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WEST
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May 3, 1963

Your ref.: WIS. 220/440/01
My ref.: 164/III

My dear John, R.R.P.

(21) I sent to you on April 11, a copy of the letter that I had written to the Premier about the draft aide memoire and the memorandum of comments on certain of the technical clauses of the proposed treaty about the Surinam boundary. Doubtless because of recent unhappy events here and the general strike that still afflicts the country, I have had no reply from the Premier; but I copied my letter also to the Solicitor General (Mr. M. Shahabuddeen) and I send with this, for your information and possible action, a copy of his letter to me of April 19.

2. You will see that Mr. Shahabuddeen starts with the speculation whether it might not be the better thing to hold on to the New River triangle and make a strong claim to navigation rights. But, as he says, we should be guided by the Foreign Office about the hope of securing a return to the British draft. On the last page of his letter the Solicitor General refers to an interesting feature of the "Kaart van Suriname door H.N. Dahlberg (M.O. Aardijkskunde)" on the scale of 1:1,000,000. (undated) On this, a triangle in the south-west, between the "Nieuwe Rivier" and the "Coraoni Rivier", and a triangle in the south-east, between the "Litani Rivier" and the "Marowini Rivier", are both shaded the same but in a shading found nowhere else on the map and not explained in the legend. Both are marked "Betwist Gebied", which I guess (but can not at the moment verify) means "A betwixt-and-between district"? (I may be wildly out.) It would be worth checking to see what the Dutch (Surinamers) are up to about the Litani triangle.

*opinion means
disputed district*

3. Mr. Shahabuddeen then turns to some interesting points on the technical matters:

- (a) He makes what seems a good case to me for omitting the words "in international practice" from the paragraph about the thalweg.
- (b) He records that our Lands and Mines Department claim that the Jorentyne is navigable beyond Tropic Isle - probably right up to Wonotobo (or Governor Light's) Falls, but certainly as far as Cow Falls.
- (c) On page 3 he suggests that the median line method of dividing territorial waters would seem to result in a boundary more favourable to us than the one proposed by the Dutch.

*See (21) by
A typing error*

4. Mr. Shahabuddeen also draws attention to a point that I had failed to notice on the copy of the aide memoire sent here - there are only three paragraphs but the last is numbered "4". This was presumably a typing error? We have a complete copy?

*(EW)
(11)*

5. With regard to statistics about sizes and numbers of ships using each channel, mentioned by Commander White in his letter to Miss Hutchinson of the Foreign Office of February 7, a copy of which Skinner sent me with his letter of February 18, I am informed by our Customs Department that during 1962, 255 coastal ships from British Guiana, with an average displacement of 45 tons nett, used the Eastern

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Channel. During the same period 425 Dutch ships used the same Channel but there was no check from our side on their displacement. This figure includes a launch of 10 tons displacement which plies a regular service between British Guiana and Nickerie.

6. I am told by the Marine Superintendent of our Transport & Harbours Department that it is the Eastern Channel that is bouyed and that is used by all save the most "local" craft. On reaching Bluff Point, near the estuary of the Nickerie River, ships veer towards Springlands.

7. F.M.S. Vidal was unable to complete and bring up to date the 1 : 50,000 map of British Guiana in respect of the left bank of the Corentyne River at the mouth. I have been unable to find out whether it would be possible (if formal request were made through the Minister of Communications) for the Hydrographic Staff of the Transport & Harbours Department to do this and, if so, how much work is involved and how long it would take. The head of the Hydrographic Staff is at present stranded in Trinidad after a holiday there and can not get back because of the strike.

8. I am giving a copy of this to the Solicitor General. I am sorry it is illtyped. I have had to do it myself in circumstances of difficulty.

Yours

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