



Barbados 16th May 1976

My Lord,

in that ___ of my despatch no. 79 of the 1st of May, in which I refer to the causes of the recent disturbances, some evidence is given as to the unhappy state of the labouring population at Byde Mill Estate, where the riots began. I have now the ___ to enclose, for your Lordship's information a copy of the proceedings of an inquest held in that estate in 1870, in which the following verdict was returned :-

“that on the 21st day of August in the year aforesaid the said female black child came to its death from starvation and not otherwise.”

2) The first witness, C Clark, swears that the child in question was the daughter of a female labourer named ___, and that “the child was born well and strong but that the mother had to go out and work to get __ and that in consequence the child did not get sufficient milk and it dwindled away”

3) The second witness witness Dr ___ says that the body was “reduced to the last degree of emaciation there was not the slightest trace of disease, only a general wasting of the tissues and the stomach was empty and contracted.” He adds “I am of opinion that the cause of death was to be entirely attributed to want of nourishment.”

4) the third witness was the mother who makes the following statement:-

“the deceased was my child. I was confined four weeks ago at the house of my aunt Sarah Clarke at Byde Mill. I was confined three weeks and then had to go to work. I worked for very little as I was weak and sick, I had little milk.

.....

7) No mention was made at the inquest of the Father of the deceased child. That such deaths are not uncommon appears evident from what the rector of the Parish Church the Rev ___ said recently of “the awful sacrifice in infant life in Barbados” and the statement he makes that the number of deaths through ___ causes of illegitimate children in this island is little short of one thousand every year.”

Glossary

Despatches – written messages (sent quickly)

labouring population –the workers

inquest – an investigation to find out why somebody died

verdict – conclusion/ decision about the cause of death

emaciation = to become extremely thin through