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PETITIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Observations of the French Government as Administering Authority

Note by the Secretariat: These observations relate to the following petitions, which have been summarized in the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (T/C.2/L.120). The observations in this document are in the same order as the petitions in the working paper.

<u>Section</u>		<u>Page:</u>
1 - II.	Petition from Mr. Samuel Ekwe (T/PET.5/297 and Add.1) . . . . .	2
2 - V.	Petition from Mr. Joseph-Marie N'Doum (T/PET.5/278) . . . . .	2
3 - VII.	Petition from representative of the Bafia people (T/PET.5/304). . . . .	3
4 - VIII.	Petition from Mr. Roland Mouthe (T/PET.5/298) . . . . .	4
5 - IX.	Petition from Mr. Andre Essome Kotto (T/PET.5/305) . . . . .	4
6 - X.	Petition from Mr. Benjamin Etoundi (T/PET.5/307) . . . . .	5

55-00878

1. Petition from Mr. Samuel Ekwe (T/PET.5/297 and Add.1)

These observations will refer only to those of the petitioner's complaints which concern him personally. The Administering Authority has already commented on the other events to which he refers concerning the meetings at Eséka and Dibomari.

The petitioner complains that he is being persecuted by the Administration because of his political opinions. According to him, this persecution takes the form of a refusal to extend his licence, that is to say to convert his licence to sell soft drinks into a licence to sell alcoholic beverages.

As a matter of fact, it was a favour on the part of the Administration to grant the petitioner a licence to sell soft drinks. This was given him because he is an ex-serviceman. His request for an extension of the licence could not be granted, because of the general measures enacted under the Administering Authority's policy of restricting the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the Territory, in accordance with the recommendations of the Trusteeship Council.

Moreover, the petitioner had been under police observation and his bar had been closed for eight days in 1953 as a result of a brawl that had occurred in his establishment. Similarly, it was in connexion with the large unlawful assembly of people on the public highway outside the petitioner's bar that the Chief Officer of the Administrative Sector summoned the petitioner and made his remarks.

Moreover, the Inspector of Licences had had occasion in 1953 to report Mr. Ekwe Samuel for the illicit sale of alcoholic beverages in his establishment. It should therefore be no surprise to the petitioner that the Inspector of Licences was careful to carry out the prescribed investigation of his establishment in 1954.

2. Petition from Mr. Joseph-Marie N'Doum (T/PET.5/278)

The petitioner complains that his numerous application for long leave addressed to the Head of his Department have been refused. In reality, it was only on 7 May 1954 that Mr. N'DOUM submitted a written application for leave. His request was complied with by Decision No. 3717 of 15 July 1954, which granted him

six months' leave, beginning on 1 August 1954. Mr. N'DOUM was entitled to this leave as from 4 April 1954, having been recruited under Order No.819 of 19 March 1947. The decision to grant him leave was delayed only because his Department was understaffed.

Mr. N'DOUM cites various facts in an effort to prove that he is being persecuted by the Administration because he was elected staff representative and because he applied to the United Nations for a fellowship. His allegations are completely unfounded. He says that in 1952 he was "removed" from Eséka to Yaoundé, so that he could be searched for any political documents, and that as a result he was "closely watched" by the Police Superintendent at Yaoundé. The truth is that Mr. N'DOUM, together with several of his colleagues in the Post and Telecommunications Service, was summoned to Yaoundé at that time for reasons of service. He arrived there just as a police inspection was going on and, as he had no identification papers, he was taken to the police station for the usual verification. He left the police station about three-quarters of an hour later on completion of the identification formalities and was never closely watched.

Mr. N'DOUM was later transferred to Douala for reasons of service. His superiors have never made unfavourable comments about him, either before or after his election as staff representative.

The page of writing which his Inspector asked him to fill in was a sample to be used in identifying his signature in a forgery case and had been requested by the Examining Magistrate in charge of the case.

### 3. Petition from Representatives of the Bafia People (T/PET.5/304)

By a referendum carried out on 12 December 1953, Bang Oscar, a Notable, was beyond all doubt chosen as the representative of the Bafia people of Douala. The candidate whom Koung Joseph supported received very few votes.

Some months later, in April 1954, when a census was to be held, the Chief Officer of the New-Bell Sector requested the population to report to the various census offices. Such matters are carried out as a matter of course by the local administration and do not generally give rise to any difficulties.

Koung Joseph, however, not only refused to present himself for the census but also incited the people of his quartier to follow his example. Despite the repeated orders of the Chief Officer of the New-Bell Sector, he persisted in his attitude and refused to comply with the summons to appear.

A case was drawn up against him for obstructing the smooth operation of the administrative services. It was considered that his attitude, and its possible legal consequences, could be prejudicial to the administration of the service in which Koung Joseph was employed as a male nurse. The Head of his Service requested his transfer. He was then assigned to the Logone-Chari Region as supplementary staff.

4. Petition from Mr. Roland Mouthe (T/PET.5/298)

In April 1954, when a census was to be held, the Chief Officer of the New-Bell Sector requested the population to report to the various census offices. Such matters are carried out as a matter of course by the local administration and do not generally give rise to any difficulties.

Mouthe Roland, however, not only refused to present himself for the census but also incited the people of his quartier to follow his example. Despite the repeated orders of the Chief Officer of the New-Bell Sector, he persisted in his attitude and refused to comply with the summons to appear.

Mouthe Roland had been engaged as a clerk on a day-to-day basis and was employed in the office of the Representative at Douala. The way in which he was obstructing the smooth working of the administration was incompatible with his duties. It was for this reason that he was dismissed by the Head of his Department, by a decision of 21 July 1954.

5. Petition from Mr. Andre Essome Kotto (T/PET.5/305)

The petitioner complains that he was dismissed from his post as assistant clerk in the Postal, Telephone and Telegraph Service, for no apparent reason.

The petitioner's curriculum vitae as set forth in the petition is correct. It should be added that the petitioner's admission to the general category in 1947 was somewhat of a promotion in comparison with his previous position as a

security guard. Moreover, the petitioner had the benefit of two years of seniority as a result of his previous service.

Having been found guilty of overcharging customers and pocketing the proceeds and of being a habitual offender, the petitioner was dismissed by Order No. 220 of 9 May 1951, on the advice of the Administrative Enquiry Board.

6. Petition from Mr. Benjamin Etoundi (T/PET.5/307)

The petitioner was given an additional probationary period of one year, his performance during the regulation probationary period not having justified his confirmation in his post.

His service continued to be unsatisfactory during the additional probationary period and he was dismissed.

The petitioner could have claimed transport back to his Region of origin after his discharge. He was informed of this and he should apply to the Finance Department for the reimbursement of the expenses he incurred in returning to the Subdivision whence he came.

Lastly, it appears that the petitioner did not appeal to the Disputes Board (Conseil du Contentieux). He merely sent a letter to the High Commissioner on 4 November 1953, in the form of a request for his intervention in the case. His request was rejected.

Mr. Etoundi has just been engaged as an assistant radio operator in civil aviation.

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