxed at the approach of the winter northers, although their fears soon returned. In January, Lawrie reported that a Spanish attack was expected, and by March many Mosquitos had fled into the back country and some Shoremen had abandoned their plantations.⁸⁵ But as usual, the Spanish invasion failed to materialise, although one isolated incident strengthened the settlers' conviction that they were threatened with annihilation. Bartholomew Gilibert and two other merchants were murdered by "fugitive English Negroes in Concert with the Spaniards...."⁸⁶ Governor Dalling was finally convinced of the need to support the "infant colony" on the Main, but he still believed that the Shoremen were exaggerating the danger and perhaps even creating it.

in so small a Community [the Mosquito Shore], there are no individuals, however despicable, that cannot raise themselves into persons of mischeivous consequences; and that they are ...as busy in creating occasions of Alarm and danger as they are importunate to have them removed and be protected under them.⁸⁷

And then late in the spring of 1778 Germain changed his attitude towards the Shore when he realised that war with France was inevitable.

In this Situation of Affairs and while it is uncertain what part Spain may take in case of War with France, the Settlements on the Mosquito Shore and the Bay of Honduras

⁸⁵ Lawrie to Dalling, 14 January 1778, CO 137/73, f. 183; Shoremen to Germain, 26 January 1779, CO 123/2, vol. ii.

⁸⁶ White to Germain, 26 January 1779, CO 137/74, f. 69; Shoremen to Germain, 26 January 1779, CO 123/2, vol. ii.

⁸⁷ Dalling to Germain, 2 July 1778, CO 137/73, f. 181.

become objects of great Attention and I do not think the Inhabitants can be blamed for putting themselves in a State of defence at a time when there is so much reason to expect they will be attacked by a hostile force....

He may even have envisaged colonial status for the Shore.

Whether I consider the Mosquito Shore as an Inlet of Commerce or a Post of Annoyance I see its Consequence in so important a point of view that I cannot help being exceedingly anxious for its preservation....⁸⁸

Early in 1778 Vergennes rejected a Spanish proposal for an offensive alliance against England, and turned her attention from a direct attack on British settlements on the Mosquito Shore to more subtle designs.⁸⁹ Thus France's hesitation to sign an offensive alliance with her Bourbon sister became an unintentional instrument of maladroit British diplomacy which kept Spain neutral, if unfriendly, through 1778.

Spanish officials failed to forge an alliance with the Mosquitos through Colvill Cairns, but they still hoped to do so. In February 1778, Governor Fernández of Costa Rica invited Mosquito Admiral Trelawny (Alparis) Dilson (a young man of twenty-eight who "carried himself well"), the new chief of the southern party of Mosquitos, to Cartago to arrange a treaty of peace and friendship. Fernández, who took Dilson into his home and "had him at his table and took him on his paseos and amusements", named him "captain of the North Coast", and promised to grant his people land in Costa Rica and the right to live under their own laws. The Mosquito youth were to be taught to read and introduced to Catholicism. The governor also promised that the Mosquito officers would be allowed

⁸⁸ Germain to Dalling, 15 May 1778, CO 137/73, f. 138.

⁸⁹ Floridablanca to Aranda, 13 January 1778, Yela y Utrilla, *op.cit.*, ii, 184; Vergennes to Floridablanca, 29 January 1778, *ibid.*, p. 214.

to keep their honours, and to pay the Indians twenty-five pesos worth of cacao for each Spanish slave they owned. Dilson left Cartago wearing a silk uniform with a silver-handled sword and baton, and with the Spanish celebrating a victory in the long struggle against a coarse but clever, even sophisticated enemy. However theirs was an ephemeral victory. When Dilson returned home his gifts were taken from him and there was even a suggestion from Jamaica that he be strangled.⁹⁰

No scheme to reduce the Mosquito Indians and to expel the English from the Mosquito Shore was as involved and expensive or conducted with as much enthusiasm as a conspiracy involving the American Jeremiah Terry. Terry's failure to gain the superintendency, compounded by Lord Dartmouth's refusal to reward him for his services to the crown, and by the increasing seriousness of the revolt in America, had induced him to formulate a plot to expel the British from the Mosquito Shore. When news of Benjamin Franklin's mission to Paris reached London in December 1776, Terry put his plan into operation. On the raw, snowy morning of 2 January 1777,

⁹⁰Fernández to Dilson, 12 February 1778, Guat 423; Minutes of peace negotiations between Admiral Dilson and Governor Fernández, 15 February 1778, Guat 464; Fernández to Mayorga, 18 and 28 February 1778, Guat 464; Bobadilla to Irrivarren, 10 April 1778, CO 137/73, f. 229; Deposition by John Hooker, 14 May 1778, CO 137/73, f. 193. Admiral Dilson missed the fate of the previous Dilson who was probably killed by Robert Hodgson for a very similar transgression. Declaration by Miguel Nicolás Castrillo, 29 November 1778, AGS, Est 8133, folder 17b. See above, p.171. The Nicaraguan diplomat-historian, José Dolores Gámez, interpreted the treaty as a humiliation for the cowardly Costa Rican, a people "quivering in terror" before the Mosquitos, while overlooking the equally timorous reactions of contemporary Nicaraguans to the enemy. Gámez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 116.

he left London, and five days later he was conferring with Franklin. We have no minutes of their conversation, but it is clear that Terry proposed to eject the English from the coasts of Guatemala, and that when he returned to London he was acting with the approval--if not under the orders--of his illustrious compatriot. Terry's personal desire for revenge against England had become part of the greater struggle raging in North America.⁹¹

Immediately after his return to London, Terry conferred with Prince Masserano. In exchange for an annual pension of £500 or for a single payment of £10,000, he offered to expel the English from the Shore and to reduce the Mosquito Indians to a permanent allegiance to the Spanish crown. Masserano's initial reaction was reserved, but he forwarded the proposal to his court, where it was received with cautious excitement. Terry was requested to come to Madrid; "His Majesty was very much interested in hearing the details of the plan." This positive response infected Masserano with enthusiasm. He assured Terry that his reward would match his merits and more than indemnify him for the disappointing treatment from the English. But he reminded Terry that he was to "aid the Spanish crown to regain her own usurped territory", and "not to foment revolt on the Mosquito Shore", a distinction intended to protect Masserano from the compromising testimony of a disgusted American if

⁹¹Terry to Franklin, 7 and 8 January 1777, American Philosophical Society Library, Franklin Papers, vol. 5, numbers 4,5; From Jeremiah Terry, 26 March 1776, T 1/527; Lawrie to Dalling, 23 October 1778, CO 5/7, f. 544; The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle, 1777, xlvii, 642.

Terry's mission to Madrid should fail.⁹²

Terry sailed for Spain on 1 April 1777 with advice from Masserano to avoid contact with Englishmen in Spain in case their inquisitiveness should endanger the enterprise. In Madrid, he met with Bernardo del Campo⁹³ and the Conde de Floridablanca, who approved his suggestions almost without modification. Terry proposed to outfit a vessel of approximately 200 tons at Bilbao with fishing equipment suitable for the Mosquito Indians, and with a cargo worth £5,000 for trade. He planned to ruin the Jamaica traders by underselling them, and then to destroy the English establishments on the Shore by inducing the Mosquito chiefs to "resume" the government of their country--preparatory, no doubt, to the establishment of Spanish hegemony over the region.

Terry hired two captains, one formerly the master of an American rebel privateer, and the other a Spaniard; he acquired three sets of ship's colours: American, British and Spanish; and he hired a mixed crew of eight Americans and twenty-five Vizcainos. Optimistic of success, he also suggested that another vessel follow his own Atlántico in six to eight months.⁹⁴

The ineptitude of eighteenth century espionage was never more

⁹² Masserano to Grimaldi, 31 January 1777, AHN, Est 4284, vol. i; Floridablanca to Masserano, 24 February 1777, AHN, Est 4284, vol. ii; Masserano to Floridablanca, 21 March and 4 April 1777, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii; Masserano to Floridablanca, 31 March 1777, AHN, Est 4284, vol. ii.

⁹³ Campo became minister to England in the 1780s and negotiated the Mosquito Convention of 1786. See chapter XI.

⁹⁴ Terry to Campo, 12 June 1777, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii; Salmon to Admiralty, 28 October 1777, Adm 1/3972. Terry also planned to free the Indians and Africans who lived in bondage on the Shore.

apparent than during Terry's Spanish sojourn. Lord Grantham was aware of his presence in Madrid, and even of the general purpose, but his interpretation was faulty.

There is at Madrid a Mr Terry suspected of having a Commission from the American Congress. he says that if he does not succeed in a month's time, he is to go away. I make no doubt whatever that his attempt (if he makes any) will be quite fruitless.⁹⁵

In London, Germain continued to ridicule every suggestion that the Spanish court was contemplating hostile action against the Mosquito Shore.⁹⁶

The preparations for the expedition took seven months. Terry and his contact in Bilbao, Diego de Gardoqui of the merchant house of Gardoqui, had to overcome numerous obstacles thrown up by jealous Spanish merchants, suspicious Englishmen, quarrelsome sailors and bureaucratic port officials. The port commissioner tenaciously refused to allow the Atlántico to sail until Gardoqui obtained a royal order directing him to issue a passport for the vessel.⁹⁷

Just prior to Terry's departure, Campo reviewed the security measures for the expedition. The American was well versed in the tricks of the contrabandista, he noted with candour, so Terry should find it easy to contact the Spaniards on the Main without arousing unnecessary suspicions. Nevertheless, Campo promised to order Spanish colonial governors to aid Terry, and gave him five passwords, Atlántico, Campo, Masserano, Bilbao

⁹⁵ Grantham to Weymouth, 18 June 1777, SP 94/204.

⁹⁶ Germain to Keith, 4 June 1777, CO 137/72, f. 126.

⁹⁷ Campo to Terry, 25 December 1777, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii.

and Gardoqui, to identify him to suspicious Spanish officials. "Everything now rests on you", Campo said, "we have done everything in our power to ensure the success of your voyage."⁹⁸

When the Atlántico glided down the Nervión River from Bilbao into the Cantabrian Sea early in February 1778, Terry felt that the success of his mission had been assured, for every obstruction to his plan had been eliminated and he believed that a peace treaty had recently been arranged between the Mosquitos and the Spanish by his old friend, Colvill Cairns. He did not suspect that the intelligence of a treaty had been premature, or that the Shoremen were on their guard and that Cairns was frightened.⁹⁹

The voyage was marred by only one incident. The Atlántico was seized near Cartagena by two guardacostas of the Caracas Company, the same company whose agents had seized the Morning Star. Terry and his ship and crew were detained for more than two months, and only the timely intervention of Viceroy Flores saved the vessel and cargo from the prize court and Terry from a Spanish dungeon.¹⁰⁰ Flores' action was "like a reprieve for a condemned man" to Terry, whose joy at regaining his vessel was only dimmed by "the number of Judas congratulations that crossed...Many

⁹⁸Campo to Terry, 19 November 1777, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii; Terry to Campo, 30 April 1778, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii.

⁹⁹Terry to Campo, 4 April 1778, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii; Affidavit by Jonathan Worth, 26 October 1778, CO 123/2, vol. i; Abalos to Flores, 4 April 1778, Guat 665. Floridablanca had prophesied the seizure by suggesting that Terry should not act impetuously in carrying out his plans, "for he might be taken by our own guardacostas, such as has befallen others sailing for the Shore." Floridablanca to Masserano, 24 February 1777, AHN, Est 4284, vol. ii.

¹⁰⁰Flores to Abalos, 20 May 1778, Guat 665; Flores to Gálvez, 30 May 1778, Guat 665.

who while their tongues were employed in wishing me joy, discovered by the Muscles of their faces their sour dissapointment...."¹⁰¹

In July, more than a year after he had discussed his project with Campo in Madrid, and a year and a half since his meeting with Franklin in Paris, Terry anchored the Atlántico at the mouth of the San Juan River, and informed the crew that he intended to establish a colony and trading post there.¹⁰² He immediately put his scheme into operation. At his invitation, George II, General Smee, Duke Isaac and most of the principal Mosquito chiefs and a large body of warriors arrived at Terry's campo towards the end of August.¹⁰³ The Indians spent a considerable time "carousing with Mr. Terry" (a prerequisite to serious discussion) before he asked for their advice and assistance in establishing a fishing and lumber-cutting establishment on the San Juan. He admitted that he had an agreement with the Spanish, but only to avoid the American privateers and to bring quality merchandise to the Indians at prices far lower than the Jamaicans could offer. The chiefs agreed to allow Terry to remain, and they volunteered to help him--at the customary wages.¹⁰⁴ They also agreed to meet with Spanish commissioners at Chagrés during

¹⁰¹Terry to Campo, 8 June 1778, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii.

¹⁰²Affidavit by Jonathan Worth, 26 October 1778, CO 123/2, vol. i.

¹⁰³Terry to Campo, 1 August 1779, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii. Two of the principal chiefs were not present, General Tempest was too far away to make the trip easily and Governor Briton refused to attend without permission and advice from Lawrie.

¹⁰⁴Examination of a Mosquito Man named Penus, 10 October 1778, CO 137/74, f. 138; Affidavit by Jonathan Worth, 26 October 1778, CO 123/2, vol. i; Terry to Campo, 1 August 1779, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii.

the next turtling season, stating their intention in a letter to the Spanish, composed with Terry's assistance.

We...have given Mr. Jerh. Terry (as we believe him to be a friend of our nation) our consent to settle upon the land at and near the mouth of said River St. John's Nicaragua, during his good behaviour, and we have at his request agreed to make a firm and lasting peace, between the Mosquito Men and Spanish Nation, as soon as the regular forms properly authorized by the King of Spain, can pass between Deputies appointed by him and us; and it is our request that the Governor of Costa Rica and Nicaragua may immediately be made acquainted with our Resolution, and thro' them the Viceroy of Sta. Fe, who we trust will communicate them to the King of Spain, so that his Deputies may meet ours upon the 15th day of August next...at a place called Sucia Bite on the Shore a little to the Westward of Chagra [at the south-east limit of the coastal territory dominated by the Mosquitos]; and in the mean time it is our desire, that all hostilities and injustice should cease between Mosquito Men and Spaniards from this day, until the King of Spain's pleasure upon this subject shall be made known to usp... and if favorable your people may safely visit our Shore and carry on such Trade as you think proper to permit.¹⁰⁵

Although the Mosquitos were interested in a treaty of alliance rather than of submission, the Spanish, especially at Matina, were overjoyed with these "preliminaries". According to Governor Perie of Costa Rica, the Mosquito chiefs and upwards of 200 warriors mixed with the vecinos of the cacao producing region in a joyful celebration. Afterwards they retired to Terry's establishment, where officials "of both nations" signed a pact of friendship. While Terry distributed gifts from an almost endless fount, the Indians "could express themselves no otherwise than by acclamations of 'viva el Rey de Espana.'" Terry's influence over the Mosquitos was so great, Perie said, that they even carried

¹⁰⁵"George Rex, Isaac Duke and Regent, Governor Briton, Admiral Frederick, John Smee General and Admiral Dilson", to the viceroy of Santa Fé, 5 September 1778, CO 123/2, vol. i.

Spanish colours on their piraguas. The Mosquito chiefs also agreed to hold a general congress in December or January to inform their people of the peace with the Spanish. "With great cheerfulness" the Mosquitos began clearing land and constructing dwellings for Terry. Within six weeks they had finished eight houses, cleared sixty acres of land and floated 200 cedar logs to the port from up-river.¹⁰⁶

Terry now began the next step in his plan by inviting Cairns to San Juan to meet "an Old Friend that will be glad to see you." But Cairns was no longer a ripe prospect for Terry's proselyting efforts, for while he had trifled with the Spaniards for commercial reasons, there could be no advantage to him in a Mosquito-Spanish treaty arranged by someone who worked the same fishing grounds and employed the Indians who had previously worked for him. Furthermore, Cairns also knew of Terry's aversion to the Indian slave trade, a profitable arm of his own business.¹⁰⁷ Unaware of the enmity that his old drinking crony now harboured towards him, Terry repeated his invitation in August with greater urgency. "I shall not trouble you with a word of Politicks till I see you, for God sake, or rather for the sake of Friendship come to me...."¹⁰⁸ Terry made yet a third plea to Cairns, hinting that the matters he wished to discuss were of great consequence. "A man's thoughts and schemes upon paper are not to be trusted among the

¹⁰⁶ Perié to (probably) Carbonell, 18 March 1779, CO 137/76, f. 33; Chavarria to Perié, 22 August and 8 September 1778, Guat 464; Perié to Gálvez, 24 September 1778, Guat 665.

¹⁰⁷ Affidavit by Thomas Brookman, 19 March 1779, CO 137/74, f. 226; Terry to Cairns, 2 July 1778, CO 137/74, f. 132.

¹⁰⁸ Terry to Cairns, 26 August 1778, CO 137/74, f. 134.

worthies of this Shore," he wrote, "your own persecution cannot yet be forgot."¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, while Cairns was offering excuses for delaying his visit, he plotted to ambush Terry's camp with the aid of a few trusted settlers and Governor Briton. The scheme was abortive however, as Terry refused to lower his defences--even for an old friend.¹¹⁰ But Terry's "Trusty Guard of Moskito Men", commanded by Admiral Dilson, gave him an exaggerated sense of security. Swayed by the mellowing effects of alcohol, he injudiciously boasted of his commission to an equally voluble settler at Pearl Key Lagoon, and Cairns soon had the details of Terry's commission, giving him a legitimate motive to eliminate his rival.¹¹¹ In the middle of October, "grieved" to learn that an old friend had turned traitor to king and country, Cairns turned to Superintendent Lawrie and Governor Dalling with a number of affidavits demonstrating that Terry had promised Briton and other chiefs fabulous gifts for their help in throwing the English off the Shore, and that the majority of the Indians favoured Terry. "Some of the Chiefs declare", Cairns said, "if any Englishman on this Coast hurts or disturbs him that all the rest will be put to the Sword."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹Terry to Cairns, 19 September 1778, CO 137/74, f. 136.

¹¹⁰Affidavit by Thomas Brookman, 19 March 1779, CO 137/74, f. 226.

¹¹¹Affidavit by John Wilson, 25 October 1778, CO 137/74, f. 186.

¹¹²Examination of a Mosquito-man named Penus, 10 October 1778, CO 137/74, f. 138; Affidavit by John O'Hanlon, 10 October 1778, CO 137/74, f. 140; Affidavit by John Young, 10 October 1778, CO 123/2, vol. 1; Affidavits by Abraham Gill and Samuel Price, 23 October 1778, CO 123/2, vol. 1; Cairns to Dalling, 15 October 1778, CO 137/74, f. 128.

The nature of this new threat to their security startled the Shoremen, for if the Indians turned against them, their slaves would also revolt; panic drove many settlers to fortify themselves in their homes.¹¹³ In spite of a sudden irresolution on Cairns' part, who suggested that they await aid from Jamaica, Lawrie resolved to act immediately.¹¹⁴ On 16 October he sailed for the San Juan, planning to recruit Briton and any other Mosquito Men or settler who could be persuaded to join him. But gaining the cooperation of the Indians was not easy. The young Mosquito king refused to cooperate, and found himself decommissioned and plain George until Governor Dalling renewed his title months later.¹¹⁵ Nor was Briton enthusiastic about attacking an armed vessel owned by a man friendly with most of the Zambos and Mosquitos--in spite of the promise of considerable plunder. However, the threat to divest Briton of his treasured commission had the desired effect, and he agreed to participate in the raid, although he demanded that the Indians act alone. But Lawrie insisted that he accompany Briton, apprehensive that the Indian would find an excuse to abandon

¹¹³The storm of rumours had taken a heavy toll, for Terry's Indian allies had left San Juan with intentions no more offensive than settling their domestic affairs and celebrating the usually raucous Christmas season.

¹¹⁴In response to pleas from the Shore for aid, Dalling said that the evidence against Terry was "too conjectural and vague" to warrant any decisive measures. However his instructions reached the Shore too late to alter the succeeding events. Dalling to Lawrie, 18 January 1779, CO 123/2, vol. i.

¹¹⁵George had the strength and spirit that made him the best of the long line of Mosquito kings. His abilities as a ruler were never again exhibited by his successors, except perhaps for a short period during the reign of his great-grandson, Robert Henry Clarence, who was chief of the Mosquito Indians when the Mosquito Reserve was incorporated into the Republic of Nicaragua in 1894.

the venture, or to massacre Terry and his people if he did go through with the attack.¹¹⁶

After brief stops at Walpa Sixa, Pearl Key Lagoon and Bluefields to enlarge his little army, Lawrie held a final war junta at Monkey Point, just north of the San Juan. The party was now composed of fourteen white men, a few Negro slaves, and a small guard of Mosquito Indians and Zambos under Governor Briton, General Smee and Admiral Frederick. During the night of 29 October they approached Terry's camp, and at dawn two Mosquito piraguas commanded by Briton closed in on the Atlántico; three others under Smee went to the small dock where a schooner was loading mahogany. The Mosquitos asked for aguardiente, then suddenly they began to wave an English flag, and to shout "long live the King of England". They seized the Atlántico and the houses on shore without resistance from Terry's men, most of whom were lying miserably ill in huts on shore.¹¹⁷

Terry had been anticipating a visit from Lawrie and hoped that the tumult was no more than a typical display of Mosquito exuberance. He boarded the Atlántico, where he was met by Briton and threatened with death, but after one of the Shoremen with the Mosquitos cried out "Don't kill him, it is not time yet!" Terry was placed in irons on deck. A horde

¹¹⁶ Affidavit by Thomas Brookman, 19 March 1779, CO 137/74, f. 226; Examination of Robert Campbell, 20 March 1779, CO 123/2, vol. i; Lawrie to Dalling, 8 November 1778, CO 137/74, f. 215.

¹¹⁷ Examination of Robert Campbell, 20 March 1779, CO 123/2, vol. i; Declaration by Luis de Ribera, 29 November 1778, AGS, Est 8133, folder 17b; Declaration by Miguel Nicolás Castrillo, 29 November 1778, AGS, Est 8133, folder 17b.

of Indians and whites, including Cairns and Lawrie, clambered aboard the Atlántico. Terry nodded to his old friend Cairns and exchanged a few polite words with the superintendent. Meanwhile the Indians, with the assistance of many of the whites, began to sack the vessel, then while the victors were celebrating their triumph, most of the cargo was trundled onto a sloop belonging to Cairns. Terry and his men were kept in chains for ~~a~~ week while their captors debated their fate. Eventually, compelled by decreasing supplies, Lawrie sent the Spanish members of Terry's crew to Matina and shipped Terry to Jamaica for trial.¹¹⁸

On 7 November Jeremiah Terry began the saddest part of the journey that had taken him from this same coast to London, Paris, Madrid, Bilbao, Portovelo and San Juan. Robert Campbell, master of the Savannah-la-Mar and Terry's host and jailer on the voyage to Jamaica, described him as an exemplary captive, one who had resisted the temptation to escape when the opportunity presented itself, and who had even volunteered his services when members of the crew fell sick. Unknown to Campbell, however, Terry was determined to gain vengeance on the English and had pledged himself to return to the Mosquito Shore. In a chance encounter with the Atlántico (which Lawrie had manned with Terry's American crewmen) at Corn Island, he offered £600 to his old crew if they would seize

¹¹⁸ Examination of Jeremiah Terry, 15 March 1779, CO 123/3, vol. 1; Lawrie to Dalling, 8 November 1778, CO 137/74, f. 215; Perié to (probably) Carbonell, 18 March 1779, CO 137/76, f. 33; Declaration by (probably) Luis de Ribera, 29 November 1778, AGS, Est 8133, folder 17b.

the ship and carry her to Portovelo, Cartagena or Havana. But afraid of the consequences of failure, they declined to accept the offer.¹¹⁹

A wealth of damning evidence accompanied Terry to Jamaica, and Governor Dalling's first inclination was to consider him guilty of the charges. "That Terry has intended great mischief, by debauching our Allies," he wrote, "and extirpating those of our settlers there... seems to appear clearly."¹²⁰ But when Terry faced the Jamaica council on 15 March 1779, his subtle testimony was corroborated by the depositions of two of the men who had participated in the raid against him. Furthermore, the charges of his accusers were weakened by embellishments and exaggerations. Lawrie's explanations exposed a fear that the attack on the Atlántico was unauthorised, perhaps even piratical. Terry "had repeatedly declared his Ship and Cargo... [to be] Spanish property," he explained nervously, "which effectually put it out of my power to prevent the Mosquito Men from taking the whole into their possession." In a letter composed for Colvill Briton by Colvill Cairns, the Indian governor claimed Terry's vessel as a prize "wether the Ship is Spanish or American Property". "The Moskito Nation", he added, is "...always at ar with the former, & the latter I am informed are at war with the Great King of England."¹²¹

Terry admitted to the council that he was a Spanish subject--but

¹¹⁹ Examination of Robert Campbell, 20 March 1779, CO 123/2, vol. 1; Examination of Bartellet Curtis, 23 May 1779, CO 137/75, f. 186.

¹²⁰ Dalling to Lawrie, 22 February 1779, CO 137/74, f. 184; Dalling to Germain, 27 February 1779, CO 137/74, f.162.

¹²¹ Briton to Dalling, 7 November 1778, CO 137/74, f. 184; Dalling to Germain, 27 February 1779, CO 137/74, f. 162; Lawrie to Dalling, 8 November 1779, CO 137/74, f. 215.

temporarily and only for the advantages of trade. Except for a fervent denial of having a commission to expel the English trade from the Mosquito Shore, he let the facts testify in his behalf.¹²² Dalling now began to see that the documentary evidence against Terry was "only copies, and those seemingly imperfect ones".¹²³ The merchants and sugar growers who comprised the council could not condemn ^{him} for his fishing and wood-cutting enterprises, nor for his becoming a Spanish subject. Peaceful commercial contact with the Spanish on the Main was an ideal most merchants aspired to; after all, a good percentage of the island's income came from trade with the Spaniards. Although the council made no mention of reparations, it ruled Terry innocent of the most serious charges and authorised him to leave Jamaica.

Throughout his forced stay on the island, Terry schemed to return to the Shore. When George II was in Kingston to have his commission renewed he secretly conferred with Terry and promised to oust the Shoremen in exchange for arms and protection against English retaliation.¹²⁴ But Terry's return was delayed until August 1782.

News of Terry's misfortune on the San Juan was a crushing disappointment to the Spanish court, and depressed Spanish officials in the Indies. The Mosquitos would now be "better armed and more insolent than ever", President Mayorga of Guatemala said sullenly. The disillusioned Governor Perié

¹²² Affidavits by Brookman and Campbell, and examination of Terry, previously cited.

¹²³ Dalling to Germain, 1 April 1779, CO 137/74, f. 179.

¹²⁴ Terry to Campo, 3 November 1779, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii.

told the commander at Matina not to trust the Mosquitos or have any more communication with them, although he suspected that the consequences of Terry's failure "would be mercantile rather than bloody". Matías de Gálvez, brother of the illustrious José de Gálvez, who was soon to replace Mayorga, received word of Terry's failure "with indifference, expecting the same considering the lack of faith on the part of the English." But Gálvez said that he was preparing the militia and would go out in person to "exterminate in short order...those feeble enemies who have caused us so much trouble."¹²⁵

England's ministers were slow to grasp the significance of the Terry conspiracy. In Madrid, nine months after Terry's departure from Bilbao, Lord Grantham was not even aware that a serious situation existed. When Floridablanca said that there were points of contention that must be adjusted between the two nations, Grantham commented that: "he seemed to lay most stress upon the Settlements in the Bay of Honduras".¹²⁶ Long after Terry had established his community on the San Juan, Germain remarked that Spanish "proceedings are of so hostile a nature towards His Majesty's Subjects...[on the Mosquito Shore] as to justify the taking every precaution for their Security."¹²⁷ But as late as April 1779, his judgment clouded by his determination to insure

¹²⁵ Chavarria to Perié, c. 10 November 1778, AGS, Est 8133, folder 17b; Perié to Chavarria, 15 November 1778, Guat 665; Perié to Gálvez, 15 November 1778, Guat 665; Mayorga to Charles III, 6 January 1779, AGS, Est 8133, folder 17; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 6 January 1779, Guat 665.

¹²⁶ Grantham to Weymouth, 23 November 1778, SP 94/206.

¹²⁷ Germain to Dalling, 7 October and 2 December 1778, CO 137/73, ff. 213, 243.

Spanish neutrality, he expressed his conviction that Terry had no authority from the Spanish court.

it would be unbecoming of His Majesty's Dignity to take any Steps upon the Subject which might give just cause of Jealousy to His Catholic Majesty, or might in any degree call in question that Harmony which subsists between the Courts of Great Britain and Madrid.¹²⁸

In April 1779, less than a fortnight after Germain's expression of confidence in the Spanish court, Spain and France concluded an offensive alliance against England. Article seven of the alliance described Spanish ambitions in the approaching war.

The Catholic King on his part understands that he will acquire by means of the war and the future Treaty of Peace the following advantages: 1. The restitution of Gibraltar; 2. The possession of the river and fort of Mobile; 3. The restitution of Pensacola and the whole Florida coast corresponding to the Bahama Channel ...; 4. The expulsion of the English from the Bay of Honduras [the Mosquito Shore], and the observance by the English of the prohibitions against making any establishments on Spanish territory as outlined in the Treaty of Paris of 1763 [the non-fulfilment of this article by the English--according to the Spanish--in refusing to withdraw from their establishments on the Mosquito Coast was a sore point which had rankled the Spanish since the signing of the treaty]; 5. The revocation of the privilege conceded to the English to cut logwood on the coast of Campeche [Belize]; 6. The restitution of the island of Minorca.¹²⁹

More than a month after the signing, Lord Grantham was still unaware of the existence of the alliance. When Floridablanca told him on 17 May that rumours of an impending rupture between the two courts were groundless,¹³⁰ Spain had, in fact, already despaired of settling their differences for "when negotiations were under way to keep the peace, word

¹²⁸ Germain to Dalling, 2 April 1779, CO 137/74, f. 154.

¹²⁹ TCD, p. 552.

¹³⁰ Grantham to Weymouth, 17 May 1779, SP 94/208, f. 133.

was received of the English depredations at the mouth of the San Juan River and in the Bay of Honduras."¹³¹ The day after Floridablanca's conversation with Grantham, a real orden commanded Spanish governors in America to prepare for war;¹³² Charles III had decided to commence hostilities in June. The ambush and sacking of Terry's camp and vessel --acts which Floridablanca described as outrages to the Spanish flag and crown--were the most important components of a series of articles in a manifesto explaining the Spanish decision to declare war.

"The most recent and most grievous" complaints against the English since the Treaty of 1763 were enumerated in the manifesto; the first eight items relate to the Mosquito Shore.

1. The English had not destroyed all fortifications made in the Bay of Honduras, as prescribed by the Treaty. (The only English fortifications "in that part of the world" were at Black River on the Mosquito Shore.)

2. The English had more firmly established themselves in the Bay of Honduras.

3. The English had incited the Mosquito Indians to revolt.

¹³¹ Manifiesto of the Motives upon which his most Christian Majesty has Founded his conduct with Regard to England... (Madrid, 1779), in SP 94/254, f. 220; Robert White replied anonymously to the Spanish charges in A Full Answer to the King of Spain's last Manifiesto, Respecting the Bay of Honduras, and the Mosquito Shore (London, 1779).

¹³² Real orden to the president of Guatemala, 18 May 1779, Guat 869; Floridablanca to Liston, 5 November 1784, Guat 666; A Full Answer, p. 59.

4. English settlers had established themselves on the Mosquito Coast for no other reasons than to usurp Spanish territory and to engage in clandestine trade. The centre of these operations was at "El Piche" (Pitt). Proof of this usurpation, according to the author, was Lawrie's appointment as "Captain General" of the "new establishments".

5. The English tried to retain the Mosquitos as allies in spite of offers by the Indians to recognise Spanish sovereignty.

6. The Irving scheme was another example of English usurpation of Spanish territory.

7. Rather than give satisfaction to the Spanish, the English had actually complained to the Spanish court on the same subjects, and were even "menacing Spain with war".

8. Late in 1778 the Spanish settlement at the mouth of the San Juan was attacked and destroyed. "When this happened peace negotiations were taking place; the Catholic king was working for England's benefit to obtain peace." There followed a long list of further complaints: seduction of the Indians of Panamá and Louisiana; the attack on a Spanish warship in the harbour of New Orleans and eighty-six other insults to Spanish navigation and trade in the previous three years; and eleven recent violations of Spanish territory, the last one being the attack on Terry's settlement.¹³³

Spanish orders to officials in the West Indies were explicit:

¹³³Manifiesto of the Motives, loc.cit., Calderón, Belice, p. 241.

For the purpose of preventing the evil designs of the court of London, the king has decided to start the most vigorous hostilities against England. Consequently, steps are being taken to unite the Spanish and French squadrons, and to declare war on Great Britain in June.... The king has commanded that you take whatever opportune steps are available to dislodge the English from those coasts, and subject or destroy the Zambos Mosquitos who are allied with them. The Governors of Havana and Yucatan and the viceroy of Santa Fe are to help in these operations.¹³⁴

Early in June, as Spain was concluding her final preparations for war, the significance of the Terry conspiracy became apparent to Germain. "Terry's plan", he wrote, "was deeply laid, & had more powerful support than the projects of a mere Adventurer could have obtained." But in spite of this proof of Spanish hostility, Germain still hoped for a reconciliation. "In the present situation of Affairs...[we should not] carry our suspicions so far as to make them the apparent motives of our conduct." Consequently he ordered Terry to be detained in Jamaica as a rebel rather than as a Spanish agent.¹³⁵

On 16 June 1779, the "indolent and ^{easily} frightened"¹³⁶ Lord Weymouth received from the Marques de Almodovar, Spain's minister to the English court, a message decrying the "unbelievable excess of insults against the Spanish flag and the violation of the King's territories" that "amount[ed] to a Declaration of War." "In spite of the pacific nature of the King", the message continued, "Spain was now forced to use every means at her command to render justice to her people and to the dignity

¹³⁴ Real orden to the president of Guatemala, 18 May 1779, Guat 869.

¹³⁵ Germain to Dalling, 2 June 1779, CO 137/74, f. 236; The argument had long since become academic: Terry had left Jamaica two months earlier.

¹³⁶ Piers Mackesy, The War for America, 1775 - 1783 (London, 1964), p. 18.

of her King." After denouncing the English for their subversive activities among the Indians of Louisiana and for daring to name a savage San Blas Indian captain-general of Veragua, Almodovar alluded to England's support to the scattered settlements on the Mosquito Shore and to the abortive Terry enterprise.

Finally, the territory in the Bay of Honduras has recently been violated by acts of hostilities and other excesses against Spaniards, who have also been imprisoned. Apart from the fact that the Court of London has neglected to accomplish the stipulations of article 16 ^[sic] of the Treaty of Paris, Spanish homes have been invaded.¹³⁷

The next day Almodovar presented a lengthy expose of Spain's complaints against England similar to the manifesto mentioned above.¹³⁸

Germain's reaction to the Spanish declaration was immediate. He authorised that attacks be made against New Orleans and Darién, but in a message to Governor Dalling he placed fond hopes on future operations to be conducted in middle America, using the friendly Mosquito Indians and modern day "Free-Booters".

¹³⁷ Almodovar to Weymouth, 16 June 1779, SP 94/208, f. 223; Weymouth to Grantham, 16 June 1779, SP 94/208, f. 231; Floridablanca to (probably) Liston, 5 November 1784, FO 185/1. Shelburne and Richmond described the crisis wrought by the Spanish declaration "as the most awful the country had ever experienced, and comparable with the Armada." Mackesy, *op.cit.*, p. 263; Jimenes to Pitt, 27 October 1763, CO 137/61, f. 213; Grimaldi to Masserano, 20 January 1767, AHN, Est 4269, vol. i; Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 354.

¹³⁸ Almodovar to Robinson, 17 June 1779, SP 94/20, f. 248. ~~Under~~ ~~Secretary~~ Robinson or Germain, writing in the margin of Almodovar's paper, blamed most of the acts on the American rebels. Violations in the Bay of Honduras were disposed of with the succinct epithet: "never heard of".

The Accounts you have transmitted...of the Fidelity and Attachment of the Musquito Indians to His Majesty, leave no room to doubt of their Assistance in any Enterprize against the Spanish Territories adjoining to their Country; The first step therefore that appears necessary to be taken is to supply them with Arms & Ammunition, & encourage them to make Inroads into the Spanish Settlements in the Neighbourhood. The Hopes of Plunder may perhaps incite many Free-Booters from the Islands and Continent of America to join the Indians in these Incursions....¹³⁹

An American rebellion had become a general war.

¹³⁹Germain to Dalling, 17 June 1779, CO 137/74, f. 239.

Chapter X

ANGLO-SPANISH CONFLICT,
1779 - 1783

Throughout the eighteenth century Spain tenaciously defended an archaic economic policy that clashed with England's trading interests in the West Indies. This confrontation, instrumental in provoking Anglo-Spanish conflicts in 1739 and 1762, again led to war in 1779. England used her foothold on the Mosquito Shore and her friendship with the Mosquito Indians during the war in a serious attempt to open a commercial highway to the Pacific Ocean, while the Spanish tried to expel the English settlers from the Coast and reduce or exterminate the Indians. The Shore became a savage but silent jungle battleground, the sounds of conflict muffled by the raucous campaigns far to the north.¹

Spanish colonial officials knew about the war a month before their English counterparts, an advantage strengthened by plans to unite the French and Spanish fleets and by confidence that the struggle in North America would forestall any immediate English offensive. And the Spanish had another advantage in the struggle: in spite of the traditional

¹M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 6 July 1779, CO 137/76, f. 31; Extract of a letter from M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 6 September 1779, in Chatfield to Palmerston, 20 May 1849, FO 252/41.

Anglo-Mosquito alliance, certain despotic acts practised on the Indians by the Shoremen, especially Superintendent James Lawrie's peremptory dethronement of King George II during the Terry episode in 1778,² disaffected the Mosquitos towards the English.³ The Spanish were unaware that soon after their declaration of war in June 1779, Lord George Germain had ordered "that Attacks should be made upon the Spanish Possessions in America on the side of the Mosquito Shore, and the Mississippi."⁴ But the Shoremen and Jamaicans were too concerned with their own defences to undertake immediate military operations. Their caution was well founded. On 15 August 1779 President Matías de Gálvez of the audiencia of Guatemala ordered the governor of the province of Yucatán, Roberto de Rivas Betancourt, to eject the English from the Mosquito Coast. Rumours of English plans to invade Guatemala gave greater urgency to Gálvez' orders. But Rivas needed no prompting; he had been drilling his ragged militia and assembling armed vessels since 2 August, the day he received the celebrated real orden of 18 May 1779, announcing the intention of the Spanish court to open hostilities.⁵

²See above, p.239.

³The Spanish hoped to widen this breach by distributing gifts and gold and silver medals to Mosquito chiefs. However this tactic was unsuccessful, for they found it impossible to reach them during the war and had to be content with awarding the medals to the caciques of the more primitive tribes on the frontier.

⁴Germain to the lords of the Admiralty, 25 June 1779, SP 42/55, f. 9.

⁵Navarro to Gálvez, 11 August 1779, Adm 1/241, f. 356; Dalling to Germain, 6 August 1779, CO 137/75, f. 148; Gálvez to Rivas, 15 August 1779, cited by Calderón, lice, p. 243; Rivas to Gálvez, 18 August 1779, id., p. 244.

On 9 September, Rivas' force attacked the logwood coast rather than the Mosquito Shore as ordered, destroying the community of St. George's Key near Belize.⁶ The Baymen should have received a warning from Black River in time to prepare their defences--or at least to evacuate the settlement, since intelligence of Spanish plans had reached the Mosquito Shore even before 2 August. But Lawrie was in the back country, and the inhabitants of Black River withheld the information, fearing that the Baymen might interfere with an expedition from the Shore searching for Spanish register ships.⁷

The first British campaign in the war was in reaction to the destruction of St. George's Key. Lt. Col. John Dalrymple, who had been sent to the Bay by Governor John Dalling to elicit the aid of the Shoremen, Baymen and Mosquitos for future expeditions, arrived in Black River at the same time as the news of the "treacherous" attack on the Key. Dalrymple immediately requested the Shoremen and the Zambos Mosquitos of General Tempest's party to join him in a punitive expedition. But the same men who failed the Baymen now tried to deter the Zambos. In Dalrymple's nearly unarmed vessel, the Indians would be at the mercy of the Spaniards, they argued, and Black River was about to be invaded; every man was needed at home. Nevertheless, a small number of Shoremen

⁶The disaster at St. George's Key hurt many Shoremen who owned property there, including Hodgson, Lawrie and Colvill Cairns. Hodgson's losses amounted to £494, Jamaica currency, Lawrie's were £585/4/4 and Cairns' £184/17/6. List of the losses sustained by property owners in St. George's Key, 13 September 1782, CO 123/2, vol. ii.

⁷Lawrie to Dalling, 2 September 1779, CO 137/76, f. 46; Dalling to Dalrymple, 20 October 1779, CO 137/76, f. 82; Dalrymple to Dalling, 3 October 1779, CO 137/81, f. 225; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 1 September 1779, CRM, p. 187.

(120 of them were still out searching for the register ships) and Zambos agreed to join him. On the same day that they sailed for Belize they met three English frigates of war commanded by Captain John Luttrell and learned that the register ships were sheltered under the cannon of Fort San Fernando de Omoa. Luttrell had failed to force the surrender of the fort by a lengthy bombardment. Excited by the prospect of plunder, Dalrymple suggested that they combine their forces to renew the attack; Luttrell enthusiastically agreed. They sailed for Omoa, stopping at Truxillo to enlist a few Baymen and the Shoremen who had failed to find the register ships. Near Omoa, Dalrymple's men disembarked and approached the fort by a forced march through thicket and swamp. En route the Zambos silenced enemy lookouts, cleared the trail of undergrowth, and even took on the gruelling task of hauling the heavy cannon. On 20 October, after a siege in which the town of Omoa was burned to the ground, Dalrymple led a successful escalade over the thick castle walls. The largest Spanish fort in the kingdom of Guatemala and three register ships and cargoes worth three million pesos were in English hands.⁸

The Zambos Mosquitos had been so much in evidence during the siege and on the escalade that Spanish defenders thought the attack had been the work of the Indians with a few English advisers and naval support.⁸

⁸ Some sources say that the booty was worth much less than three million pesos. See Robert S. S mith, "Indigo Production and Trade in Colonial Guatemala", HAHR, xxxix (1959), p. 199; and Salvatierra, Contribución, i, 472.

⁹ The dispute between those who participated in the expedition and their superiors in Jamaica and in London over the division of the plunder was an interesting aftermath. The navy claimed the entire sum because the booty was captured "at sea", although the vessels were anchored in the harbour and the capture was only made possible by Dalrymple and his irregular force. There was another slight to the victory. After the surrender Dalrymple tried to help the Mosquitos regain two of their comrades,

(continued on next page)

The capture of Omoa was an awkward appendage to an expansive military operation on the Spanish Main suggested by Robert Hodgson (the former superintendent of the Mosquito Shore who hoped for a new command in the Indies), and eagerly supported by Lord George Germain. Hodgson proposed to divide the Spanish empire and to open a trading route to the South Sea by invading the kingdom of Guatemala through Nicaragua. After the capture of Omoa, Germain ordered Governor Dalling to use "The most vigorous efforts...to gain possession of the lake and country of Nicaragua [and to give] the greatest encouragement...to the native Indians and Creole Spaniards to join the King's troops." To encourage the Mosquitos, 2,000 fowling pieces and a great supply of light ordnance and presents were sent for their use in hunting and warfare. Dalling, who was excited by the prospects of leading an expedition on the Main, and who had been given a free hand in the operations by Germain, had begun the preparations even before receiving specific instructions to do so. He felt that the expedition would revenge England for Spain's "perfidious and unprovoked" declaration of war. He also agreed with Germain that it would be "such a Diversion as will oblige our new Enemy the Spaniard to look at home instead of disturbing us here",

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Trumble and Brumsley, who had been prisoners for many years in Panama and Cartagena. Dalrymple demanded their release, giving the commander of the fort, Simon Desnaux, a painful alternative. Since Desnaux had ignored a call to capitulate during the siege, the prisoners were prisoners of the Mosquitos. They would remain their slaves until their two comrades were freed. However, the prisoners were released after Desnaux promised to look into the case; and nothing more is heard of Trumble and Brumsley. Lawrie to Dalling, 4 October 1779, CO 137/76, f. 48; Dalrymple to Desnaux, 26 October 1779, CO 137/75, f. 235; Dalrymple to Amherst, 21 October 1779, O 34/119, f. 174; Luttrell to Parker, 25 October 1779, Adm 1/242, f. 426. Testimony by Fernando Mancebo, 1 January 1780, Guat 464; Testimony by Alonso Gil Rondón, 5 January 1780, Guat 464; Testimony by Simon Desnaux, 11 February 1780, Guat 464; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 15 March 1780, Guat 464. London Magazine, December 1779, p. 59.

demonstrating the fear in Jamaica of a Franco-Spanish invasion.¹⁰

Dalling ordered Lawrie and Dalrymple to recruit as many Mosquitos and Shoremen as possible for the scheme designed to seize Fort Inmaculada on the San Juan, gain command of Lake Nicaragua and the inland cities of Granada and León, and occupy a port on the South Sea, probably Realejo. The army was to assemble at Cape Gracias a Dios. Considerable reliance was placed on Lawrie and the Shoremen, and especially on the Mosquito Indians, whose assistance as scouts, boatmen and provisioners would be of the "greatest Consequence". But the governor cautioned against depriving the Mosquitos "of their private plunder, which [could] occasion a general defection, and prove fatal to the Enterprize." Lawrie expressed his optimism for the success of the expedition, and promised to raise 1,000 Mosquito Men within three weeks.¹¹

Problems arose almost immediately. The scramble for the loot seized at Omoa interfered with Dalling's recruitment of officers. On learning that the navy intended to appropriate the spoils, Dalrymple informed Dalling that "many reasons concur to carry me to Britain." This "un-officer-like" conduct infuriated and frustrated General Dalling,

¹⁰ Germain to Dalling, 17 Jun 1779, CO 137/74, f. 239; Dalling to Germain, 13 November 1779, CO 137/76, f. 53; Dalling to Parker, 17 December 1779, CO 137/77, f. 224; Hodgson to Germain, 3 January 1781, CO 137/80, f. 323; Hodgson to Dalling, 17 December 1780, Sta Fe 1261; Germain to Dalling, 1 March 1780, GP/SDB.

¹¹ Dalling to Dalrymple, 20 November 1779, CO 137/76, f. 82; Dalling to Polson, 4 February 1780, CO 137/76, f. 247; Germain to Dalling, 4 December 1779, CO 137/75, f. 202; Lawrie to Dalling, 18 November 1779, CO 137/76, f. 224; Lawrie to Dalling, 17 December 1779, CO 137/81, f. 202; Germain to Dalling, 4 January 1780, GP/SDB.

especially since he had placed his hopes for success on Dalrymple's proven leadership. Nothing, he insisted, should thwart the "very serious service" they were about to undertake. Hoping to stop him before he left for England, Dalling sent orders for Dalrymple to receive the troops at Cape Gracias a Dios.¹²

Opposition to the invasion came from various sources. Commandr Parker of the Jamaica station thought the scheme detrimental to the defence of the island and that it had little chance of success, although he reluctantly agreed to furnish his support. The sugar-growers and merchants of Jamaica were antagonistic to any move that might weaken the island's defences. Because of the "fear of the jealousy of the People", Dalling had to raise the invasion force by stealth. Soldiers were sent to the Main as "Convalescents", a ruse not likely to deceive many people considering the large number of men involved and the notorious unhealthiness of the Shore.¹³

Meanwhile in England, news of victories over the Spanish and Americans greatly encouraged public and governmental enthusiasm for the conflict. Word of the capture of Omoa reached London on 17 December just four days before news of a similar victory at Savannah.¹⁴ These

¹² Dalrymple to Dalling, 5 October 1779, CO 137/76, f. 72; Dalling to Germain, 15 November 1779, CO 137/76, f. 56; Dalling to Dalrymple, 14 November 1779, CO 137/76, f. 86.

¹³ Dalling to Germain, 13 November 1779, CO 137/76, f. 53; Parker to Dalling, 15 December 1779, CO 137/77, f. 221.

¹⁴ The news of the victory at Omoa was greeted with excitement in England. Horace Walpole, in referring to what he called the "ridiculous" British action in Georgia, wrote: "They had betted to have stuck to their triumphs on the Mosquito Shore; which were heroic and perfect in every light, and the narratives of which seem to me the clearest relations of any battle or siege I ever saw." Walpole was probably referring to Dalrymple's account of the attack printed in The London Magazine or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer, 1779, xlv ii, 569. Walpole to Ossory, 23 December 1779, printed in Wilmaith Lewis, ed., Horace Walpole's Correspondence with the Countess of Upper Ossory (2 vols., London, 1965), ii, 148.

triumphs induced the British cabinet to approve the expedition on the San Juan and to authorise strong reinforcements for it. On Christmas eve they presented Governor Dalling with 3,000 additional troops.¹⁵

In Jamaica, however, the euphoria of initial success was dissipated by bad news from the Main. Omoa had been recaptured, which prompted Lawrie to lament that the San Juan expedition would thus be delayed. Furthermore, the dry season was well advanced; if they did not reach Lake Nicaragua before the rainy season began in April or May, operations would become extremely difficult or even impossible. Rather than postpone the enterprise, Governor Dalling, a military man unhappily immersed in the petty squabbles of civil administration, decided to act immediately. Yet further delay was caused by the renewed threat of a Franco-Spanish invasion, and the first unit of 540 men did not leave Jamaica until 3 February 1780. Since Dalrymple's whereabouts were still unknown, the military command of the expedition went to Captain John Polson, a young, inexperienced officer frightened by his new responsibilities. Polson had flexible orders. If Lawrie were unable to collect a large supporting force he was to consider lesser objectives, such as harassing Spanish frontier towns and posts.¹⁶

Polson's army was plagued by bad luck and inept leadership from the

¹⁵Hodgson to Germain, 27 December 1779, CO 137/73, f. 262; Germain to Dalling, 4 January 1780, GP/SDB; Cabinet minutes, 24 December 1779, cited by Mackesy, War for America, p. 314; Stormont to George III, 24 December 1779, CKG, iv, 533.

¹⁶Lawrie to Dalling, 27 December 1779, CO 137/31, f. 230; Dalling to Lawrie, 6 January 1780, CO 137/1, f. 217; Dalling to Germain, 28 January and 4 February 1780, CO 137/76, ff. 144, 220.

beginning. The usual thrice a year voyage to the Cape took two weeks because of stormy weather. At their arrival they found neither Indians nor craft. Three more weeks passed before Lawrie's storm-battered force began to arrive from Black River and from other English and Mosquito settlements on the Shore. Many piraguas had been destroyed and their crews lost in the pounding surf. The principal Mosquito chiefs, King George II, General Tempest and Governor Briton, and their men, were brought together only with great difficulty. Briton refused to leave Tebuppy until persuaded by Polson and young Lieutenant Horatio Nelson, commander of the naval forces on the expedition. On the scheduled day of departure for the San Juan a number of Indians ran off, ostensibly to search for provisions, and when the expedition finally did sail on 16 March the fleet immediately ran onto a reef. Most of the vessels were soon freed, but strong winds and a heavy sea delayed their arrival at the mouth of the San Juan until 27 March.¹⁷

When Polson's army began to move up the river, led by Nelson and Lieutenant Edward Marcus Despard, a capable young Irish engineer,¹⁸

¹⁷Dalling to Germain, 2 June 1780, CO 137/77, f. 149; Benjamin Moseley, A Treatise on Tropical Diseases, on Military Operations and on the Climate of the West Indies (London, 1792), p. 76; Carola Oman, Nelson (London, 1947), p. 29; Mackesy, op.cit., p. 335.

¹⁸Nelson described his efforts on the advance up the river. "Major Polson, who commanded, will tell you of my exertions; how I quitted my ship, carried troops in boats an hundred miles up a river, which none but the Spaniards since the time of the buccaneers had ever ascended; it will then be told how I boarded, if I may be allowed the expression, an out-post of the enemy, situated on an island in the river; that I made battaries, and afterwards fought them, and was a principal cause of our success." James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur, The Life of Admiral Lord Nelson, K. G. From His Lordship's Manuscripts (2 vols., London, 1809), i, 22.

they encountered further difficulties. The piraguas were too large and unwieldy; several of them capsized and a number of men drowned in the brackish current of the river. An immoderate use of rum in the tropic heat by the unconditioned troops took a further toll. Advance units reached Fort Inmaculada on 11 April, when Nelson and Despard proposed to lead an immediate assault. But Folson cautiously decided to besiege the fort. Cannon were set on a hill overlooking the enemy and the two sides settled down to an artillery duel.¹⁹

President Matías de Gálvez, who had arrived in Granada to organise the defence of Nicaragua, despaired of relieving the fort. The English controlled the river, the only route by which aid could be sent, and desertions had reduced the number of available militiamen in the kingdom to 600 men--mostly untrained and unarmed. Gálvez planned to raise 1000 men for an expedition, but recruitment was difficult and the naval force he expected from Havana and Cartagena was to arrive two years late. Meanwhile, the kingdom remained vulnerable to the English invaders on the San Juan.²⁰

At the fort the rains had begun and continued until the Spanish capitulated on 29 April. The victory coincided with the first sickness among the British troops and the Mosquitos; the victors were no better off than the vanquished. There were no useful supplies in the fort which was not only "an improper hospital, but a certain grave to almost all

¹⁹Folson to Kemble, 1 May 1780, KP, ii, 215.

²⁰M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 24 April 1780, Guat 464; Gálvez to Rivas, 23 May 1780, Mex 3021; Gálvez to Navarro, 28 May 1780, Cuba 127; Rivas to Gálvez, 7 July 1780, Mex 3 21.

who entered it."²¹ Also, many English officers and men mistreated the Indians, in spite of Governor Dallin's warnings. Polson even refused to let them have the Spanish mulatto prisoners promised by Dalling. The Mosquitos were fond of Nelson²²--and of Dalrymple, who had belatedly joined the expedition--but Nelson was evacuated to Jamaica when he contracted dysentery, and Dalrymple gave himself up to the few pleasures that might be purchased on the San Juan.²³ The Mosquitos began to

²¹ Thomas Dancer, A Brief History of the late Expedition (Kingston, 1781), p. 18.

²² On the advance up stream, one of Nelson's men was killed by a snake bite. "Captain Nelson also, during this march, had nearly experienced the same dreadful fate. One day excessively fatigued, he had ordered his hammock, on one of their halts, to be slung under some trees. During his sleep, that extraordinary animal called the Monitor Lizard, from its faculty of warning persons of the approach of any venomous animal, passed across his face; which being observed by some of the attendant [Mosquito] Indians, they, shouted, and awoke him. He immediately started up, and throwing off the quilt, found one of the most venomous of the innumerable serpents in that country, curled up at his feet. From this providential escape, the Indians, who attended, entertained an idea that Nelson was a superior being, under an especial protection; and this idea, which his wonderful abilities and unearied exertions tended to confirm, was of essential service in gaining their confidence, and prolonging their co-operation." Clark, op.cit., i, 36.

²³ Sir Alexander Leith wrote: "Dalrymple's greatness of soul has been at length obliged to relinquish the path of glory for the purer air of the Corn Islands; ... I hope [he] has left no body like him behind. - he was troubled somewhat with an ague, but proceeded up the river with Genl. Kemble in order to attack a strong battery the Spaniards have erected at the entrance of the Lake - however his martial spirit was obliged to bow to another cold fit, and he in a few days returned, not loaded with honors & crowned with laurels, but extremely encumbered with a great quantity of fat turkeys, and some broods of fine young chickens - it seems this Gentleman, during the extremities he has undergone in the course of this bloody campaign never stirred without his hen roosts, Claret, turkey - he deems his health of great importance to his Country, and certainly leaves no means untried to establish it effectually - I was extremely ill when he returned, but he took up his quarters in the Fort, and entertained me every evening with three or four Spanish whores rolling on his bed, with whom he practiced all the conduct of a Covent Garden

(continued on next page)

desert in great numbers. At the same time, in London, Germain commented prophetically: "without the assistance of the Mosquito Indians it will be impossible to retain the country, even if Captain Polson obtains possession of it." Their loss was disastrous, for they were the only experienced bateaux-men and hunters available. Polson began to withdraw his forces downstream leaving behind a small garrison. Meanwhile, a greater catastrophe was developing at the mouth of the river, where newly arrived reinforcements had begun to perish in the harbour's "pestilential vapours". The Mosquitos gone, it was impossible to transport the men upstream before the epidemic spread of "fluxes and intermittant fever"; dysentery, malaria and yellow fever had begun their work on the troops.²⁴

(continued from previous page)

brothel - I could not help observing to him that I thought his state of health not so very dangerous as he seemed to apprehend; and that people would look strangely on him as a sick man, when he could drink his Claret, and eat his turkey, as well as any Officer in the Camp. I therefore advised him to remain some time with me for his own credit - this conversation was not much relished by him, and as there appeared some foundation for my observations, it became necessary for him to clear away all imputations immediately - He accordingly sent for Capt. Dixon; and, in a most piteous manner, the tears trickling down his face in strict accord with his tremulous voice, told him he found his constitution entirely gone, and he was convinced he should die in a few hours; begged that his dear corps, the Loyall Iris, might favour him; and, as a token of the affection he bore, even in the agonies of death, to observe a body of men, he bequeathed to the sick of the corps all his wine and turkeys - Dixon, who has but little command of his risible faculties, burst out laughing, and swore 'by God he should not die.' However Dalrymple, having established his plea of sickness, and affection for his Corps, returned to the Spanish Whores, and the next morning (not being able to walk) was carried to the boat by four negroes.' Leith to Keating, 22 July 1780, CO 137/81, f. 249.

²⁴ Gálvez to Navarro, 18 July 1780, Cuba 1278; Germain to Dalling, 5 April 1780, Report on the Manuscripts of Mr. Stopford-Sackville Historical Manuscripts Commission (2 vols., London 1904, 1910), ii, 25; Corr 1 to Ferná, 10 August 1780, C C, x, 9; Polson to Kemble, 1 May 1780, KF, ii, 215.

In spite of the multiplying disasters, the English army on the San Juan had opportunities to control Lake Nicaragua. During the siege on the fort, Lt. McLean of the Jamaica volunteers and twelve Mosquito Men captured two enemy piraguas on the lake, and later the outlet was controlled by another small force. But Polson ignored these openings; his interest did not extend beyond the fort.²⁵

When General Kemble, who replaced Polson as commander of the expedition, arrived at the mouth of the San Juan with further reinforcements in May 1780, his lack of enthusiasm for the expedition matched Polson's. "My distress for the want of Men to navigate the Craft is very great, and I am at a loss how to surmount it." Nevertheless, after many difficulties Kemble reached the castle, then made a half-hearted attempt to accomplish the purpose of the expedition by leading 300 men upriver. But after some desultory reconnoitering "the whole were ordered to embark and retreated much to the disappointment of all and to the astonishment of the troops in general." Shortly afterwards Kemble returned to the mouth of the river, leaving a token garrison at the fort.²⁶

On 10 August, aware of the failure on the Main, and faced with revived fears of a Franco-Spanish invasion which had made it impossible for him to send further reinforcements, Dalling ordered Kemble to destroy the fort. Although control of the South Sea route was still

²⁵ Report by David Lamb, 27 July 1781, CO 123/16.

²⁶ Kemble's Journal (New York, 1884), p. 7, From the Collections of the New York Historical Society, p. 7; Kemble to Dalling, 5 July 1780, CO 137/78, f. 250; report by David Lamb, 27 July 1781, CO 123/16.

a primary object of government, it would have to wait for a other season.²⁷

A month later Dalling admitted that the campaign must be abandoned, not only because of the great mortality--in Jamaica as well as on the Main--but also because of the lack of support from the navy and the loss of a relief fleet from England. He ordered that the surviving troops be transferred to Bluefields, Black River and Jamaica. On 30 October, Germain gave his own coup d' grace to the expedition when he said that New Orleans rather than the Spanish Main should become the primary object of attention. However, he hoped that Bluefields would become the base for future attacks against the enemy.²⁸

It is sometimes held that the San Juan expedition was an attempt by England to partially indemnify herself for the loss of her American colonies. However, Lord George Germain did not harbour thoughts of American independence in 1779, and surely George III would never have accepted Spain's American colonies as recompense for the loss of England's own rebellious thirteen.²⁹ The primary object of the invasion of Guatemala was to discourage aggressive Spanish action and to encourage

²⁷Dalling to Kemble, 10 August 1780, CO/137/78, f. 246; Dalling to Germain, 12 August 1780, CO 137/78, f. 205; Dalling to Kemble, 20 August 1780, CO 137/78, f. 24; General officers' meeting, 17 August 1780, CO 137/78, f. 234.

²⁸Dalling to Germain, 19 September 1780, CO 137/78, f. 281; Germain to Dalling, 30 October 1780, CO 137/78, f. 265; Germain to Dalling, 1 November 1780, CO 137/78, f. 268.

²⁹There were contemporary suggestions that the Mosquito shore would make an ideal substitute for the loss of the American colonies. See the anonymous letter to the Highgate Gazette, 12 October 1784, p. 250.

trade by opening communications across the peninsula. After Spain declared war, Germain's dispatches became optimistic, even exuberant; England need no longer humble herself to retain Spanish neutrality. Germain was anxious to carry the conflict to the enemy, but he made it clear that England did not intend to establish colonies in middle America, favouring the restoration of the Spanish provinces to their native and Creole inhabitants.³⁰

The San Juan fiasco, with its great waste of men and materials, was a gross caricature of a military campaign. The army of more than 1,400 men was reduced to less than 400, with no more than five men lost in combat. For every man who fell in battle 200 perished in the ravaging epidemics. Whole units fell sick in a single night.³¹ The navy

³⁰ Germain to Dalling, 17 June 1779, CO 137/74, f. 239; General officer's meeting in Kingston, 4 January 1780, CO 137/78, f. 234; C.F. Mullett, "British Schemes Against Spanish America, 1806", HAHR, xxvii (1947), p. 269; Williams, Isthmian Diplomacy, p. 20; Alcee Fortier and John Rose Ficklen, Central America and Mexico (Philadelphia, 1907), p. 115; John Dalrymple, Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1781, 1788), i, appendix 1, p. 2.

³¹ The expedition was composed of the following units:

Regular troops	635
Jamaica volunteers	258
Jamaica Legion ("a riotous troublesome set of people")	213
Royal batteaux men	125
Light horse or dragoons ("Curacao Men, Sailors, Italians, Portuguese")	98
Artificers	50
	Total: 1,379

This total does not include Mosquito Indians, Shoreman, Baymen or navy.

Hercules Ross, agent general for the expedition was "confounded in such Schemes by the Medley of Characters, which were likely to compose the army on the Expedition: for Instance, Officers of Sea and Land, Artificers, Gentlemen Volunteers, Indian Kings, Princes, Generals and Colonels of their class and colours.... it was a task beyond his abilities...." Dalling to Germain, 1 January 1781, CO 137/79, f. 172. Hodgson estimated that the loss of men on the expedition was 4,000, more than twice the number of men actually participating. Bentham to Wilson, 29 September 1781, printed in John Bowring, The Works of Jeremy Bentham (11 vols., London, 1838-1843), x, 109.

suffered in a similar fashion. Lt. Newnham Collingwood, later Admiral Lord Collingwood, succeeded Nelson as commander of the Hinchinbroke on the expedition, reported that 180 of the 200 members of his crew died in four months while stationed at the mouth of the river. 'Mine was not a singular case," Collingwood wrote, "for every ship that was long there suffered in the same degree. The transports' men all died;...but transport-ships were not wanted, for the troops whom they had brought, were no more;...."³²

Trouble also came from the Shoremen, who told the Mosquitos that the real purpose of the expedition was to enslave them, thus helping to establish an early climate of discontent among the Indians.³³ Polson said that "the Villainy of the Shore Settlers, who in general are the outcasts of all the British West Indies", hurt the expedition because they feared that it would hinder their illicit trade with the Spanish.³³

In spite of the many factors explaining the disaster, it is difficult to believe that it occurred. The odds favouring success had been overwhelming. There were few regular Spanish troops in the kingdom of Guatemala, and the militia, though technically numerous, was composed of barefooted, poorly trained and usually unarmed Indians, mestizos and mulattos. In battle they could never have defeated the veteran British forces with their Mosquito auxiliaries. Ultimately, the failure can be traced to Polson and Kemble; the lack of initiative and enthusiasm in

³²G.L. Newnham Collingwood, A Selection from the Public and Private Correspondence of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood: interspersed with memoirs of his life (London, 1828), p. 5.

³³Polson to Dalling, 30 April 1780, CO 137/81, f. 203.

both men for the campaign was apparent throughout. Polson erred either by not immediately storming the fort or by not laying siege with a smaller force and pushing on to the lake. Kemble refused to attack Fort San Carlos at the mouth of the lake, in spite of the ease with which the point had twice fallen to small patrols.

The English were fortunate that the Spanish reaction to the invasion was so tardy, for even before Polson's army left Jamaica, steps had been taken to counter the expedition. In August 1779, José de Gálvez notified his brother, Matías de Gálvez, president of the audiencia and captain general of Guatemala, that the English had formed a large company for the purpose of exploiting interoceanic communications across the peninsula.³⁴ The day after Polson's army left Jamaica Charles III ordered that aid be sent to Guatemala from Puerto Rico, Havana, Cartagena, Merida and Peru. Three Peruvian guardacostas were ordered to patrol the Pacific coast of Nicaragua to repulse the enemy if they should reach that point. Gálvez ordered the construction of two small armed vessels (later captured by the Zambos Mosquitos) on Lake Nicaragua and had breastworks erected at the outlet of the lake, which were manned by frightened militiamen who soon disappeared into the bush. Only the timidity of General Kemble forced the English retreat.³⁵

³⁴There is no indication of this in British sources.

³⁵Charles III to Gálvez, 4 February 1780, Guat 451; J. Gálvez to M. Gálvez, 11 August 1779, Guat 464; Rivas to Navarro, 15 April 1780, Cuba 1279; Rivas to Gálvez, 15 April 1780, Mex 3021; Gálvez to Navarro, 20 April 1780, Cuba 1278; From the edictos of the audiencia of Guatemala, 19 August 1780, Cuba 1278.

At whitehall, a search was begun for a scapegoat. Germain accused Lawrie of improper conduct in the preparations for the expedition, yet there is no proof that he was guilty of anything but old age, a charge Germain borrowed from Hodgson. Governor Dalling received even greater abuse. Years later, William Knox told the younger Pitt that the expedition failed "through the avarice and presumption of the...Governor of Jamaica in making the attack that he might share in the plunder, when he was only ordered to make the preparations." But this accusation was unfair; Dalling had been ordered to put the plan into operation and he did everything in his power to assure its success, except perhaps to name a proper person to command it.³⁶

The poor treatment of the Mosquitos on the expedition can be blamed on Polson, since Dalling had ordered him to treat them with care. Hodgson wrote that they "were struck, they were starved, they were treated with military strickness--and all ran away."³⁷ Officers on the expedition blamed the climate and disease for the failure. The weather never cooperated. From the time they left Jamaica until their arrival at Fort Inmaculada the army was hindered by the blustery winds of the dry season and from that time on^{by} the insidious tropical rain.³⁸

The Spanish did not move to retake the castle on the San Juan until

³⁶ Germain to Dalling, 6 September 1780, CO 137/78, f. 130; Germain to Dalling, 1 November 1780, CO 137/78, f. 268; Mackesy, op.cit., p. 337.

³⁷ Hodgson to Knox, 28 April 1781, CO 137/80, f. 21.

³⁸ Leith to Dalling, 26 June 1780, CO 137/78, f. 198; Dalling to Germain, 2 July 1780, CO 137/78, f. 167; McDonald's report, 24 August 1789, CO 137/78, f. 228; Mullett, op.cit., p. 273.

they were sure that the English garrison had been greatly reduced by disease. Matías de Gálvez intended to command the counter-attack, but he was suddenly crippled with such a bad case of gout that he was forced to return to Guatemala, much of the way on the shoulders of Indian carriers. One of his most trusted officers, Tomás de Juliá, laid siege to the fort early in January 1781, after an unsuccessful attempt to storm its gates. At night after the first day of bombardment the English garrison, commanded by Captain Despard, crept out of the castle and disappeared downstream. Charges of explosives, which were set before the retreat, failed to detonate when an English deserter cut the burning fuses.³⁹

The recapture of the fort was an epilogue to the English disaster. Yet Governor Saavedra of Havana, who noted the value of the San Juan interoceanic route, called the victory the most important one for Spain in the war.⁴⁰ While Fort Inmaculada was recaptured with ease, Gálvez complained that the enemy remained master of the North Coast, a situation he would have remedied, he said, if the requested naval support had arrived. And now, without the strength to stop them, Gálvez reported that the Mosquitos and English were going to test their "arrogant and insane schemes" on the Wanks (Segovia) and Bluefields rivers.⁴¹

³⁹Nava to Gálvez, 18 September 1780 and 7 January 1781, Guat 465; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 26 September 1780, Guat 464; Gálvez to Navarro, 29 September 1780, Cuba 1278; Account of the seizure of the Castillo de la Inmaculada Concepción, anon., n.d., BPR, Ayala LXVI-2884; García Peláez, Memorias, iii, 113.

⁴⁰Saavedra to Gálvez, 4 April 1781, Ind Gen 1578; Herrera to Gálvez, 12 November 1780, Guat 869.

⁴¹M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 5 November 1780, Guat 464; Gálvez to Navia, 10 March 1781, Cuba 1324.

San Juan was not the only British defeat on the Main in 1780. While the English were preparing for the invasion, Gálvez was gathering the Guatemalan militia for an attack on the leeward Mosquito Coast. A man imbued with the spirit of the conquistadores, he was confident of success, especially with the reassuring intelligence that no more than forty English soldiers defended Black River. Originally the army was to include eighty veterans and 2,500 militiamen, but it was greatly reduced as whole units fled into the hills to escape the obnoxious and frightening service against an almost mythical enemy. Other problems hindered the Spanish plans, including a lack of naval support and a near rebellion in the capitol. But Gálvez ordered the expedition to proceed, although he turned its command over to the governor of Comayagua when intelligence was received of the English expedition on the San Juan.⁴²

On the day that Polson arrived at Fort Inmaculada, the Spanish militia clashed with 400 English settlers and Negroes near Black River. After a short exchange of gunfire, the Shoremen retreated into town under cover of darkness. That night Philip Bode, commander in Lawrie's absence, decided that the block houses in Black River were indefensible. He dismissed his men, suggesting that they "provide for themselves"--saue qui peut! The Shoremen fled in all directions--into the woods, towards Cape Gracias a Dios, and to Roatan--unaware that the Spanish militia

⁴²Gálvez to Navarro, 12 January 1780, Cuba 1278; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 22 February and 15 March 1780, Guat 464; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 6 January 1780, cited by García Peláez, op.cit., p. 108; From Matías de Gálvez, 12 January 1780, ibid.

had also fled in disorder.⁴³

Governor Dalling was shocked by the Shoremen's cowardice and "abandoned principles". "By their pusillanimous behaviour they hardly merit our compassion", he wrote. General Kemble noted "that their very Negores [sic] were ashamed of them."⁴⁴

The Spanish force displayed the same cowardice as the Shoremen. According to John Skene Thomson and James Pitt Lawrie, who were captured by the Spaniards, "They durst not proceed to the Town of Black River, being afraid of the Mosquito Indians, of whom they entertain the most dreadful ideas." In fact, the mestizos and mulattos who made up the Spanish force were "kept in Order and Obedience by a Franciscan Friar, & the Cudgels of half a dozen of Spanish Soldiers." Thomson felt that "50 Regulars might have driven them like a herd of Cattle." "Such is their Alacrity", he said, "that their progress home in one day tho' against a rapid Stream was greater than they made in three days when coming down to attack the settlement of Black River."⁴⁵

Early reports said that the Spanish invaders had reduced the community

⁴³ Affidavit by Alexander Smith, 9 September 1780, CO 137/78, f. 154; Hoare to Dalling, 14 April 1780, CO 137/77, f. 199; Gálvez to Navarro, 20 April 1780 and 18 July 1780, Cuba 1278; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 24 and 25 May 1780, Guat 869.

⁴⁴ Dalling to Germain, 31 May 1780, CO 137/77, f. 188; Kemble to Dalling, 14 June 1780, CO 137/78, f. 188.

⁴⁵ Thomson made some interesting comments about the Spanish towns in the interior. Comayagua, for example, was "a Bishops See, furnished with Two or three hundred priests, & about half that number of Bells which they are continually ringing." Thomson to Despard, 26 September 1781, CO 137/81, f. 139; James Pitt Lawrie was Superintendent Lawrie's son.

to cinders. Consequently, when an English vessel passed the settlement on 18 April, the crew were surprised to see the town inhabited and its multicoloured houses undamaged. Black River had not long remained deserted. In their panicky flight the settlers had left many slaves behind, a large number of whom had quietly taken control of the town. And now the refugee Shoremen refused to return, fearing that the Negroes, who were demanding tribute from visitors, and even trading with passing vessels, were allied with the Spanish.⁴⁶ The Shoremen who had fled to Roatán were better organised than those who^{had} rushed into the bush, and persuaded Major Richard Hoare, the leading settler at Belize, to help them regain their lost property before the slaves they had brought away followed the example of their brothers. Hoare recruited eighty-four volunteers and took them to the Shore on the Black Joke, Near Black River the negotiated with the rebel Negroes, who were lectured by Hoare "on the Impropriety of their conduct". His speech was well received. After some bargaining the Negroes promised to relinquish the town and to return to their masters; the rebel captains and their wives were freed and awarded \$100. each for "guarding" Black River in the absence of the Shoremen.⁴⁷

After the events at Black River, the English continued to use the Shore as a base of operations. Governor Dalling ordered the construction of fortifications at Bluefields bluff, and ordered Lawrie to induce

⁴⁶ Report by Captain Todd, 4 August 1780, CO 137/78, f. 242; Report by Joseph Everett, 3 June 1780, CO 137/78, f. 5; Hoare to Dalling, 8 July 1780, CO 137/78, f. 315.

⁴⁷ Agreement between Richard Hoare and the Shoremen, 16 June 1780, CO 137/78, f. 307; Report by Richard Hoare, 3 and 8 July 1780, CO 137/78, ff. 304, 305.

the Mosquitos "to bother" the Spanish in the interior. To inspire the Indians and to repay them for the coloured prisoners denied them at the fort, he sent £500 worth of gifts.⁴⁸ He also commissioned Robert Hodgson, who had returned to Jamaica hoping to command the San Juan expedition, to raise a Mosquito and Negro corps. Hodgson accepted the commission, then declined to go to the Shore because his old enemy, James Lawrie, was still there. "What must be done with Mr. Lawrie & the remains of his wretched Council?!!" Hodgson asked. He lamented that he might as well return to England, complaining bitterly to Germain about not being placed in a position of responsibility from the first. "The only thing I am sure of is that I have been sent to Jamaica where, pity for my country! I am still standing with my arms across." Hodgson remained in Kingston until December 1780, when he informed Dalling that he was leaving immediately for London. The governor's answer was curt.

General Dalling present his compliments to Mr. Hodgson, he intended to have made use of his abilities early on the Main but as Mr. Hodgson made appear a disinclination for that service the General did not chuse to push the matter farther.⁴⁹

Hodgson's impudence did not deter the new plans for the Shore. On 2 July Dalling named Captain Glendowe commander at Bluefields with instructions to "bend not a little to [the] caprice" of the Mosquitos, and to pay particular attention to Admiral Dilson on the windward Shore

⁴⁸ Dalling to Germain, 22 June 1780, CO 137/78, f. 62; Dalling to Kemble, 23 June and 10 August 1780, CO 137/78, ff. 68, 246.

⁴⁹ Dalling to Hodgson, 2 July 1780, CO 137/78, f. 202; Hodgson to Dalling, 9 August 1780, CO 137/78, f. 332; Hodgson to Germain, 13 August 1780, CO 137/78, f. 328; Hodgson to Germain, 23 September 1780, CO 137/79, f. 5; Hodgson to Dalling, 15 December 1780, Sta Fe 1261; Report by Robert Hodgson, 3 January 1781, CO 137/80, f. 323; Dalling to Hodgson, 16 December 1780, CO 137/80, f. 340.

to
and/General Tempest on the leeward because of their commanding positions on the frontiers of the Mosquito kingdom. However, King George II was still the principal chief; Glendowe was to wait on him first. Dalling also commissioned Dr. Irving⁵⁰ and the Reverend Mr. Stanford as field officers to assist in the reconciliation of the Mosquitos. Irving and Stanford sailed for the Main on 6 September carrying £3,000 worth of gifts and orders to raise a regiment of Indians. Shortly before he left Jamaica, Hodgson noted with surprise that this important duty "was to be risked in the hands of a flighty Doctor of Physic and a Clergyman who he had been well informed had been rung about with a bell for perjury."⁵¹

Sir Alexander Leith, David Lamb⁵² and the notorious Colvill Cairns were also commissioned to conciliate the Indians, as well as to hire piraguas for future operations. A number of Woolwa and Mosquito chiefs met with Leith to provide boats and men. In return, Leith promised the Mosquitos all the plunder that they could seize.⁵³

⁵⁰Irving was part-owner of the Morning Star. See above p.

⁵¹Dalling to Glendowe, 2 July 1780, CO 137/78, f. 173; Dalling to Germain, 1 July 1780, GP/SDB; Report by Robert Hodgson, 3 January 1781, CO 137/80, f. 323.

⁵²Lamb was a Shoreman who participated in the San Juan expedition as an engineer.

⁵³Agreement between Sir Alexander Leith and Woolwa and Mosquito chiefs, 18 August 1780, CO 137/78, f. 298. Dalling to Germain, 19 September 1780, CO 137/78, f. 323; Galvez to Solorzano, 6 September 1780, BAGG, i (1940), p. 111; Kemble to Dalling, 28 August 1890, CO 137/78, f. 290; Kemble to Lamb, 30 August 1780, KP, ii, 291.

In September 1780, a new spirit of optimism began to replace the depression following the San Juan catastrophe. Governor Dalling wrote: "In the midst of our gloom, fairer prospects seem to arise", and ordered the 85th regiment of foot to the Shore. They were accompanied by three Mosquito chiefs, who had been feted royally in Jamaica in hopes that they would renew attacks against the Spanish.⁵⁴

On 1 October a general Indian congress was held at Cairns' home in Tebuppy. Most of the major Mosquito chiefs were present, including King George, Governor Briton, Duke Isaacs, General Smee, Major Jasper Hall and the Admirals Richards and Dilson. They agreed to fight the Spanish, but demanded the right to do so in their own way by striking from ambush and in night attacks. Bluefields was still thought to be an ideal base of operations, but the attraction soon began to diminish. Dalling and Kemble questioned the value of the river, and Irving, who had explored it to its headwaters, said that no major invasion force could penetrate into the interior on it.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, through Dr. Irving's efforts, preparations continued for a general campaign. Irving hoped to "render the Country easily accesable^[to]...Perdition to the Spanish Empire." On 3 December he reported that the remnants of the Army of the San Juan were recovering, Negroes and piraguas were available, the

⁵⁴Dalling to Germain, 19 September 1780, CO 137/78, f. 278; Ross to McNaughton, 30 September 1780, CO 137/81, f. 340.

⁵⁵Indian congress, 1 October 1780, CO 137/79, f. 164; Kemble to Dalling, 11 October, 15 and 20 November 1780, CO 137/79, ff. 64, 129, 133; Kemble to Cairns and Thomson, 13 and 15 October 1780, KP, ii, 315, 316. Kemble's tour of duty on the Mosquito Shore was a nightmare. Highly suspicious, he complained of an entirely unexpected problem in a letter to Cairns: "The Goats are dead, and I fear some foul play...." Kemble to Cairns, 24 November 1780, KP, ii, 351.

navigation of the principal rivers was understood, and the right season was approaching. Operations were planned to begin before Christmas; but the dry season passed with no action being taken because there seemed to be no practical alternative to the San Juan route and English officials distrusted both the Mosquitos and the Shoremen.⁵⁶

With prospects for action diminished, Irving sailed to Jamaica late in February 1781, but he was immediately ordered back to the Shore to carry on a sporadic war against Spanish settlements. Then suddenly the governor had a change of heart. He now agreed with Admiral Parker, who contended that Roatan and the leeward Shore were more worthy of support than were major military operations into the interior. Consequently, Dalling sent Captain Despard to establish a base at Cape Gracias a Dios, but Despard soon announced that the Shoremen there were little deserving of protection, and after leaving some ammunition and provisions for Lawrie in Black River, he moved his small company to Roatan. British interest in the Mosquito Shore was waning.⁵⁷

In spite of earlier displays of dastardly behaviour, the Shoremen soon had an opportunity to redeem themselves. In May 1781, deserters from the Honduras provincial militia arrived in Black River with news

⁵⁶ Irving to Dalling, 21 November 1780, CO 137/79, f. 158; Irving to Dalling, 3 December 1780, CO 137/80, f. 43; Germain to Dalling, 7 December 1780, CO 137/78, f. 342.

⁵⁷ Dalling to Germain, 6 March 1781, CO 137/80, f. 92; Germain to Dalling, 7 March 1781, CO 137/80, f. 1; Parker to Dalling, 1 April 1781, CO 137/80, f. 170; Dalling to Parker, 9 April 1781, CO 137/80, f. 172; Dalling to Despard, 20 March and 23 April 1781, CO 137/80, ff. 168, 157.

that small pox and a lack of military discipline had left San Pedro Sula nearly defenceless. Since the town was the repository for an undetermined amount of treasure as well as for the arms destined for use at Omoa, the Shoremen decided to attack it. Superintendent Lawrie found he could "muster near 200 blacks and all fine young fellows", while old General Tempest, Duke Isaac, Admiral Richards and King George all announced their willingness to join the expedition. Less than two weeks later, after the "dishonorable flight" of the dragoons defending San Pedro, three companies of Shoremen, Negroes and Mosquitos, commanded by John Pitt, David Usher and John Young seized and sacked the town, burning it to the ground in the fire that followed the explosions which destroyed the armoury. King George III sent his personal congratulations to Lawrie and his men, while Germain gloated over the victory, one of the few achieved by the British at this time.⁵⁸

The destruction of the large supply of arms and munitions in San Pedro forced President Gálvez to postpone attacking the Mosquito Coast. Even more disheartening to Gálvez was the "villainy and disrepute" of the 200 king's Negroes at Omoa, who could not be trusted to fight the English, and the flight of the dragoons, who showed "little obedience, no bravery...and were useless"; they were "vicious and virtually without

⁵⁸ Report by James Thomson, 3 September 1781, CO 137/81, f. 133; Dalling to Germain, 30 September 1781, CO 137/81, f. 123; Germain to Campbell, 10 November and 5 December 1781, CO 137/81, ff. 37, 187; Gálvez to Cargigal, 23 June 1781, Cuba 1324; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 24 June 1781, Guat 878; Hoare to Dalrymple, 12 March 1781, Shel 79; Lawrie to Dalrymple, 22 March 1781, Shel 79.

military discipline", and contributed nothing but a great expense to the kingdom. As a result, he asked permission to reform the military in Guatemala, a request granted by Charles III in January 1782.⁵⁹ However before Gálvez received this permission, the Mosquitos renewed their incursions. Matina was sacked and burned, and horrible cruelties were inflicted on the inhabitants by 300 Zambos Mosquitos and Englishmen (disguised as Indians). Gálvez also reported that another enemy force repeated these barbarities at Agalta, carrying a number of the inhabitants into slavery.⁶⁰ He decided to retaliate as soon as he could conscript and train an army and be assured of strong naval support. On 16 January 1782, the various units of his unwieldy, barefoot army--280 men each from Tegucigalpa and San Salvador, 500 from San Miguel, 190 from Olancho el Viejo and 180 from Santa Ana--marched towards a rendezvous at Juticalpa on the frontiers of the Mosquito territory. Another 100 veterans and 660 militiamen gathered at Truxillo to board warships from Havana, Bacalar and Campeche, as well as from the consulado of Cadiz.

On 5 March the land army, commanded by Lt. Col. Vicente de Arrizavalaga, who led the unsuccessful attack on Black River in 1780, began the difficult march to the coast. A week later, on the day that the Spanish fleet sailed from Truxillo to attack Roatán and the Mosquito Coast, cold heavy rains began to fall. On 25 March, a small number of Zambos

⁵⁹M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 24 June 1781, Guat 878; J. Gálvez to M. Gálvez, 30 January 1782, Guat 878.

⁶⁰M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 4 January 1782, Guat 466.

Mosquitos and Shoremen ambushed the column, killing and injuring thirty-two men. Arrizavalaga claimed victories in further sharp encounters, but very few of the unseen attackers were even wounded. Because the Spaniards did not know the country, had lost most of their provisions, and had received no word from Gálvez since leaving Jutigalpa, they established a camp six leagues from Black River.

A few days later, with the provisions almost exhausted and the steady rains continuing at Arrizavalaga's camp, the English stronghold at Cape Camaron, Fort Dalling,⁶¹ fell to Gálvez' army. On 2 April, Arrizavalaga sadly wrote: "It is raining incessantly and our agonies are multiplied by the clamour of the troops who have nothing to eat. The hope that our miseries will be remedied is remote." On the same day Matías de Gálvez was being honoured as the first Spanish conqueror of Black River.⁶² When the Spanish had approached the community, most of the Shoremen and troops fled to Cape Gracias a Dios without a fight. While the conquerors celebrated their victory, the remainder of Arrizavalaga's 1,500 troops ate the last available banana and palm fronds. On 9 April, without even bothering to send scouts towards Black River, Arrizavalaga ordered the retreat. "Without any food, the troops nude from head to foot, and mired to their belts in the mud",

⁶¹Fort Dalling was located near the river emptying into the sea at Cape Camaron known as Cape River--"Quepriva" to the Spanish, who called Black River "La Criva" or "Piche", after the Shoreman William Pitt.

⁶²Columbus took possession of the American continent in 1502 at the same place, which became known during the early colonial period as the Río de la Foseion.

they straggled back into the interior, leaving as many as 300 men dead on the trail.⁶³

The Shoremen who had retreated to Cape Gracias a Dios thought themselves to be at the mercy of the Spaniards. The enemy held Black River (renamed Concepción de Honduras), and another column was approaching from the San Juan. The chance of receiving aid from Jamaica was slight; the island was again expecting an invasion.⁶⁴ But the Shoremen were fortunate. The enemy approaching from the south was badly mauled by a storm and unable to pass Bluefields; the army at Concepción, weakened by Arrizavalaga's retreat, and without sufficient arms and provisions, could not advance. Meanwhile, ambushes by Mosquitos and English Negroes and desertions had placed the Spanish in an almost untenable position. Only the timely arrival of supplies saved Concepción from being abandoned.⁶⁵

⁶³ M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 16 December 1781, Guat 869; Gálvez to Cagigal, 19 March 1782, Cuba 1324; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 20 March 1782, Ind Gen 1578; Declaration by Gabriel Hervias, 18 April 1782, Guat 466; Diary by Vicente de Arrizavalaga, 1 March - 13 April 1782, BAGG, i, ii (1946), p. 65; García Peláez, op.cit., p. 125.

⁶⁴ Campbell to Mathew, 8 March 1782, Letter-Books and Order-Books of George, Lord Rodney Admiral of the White Squadron 1780 - 1782 (2 vols., New York, 1932), i, 269. From the Collections of the New York Historical Society.

⁶⁵ M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 2 and 29 April 1782, Guat 466; Testimony by Gabriel Hervias, 18 April 1782, Guat 466; Gálvez to Cagigal, 6 August 1782, Cuba 1324; Lawrie to White, 9 May 1782, CO 123/2, vol. ii; Campbell to Shelburne, 15 June 1782, CO 137/82, f. 253; From a Jamaican merchant to a correspondent in London, 27 March 1782, Shel 79; Consulta from Matías de Gálvez, 4 August 1782, cited by García Peláez, op.cit., p. 126; Gámez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 137. Gálvez' scorched-earth ideas were very similar to earlier observations by Charles III that British colonisation in the Bay of Honduras would be discouraged if all plant life there were destroyed. See above, p.148.

Gálvez' energy seems to have been dissipated by his success on the Mosquito Coast. Rather than lead another expensive expedition, he offered ten pesos for each Mosquito Indian captured, the ownership of every captured Negro to the captor, and 1,000 pesos for the heads of the leading Mosquito chiefs, King George and General Tempest. He explained that he had only 400 fixed regulars in Guatemala, not nearly enough men to cover the "points of most importance in the Kingdom": Omoa, Truxillo, Black River and the river and port of San Juan. Gálvez still spoke of his devastating plans to destroy all fortifications, buildings, plantations, fruit trees, stands of sugar cane and other crops on the Coast.⁶⁶

Intelligence of Admiral Rodney's extraordinary victory over the Comte de Grasse's French fleet, reached Jamaica late in July. The island was now free from the threat of invasion, and General Archibald Campbell, who had recently replaced the disgraced Dalling as governor of Jamaica, was able to turn his attention to "The distressed and precarious situation of those settlers collected at Cape Gracios a Dios, [which] gives me infinite anxiety." Explaining that the loss of the Shore would end the traditional alliance with the Indians and ruin "a considerable branch of Traffick", Campbell asked Admiral Rodney and Rear Admiral Rowley of the Jamaica station for boats to "sweep the Coast of those [Spanish] Intruders."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 2, 15 and 16 April 1782, Guat 466; Gálvez to Cagigal, 18 April 1782, Cuba 1324.

⁶⁷ John Macgregor, Commercial Tariffs, and Regulations of the Several States of Europe and America...Spanish American Republics, xvii, in FO 115/99, f. 216; Campbell to Rowley, 28 July 1782, Adm 1/242, f. 44; Campbell to Rodney, 4 and 24 June 1782, Letter-Book.1.Rodney, 1, 440, 461.

The governor named Robert Hodgson to command the expeditionary force. Hodgson had been in London since his dispute with Dalling, persuading Knox and Germain to approve another campaign on the San Juan. The route was too important to allow the previous disaster to discourage them, he said--especially if the new expedition were led by a person with an "enlightened mind". Although Hodgson was anxious for this command, he still refused to participate in any operation in which the "ignorant and incapable" James Lawrie might take part. In September 1781, with the strong support of Lord Hillsborough (who had named Hodgson to the superintendency in 1768 and who remarked that he should have commanded the first expedition on the San Juan), for the second time Germain approved a Hodgson scheme to invade Guatemala. He was to command this new army on the Main, with a "rank of distinction" --colonel with provincial rank--to aid him in recruiting for the enterprise.⁶⁸

Governor Campbell was ordered to send American loyalist volunteers⁶⁹ to the Shore to reinforce the troops already there and to enlist the Mosquitos for action. Germain advised Campbell not to rely on Lawrie for recruitment of the Indians. Nevertheless, Lawrie was informed of the new scheme, and exactly as he had done two years earlier, he promised

⁶⁸Hodgson to Knox, 28 April 1781, CO 137/80, f. 21; Hodgson to Germain, 28 June 1781, CO 137/80, f. 192; Patent to Robert Hodgson, 20 December 1781, Sta Fe 1261; Hillsborough to Knox, 17 September 1781, Sta Fe 1261; Hodgson to Germain, 18 October 1781, Sta Fe 1261; J. Gálvez to M. Gálvez, 9 July 1781, Guat 869; Hodgson to Knox, 28 July 1781, in Bentham to Wilson, 29 September 1781, Bowring, loc.cit.

⁶⁹The Royalists had originally been recruited for use on the first San Juan expedition.

to recruit 1,000 Mosquitos and "Commerce" Indians in three weeks.⁷⁰

When Hodgson arrived in Jamaica he discovered that his efforts were now to be directed at expelling the Spanish from the Shore. But before preparations could begin, he incited another feud, this time with Governor Campbell. Hodgson complained to Germain that he found himself "accountable to those who...have not had the opportunity of knowing what may be done, ^[just] at a time when the rank You honored me with here was on the point of bringing my former experience of the fastnesses of the country into it's fullest use."⁷¹ Hodgson's commission to lead the expeditionary force to Black River was approved by Germain's replacement, Thomas Townshend, but violently opposed by the Mosquito Shore agent, Robert White, who decried "the Calamity which immediately threatens the Settlers & Settlements of the Mosquito Shore, by the return of Mr. Hodgson with higher powers of Oppression against them than ever."⁷²

⁷⁰ Germain to Campbell, 7 September 1781, CO 137/80, f. 289; Germain to Campbell, 10 November 1781, CO 137/81, f. 37; Lawrie to Dalling, 18 November 1781, GP; Bowring, *loc.cit.* Shortly before his departure for the Indies, Hodgson was ^{met} ~~a guest of~~ Jeremy Bentham, who remarked that he had a constitution of iron, and far from being "a little maddish" as Shelburne commented, appeared to be "as sober and consistent as anything about his lordship." His writing was bad, Bentham admitted (a fact born out by Hodgson's letters and dispatches), but "his discourse is better... his observations just." Bentham to Wilson, 3 October 1781, *ibid.*, x, 110.

⁷¹ Hodgson to Germain, 27 April 1782, Shel 78; Hodgson to Shelburne, 15 May 1782, Shel 79.

⁷² Townshend to Campbell, 14 August 1782, CO 137/82, f. 265; White to Townshend, 20 August 1782, CO 123/2, vol. ii.

Nevertheless, in August Hodgson sailed with the relief force to Cape Gracias a Dios. At their arrival, Captain Parry, who commanded the naval convoy, was surprised to find more enmity among the Shoremen than towards the Spanish. Prompted by Lawrie, many of the settlers refused to serve under the imperious Hodgson. Parry told both sides to get down to business or be left to their own devices. At Lawrie's insistence, and with Hodgson's reluctant approval, Captain Despard was given the command of the army composed of 600 Mosquito Men, 500 Negroes and Shoremen, and eighty American loyalists, while Hodgson was acknowledged as the titular commander-in-chief. On 26 August they sailed from the Cape for Black River. Despard's force disembarked a few miles from the community, while the fleet sailed on to anchor near the ocean bar on the afternoon of 29 August. The presence of so many English sails shocked the Spanish into a night of frantic defensive preparations. Then at dawn, British banners were spied on the bluff overlooking the fort. Lt. Col. Juliá, whom Gálvez named as commander on the Coast as a reward for retaking Fort Inmaculada, immediately sent an envoy to the bluff to discover the English intentions. Despard's explanation was simple: he had come to recover the country in the name of the British crown. Initially, the Spanish vowed a resistance to the death, but Despard reminded them that retreat was impossible and once fighting broke out he could not "restrain the fury of the Indians and Negroes". Juliá knew this was no idle threat, because the Spanish garrison at Cape Camarón had already been massacred. Furthermore, the provisions would

last only a short time; they could not withstand a siege. Julia capitulated with honourable terms, and at sunset on 31 August 1782 the Spanish garrison, 742 men and twenty-seven officers, marched out of the fort to the drumming of tambours. Concepción de Honduras, five months old and the only Spanish community ever to be established on the Mosquito Shore, was again in English hands.⁷³

Because every veteran soldier in the kingdom had been captured at Concepción and could not return to active duty until a like number of English prisoners were released, and because of the exhausted state of the militia, Gálvez feared a new English offensive. Yet he was determined to gain revenge for his humiliation, and requested warships and 100 trained mastiffs from the governor of Havana. With these fierce animals he would destroy all signs of civilisation on the Coast. But Gálvez was never able to carry out his threats, for he was named viceroy of New Spain in October, and died shortly afterwards while trying to direct from México operations against the English and Mosquitos. Gálvez had been a vigorous defender of Spanish rights in middle America, but in the end his efforts were no more successful than any previous--and

⁷³ Domínguez to Rosado, 23 September 1782, Cuba 1324; Articles of capitulation, 31 August 1782, Cuba 1323; Despard to Hodgson, 5 September 1782, AGS, Guerra 6945; Hickey to Hodgson, 26 October 1782, AGS, Guerra 6945; Bills presented by Robert Hodgson, 17 July 1782, Sta Fe 1261; Juliá to Gálvez, c. 31 August 1782, Guat 466; Parry to Rowley, 23 August 1782, Adm 1/242, f. 46; Despard to Campbell, 2 September 1782, CO 123/14; Lawrie to Campbell, 31 August 1782, CO 123/14; Campbell to Townshend, 10 October 1782, printed in the London Gazette, 30 November 1782, p. 753; Edward Marcus Despard, Memoirs of the Life of Col. M. Despard (London, 1803), p. 13; Juliá to Gálvez, 23 August 1782, cited by Calderón, "Un Incidente Militar", p. 18.

far more expensive.⁷⁴

While the war continued, in fact early in the conflict, Spain and England began unofficial peace talks, with England basing her demands on the articles of the Treaty of 1763. The Spanish did not reject this suggestion, but insisted that the article relating to the Bay of Honduras be carefully defined to avoid future quarrels.⁷⁵ The talks continued for two years, however, while each side struggled on the battlefield to gain a position of strength. The English emissary, Richard Cumberland, believed that he had the advantage in the negotiations, and took the precaution "not to insert the article relative to the Mosquito Shore". Although he felt no obligation to abandon the Shore in exchange for peace, he was willing to give it up to assure the retention of Gibraltar and Minorca. Cumberland's hopes for an advantageous settlement were shattered by the arrival of the Comte d'Estaing in Madrid and by the celebrated London riots of 1780, two events which stiffened Spain's resolve to demand the best terms possible. But the Spanish felt no confidence in obtaining an early and easy peace. In February 1782, Floridablanca said that England would not give Spain what she demanded, in fact he heard that an English minister had remarked that "the King of England would recognize American independence when the French were masters of the Tower of London"; and that "Madrid would be the only equivalent exchange for Gibraltar."⁷⁶ But not until word

⁷⁴M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 17 October 1782, cited by Calderón, "Un Incidente Militar", p. 23; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 21 September 1782, García Peláez, *op.cit.*, p. 127.

⁷⁵Floridablanca to Hussey, 2 March 1780, SP 94/209, f. 5.

⁷⁶Hernández y Sánchez, "La Paz de 1783", p. 185.

reached London of Gálvez' victories in the Bay of Honduras did England change her official attitude. In July 1782, the new English peace commissioner, Alleyn Fitzherbert, was authorised to abandon the Treaty of 1763 as the basis for negotiations and to consider Spanish demands for territorial restitution and compensation. Early in the autumn, before news of the successful English counteroffensive on the Shore reached Madrid, the Spanish proposals were presented to Fitzherbert. In addition to demands relating to Florida, Gibraltar and Newfoundland,⁷⁷ Fitzherbert was told:

Experience has shown that the English settlements on the firm ground of the coasts of Honduras, Campeche and Mosquitos lead invariably, sooner or later, to enterprises and discussions capable of lighting the fire of war. These establishments must not continue, nor be renewed, for they are incompatible with the continuation of peace.⁷⁸

By December, each government openly desired to end hostilities. The only undecided question was that of the English settlements in the Bay of Honduras. The Spanish no longer referred to the Mosquito Coast by name, probably because its military reconquest raised the prospect of a legal English claim to the region. But the Spaniards were granted a fortuitous argument for their claims when Lord Grantham artlessly commented to the Spanish ambassador in London about the Mosquito Shore: "on n'y retournera plus"; we will not return there again. The English were not allowed to forget this statement.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Cumberland to Shelburne, 20 May 1782, BM, Add 28,851, f. 3; Instructions to Alleyn Fitzherbert, 27 July 1782, FO 27/3, f. 26.

⁷⁸To Alleyn Fitzherbert, 6 October 1782, AHN, Est 4203.

⁷⁹Fitzherbert to Grantham, 18 December 1782, FO 27/3, f. 459; Grantham to Spanish ambassador, 26 December 1782, 30/15/9, no. 945.

The preliminary articles of peace were signed on 20 January 1783 with the Mosquito Shore question remaining unsolved.⁸⁰ Only one article even hinted at the subject.

His Catholick Majesty shall not for the future suffer the Subjects of His Britannick Majesty, or their Workmen, to be disturbed or molested, under any Pretence whatsoever, in their Occupation of Cutting, Loading and carrying away Logwood, in a District of which the Boundaries shall be fixed; and for this Purpose they may build without Hindrance, and occupy without Interruption, the Houses and Magazines necessary for them, for their Families, and for their Effects, in a Place to be agreed upon either in the Definitive Treaty, or within Six Months after the Exchange of the Ratifications. And His said Catholick Majesty assures to them, by this Article, the entire Enjoyment of what is above stipulated. Provided that these Stipulations shall not be considered as derogatory in any Respect from the Rights of His Sovereignty.⁸¹

Throughout the war the Mosquito Shore seemed on the verge of being granted colonial status. Germain had prompted adventurers to establish on the Shore and had encouraged the Shoremen by promising them protection. But he emulated previous ministers in taking no practical steps towards colonial status, though perhaps he had this in mind when he wrote:

While the war continues... [the Shoremen will] be assured of Succour and Protection, and they must endeavour to establish themselves so effectually in that time, & from such Alliances with the Natives & Creole Spaniards, that, when Peace comes, they may be able to support themselves.⁸²

On 13 September 1780, Robert White proposed the establishment of a "regular Royal Government" on the Shore to strengthen England's

⁸⁰ White to Germain, 22 June 1779, CO 137/75, f. 1; White to De Grey, 13 September 1780, CO 137/78, f. 145; White to Germain, 10 April and 28 July 1780, CO 137/80, ff. 19, 200; White to Townshend, 9 December 1782, CO 123/2, vol. ii.

⁸¹ Preliminary articles of peace between England and Spain, 20 January 1783, 30/15/9, no. 948.

⁸² Germain to Dalling, 8 October 1779, CO 137/75, f. 116.

position in future peace negotiations. But White's imprudence and poor timing were never more apparent. His memorials were blunt and demanding, and tardy replies to his verbose petitions invariably incited embarrassing sarcasm in his further correspondence. In August 1781, he complained to Germain of the "Contempt shewen by Your Lordship to My Letters", and asked for "an explanation of the Cause of this ungracious Treatment." After further efforts to attract Germain's attention, he was humbled by a short note from Knox addressed to "Henry White" about his "unauthorized Representations respecting the Mosquito-Shore".⁸³ Nor did the Shoremen strengthen their own cause. Their cowardly and disgraceful conduct elicited the caustic ire of Germain shortly before White presented his petition for colonial status.

The shameful Behaviour of the Baymen he meant the Shoremen at Black River is a proof how little dependence ought to be placed on such People, and how very unworthy they are of being the occasion of any extraordinary Expence.⁸⁴

More valuable support for the settlers came from Colonel Despard. In spite of their shortcomings, he said, they were industrious men and worthy of consideration.⁸⁵

However, Whitehall found it difficult to support an independent Mosquito colony because of its traditional dependence on Jamaica--
"without whose Preservation there can be little Expectation of retaining

⁸³White to Germain, 28 August and 25 September 1781, CO 137/80, ff. 253, 312; White to Knox, 17 September and 10 October 1781, CO 137/80, ff. 300, 317.

⁸⁴Germain to Dalling, 6 September 1780, CO 137/78, f. 130.

⁸⁵Despard to Dalling, 3 September 1781, CO 137/81, f. 127.

such retired Dependancies".⁸⁶ The fate of the Mosquito Shore was to be left to talks leading to and following the definitive treaty of peace.

⁸⁶ Shelburne to Campbell, 8 April 1782, CO 137/82, f. 141; Townshend to Campbell, 26 November 1782, CO 137/82, f. 296.

CHAPTER XI

MOSQUITO CONVENTION, 1783 - 1787

The preliminary articles of peace concluding the Anglo-Spanish conflict of 1779 - 1783 made no mention of the Mosquito Shore,¹ although the English presence on the Shore had been a major factor in causing the war. But the Spanish were determined that there should be no such oversight in the definitive treaty, which they felt must delineate precisely the boundaries of British logwood settlements in Yucatán, and leave neither "foundation nor pretext" for the British to remain in their "furtive" establishments in the Bay of Honduras.² On the other hand, the British cabinet, disrupted by continuous dissensions and preoccupied with the greater issues of France and America, had formed no policy on the "Honduras question" to guide the Duke of Manchester, the British commissioner in the negotiations which began in Paris on 21 May 1783. However the failure to name the Mosquito Shore in either the Treaty of 1763 or in the recent preliminary treaty should have given Manchester a strong advantage in discussions on this question. Nor could England easily abandon the Bay of Honduras without provoking a storm of controversy.³ British merchants who traded there, the British

¹ Preliminary articles of peace bet een England and Spain, 20 January 1783, 30/15/9, no. 948.

² Calderón, Belice, p. 252; Hernández y Sánchez Barba, "La Paz de 1783", pp. 180, 195.

³ White to Fox, 30 April 1783, FO 72/1, f. 391; Campo to Aranda, 20 April and 8 June 1783, AHN, Est 2862, vol. ii; Hernández y Sánchez Barba, op. cit., P. 198; Gálvez to Floridablanca, 3 June 1783, cited by Calderón, Belice, p.260.

settlers on the Mosquito Shore (who were again pressing for colonial status through their agent in London, Robert White), and the traditional alliance with the Mosquito Indians, all had to be considered.⁴ But because of an oversight by Charles James Fox, who forgot to send instructions on the Mosquito question, Manchester lost his advantage; he could only refer to Lord Grantham's dispatch of 9 November 1782 to Fitzherbert for guidance.

Rather than think of parting with Gibraltar...You are authorized to hold out a Relinquishment of our Settlements on the Mosquito Shore, supposing fair Regulations to take place, for leaving us Our ancient Right of cutting Logwood....⁵

Furthermore, Grantham had told the Conde de Aranda, the Spanish commissioner at the negotiations: "Si c'est du Côte des Mosquitos lequél a été longtemps [vu] comme un Point jaloux, on n'y retournera plus."⁶ Aranda, supported by the French minister, the Comte de Vergennes, used this statement as an instrument to press for the total evacuation of the English settlements on the Mosquito Shore. The result was a draft article⁷ which Fox called "as unpalatable as unexpected", and for which he reproached Manchester for having allowed it to be inserted.

Your Grace's acquiescence in the Article proposed have made it almost out of the question to hope that the Spanish Minister will so far relax, as to acquiesce in the Idea of our Keeping our Settlements on the Mosquito Shore....The only thing that could be wished to have been otherwise in...this negotiation, is that you had taken an earlier opportunity of apprising me of this cursed clause in the 6th Spanish Article.

⁴Memorial from the Shoremen to North, 8 April 1783, CO 123/2, vol. ii; Mosquito Indian chiefs to Despart, 25 April 1783, CO 123/14; Chiefs to Campbell, 25 April 1783, CO 123/14; Campo to Aranda, 8 June 1783, AHN, Est 4246

⁵Grantham to Fitzherbert, 9 November 1782, CO 123/3.

⁶Manchester to Fox, 6 July 1783, CO 123/3.

⁷Excepting the word "Spanish" before the word "Continent", this article was nearly identical to article six in the definitive treaty. See below, p. 323,

Nevertheless, Fox accepted some of the blame. "The unfortunate circumstance too of my having left this Article quite blank in my project prevented my words coming into consideration in the same manner as those of the other Articles."⁸

Yet the draft article was far from a complete Spanish victory. Manchester had refused to allow the words Mosquito Shore to be included in it, leaving it so loosely worded that "the part of the world, which .../[English settlers] are to quit is totally undefined, and Jamaica itself might, strictly speaking, come within."⁹ But Fox admitted privately that the intention of the article was the evacuation of the Shore; as Robert White said, "his Majestys Subjects reside no where on the Coast of America in those parts, except upon the Mosquito Shore."¹⁰

Convinced by White and certain merchants that the Shore was "much the more considerable object" than the logwood settlements, Fox decided to try to retain the country for England. And since it had not been mentioned in the preliminary treaty, he argued, England was not bound to give it up.¹¹ He instructed Manchester to omit the article if possible, or to remove all references to the evacuation of settlements in the West Indies. However rather than break off or unduly delay

⁸ Fox to Manchester, 20 July 1783, CO 123/3.

⁹ Fox to Manchester, 2 July 1783, CO 123/3; Manchester to Fox, 6 July 1783, CO 123/3.

¹⁰ White to Fox, 24 June 1783, FO 72/1, f. 523.

¹¹ Dyer to Munro, 17 March 1783, NLS, 5528, f. 115; Campo to Aranda, 28 June 1783, AHN, Est 4246; Fox to Manchester, 2 July 1783, CO 123/3; Fox to Manchester, 20 July 1783, 30/15/9, no. 1141; Dyer to Fox, 28 June 1783, FO 72/1, f. 539.

negotiations, he was to sign the treaty including the controversial article. The English commissioner first tried, unsuccessfully, to eliminate the article, and then tried to alter its wording, which provoked Aranda to cry repeatedly "Expliquez vous, il faut vous expliquer",¹² until Manchester finally found it necessary to explain that England

had some Settlements on the Mosquito Shore which had no Connection with Honduras but were on the Territory of Free Indians which Our Government had never had an Idea of abandoning, and of which no mention had ever been made in the negotiations; We could not therefore consent to give them up by general Words.¹³

But Aranda refused to alter his stand, although he agreed to insert the word "Spanish" before the word "Continent" in the article. It was a matter of "great indifference" to him, he said, whether or not the word was included, since the whole continent and the adjacent islands were under Spanish sovereignty. Aware that Aranda would break off the negotiations rather than agree to the English requests, Manchester and Fox accepted the lesser concession, hoping that it would make the article even more vague than it already was.¹⁴ While it remained obnoxious to the English and even "dangerous to the duration of peace", Fox reasoned

¹²Fox to Manchester, 2 July 1783, CO 123/3; Manchester to Fox, 28 July 1783, 30/15/9, no. 1146; Manchester to Fox, 9 and 13 July 1783, CO 123/3; Fox to George III, 12 July 1783, CKG, vi, 416. Vergennes told Manchester that if he persisted with his objections: "Vous en aurez pour deux ans." Manchester to Fox, 28 July 1783.

¹³Manchester to Fox, 13 July 1783, CO 123/3.

¹⁴Aranda to Manchester, 13 July 1783, 30/15/9, no. 1127; Manchester to Fox, 9 and 13 July 1783, CO 123/3.

that England could interpret the term "Spanish Continent" in her own way.¹⁵

Well aware that the issue would not end with the signing of the treaty, he instructed Manchester to make no comments "which might in any degree preclude or prejudice this future question."¹⁶ Aranda and Vergennes also must have known that the article would bring further controversy, yet Aranda failed to exact a more precise enunciation of Spanish demands, because Vergennes, who was anxious to conclude the treaty, wished to avoid "any Specifications or discussions on the Mosquito Business." Consequently, when the treaty was signed on 3 September 1783, the problem was left unsolved.¹⁷ The inclusion of article six¹⁸ in the Anglo-Spanish Treaty of 1783 was a victory for Spanish diplomacy, although it remained so vague as to be left entirely open to diverse interpretations.

A few days after the signing of the treaty, Lord North, secretary of state for the home department, defined England's public interpretation of article six.

by the words Spanish Continent, His Majesty's Servants understand that part of the Coast of Honduras which is not included in the described Limits, and such other parts of the Continent of North America, as have been, and are acknowledged by Us to belong to the Crown of Spain.¹⁹

¹⁵ Fox to George III, 19 July 1783, CKG, vi, 419; Fox to Manchester, 20 July 1783, CO 123/3; Draft note, Manchester to Aranda, n.d., 30/15/9, no. 1123; Cabinet minutes, 18 July 1783, Lord John Russell, ed., Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox (3 vols., London, 1853-57), ii, 132. George III, on hearing of this deception, commented: "It is a very untoward circumstance that a Definitive Treaty cannot be concluded without leaving clear ground for fresh Disputes." George III to Fox, 19 July 1783, CKG, vi, 420.

¹⁶ Fox to Manchester, 20 July 1783, CO 123/3.

¹⁷ Manchester to Fox, 31 July 1783, CO 123/3; Diary of the Conde de Aranda, 9 July 1783, AHN, Est 4230; Vincent T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire 1763-1793 (2 vols., London, 1952, 1964), i, 324.

¹⁸ See Appendix A.

¹⁹ North to Campbell, 3 October 1783, CO 137/83, f. 134.

In accordance with the terms of the treaty be informed Governor Campbell of Jamaica that "the Subjects of His Britannic Majesty, wherever dispersed ...on the aforesaid Spanish Continent shall collect themselves within... the space of 18 Months after the exchange of the Ratifications of the said Treaty" within the assigned territory on the logwood coast of Yucatán (Belize).²⁰ Since there were few British settlers on the coasts of Yucatán, México and middle America in 1783 except those at Belize and on the Mosquito Shore, North could only have been referring to the Shore. But in a secret dispatch to Campbell he outlined England's actual interpretation of the article.

His Majesty, in His Negotiations with the Court of Spain, most certainly never meant to affect the rights of any third Person, and consequently did not include the Mosquito Shore (which has never belonged to the Crown of Spain) under the name of the Spanish Continent.

Therefore, he said, English settlers on the Shore did not have to evacuate their settlements;²¹ in fact they "ought to be supported", although in as inoffensive a manner as possible.

It would be disadvantageous to enter into a fresh Quarrell with Spain upon this point in the moment of a return of Peace, when the Nation, from their aversion to War, may be inclined to yield too much for the sake of preserving the Public Tranquility. It is to be hoped, that Spain is in the same Sentiments, and that when She sees our Settlers in a condition to resist, She will not use Force at the hazard of producing a fresh rupture between the two Courts.²²

²⁰North to Campbell, 30 September 1783, CO 137/83, f. 125.

²¹North to Campbell, 3 October 1783, "Most secret & confidential", CO 137/83, f. 131.

²²North to Campbell, 7 November 1783, CO 137/83, f. 136.

Superintendent Lawrie was informed in November that "The native Princes and Inhabitants of that Country will...rest satisfied, that they are exactly on the same footing as before the commencement of the War."²³ This decision encouraged a large migration to the Shore of Loyalists from South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia, and of others "ruined by the cession of East and the conquest of West Florida." The Mosquito Shore, according to an editorial in the Kingston Royal Gazette, should replace England's lost colonies, especially in this "period of crisis" when every effort must be made to extend commerce, England's "only resource in the day when the combined rage of the House of Bourbon attempts to shake you to the centre."²⁴

When a new English government reaffirmed the previous policy of support for the Mosquito Shore,²⁵ Governor Campbell agreed to assist the Loyalists to establish themselves there, and sent detailed instructions to Lawrie to improve civil administration, including the election of a council.²⁶ However, Whitehall's pledge of support did not alleviate the

²³Campbell to Lawrie, 26 November 1783, CO 137/84.

²⁴Kingston Royal Gazette, 12 October 1784, p. 250; Campbell to North, 14 July 1783, CO 137/83, f. 120; Campbell to Sydney, 3 July 1784, CO 137/84; Tonyn to Campbell, 27 May 1784, CO 137/84; J. Campbell to A. Campbell, 3 July 1784, CO 123/3.

²⁵Lord Sydney, who came to office at the fall of North, not only affirmed the government "will shew a particular attention to their Situation and concerns", but authorised convicts to be sent to Belize and to the Shore to cut wood for the Baymen and to assist the American Loyalists to establish themselves. The authorisation was later withdrawn, but not until a large number of convicts had already been sent to the Shore. Sydney to Campbell, 19 March 1784, CO 137/84; Sydney to Clarke, 5 October 1784, CO 137/84.

²⁶Campbell to Lawrie, 4 June 1784, CO 123/14. No Indian, indentured servant, mulatto, Negro or anyone of mixed blood was eligible for the council.

insecurity of the Shoremen, who were apprehensive about Spanish intentions and about the weakness of their aging superintendent. According to Campbell:

Major Lawrie is actually worn down to a state of Dotage, and as his Estimates are generally formed by designing people about him, who take advantage of his years and infirmities, I find it necessary to restrict his draughts for the extraordinary Services of the Shore, as they often exceed the limits of propriety.²⁷

The fears of the settlers were well-founded. In July 1783 a high-ranking Spanish official said that the Mosquito Coast should be invaded immediately after the signing of the definitive treaty of peace, before the English had time to react. If this were not done, Spain would find herself threatened with guerras a cada instante.²⁸ Matías de Gálvez, the viceroy of México, had already begun to fit out an expedition in Guatemala and Havana to destroy the Mosquito Indians, those "disobedient vassals of the king".²⁹ On receiving intelligence of these plans, Fox asserted that the expedition could be "justified upon no principal whatever."³⁰ However Manchester and Aranda ignored the subject, not wishing to allow new issues to disrupt the negotiations.

On 25 August, a week before the signing of the treaty, José de Gálvez gave the president of the audiencia of Guatemala, José Estachería, the "extremely important" duty of removing the British settlers from Black River--by force if necessary--if they had not already moved as prescribed by the treaty that was about to be signed. Once the English were gone,

²⁷Campbell to Townshend, 25 January 1783, CO 137/83, f. 19.

²⁸Artículo del oficio, 17 July 1783, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i.

²⁹Aranda to Campo, 30 July 1783, AHN, Est 2862, vol. ii.

³⁰Fox to Manchester, 20 July 1783, CO 123/3; Gálvez to Floridablanca, 8 February 1783, AHN, Est 4203.

Estachería was to command a two-pronged offensive against the Mosquito Indians in conjunction with Matías de Gálvez, Governor Merino Ceballos of Campeche, and the viceroy-archbishop of Santa Fé, Juan Antonio Caballero y Góngora. One arm of the expedition was to move north from Panamá, subduing the Calidonian Indians en route, while another column was to move south from Guatemala; the two armies were to draw together until "those Barbarians were reduced to a state of extinction or prostration", so that they could never again rebel against the king or give asylum to foreign enemies of the crown.³¹ Early in January 1784, Estachería said that he was ready to begin operations. Spanish troops gathered at the headwaters of the major rivers leading to the Shore, while naval forces were ready to sail from Havana, Campeche, Mérida, Bacalar, Omoa, Truxillo and Cartagena.³² According to Gálvez, the Mosquitos, those "enemies of all humanity", faced slavery or "utter extinction". The operation, which Gálvez called "the most important duty assigned to me by our august sovereign", was scheduled to begin on 1 March 1784.³³

The settlements on the Shore were not without protection. Admiral

³¹ Gálvez to Estachería, 25 August 1783, Guat 665; Gálvez to Merino Ceballos, 25 August 1783, Calderón, Belice, p. 263.

³² Estachería to Gálvez, 6 January 1784, Guat 665; Christopherz to Campbell, 10 April 1784, CO 123/3; Lawrie to Campbell, 4 August 1784, FO 72/3, f.271; Despard to Campbell, 4 August 1784, FO 72/3, f. 283; Mosquito chiefs to Campbell, 12 June 1784, CO 137/84.

³³ Gálvez to Merino y Ceballos, 5 May 1784, Guat 666; Caballero y Góngora to Gálvez, 21 March 1784, CRM, p. 224; Despard to Campbell, 4 August 1784, FO 72/3, f. 283.

Gambier of the Jamaica naval station, one of the few naval men who had ever supported the Mosquito settlements, approved "at this Critical period", Campbell's intention "to Keep these petty Kings and Princes, steady in their Natural affection for the English and hatred of the Spaniards...."³⁴ In July he ordered a ship of the line to convoy a regiment of troops to the Shore. Their arrival overjoyed the Mosquitos, who lit great fires as the English sailed along the coast. It was now believed that "hostile efforts may be of no more avail against our country, than the pecking of a wren against the tallons of an eagle."³⁵

But the Spanish attack did not occur. Viceroy Caballero y Góngora failed to recruit an invasion force, preferring rather to work for the peaceable conversion of the Mosquitos. Then with the publication of the treaty of peace, Matías de Gálvez ordered that operations be suspended until 19 March 1785, eighteen months after the evacuation of British settlements in the Bay of Honduras.³⁶ Nevertheless, Gálvez continued offensive preparations against the Mosquito Indians. In May 1784, after asking for permission to attack them, but before receiving the affirmative answer (which was issued on 4 August by Charles III), he ordered the governors of Bacalar and Campeche to send armed piraguas and 300 men each to Truxillo, and he revived plans to use perros bravos against Negroes

³⁴ Gambier to Stephens, 28 February 1784, Adm 1/243.

³⁵ Gambier to Stephens, 5 July 1784, Adm 1/243; Norman to Pakenham, 23 August 1784, Adm 1/243; Gambier to Sydney, 14 November 1784, CO 123/3; Supplement to the Kingston Morning Post, 19 and 26 March 1785.

³⁶ Caballero y Góngora to Gálvez, 31 March 1784, Sta Fe 600; Gálvez to Estachería, 9 June 1784, Guat 666; Estachería to Gálvez, 11 August 1784, Guat 666; Lawrie to Norman, 20 September 1784, FO 72/4, f. 41.

and Zambos living near Black River.³⁷ Trusting neither President Estachería nor the governor of Yucatán, he named Francisco Antonio Crespo (inspector interino in México) to command the expedition. In the weeks that followed, 1,000 militiamen and seven vessels from the presidio at Bacalar gathered at Truxillo to await Gálvez' commands. But Gálvez died suddenly without leaving further instructions, and his subordinates, including Crespo, were unenthusiastic about conducting military operations on a distant frontier, and left the responsibility to Gabriel de Hervias, commander at Truxillo. But Hervias decided that he could do nothing without further reinforcements, arguing that it was impossible to attack the enemy by land.³⁸ Furthermore, because of the "infinity of swamps and lagoons" in a country unadaptable to Spanish labour, and inhabited by cruel Indians, Hervias did not even think that Spain should wish to attack. While his orders were explicit and included "every thing but the word War", he refused to invade the Coast and asked for a transfer to another post.³⁹

³⁷Memorial from Matías de Gálvez, 18 April 1784, CRM, p. 231; M. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 24 April 1784, Guat 665; Gálvez to M rino Ceballos, 19 May 1784, Guat 666; Real orden to Caballero y Góngora, 4 August 1784, CRM, p. 228; Floridablanca to Campo, 25 November 1784, AGS, Est 8134.

³⁸Hervias' troops were mostly impressed militiamen (many of whom had already died of disease), and were "much dissatisfied with the usage they received from...[him]." Herrera to Gálvez, 25 February 1785, Guat 665; Real audiencia gobernadora of México to Gálvez, 25 April 1785, Guat 666; Estachería to Hervias, 30 April 1784, Guat 665; Hervias to Gálvez, 8 August 1784, Guat 666; Report by Gabriel de Hervias, 15 August 1784, Guat 666; Estachería to Gálvez, 12 October 1784, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii. An English naval officer who visited Truxillo said that he "only wanted assistance to destroy the whole." Norman to Pakenham, 17 October 1784, FO 72/4, f. 47.

³⁹Hervias to Gálvez, 8 November 1784, Guat 666; Norman to Pakenham, 17 October 1784, FO 72/4, f. 47.

If Hervias had invaded the Mosquito Shore, failure would surely have attended his efforts, for by the middle of November 1784, the English had collected 1,600 armed men to repulse the expected invasion, which was now rumoured to be set for 19 February 1785, a month before the expiration of the eighteen months granted by the treaty of peace. England also had powerful warships in the Bay, while the only vessel available to Hervias when he was ordered to travel to Black River to discuss the terms of the treaty with the British had no sails.⁴⁰

As the Spanish became aware that the English intended to retain their settlements on the Mosquito Shore, a suspicion arose that they also intended to make themselves masters of the coast from Yucatán to Darién, and then to construct an interoceanic canal to Realejo by way of the San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua. Hervias cited the weakness of Spanish positions on the San Juan River and at Truxillo, and said that the people of Olanchito and Yoro were "English rebels at heart" and ready to "take up arms for England". Estachería said that the English operating from the Mosquito Coast, "where the consequences have been so fatal to the state, business, peace and tranquility of the kingdom," were also planning to promote an alliance between the Zambos Mosquitos and the irreduced Indians of Petén.⁴¹ Plans were in fact then underway to unite the Mosquitos with the San Blas Indians of Panamá, although neither the

⁴⁰Lawrie to Clarke, 22 December 1784, CO 137/85; Hervias to Galvez, 8 August 1784, Guat 666; Report by Gabriel de Hervias, 15 August 1784, Guat 666.

⁴¹Hervias to Gálvez, 26 October and 22 December 1784, Guat 666; Fuertes to Casamayor, 11 March 1784, Guat 665; Estachería to Gálvez, 12 November 1784, Guat 666; Estachería to Macé, 27 March 1784, Guat 665.

Spanish fear nor the English plans were realised. Colonel Despard remarked that in alliance the Mosquitos and San Blas Indians would be able to resist all the power of Spain.⁴²

Although too weak to wage a successful war in the West Indies, Spain was blindly determined to fight for the Mosquito Coast, hopefully with the aid of the French, but alone if necessary. According to Bernardo del Campo, who was named envoy to the Court of St. James in February 1783 after rising swiftly through Spain's "anonymous bureaucracy",

Whether by blood and fire or otherwise, we must see that not a single Englishman remain on the Spanish Continent... because even the doleful extreme of a war to obtain completely this object would be in truth the lesser evil than tolerating them there, allowing them to consolidate and [forcing Spain] to suffer the same war at a time and under the circumstances to suit them.

In a conference late in October with Lord Carmarthen, secretary of state for the foreign department in Pitt's ministry, Campo said that: "[I am] sure that the king [my] master would rather risk ten wars than yield this point." England had no alternative, he declared, but to issue immediate orders for the evacuation of the Shore.⁴⁴

Intelligence that the Spanish were not only considering a war but actually preparing for hostilities in the Bay of Honduras alarmed the British cabinet and prompted the radical Duke of Richmond to comment: "This must necessarily...bring on a Rupture with Spain...." If England's

⁴² Memorial from Edward Marcus Despard, 10 November 1784, CO 123/3.

⁴³ Campo to Floridablanca, 5 November 1784, AHN, Est 4227, vol. 1.

⁴⁴ Minutes of a conversation between Campo and Carmarthen, 28 October 1784, BM, Add 28,059, f. 48; Campo to Floridablanca, 5 November 1784, AHN, Est 4227, vol. 1.

rights to the Shore could not be supported on legal and historical grounds, he said, then she should withdraw her settlers from there so as to avoid a war.⁴⁵

Early in November 1784, Pitt, with the approval of his cabinet, decided to negotiate the evacuation of the Mosquito Shore. On 15 November he instructed Robert Liston, the English envoy in Madrid, to broach the subject with Floridablanca. "It might be also privately added", Pitt said, "...that there is no doubt of our being ready to remove from the Mosquito Shore if the Business is put in a proper Train;" but first "...[we must] satisfy the Public, and justify our Conduct to Parliament" by insuring the security of the Mosquito Indians and by obtaining an additional cession of land for the wood-cutters.⁴⁶ If Floridablanca should react to the overture by arguing that the matter was no longer open to discussion, that by the definitive treaty the English had already surrendered the Shore, then Liston was to proclaim that "the Probability of Hostilities taking Place...will fully prove the Necessity of some further Arrangements...."⁴⁷

The willingness to accommodate Spain resulted from a variety of reasons. England was still recuperating from seven years of war; the resumption of hostilities could be an economic disaster. Furthermore, an accord with Spain would lead hopefully to important commercial

⁴⁵Richmond to Sydney, 29 October 1784, CO 123/3.

⁴⁶Anon. minute, 13 November 1784, FO 72/3; Pitt to Liston, 15 November 1784, FO 72/3; Carmarthen to Liston, 28 November 1784, FO 185/1.

⁴⁷Carmarthen to Liston, 28 November 1784, FO 185/1.

concessions and to the dissolution of the crumbling Franco-Spanish family alliance.⁴⁸

Yet while England was anxious to resolve the Mosquito problem and ready to make the necessary concessions, she seemed unable to do so gracefully. Carmarthen told Campo early in December that there were many people who believed that the Mosquito Shore was not part of the Spanish continent. This news "came as if it had fallen from the clouds", Campo said later. He "had to call for assistance from God so as not to become discomposed or say or do anything that he would later regret." He told Carmarthen that the English interpretation of the phrase was absurd. "Not only would it be a scandal to all of Europe," he said, "but it would inevitably cause a bloody war, because the decorum of the king and the honour of the Spanish people would be cruelly compromised."⁴⁹

A similar exchange on "that cursed Mosquito affair" occurred between Liston and Floridablanca in Madrid. Floridablanca began the conversation by saying that: "The English Ministry lost an opportunity of uniting the two Countries at the commencement of the last War. Another now presents itself, I hope they will not neglect that also." In reply, Liston claimed the Mosquito Shore for England on legal grounds, and then explained the English interpretation of the phrase "Spanish Continent". Floridablanca, a man with "Strong nervous affections", according to Liston,

⁴⁸ Carmarthen to Liston, 28 November 1784, FO 185/1; Pitt to Liston, 29 November 1784, FO 72/3; Liston to Carmarthen, 5 December 1784, FO 72/3.

⁴⁹ Campo to Floridablanca, 11 December 1784, AHN, Est 4227, vol. ii.

"appeared to have difficulty to contain the marks of his dissatisfaction within the Bounds of moderation." "I thought myself lucky", he remarked, "in not having been kicked down Stairs." If England "resolved to protect her Settlers upon the Mosquito Shore", Floridablanca threatened that "War must be a consequence." His king would grant only a three-month extension of time for the evacuation of the Shore; English settlers who refused to move peacefully would be driven away by force. As to the Mosquito Indians, Spain would "reduce them to submission or...transport them to the different islands in the Gulf of Mexico."⁵⁰

Yet the heated conversations were little more than decoration; on 7 January 1785 Floridablanca promised to ask the king to suspend orders for the expulsion of the English settlers from the Mosquito Shore and he agreed to continue conversations with Liston.⁵¹

Reales órdenes calling for the suspension of all hostile plans against the Mosquito Coast were issued on 20 January 1785 to Spanish governors in the West Indies. Until these orders arrived months later, however, the Spanish continued their offensive plans. A large number of

⁵⁰Liston to Fraser, 8 January 1785, FO 72/4; Resolution by Charles III, 5 January 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. 1; Liston to Carmarthen, 7 January 1785, no. 1, NLS, 5531, f. 1; Liston to Fraser, 8 January 1785, FO 72/4; Liston to Carmarthen, 8 January 1785, FO 72/4. Floridablanca commented that the English interpretation of the words "Spanish Continent" was "a subterfuge which he should not have been surprized to meet with from an Italian Abbé, but which was unworthy of Englishmen...." Liston to Carmarthen, 7 January 1785, no. 1, NLS, 5531, f. 1.

⁵¹Liston to Carmarthen, 7 January 1785, no. 2, NLS, 5531, f. 7.

piraguas were being constructed on the Wanks River and on Lake Nicaragua for an attack scheduled to be made in October against the Mosquito Indians, "whose Extirpation was determined on from their repeated Barbarities."⁵² Exaggerated rumours reached Black River that the attack was planned for April, rather than October, and that 14,000 Spanish troops were going to descend on the Shore; similar intelligence came from the Baymen at Belize.⁵³ When word was received that Pitt had decided to discourage further immigration to the Shore, and when no assistance was given to Shoremen who wanted to move from there, the general situation "cast a universal damp on all their Spirits...."⁵⁴ The English began frantic defensive preparations and pleaded for aid; failing that they demanded boats so that they might flee the country. "I shall be left alone", Lawrie said, unless troops were placed on the Shore. He called a general congress of the Mosquitos at Cape Gracias a Dios in January to soothe the Indians, who had begun to form "the most Unfavourable Ideas of our Sincerity; And to suspect

⁵² Reales órdenes, 20 January 1785, CRM, p. 242; Estachería to Gálvez, 15 April 1785, Guat 666; Medina to Morales, 1 March 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; Robinson to Lawrie, 25 January 1785, FO 72/5, f. 524.

⁵³ Letter from Black River, 10 February 1785, printed in The Whitehall Evening Post, 7 May 1785.

⁵⁴ Baymen to Campbell, 31 May 1784, CO 137/84; Cabinet minutes, 15 November 1784, CO 123/3; Paterson to Hervias, 5 February 1785, Guat 666; Despard to (probably) White, 1 March 1785, CO 123/3; Dirom to Sydney, 5 March 1785, CO 123/3; Supplement to the Kingston Morning Post, 5 March 1785. The critical situation in the Bay of Honduras caused a different sort of concern in Jamaica. When word was received from London that troops would soon be arriving in Kingston intended for the defence of the Mosquito Shore, an anonymous correspondent to a Kingston paper wrote that: "we must, no doubt, think ourselves highly indebted to our Mosquito brethren, as on their account we are to be saddled with the maintenance of 2,000 men, which, with regard to ourselves, we have not the least occasion for." Supplement to the Royal Gazette, 4 June 1785, p. 455.

that the British Settlers would assist the Spaniards, to extirpate them from the Country." However the arrival of reinforcements and a large supply of arms, plus three warships to patrol the coast, calmed the settlers and Indians. The Zambo General, Thomas Lee, even offered to attack Truxillo with 500 men to destroy whatever armaments the Spanish were preparing there. On Sydney's orders, George Etherington (promoted to brigadier general for this service) was sent to command the regular troops during the "critical Situation of affairs in that Country", although Etherington was given strict orders not to fight unless the Shore was attacked.⁵⁵

Spanish intelligence reports said that English warships were at Cape Gracias a Dios and that twenty-eight Mosquito piraguas were being armed for the purpose "of beginning a war before the conclusion of the period signaled by the treaty of peace." A Spanish spy learned in a Kingston waterfront cafe that English troops had orders to insult and provoke the Spanish into a war. The English had so overreacted defensively that Estacheria, who had planned to invade the Coast, now believed that the enemy was preparing a "lively war" and called for strong reinforcements (especially if he were to carry out his orders), as well as for guardacostas

⁵⁵Lawrie to Campbell, 12 June 1784, FO 72/3, f. 260; White to Nepean, 19 May 1785, CO 123/3; Pakenham to lords of the Admiralty, 22 January 1785, FO 72/5, f. 309; White to Sydney, 16 April 1785, CO 123/3; Clarke to Yonge, 24 January 1785, WO 1/54; Pakenham to Cornwallis, 28 January 1785, Adm 1/243; Jamaica Gazette, 26 January and 5 February 1785, p. 95; Log of HMS Bull dog, 20 March 1785, Adm 51/141; Clarke to Etherington, 30 January 1785, CO 137/85.

from Cartagena and Havana to patrol the Shore. During this tense period, one clash was reported between English and Spanish vessels, and there were even rumours that war had erupted.⁵⁶

But when Etherington arrived on the Shore, he requested the Spanish to do nothing until word was received of the progress of negotiations in Europe. Hervias readily agreed to await further instructions; he had little choice, for his veteran troops were almost nonexistent, and the militiamen were forever disappearing. In fact, he had only twelve men fit for duty at the end of the stipulated eighteen months period after the Treaty of Peace. Then in April, the real orden of 20 January arrived in Guatemala, and war was averted.⁵⁷

This period of uncertainty had a severe effect on the Mosquito Shore economy. Immigration was stunted and men were reluctant to gamble the lives of their slaves or to invest money in clearing land. Some of the leading settlers began to abandon the Shore. The Spanish faced similar problems. Lookouts had to be supported on the frontiers of the Mosquito territories and expeditions undertaken "to maintain the English within their limits." According to treasury accounts received from Santa Fé,

⁵⁶ Estachería to Gálvez, 15 April 1785, Guat 666; Audiencia of Guatemala to Gálvez, 20 February 1785, Guat 666; Zejudo to Casamayor, 11 April 1785, Guat 666; Hervias to Estachería, 23 April 1785, Guat 666; Declaration by Captain Swasey, printed in the Supplement to the Royal Gazette, 5 February 1785, p. 115; Anon. editorials in the Supplement to the Royal Gazette, 19 February and 26 March 1785, p. 255; Sastre to Gálvez, 20 March 1785, Guat 666; Hernández y Sánchez Barba, op.cit., p. 215.

⁵⁷ Hervias to Etherington, 4 March 1785, FO 72/5; Hervias to Estachería, 5 March 1785, Guat 666; Sydney to Clarke, 8 March 1785, CO 137/85; Estachería to Gálvez, 14 January, 15 March and 30 April 1785, Guat 666.

Guatemala and Yucatán for an unspecified period of time, these operations and other defensive measures against the Mosquito Indians and English in the Bay of Honduras had cost more than £700,000 sterling.⁵⁸

Before talks could begin seriously in Europe on a treaty respecting the Mosquito territory, the question of preconditions had to be resolved. Charles III would not negotiate until the English issued orders for the evacuation of the Mosquito Coast, and he insisted that Gibraltar be included in the discussions as his price for enlarged boundaries on the logwood coasts. Carmarthen refused to accept these conditions, arguing that the evacuation of the Mosquito Shore was to be the subject of the negotiations, and that "it seems perfectly impossible that we should ever admit a separate Object, & one of such Importance [as Gibraltar], to be introduced into the Consideration of the present Question."⁵⁹ Since Spain's only practical objective in the negotiations was the acquisition of the Mosquito Coast, Floridablanca agreed to begin talks on England's terms. As a way of "bringing this unpleasant business to a more speedy conclusion", George III suggested that London, rather than Madrid, be selected as the site for the negotiations.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Galvez to Floridablanca, 15 February 1785, Guat 666.

⁵⁹ Campo to Floridablanca, 29 January 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; Carmarthen to Liston, 3 March 1785, no. 4, FO 185/2. According to Carmarthen, England's object was "to bring the Spanish Minister to consent to a Negotiation for an Exchange of Territory, in Lieu of the Settlements at present held by British Subjects on the Mosquito Shore." Carmarthen to Liston, 3 March 1785, no. 5, FO 185/2.

⁶⁰ Floridablanca to Carmarthen, 16 February 1785, FO 72/4, f. 201; George III to Carmarthen, 3 March 1785, LCG, 1, 136.

The English entered the talks (which were delayed by heavy parliamentary business in February and March 1785) knowing that if they evacuated the Shore without some recompense "to justify the Measure in the Public Opinion", it would create a "popular Clamour". They had to consider their traditional alliance with the Mosquito Indians and the "troublesome Task of removing the Settlers". Liston did not see how the issue could be resolved. "The expulsion of the British Inhabitants from the Mosquito Settlement", he said, "would raise such a clamour as might be fatal to the Minister who should consent to it." However, he added, the Mosquito Shore was the only "important subject of contest" and would remain so until a solution was found to the problem.⁶¹

Consequently, Spanish ministers did not enter the negotiations optimistically. "If we see the Mosquito Coast without a single Englishman", Campo wrote, "it will be truly God's benediction." Furthermore, he said that England had extracted a Spanish promise not to initiate hostilities in the Indies, while she delayed the evacuation of the Mosquito Coast under the pretext that it was not part of the "Spanish Continent". Campo even suspected that the English were promoting revolution in the Spanish colonies. Floridablanca responded to the doubts of Spain's envoys in Paris and London, exclaiming: "e must understand that we can never trust that court in anything". The Mosquito Coast "was not of sufficient

⁶¹ Campo to Fraser, 16 March 1785, AGS, Est 8134; Carmarthen to Liston, 3 March 1785, no. 4, FO 185/2; Liston to Carmarthen, 20 April 1785, NLS, 5531, f. 100.

importance to hazard involving the half of the World in a new war"; nevertheless he saw it as the cause of an imminent conflict; while in "one of those fits of heat to which he is so frequently subject", he told Liston that "it was impossible we should continue friends; that the time must soon come when we should be violent and implacable enemies."⁶²

England also feared war over this issue. Unless British ministers acted carefully in their discussions on the Mosquito Shore and the Bay of Honduras, it was declared in an editorial in a London paper, "it is very probable a war will be blown up again by incendiary rascals...." While England struggled to pay the national debt, "the Spaniards may be whetting the sword for another war...."⁶³

English representatives in Spain suspected that the French were encouraging the Spanish to take an inflexible stand, and that the Duc de Voguyon, the new French ambassador in Madrid ("a complete Courtier and a man of intrigue"), had been sent to Spain for that very purpose.⁶⁴ Yet English ministers trusted their Spanish counterparts, although they worried about the acts of individual Spanish officials in the Indies.

⁶²Liston to Carmarthen, 7 January, 28 March, 20 April and 13 May 1785, NLS, 5531, ff. 7, 79, 100, 110; Aranda to Floridablanca, 4 February 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. 1; Campo to Floridablanca, 11 February 1785, AHN, Est 4232; Campo to Floridablanca, 29 March and 26 April 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. 1; Floridablanca to Campo, 19 April 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. 1; Liston to Carmarthen, 10 January 1785, private A, FO 185/2.

⁶³The Whitehall Evening Post, 21 May 1785.

⁶⁴Liston to Carmarthen, 13 May 1785, NLS, 5531, f. 110; Munro to Carmarthen, 16 May 1785, FO 72/5, f. 559.

"I mention the danger of Dn. d. de Galvez [son of Matías de Gálvez] doing mischief in the West-Indies", Liston wrote. "He is a violent, dangerous man" who might be "fed by his imperious and enterprising Disposition", to avenge his father's defeats on the Mosquito Shore by attacking English settlements there without orders from Madrid.⁶⁵

When negotiations were resumed in London after the pause in February and March, Campo was more optimistic of success. England would concede Spanish demands, he said, because she did not want a war "for any reason whatsoever". "With very little sacrifice [i.e., territorial concessions in Yucatán] our Court will succeed in settling this scabrous and disagreeable matter which has already cost us several wars."⁶⁶ Progress was immediate in spite of arguments against abandoning the Mosquito Shore by two members of the British cabinet, the Duke of Richmond and Lord Gower. The two nations agreed to include an article in the treaty to protect the Mosquitos against mistreatment. (Campo later clarified this point when he said that Spain "would never employ rigorous methods to reduce

⁶⁵Liston to Carmarthen, 28 March 1785, NLS, 5531, f.79; Liston to Fraser, 30 March 1785, FO 72/5; Gálvez, however, carefully followed the orders of his uncle (José de Gálvez) to keep the peace. B. Gálvez to J. Gálvez, 4 April 1785, Guat 666.

⁶⁶Campo to Heredia, 17 June 1785, AGS, Est 8157; Sydney to Clarke, 2 June 1785, CO 137/85; Carmarthen to Liston, 18 June 1785, FO 185/2. Curiously, an article appearing the next day in a Kingston paper also ascribed the wars of the eighteenth century to the Anglo-Spanish dispute over the Mosquito Shore. "The disputes between the Spaniards and the Settlers on the Mosquito-Shore...with the smuggling trade carried on by the West-Indies [sic], particularly the inhabitants of Jamaica, have been the cause of no fewer than three wars with his Catholic Majesty, to the last of which we owe our ruin, the loss of the dominion of the seas, and consequently of America. It is more than probable that the present quarrel had originated from the same causes." Supplement to the Royal Gazette, 18 June 1785, p. 494.

the Mosquitos except when they could not accomplish the same by softness and moderation!"⁶⁷) But in the late summer and early autumn of 1785, even as Spain made a second concession, permitting the Baymen to cut mahogany as well as logwood in their assigned territory, a further delay (due to urgent domestic business), precipitated a renewed crisis. Campo, who had unsuccessfully tried to keep the negotiations going, wrote: "What will they think at Madrid not hearing a word of Mosquitos? Damn Mosquitos!" George III was also deeply concerned over the worsening situation. "If both Courts do not with vigour enter into arranging the ill-left business of the Mosquito Shore it must soon occasion much ill humour, which the French may at their pleasure bring to something serious."⁶⁸ Spanish ministers, interpreting the delay as being caused by ulterior motives, especially when coupled with disquieting intelligence and rumours from the Indies, ordered troops to be sent to the Bay of Honduras. And then, with the explanation that England had failed to fulfil the sixth article of the definitive treaty of peace, and that her "bad faith shows and confirms itself more every day", Estachería, Caballero y Góngora and Matías de Gálvez were ordered to prepare "to harass and expel [the

⁶⁷ Campo to Carmarthen, 24 June 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; Floridablanca to Liston, 1 May 1785, AGS, Est 8134. Meanwhile the English searched (unsuccessfully) for proof that the Indians had tried to ally themselves with the Spanish during or before the recent war. "Proof of the little credit due to their professions to this country", Carmarthen said, "might be of great service in the course of this business." Carmarthen to Liston, 11 February 1785, FO 185/2.

⁶⁸ Campo to Pitt, 28 July 1785, AGS, Est 8134; Campo to Floridablanca, 6 August 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; Campo to Carmarthen, 30 September 1785, AGS, Est 8134; Campo to Carmarthen, 1 September 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; Campo to Pitt, 13 September 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; Campo to Floridablanca, 7 October 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; George III to Sydney, 18 June 1785, LCG, i. 166.

Shoremen]...by force from the settlements on the Mosquito Coast."⁶⁹ War was again imminent, although William Carmichael, the American ambassador in Madrid, did not believe so. "The two nations may bully," he said, "but not fight in their present circumstances for such an object."⁷⁰ But Carmichael was unaware of Spain's unflinching determination to acquire the Mosquito Shore.

On the Shore, troop withdrawals from Black River were viewed "with a degree of regret little short of Despair", and drew bitter complaints. It also prompted the Shoremen to repeat defensive measures which had the predictable effect of frightening neighbouring Spaniards.⁷¹ Gabriel de Hervias said that he would soon be forced to abandon Spanish military posts near the Limón, Aguán and Chapagna rivers of Honduras, as large numbers of Loyalists were settling at Cape Gracias a Dios, and because British settlements were being pushed ever closer to Truxillo.⁷² As usual, establishing an effective defence against the English and Mosquitos seemed to be next to impossible. When Estachería ordered 100 militiamen to be sent to Fort San Carlos on the San Juan River, seventy-three men

⁶⁹Duff to Fraser, 1 August 1785, FO 72/6, f. 834; Gálvez to Floridablanca, 31 July 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i; Real orden to Caballero y Góngora and Matías de Gálvez, 25 October 1785, Guat 666.

⁷⁰Carmichael to Jefferson, 27 June 1785, PTJ, viii, 251.

⁷¹Douglas to Lawrie, 21 June 1785, HA/MSL; Douglas to Innes, 20 June 1785, HA/MSL; Hervias to Troncoso, 25 September 1785, Guat 666; Estachería to Galvez, 15 October 1785, Guat 470.

⁷²Letter from Jamaica, 7 May 1785, published in the Independent Gazeteer; or the Chronicle of Freedom, Philadelphia, 11 June 1785; Caballero y Góngora to Gálvez, 20 May 1785, Guat 666; Hervias to Estachería, 28 June 1785, Guat 666; Estachería to Gálvez, 15 August 1785, Guat 666; Estachería to Gálvez, 15 September 1785, Guat 470; Hervias to Troncoso, 31 October 1785, Guat 666

deserted the night after receiving their orders. Relations worsened when some documents which described England's campaign on the San Juan River in 1780 were captured by the Spanish and misinterpreted as being plans for an impending invasion. And one Kingston paper reported that "there is every reason to fear the groundwork is laying of a serious quarrel between the two nations."⁷³

However even as orders were being issued from Madrid to prepare for war, the pendulum swung towards peace. British troops, who had again returned to the Shore, were removed, easing tensions in the Indies; in London, Campo said that the Shore was of insufficient consequence to merit a war; furthermore, he said that the English should be trusted, although they had caused the present long delay in negotiations; Spain should not be too much in a hurry, for "it does not follow in this country as it does in others that it can be said openly the King and his Council have decided the case and that is what will be done." He also suggested that England be granted a few more leagues of "worthless territory in Yucatan", a concession that English ministers had requested to prepare public opinion for the abandonment of the Shore.

While Floridablanca was willing to grant this third concession to the English,⁷⁴ the advantage in the negotiations remained with the Spanish,

⁷³Estachería to Gálvez, 13 July 1785, Guat 666; Estachería to Gálvez, 14 October 1785, no. 32, Guat 879; Caballero y Góngora to Gálvez, 30 August 1785, Guat 666; "European intelligence", The Royal Gazette, 1 - 8 October 1785.

⁷⁴Hermenegildo to Narváez, 12 December 1785, Guat 666; Estachería to Gálvez, 15 December 1785, Guat 666; Carmarthen to Liston, 7 October 1785, FO 185/2; Liston to Carmarthen, 27 October 1785, FO 185/2; Campo to Floridablanca, 1 and 16 October and 23 November 1785, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i.

for the compensation Spain offered in this new "concession" was a few thousand square miles of unhealthy and unprofitable swampland and mountains adjacent to Belize, itself "an open Receptacle for Out-Laws, Felons, Foreigners, & all such Men as fly from Justice, or are fond of a Licentious Life," and which did not offer an easy access into the interior for British merchants. With "not above" twenty-five settlers, there were not even enough people at Belize to form a government.⁷⁵ Robert White (who was to become the agent for the Baymen) said that "in every point of View, Political as well as Commercial, [the Mosquito Shore] ...is on present inspection, and in future Contemplation, infinitely preferable to the Bay Settlement...."⁷⁶

Also of advantage to Spain was the fact that England did not want a war and still hoped to conclude a commercial treaty with Spain and to separate the two Bourbon states (whose unity in a conflict many Englishmen believed could turn England into a second-rate power). Yet standing in the way of a harmonious relationship was the Mosquito Shore. As Liston said: "The only indispensable Preliminary to any Degree of Approximation between England and ...[Spain] seems an amicable Adjust ent of our differences in America."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Colonel Despard was the superintendent of the Belize settlements, but he had been ordered to remain on the Mosquito Shore during the recent war and had never taken up his new post, in spite of complaints. He did not move to Belize until the evacuation of the Shore was terminated in June 1787. White to Nepean, 26 November 1785, CO 123/3.

⁷⁶ White to Fraser, 16 December 1785, FO 72/6; White to North, 8 April 1783, CO 123/2, vol.ii; White to Sydney, 25 November 1785, CO 123/3; Clarke to Sydney, 7 February 1785, CO 137/85.

⁷⁷ Liston to Carmarthen, 30 December 1785, FO 72/6, f. 1454; Carmarthen to Liston, 29 November 1785, FO 185/2; Campo to Floridablanca, 17 January 1786, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i.

In January 1786, Floridablanca's distrust of the English led him to weigh the advantages of acceding to the recent Franco-Dutch alliance. He noted the increase in the number of English colonists on the Coast, the command of the settlement at Cape Gracias a Dios by an English colonel, the approach of settlers and wood-cutters to Truxillo, the patrol of the coast by English warships, the attempt to disseminate protestantism, and the continuing illicit trade. According to Liston:

The conclusion he drew was that we had formed a deliberate plan for recommencing the war, by an invasion of the Spanish Dominions in South America; that the negotiations begun by us on the Subject of the Mosquito Coast had been only a pretext, to gain time; and that we should renew hostilities as soon as we thought ourselves in a condition to do it with advantage.

While "adhering to that sincerity which forms so striking a part of his character", Floridablanca told Liston that Spain's eyes had been opened; she could neither trust England nor try to stand alone against her, and he admitted that the Spanish court had been invited to join the Franco-Dutch Alliance.⁷⁸

Liston was deeply troubled. If any other minister but Floridablanca had spoken of consenting to join the alliance, he said, it would merely be "meant to alarm Great Britain, in hopes of obtaining on more favourable terms the evacuation of the Mosquito Settlements."⁷⁹ Knowing that

⁷⁸Liston to Fraser, 30 January 1786, FO 72/7; Liston to Carmarthen, 2 February 1786, FO 72/7; Liston to Carmarthen, 5 and 10 February 1786, NLS, 5533, ff.11 15; From Liston n.d. (c. February 1786), FO 185/2; List of complaints against the British settlers on the Mosquito Coast, 6 April 1786, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i

⁷⁹The Spanish were aware of what might be gained by taking advantage of England's fear of the Franco-Dutch alliance. Campo said that it created an ideal opportunity for Spain to extract an advantageous treaty from England. Campo to Floridablanca, 20 April 1786, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i.

Floridablanca was serious, however, Liston went to him and "began to cry like a baby", imploring him not to accede to the alliance. Floridablanca replied that Spain would not do so if England would yield to Spain's demand for the evacuation of the Mosquito Shore.⁸⁰ Liston wrote home excitedly that "I have at least arrested for a moment a most disastrous current of politicks that began to run against us." It was, he said,

indispensably necessary to adopt some measures tending to an immediate arrangement of the business of the Mosquito Shore, if we wish to avoid a total change of principles and conduct on the part of Count Floridablanca, and perhaps an eventual rupture....⁸¹

Faced with this situation, Pitt and the cabinet (which had not been hasty to sign a convention with Spain when continued negotiations had helped to maintain satisfactory relations) were suddenly given the alternative of quickly resolving the Mosquito issue or of watching England's European neighbours form an alliance obviously directed against her. In March, Carmarthen said that the situation in Europe now made it imperative that the Mosquito problem be settled quickly, although he

⁸⁰ Floridablanca to Campo, 11 February 1786, cited by Hernández y Sánchez Barba *op.cit.*, p. 223. Floridablanca was unaware of a serious incident that had recently occurred in Honduras. In January 1786 Spanish officials arrested a Spanish contrabandist who traded with the English on the shore. Soon afterwards the inhabitants of San Jorge de Olanchito freed the prisoners, killing and wounding a number of soldiers who had been guarding them. The situation was so critical, that Hervias said that Truxillo might have to be abandoned, for his garrison was composed by "200 cowardly peasants called militiamen." Estachería to Gálvez, 15 January 1786, Guat 666; Hervias to Roncoso, 7 February 1786, Guat 666.

⁸¹ Liston to Carmarthen, 10 and 13 February 1786, NLS, 5533, ff. 15, 19; Liston to Fraser, 11 February 1786, FO 72/7; Hernández y Sánchez Barba, *loc.cit.*; Liston to Carmarthen, 9 March 1786, FO 72/7; Liston to Carmarthen, 3 and 6 April 1786, FO 185/2.

said that if Spain did sign the Franco-Dutch treaty, England would continue to show good faith in the negotiations. "Even had...[this statement] been insincere," Liston said, "[it] must be considered as a refined and masterly stroke of policy", for it brought further assurances from Floridablanca that Spain would not accede to the alliance if the Mosquito question were settled satisfactorily.⁸² An agreement now seemed near,⁸³ and Liston wrote:

If the next messenger brings a draught of a Convention likely to put an end to the nauseous Dispute that has so long occupied us, confidence and good humour will immediately return: the accession, I trust, will never be more heard of.⁸⁴

But Liston was to have a few more bad moments.

I begin to be afraid that the Cabinet of Versailles have at length got some Hint that the Delay of the Accession is owing to our Interposition, & that they will make a new Effort to disappoint the Mosquito Business & to set Spain & us by the Ears.⁸⁵

Early in July he reported that there were signs that the Spanish Crown might open hostilities against England, and against the Mosquito Indians.

"The bare mention of the Mosquito Shore or the Bay of Honduras", Liston said, "puts...[Floridablanca] in a passion."⁸⁶ But Liston's fears were

⁸² Carmarthen to Liston, 16 March 1786, nos. 8, 10, FO 185/2; Liston to Carmarthen, 16 April 1786, no. 26, FO 185/2.

⁸³ Carmarthen to George III, 18 April 1786, BM, Add 28,059, f.116; Carmarthen to Pitt, 17 April 1786, BM, Add 28,061, f.102; Campo to Carmarthen, 18 April 1786, FO 185/2; Carmarthen to Liston, 20 April 1786, FO 185/2.

⁸⁴ Liston to Carmarthen, 19 April 1786, "Private and Confidential", FO 72/7.

⁸⁵ Liston to (probably) Fraser, 8 May 1786, FO 72/8. Campo also wanted a convention with England to be signed promptly because there was increasing talk that independence of Spain's American colonies might be of value "politically and for the good of mankind", and that there was intelligence that activists working for this end were operating on the Mosquito Coast. Campo to Floridablanca, 2 May 1786, AHN, Est 4227, vol. i.

⁸⁶ Liston to Carmarthen, 10 July 1786, FO 185/2; Liston to Fraser, 12 July 1786, FO 72/8.

groundless, for on 14 July 1786, the Mosquito Convention was signed in London by Bernardo del Campo and Lord Carmarthen.⁸⁷ For the first time in history the Mosquito Shore was the specified subject of an international treaty: for the first time in history, England acknowledged Spanish sovereignty over the Shore. The convention was ratified and exchanged on 1 September. By its terms, the boundaries of the logwood settlements near Belize were defined, and Spain's sovereignty was recognised throughout the Bay of Honduras. The evacuation of the Mosquito Shore was to be terminated by 1 March 1787 (later extended to 30 June 1787).⁸⁸

Under the continual threat of a Mosquito or slave uprising, the evacuation of the more than 2,300 Englishmen and their families and slaves from the Shore was carried out between February and June 1787.⁸⁹ On 21 June, Superintendent Lawrie and the other English commissioners conducting the evacuation left Black River. In the ruins of the little town destroyed by the English before their departure, "The Spaniards fired

⁸⁷ Carmarthen to Liston, 14 July 1786, FO 185/2; Carmarthen to Hawkesbury, 14 July 1786, BM, Add 28,061, f. 218; Mosquito Convention, 14 July 1786, CO 123/4. See appendix B for the text of the convention.

⁸⁸ Sydney to Clarke, 1 September 1786, CO 137/86; Campo to Floridablanca, 5 September 1786, Guat 666; Sonora to commander of Truxillo, 18 January 1787, NLS, 5534, f. 4.

⁸⁹ Gardner to Hutt, 3 January 1787, Adm 1/243; Clarke to Sydney, 31 December 1786, CO 137/86. The number of settlers that were evacuated was 448; the number of slaves 1,891. Of this number, 334 settlers were at Black River, forty-five at Cape Gracias a Dios, thirty-three at Pearl Key Lagoon, and fourteen at Bluefields. American Loyalists in this group totalled sixty-six, with 143 slaves. List of settlers on the Mosquito Shore, 16 October 1786, CO 137/86; Loyalists to Lawrie, 16 October 1786, NLS, 5533, f. 152.

a Royal Salute, and Hoisted His Catholic Majesty's Colours". With Gabriel de Hervias their first governor of the Mosquito Coast since the short rule of Tomás de Juliá in 1782, the Spanish turned to a sorrowful future among the Mosquito Indians.⁹⁰

⁹⁰Log of HMS Camilla, John Hutt commander, 21 June 1787, Amd 51/150, part vii.

APPENDIX A.

Article six, Anglo - Spanish Treaty of Peace signed at Versailles on 3 September 1783 by the Duke of Manchester and the Conde de Aranda:¹

The Intention of the Two High Contracting Parties being to prevent, as much as possible, all the Causes of Complaint and Misunderstanding heretofore occasioned by the Cutting of Wood for Dying, or Logwood; and several English Settlements having been formed and extended, under that Pretence, upon the Spanish Continent; it is expressly agreed that His Britannick Majesty's Subjects shall have the Right of cutting, loading and carrying away Logwood, in the District lying between the Rivers Wallis or Bellize, and Rio Hondo, taking the Course of the said two Rivers for unalterable Boundaries, so as that the Navigation of them be common to both Nations, to wit, by the River Wallis or Bellize, from the Sea, ascending as far as opposite to a Lake or Inlet which runs into the Land, and forms an Isthmus, or Neck, with another similar Inlet, which comes from the Side of Rio-Nuevo or New River; so that the Line of Separation shall pass straight across the said Isthmus, and meet another Lake formed by the Water of Rio-Nuevo, or New River, at its Current. The said Line shall continue with the Course of Rio-Nuevo, descending as far as opposite to a River, the Source of which is marked in the Map, between Rio-Nuevo and Rio-Hondo, and which empties itself into Rio-Hondo; which River shall also serve as a common Boundary as far as its Junction with Rio-Hondo; and from thence descending by Rio-Hondo to the Sea, as the Whole is marked on the Map which the Plenipotentiaries of the Two Crowns have thought proper to make Use of, for ascertaining the Points agreed upon, to the End that a good Correspondence may reign between the Two Nations, and that the English Workmen, Cutters and Labourers may not trespass from an Uncertainty of the Boundaries. The respective Commissaries shall fix upon convenient Places, in the Territory above marked out, in order that His Britannick Majesty's Subjects, employed in the Felling of Logwood, may, without Interruption, build therein Houses and Magazines necessary for themselves, their Families, and their Effects; and His Catholick Majesty assures to them the Enjoyment of all that is expressed in the present Article; provided that these Stipulations shall not be considered as derogating in any wise from his Rights of Sovereignty. Therefore all the English, who may be dispersed in any other Parts, whether on the Spanish Continent, or in any of the Islands whatsoever, dependent on the aforesaid Spanish Continent, and for whatever Reason it might be,

¹The Definitive Treaty of Peace and Friendship, between His Britannick Majesty, and the King of Spain, 3 September 1783. (London, 1783), p.11. See also: Francis G. Davenport and Charles O Faullin, European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies (4 vols., Washington, 1917, 1929, 1934, 1937), iv, 159.

without Exception, shall retire within the District which has been above described, in the Space of Eighteen Months, to be computed from the Exchange of the Ratifications; and for this Purpose Orders shall be issued on the Part of his Britannick Majesty and on that of His Catholick Majesty, his Governors shall be ordered to grant to the English dispersed every Convenience possible for their removing to the Settlement agreed upon by the present Article, or for their retiring wherever they shall think proper. It is likewise stipulated, that if any Fortifications should actually have been heretofore erected within the Limits marked out, His Britannick Majesty shall cause them all to be demolished; and He will order His Subjects not to build any new ones. The English Inhabitants, who shall settle there for the cutting of Logwood, shall be permitted to enjoy a free Fishery for their Subsistence, on the Coasts of the District above agreed on, or of the Islands situated opposite thereto, without being in any wise disturbed on that Account; provided they do not establish Themselves, in any manner, on the said Islands.

APPENDIX B.

Convention between His Britannick Majesty and the King of Spain.
Signed at London, 14 July 1786.¹

Article I. His Britannick Majesty's Subjects, and the other Colonists who have hitherto enjoyed the Protection of England, shall evacuate the Country of the Mosquitos, as well as the Continent in general, and the Islands adjacent, without Exception, situated beyond the Line herein after described, as what ought to be the Frontier of the Extent of Territory granted by His Catholick Majesty to the English, for the Uses specified in the 3d Article of the present Convention, and in Addition to the Country already granted to them in Virtue of the Stipulations agreed upon by the Commissaries of the two Crowns in 1783.

Article II. The Catholick King, to prove, on his side, to the King of Great Britain, the Sincerity of his Sentiments of Friendship towards His said Majesty, and the British Nation, will grant to the English more extensive Limits than those specified in the last Treaty of Peace; And the said Limits of the Lands added by the present Convention shall for the future be understood in the Manner following.

The English Line, beginning from the Sea, shall take the Center of the River Sibun or Jabon, and continue up to the Source of the said Rivers; from thence it shall cross in a strait Line the intermediate Land, till it intersects the River Wallis; and by the Center of the same River, the said Line shall descend to the Point where it will meet the Line already settled and marked out by the Commissaries of the two Crowns in 1783: Which Limits, following the Continuation of the said Line, shall be observed as formerly stipulated by the Definitive Treaty.

Article III. Although no other Advantages have hitherto been in Question, except that of cutting Wood for Dying, yet his Catholick Majesty, as a greater Proof of his Disposition to oblige the King of Great Britain, will grant to the English the Liberty of cutting all other Wood, without even excepting Mahogany, as well as gathering all the Fruits, or Produce of the Earth, purely natural and uncultivated, which may besides, being carried away in their natural State, become an Object of Utility or of Commerce, whether for Food or for Manufactures: But it is expressly agreed, that this Stipulation is never to be used as a Pretext for establishing in that Country any Plantation of Sugar, Coffee, Cacao, or other like Articles, or any Fabrick or Manufacture, by Means of Mills or other Machines whatsoever (this Restriction however does not regard the Use of Saw Mills, for cutting or otherwise preparing the Wood) since all the Lands in Question being indisputably acknowledged to belong of Right to the Crown of Spain, no Settlements of that Kind, or the Population which would follow, could be allowed.

¹Convention between His Britannick Majesty and the King of Spain. Signed at London, the 14th of July, 1786. (London, 1786).

The English shall be permitted to transport and convey all such Wood, and other Produce of the Place, in it's natural and uncultivated State, down the Rivers to the Sea, but without ever going beyond the Limits which are prescribed to them by the Stipulations above granted, and without thereby taking an Opportunity of ascending the said Rivers beyond their Bounds, into the Countries belonging to Spain.

Article IV. The English shall be permitted to occupy the small Island known by the Names of Casina, St. George's Key, or Cayo Casina, in Consideration of the Circumstance of that Part of the Coasts opposite to the said Island being looked upon as subject to dangerous Disorders; but this Permission is only to be made Use of for Purposes of real Utility: And as great Abuses, no less contrary to the Intentions of the British Government, than to the essential Interests of Spain, might arise from this Permission, it is here stipulated, as an indispensable Condition, that no Fortification, or Work of Defence whatever, shall at any Time be erected there, nor any Body of Troops posted, nor any Piece of Artillery kept there; and in order to verify with good Faith the Accomplishment of this Condition sine qua non (which might be infringed by Individuals, without the Knowledge of the British Government) a Spanish Officer or Commissary, accompanied by an English Commissary or Officer, duly authorized, shall be admitted, twice a Year to examine into the real Situation of Things.

Article V. The English Nation shall enjoy the Liberty of refitting their Merchant Ships in the Southern Triangle included between the Point of Cayo Casina, and the Cluster of small islands which are situated opposite that Part of the Coast occupied by the Cutters, at the Distance of eight Leagues from the River Wallis, seven from Cayo Casina, and three from the River Sibun ; a Place which has always been found well adapted to that Purpose. For which End, the Edifices and Storehouses absolutely necessary for that Service shall be allowed to be built; but in this Concession it also included the express Condition of not erecting Fortifications there at any Time, or stationing Troops, or constructing any military Works; and in like Manner it shall not be permitted to station any Ships of War there, or to construct an Arsenal, or other Building, the Object of which might be the Formation of a Naval Establishment.

Article VI. It is also stipulated, that the English may freely and peaceably catch Fish on the Coast of the Country assigned to them by the last Treaty of Peace, as also of that which is added to them by the present Convention; but without going beyond their Boundaries, and confining themselves within the Distance specified in the preceding Article.

Article VII. All the Restrictions specified in the last Treaty of 1783, for the entire Preservation of the Right of the Spanish Sovereignty over the Country, in which is granted to the English only the Privilege of

making Use of the wood of the different Kinds, the Fruits and other Produce, in their natural State, are here confirmed; and the same Restrictions shall also be observed with respect to the new Grant. In consequence, the Inhabitants of those Countries shall employ themselves simply in the cutting and transporting of the said Wood, and in the gathering and transporting of the Fruits, without meditating any more extensive Settlements, or the Formation of any System of Government, either military or civil, further than such Regulations as their Britannick and Catholick Majesties may hereafter judge proper to establish, for maintaining Peace and good Order amongst their respective Subjects.

Article VIII. As it is generally allowed that the Woods and Forests are preserved, and even multiply, by regular and methodical Cuttings, the English shall observe this Maxim, as far as possible; but if, notwithstanding all their Precautions, it should happen in Course of Time that they were in Want of Dying-Wood, or Mahogany, with which the Spanish Possessions might be provided, the Spanish Government shall make no Difficulty to furnish a Supply to the English, at a fair and reasonable Price.

Article IX. Every possible Precaution shall be observed to prevent Smuggling; and the English shall take Care to conform to the Regulations which the Spanish Government shall think proper to establish amongst their own Subjects, in all Communications which they may have with the latter; on Condition nevertheless that the English shall be left in the peaceable Enjoyment of the several Advantages inserted in their Favour in the last Treaty, or stipulated by the present Convention.

Article X. The Spanish Governors shall be ordered to give to the said English dispersed all possible Facilities for their Removal to the Settlements agreed upon by the present Convention, according to the Stipulations of the 6th Article of the Definitive Treaty of 1783, with respect to the Country allotted for their Use by the said Article.

Article XI. Their Britannick and Catholick Majesties, in order to remove every Kind of Doubt with regard to the true Construction of the present Convention, think it necessary to declare, that the Conditions of the said Convention ought to be observed according to their sincere Intention to ensure and improve the Harmony and good Understanding, which so happily subsist at present between their said Majesties.

In this View, His Britannick Majesty engages to give the most positive Orders for the Evacuation of the Countries above-mentioned, by all His Subjects of whatever Denomination. But if, contrary to such Declaration, there should still remain any Persons so daring, as to presume, by retiring into the interior Country, to endeavour to obstruct the entire Evacuation already agreed upon, His Britannick Majesty, so far from affording them

the least Succour, or even Protection, will disavow them in the most solemn Manner, as He will equally do those who may hereafter attempt to settle upon the Territory belonging to the Spanish dominion.

Article XII. The Evacuation agreed upon shall be completely effected within the Space of Six Months, after the Exchange of the Ratifications of this Convention, or sooner, if it can be done.

Article XIII. It is agreed that the new Grants described in the preceding Articles, in Favour of the English Nation, are to take Place as soon as the aforesaid Evacuation shall be entirely accomplished.

Article XIV. His Catholick Majesty, prompted solely by Motives of Humanity, promises to the King of England, that he will not exercise any Act of Severity against the Mosquitos, inhabiting in Part the Countries which are to be evacuated, by Virtue of the present Convention, on Account of the Connections which may have subsisted between the said Indians and the English: And His Britannick Majesty, on His Part, will strictly prohibit all His Subjects from furnishing Arms, or Warlike Stores, to the Indians in general, situated upon the Frontiers of the Spanish Possessions.

Article XV. The two Courts shall mutually transmit to each other Duplicates of the Orders, which they are to dispatch to their respective Governors and Commanders in America, for the Accomplishment of the present Convention; and a Frigate, or proper Ship of War, shall be appointed, on each Side, to observe in Conjunction that all Things are performed in the best Order possible, and with that Cordiality and good Faith of which the two Sovereigns have been pleased to set the Example.

Article XVI. The present Convention shall be ratified by their Britannick and Catholick Majesties, and the Ratifications exchanged, within the Space of Six Weeks, or sooner, if it can be done.

In Witness whereof, We the undersigned Ministers Plenipotentiary of their Britannick and Catholick Majesties, in Virtue of our respective Full Powers, have signed the present Convention, and have affixed thereto the Seals of our Arms.

Done at London, this Fourteenth Day of July, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty Six.

Carmarthen and Le Marquis del Campo

At the Time of exchanging our Sovereigns Ratifications of the Convention signed the 14th of July last, We the undersigned Ministers Plenipotentiary have agreed, that the Visit of the English and Spanish Commissaries,

mentioned in the 4th Article of the said Convention, with Respect to the Island of Cayo Casina, is to extend in like Manner to all the other Places, whether in the Islands, or on the Continent, where the English Cutters shall be situated. In Witness whereof, We have signed this Declaration, and affixed thereto the Seals of our Arms.

London, this 1st of September, 1786.
Carmarthen and Campo

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Gulf of Mexico

CUBA

YUCATAN

Caribbean

JAMAICA

Sea

BR. Belize
HON.

Bay of Honduras

GUATEMALA

Omoa
San Pedro Sula
HONDURAS

Truxillo
Black River
LEeward SHORE
Brewer's Lagoon
Caratasca Lagoon
C. Gracias a Dios

EL SALVADOR

Jutigalpa
Jinotega
NICARAGUA

Sandy Bay
Tebuppy
(boundary of Mosquito Reserve, 1860-1894)

Leon
Managua
Granada
Lake Nicaragua

WINDWARD SHORE
Great River
Pearl Key Lagoon
Bluefields
CORN ISLAND
Monkey Point
Fort Inmaculada

Pacific

San Juan or Desaguadero

COSTA RICA
Cartago

(Extent of territory controlled by Mosquito Indians during 18th century)

Boruca
Tehraba

Bocas del Toro
Chiriqui Lagoon
Escondido de Veragua

Portobelo

PANAMA

0 50 100 150
scale = miles

Ocean

