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Chairman: Mr. Enrique de MARCHENA
 (Dominican Republic).

AGENDA ITEM 40

Question of the frontier between the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian administration and Ethiopia: reports of the Governments of Ethiopia and of Italy (A/3463, A/3502 and Corr.1, A/C.4/L.486) (*concluded*)

DRAFT REPORT OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE
 (A/C.4/L.486)

1. Mr. SOWARD (Canada), Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Fourth Committee (A/C.4/L.486).

2. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should adopt the draft report.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 13

Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3170, A/C.4/350) (*continued*)

HEARING OF PETITIONERS ON QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION (*continued*)*

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Afana Osende, representative of the Association des étudiants camerounais, took a place at the Committee table.

3. Mr. OSENDE (Association des étudiants camerounais) said that the colonialism which the Asian-African Conference, held at Bandung, had condemned in its final *communiqué* was raging in the Trust Territories of the United Nations, and especially in the two Cameroons. Cameroonian patriots had never accepted the arbitrary partition of their country between France and the United Kingdom, but it was only since 1945 that, thanks to the great liberation movement which could be observed throughout the whole world, they had been able to make their views known. In Articles 73

and 76 of the Charter, the United Nations had proclaimed as a principle the paramount importance of the interests of indigenous inhabitants and the need to respect their freely expressed wishes. Conscious of their legitimate rights, the Cameroonian people had therefore banded together in order to recover their national unity and sovereignty. But they had met with the opposition of the Administering Authorities which, spurning their international commitments, had imposed a régime of oppression and exploitation. Although the guardian of international law, peace and security, the United Nations had not supported the Cameroonian people. The population of the Territory wished to develop at long last their immense natural resources for the benefit of their national economy. They were resolved to exhaust all the peaceful means at their disposal and were thus launching a final anguished appeal to international public opinion.

4. The overwhelming majority of the people claimed the immediate reunification and independence of the Territory. The Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC), which now personified Cameroonian nationalism, was a highly representative organization. While all the inhabitants were not actually affiliated to it, the majority gave it their material and moral support. That was particularly true of the Association des étudiants camerounais, which he represented and which grouped together all students in the French Trust Territory. The various branches and the executive committee of that Association had set forth their claims in numerous petitions addressed to the United Nations. At its congress in September 1956 the Association had adopted a motion in which it advocated the immediate independence and reunification of the country and opposed any statute which would not fulfil those two requirements. In the eastern Cameroons the overwhelming majority of the student youth supported the programme launched by the UPC. Other organizations, representing women, young people and workers, had adopted the joint proclamation of 22 April 1955 which sought the end of the Trusteeship System and the establishment of a sovereign and reunified Cameroonian State. In the Cameroons under British administration, the advocates of reunification had always been successful; the United Kingdom, in a spirit of realism, had been forced to grant that region a measure of self-government.

5. Even the colonialist newspapers recognized the strength of the UPC. Thus, on 26 June 1954, the newspaper *Le Monde* had stressed the great influence of the UPC in certain regions; the newspaper *Combat*, on 30 May 1955, had stated that by its political programme the party had succeeded in uniting almost 80,000 supporters; the newspaper *La Croix*, on 6 April 1955, had stated that the UPC was extending its action over the whole Territory. In the *Echo du Cameroun*, Mr. Ignace Atangana had stated that most, if not all, Cameroonians sympathized with the UPC. Finally, Mr. Roland Pré, the former High Commissioner of the

* Resumed from the 640th meeting.

Cameroons under French administration, had admitted on 7 January 1956 that the essential problem of today, the solution of which would affect the whole future of the Territory, was Cameroonian nationalism. The present High Commissioner had recently stated that the essential force in the Cameroons was the UPC.

6. The truth of such statements was confirmed by the ardour with which the Cameroonian people were striving for immediate unification and independence. Thus, the Cameroonian national anthem, which had been adopted before 1914, re-echoed throughout the whole Territory. In spite of their extreme poverty, the people themselves financed all the activities of the progressive movements; the list of subscribers, the register of contributions and the account books proved it. In spite of the great difficulties attending any underground movement, the UPC had secured impressive victories, as witness the widespread refusal of the population to take part in the elections organized by the French Government. On 2 January 1956, according to the official Press, 61 per cent of the electorate had refrained from voting. In fact, out of 884,151 registered electors, only 250,000, or barely 28.5 per cent, had gone to the polls. Irregularities had been observed and had been described publicly at a Press conference organized by the review *Afrique-Informations*. During the elections of 18 November 1956 for the appointment of three municipal councillors, the percentage of the electorate not voting had been the following: 25 per cent at Nkongsamba, 89 per cent at Douala and 61 per cent at Yaoundé. Finally, during the elections of 23 December 1956 for the renewal of the Territorial Assembly, special correspondents of the large French and African newspapers had estimated that about 45 per cent of the electorate had voted, a figure which was certainly exaggerated. Numerous irregularities had again been observed. One elector had voted a hundred times in a single centre and the High Commissioner had promulgated a decree allowing people to vote without electoral cards. The present Assembly was therefore a puppet body which represented only the French colonialists. It had become abundantly clear that the whole country intended to recover its unity and national sovereignty immediately. The United Nations should help it in its struggle against the colonialist Powers, whose bad faith was obvious.

7. In signing the Charter, the Administering Authorities had undertaken to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of indigenous inhabitants and their progressive development towards self-government or independence. Such obligations should take precedence over the provisions of domestic law, for they originated in an international treaty. However, the Administering Authorities, and particularly France, did not fulfil their promises.

8. Contrary to the assertions of the Administering Authorities, it was the Cameroonians who contributed by their labour to the development of the country. In the Cameroons under British administration the budget was used to cover part of the expenditure in the Nigerian Federation. The actual total of customs revenue had never been revealed but it was obvious that that Trust Territory was merely a source of profit for the British Empire. Admittedly, in the Cameroons under French administration the Administering Authority provided financial aid but during recent years it had been on a greatly reduced scale and the Administering Authority was proposing to meet capital ex-

penditure out of the annual income from the Territory or by means of loans. The colonialists estimated that the Cameroons would soon be self-sufficient whereas in fact the masses still remained poverty-stricken. Clearly the colonialists had not the slightest interest in the welfare of the indigenous inhabitants.

9. Public expenditure was designed essentially for the benefit of the colonialists. Profitability was one of the principles of the French colonialist economy. Its aim could be expressed in the terms: "Everything for the metropolitan country". By virtue of the so-called colonial pact, the colonists were dispossessing the Africans of their land. They occupied 230,000 hectares in 1946; today, they possessed more than 2 million hectares.

10. The Administering Authorities were making no effort to provide the country with means of overland communications, which were of prime importance. The French had laid only 160 kilometres of railway track in 40 years whereas the Germans had laid 340 kilometres during the 30 years of their protectorate. There were only 577 kilometres of asphalt roads and 4,875 kilometres of earth roads. The rest of the road system consisted only of paths made by unpaid labour working under the military authorities. For strategic or financial reasons the Administration constructed good roads only in regions inhabited by a large proportion of Europeans and rich in resources that could be exploited immediately. According to the Central Planning Office, transport and communications were intended to facilitate the collection and removal of local produce. That seemed to indicate that the French wished to carry out wholesale pillaging of the country.

11. The object of the modernization and equipment plan was to drain the resources of the country. Only the export sectors of the economy were being financed. Despite an abundance of raw materials and man-power the country had no heavy industries. Processing industries were all geared to the needs of those in the metropolitan country.

12. The French Administration's avowed intention was to close the gap between the levels of living of the urban and rural population; yet in 1955 agricultural machinery and tractors had represented only 0.91 per cent of total imports. The colonists saw no point in mechanizing agriculture when manpower in the country could be had almost for the asking. There were no family benefits or social security. The average wages of a worker with two dependants on a plantation such as that of Dizangué amounted to about 20 francs per person per day. Prices of produce purchased by the Cameroonian masses, on the other hand, remained very high. The cost of living index was rising steadily. That state of affairs, which was due to the dominant position of the metropolitan country, affected the Africans much more severely because not only were they paid less than the colonists but they were also more sensitive to fluctuations in world prices. Such fluctuations were, moreover, generally to the advantage of the European middlemen and not the indigenous producers. All trade was controlled by a few firms. All wealth was concentrated in the hands of a minority of colonists and indigenous inhabitants who occupied all the key positions. The overwhelming majority of the population floundered in misery and ignorance.

13. Health conditions in the country left much to be desired owing to the inadequate number of hospitals and

a shortage of staff and equipment. It was true that a number of epidemic diseases, such as sleeping sickness, had been eliminated, but social scourges like prostitution and alcoholism were still rife and prophylactic measures seemed to be taken only when little cost was involved and when they were absolutely necessary to protect the colonists and preserve the health of the labour force. There were 22 doctors for the 1,500,000 inhabitants in the Cameroons under British administration and 125 doctors for the 3,200,000 inhabitants in the Cameroons under French administration; that was an average of one doctor for every 25,000 inhabitants. According to information submitted by the Ministry for Overseas France, the number of hospital beds would be increased from 6,250 to 8,200 under the four-year plan, or a little less than three beds for each 1,000 inhabitants. Moreover, government hospitals with some pretensions to equipment existed only in centres densely populated with colonists. Indigenous patients therefore very often had to sleep on the ground and were discharged before they were cured. The situation was even worse in the bush. The amount of work done in constructing bush dispensaries and comfortable houses for the indigenous inhabitants, and providing indigenous settlements with electricity and water was insignificant. That state of affairs was explained by the basic tenet of the colonial régime: the enrichment of the colonials at the expense of the indigenous inhabitants.

14. Educational policy was also designed for the maximum benefit of the colonizers and to prevent the indigenous inhabitants from becoming conscious of their dignity as human beings and their national culture. Education was maintained at the bare minimum necessary to train interpreters and minor clerks for work in administrative offices, trade and industry. The Administration derived little benefit from it and there was always the danger that it might train nationalists. With respect to vocational training, the authors of the four-year plan proposed to provide primary schools with small workshops for manual training which would merely acquaint pupils with basic techniques, because the educational system would be discredited if specialists were trained and could not find employment. There was practically no higher education. Only eleven of the 500 students at Ibadan University College were Cameroonians. In 1947 the Territorial Assembly of the Cameroons under French administration had decided to send 200 scholarship students to France each year. Not only had that number never been reached but scholarships already granted had been withdrawn for political and fictitious reasons. Moreover, the Administering Authorities were trying to prevent Cameroonians from taking advantage of international scholarships. All those facts showed that the interests of colonial peoples in general and of the Cameroonian people in particular were at complete variance with those of the colonial régime.

15. Turning to the general policy of the Administering Authorities, he paid a tribute to the liberalism of the United Kingdom Government; the British authorities, although they had deposed the Emir of Dikwa, had made it difficult for petitioners sent to the United Nations to obtain passports and had hampered movement between the two Territories, in general respected civic freedoms and had so far applied the Charter and the Trusteeship Agreements. If they persevered and continued to make progress in that direction, they would certainly earn the gratitude of a unified and independent Cameroons.

16. The French Government's attitude was altogether different, for under its authority opponents of the colonial régime enjoyed only freedom of silence and their organizations were illegally dissolved, despite the assurances the French representative had given at the 275th meeting of the Standing Committee on Petitions. In electoral matters the French Administration had raised gerrymandering to the status of a democratic institution. Apart from plural votes, ballots cast by unregistered voters and ballots of minors, it had "padded" ballot boxes so that candidates were elected by a larger number of votes than there were electors, and had itself presented lists when no candidate was nominated as a result of an order to abstain. At the approach of the present session, at which the General Assembly was to discuss Algeria, Togoland and the Cameroons, the French Government had tried to bring things to a head; accordingly it had unilaterally revised the electoral lists and defined the *circonscriptions*; it had intensified its efforts to divide the African opposition and organized a referendum without the participation of the most representative movements of the people.

17. The principle of "divide and rule" was palpably one of the cornerstones of colonial policy in general and of the French administration in particular. Accordingly the Administering Authority had tried, by means of favours of all kinds to find Africans willing to vote against the UPC, and at the same time had taken arbitrary measures against UPC members, by transferring and discharging civil servants and depriving persons of their civic rights. It had sent bogus petitions and petitioners to the United Nations and had financed puppet movements such as the Indépendance camerounaise whose receipt voucher book showed the source of the funds it had received.

18. When the dynamic forces of the country had regrouped themselves in the *Courant d'union nationale*, the Ministry for Overseas France had instructed the High Commissioner of the Cameroons under French administration to do everything possible to break up the movement. The Administration had indeed succeeded in cowing many of those who were not members of progressive movements and they had participated in the election travesty of 23 December 1956. The referendum had been held without the participation of those who best represented the people. Indeed, the French Parliament had not begun discussion of the proposed amnesty until the list of candidates had been closed. Moreover, even after the amnesty proposal had been adopted, the scandalous decree of 13 July 1955 prohibiting the most powerful organizations of the country had remained in force. Their leaders and active members had been and could be arrested at any time, either in connexion with the events of May or for reorganizing dissolved movements. Since 19 December 1956 the Administering Authority had been bringing parachutists into the Territory to maintain the colonialist order, threatened as it was by the disturbances that the arrest of patriots would undoubtedly cause.

19. He described the terror which had reigned in the Cameroons since December 1956 and which had been mentioned by all French newspapers such as *Le Populaire*, *Le Figaro* and *Témoignage chrétien*. It had been officially admitted that on 10 January 1,000 persons had been killed between Eséka and Yaoundé. He read out extracts from a statement issued to the newspapers of the world on 30 January by officials of the UPC Central Committee. The toll of the massacres in a

single region during two weeks of pacification had been drawn up by the UPC; it included persons who had died in prisons and in concentration camps, after being tortured and mutilated. About 10,000 arrests had been computed throughout the Territory. Yet the newspapers and the radio had been instructed to observe absolute silence on the subject. Postal censorship was in force. The High Commissioner issued confidential instructions designed to prevent the indigenous inhabitants from leaving the territory, and the roads were blocked.

20. The French Government was unquestionably taking those steps because it wished to perpetuate the colonial régime in the Cameroons despite the aspirations of the population concerned, despite the Trusteeship Agreements and the United Nations Charter, despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and despite

the French Constitution, although its representative had stated in the United Nations that on termination of trusteeship the peoples of the Territory would be able, if they so wished, to realize their aspirations outside the French Union.¹ In those circumstances the United Nations could no longer ask Cameroonian patriots to be patient and to have confidence in the Administering Authorities; the Cameroonian people intended to shoulder their responsibilities as a free people and the United Nations should assume its own responsibilities.

21. The CHAIRMAN requested the petitioner to complete his statement at the afternoon meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

¹ See A/2680, p. 157.