

13/3/1816.

**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO.**

Publication No. 398.

*Sir Ralph Woodford to Earl Bathurst. Mr. Maingot's Salary
again and the Medical Officer.*

*Source :--The Red House, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Duplicate
Despatches.*

No. 160.

Published by courtesy of *His Excellency the Governor.*

TRINIDAD
13th March, 1816.

MY LORD,

I have had the honor to receive Your Lordship's Despatch No. 74 by which I am sorry to learn that my recommendation for fixing Mr. Maingot's salary at the Sum of £500 Sterling has not met Your Lordship's Approbation.

It is probably owing to my imperfect Explanation that Your Lordship is not aware that ever since 1805 Mr. Maingot has had all the responsibility and executed all the Duties of the Commissary of Population and Surveyor General, previously apportioned among Colonel Rutherford and Four principal Assistants besides Clerks. If Mr. Maingot had not been possessed of some property, he never could have lived on a Salary of £300 if even it had been punctually paid, but it was generally 18 Months or Two Years in Arrear.

Previous to my arrival he had been obliged to assist in the Slave Registry Office to enable him to exist, but since June 1813 he has been entirely and fully employed, and when I recommended the sum of £500 I considered it extremely moderate and I intended to solicit even an early Augmentation of it.

His Health is unluckily much impaired by a long residence here, since 1783. The Public Service will meet with an irreparable loss in being deprived of his Experience, Integrity, and Ability.

With respect to clerks I have the honor to observe that I know of none in the Public Offices here, such as the Registry of Slaves Office, the Judge's Escribano &c., where the Salaries are not regularly by the general Price of clerical labour, and runs from 800 to 1200 dollars.

The lowest white man cannot exist under a Dollar and a half a day, independent of clothing, Medical Attendance etc.

It is not to be expected that any Person will risk a continued Residence, and perform his duties in this Country, without ample remuneration, and from want of a superfluous population Provisions in this Island are dearer than in any other of the West Indies.

With reference to the Medical Appointment I have the honor to observe that I agreed some time ago with a Medical Practitioner to attend the Government Negroes at the rate of £125 Sterling per annum.

Although it is falling into disuse to contract for Medical attendance on Negroes by which plan they only obtain weekly care, the daily demands for other medical Duties appeared to me to render it expedient that I should have authority to allot an Annual Stipend to a proper Person to perform them. They are casual and accidental and cannot therefore be contracted for, a mode never adopted, but for Estate Negroes.

It would also be attended with beneficial Consequences if the Colony were allowed to apportion a part of their Funds in securing the Advice and Observations of a respectable Medical Man on those Branches of his Profession within the Colony which are supposed to interest the Public generally more than an Individual, and it was under these Circumstances coupled with the former that I ventured to suggest the Propriety of such an Appointment.

The want of a Colonial Revenue has long prevented a sufficient Number of Public Officers from being appointed in this Colony, and by the Manner in which Business has been carried on, every Individual has suffered as much as the Government; and I feel certain that if those Public Officers now established were paid, so as not to be obliged to engross Three or Four Offices, or engage in petty Commerce to enable them to gain a Subsistence and support their Families, the Business of the Government would be much better carried on, and a superior Description of Person, might be induced to accept the Situations.

I beg leave to enclose a detail of Mr. Maingot's Services, and to observe that his Object in applying to Your Lordship in 1813 for a Confirmation of his Office was with a view of attaining a warrant of Appointment under the Royal Sign Manual.

I have the honor to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient humble Servant,

RALPH WOODFORD.

EARL BATHURST,

&c &c &c