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COMMUNICATION FROM DR. E.M.L. ENDELEY, NATIONAL PRESIDENT, CAMEROONS
PEOPLES NATIONAL CONVENTION CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER UNITED
KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

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CAMEROONS PEOPLES NATIONAL CONVENTION

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS,
BUEA,
SOUTHERN CAMEROONS
13th September, 1960

To the Right Honourable
The Secretary of States for the Colonies,
Colonial Office,
Church House,
Great Smith Street,
London, S.W. 1.

Sir,

The Future of the Southern Cameroons and Related Matters

1. I am directed by the National Executive Committee of the Cameroons Peoples National Convention - the successor of the K.N.C./K.P.P. Alliance - to refer to our petition dated the 4th of April, 1960, and the discussions between Mr. A. Emmanuel, C.M.C., Head of the West Africa Department, Colonial Office, and our Mr. R.J.K. Dibonge, during the latter's visit to the United Kingdom in June-July, 1960, and to request you to be good enough to favour us with a detailed reply to the various matters raised in our petition.

2. It is a matter of profound regret that your Office, which is reputedly a paragon of efficiency, should take such a long time to formulate an answer to our petition - a petition which deals with matters of paramount importance to the well-being and stability of the Southern Cameroons and its people. Thus we are unable to resist the conclusion that your long silence stems from the

fact that you have not been fully appraised of the true state of affairs in the territory. We were amazed to learn from Mr. Dibonge that the opinion is held in your Office that His Excellency The High Commissioner has already given an interim, verbal reply to our petition. This is a false assumption. It is true that we had an interview with the High Commissioner - at his own request - at BUEA on April 18th, 1960, the purpose of which was, so we were informed, to elucidate certain statements contained in our memorandum about which His Excellency was not clear.

3. We are much disturbed at the trend of events in this territory since our petition of April 4, 1960, was written. Things are moving from bad to worse, for the K.N.D.P. Government have virtually been given a 'carte-blanc' by your local representatives. Vital decisions, which intimately affect all sections of the territory, are allowed to be taken 'ex parte' by the K.N.D.P. Government, though they have no parliamentary majority in the Southern Cameroons Legislature. We are reliably informed that the K.N.D.P. Government, whose members are now being indoctrinated by extraneous "agents-provocateurs", are planning not only to muzzle C.P.N.C. field secretaries and supporters during the forthcoming plebiscite, but they are also threatening to resort to active violence in the event of their losing the referendum. As evidence of their diabolical intentions they are surreptitiously encouraging the influx of Bamileke thugs from the Cameroun Republic whom they will use as stooges in towns like Tombel, Muyuka and Santa. Moreover, information reaching from unusually reliable and well-informed sources indicate that funds are now being feverishly collected in the large towns of the Cameroun Republic (such as Douala and Yaounde) to finance the propaganda effort of the K.N.D.P. in relation to the forthcoming plebiscite. There is little doubt that these facts are known to the local administration. We know that plans have been formulated by the authorities to evacuate expatriate women and children in the event of violence breaking out in this territory.

4. It was recently reported in the local press that the Southern Cameroons will be administered under a 'New Constitution'. We would like to be informed whether or not this statement is founded on fact. Since the constitutional provisions in the Nigeria Constitutional Instruments, which relate to the

Southern Cameroons, were negotiated by all recognised political parties (including Chiefs) in this territory, and as the forthcoming plebiscite is to decide our political future, we are strongly of the opinion that these constitutional provisions should remain, 'mutatis mutandis', in full force and effect until after the results of the referendum are known.

5. Mr. Emmanuel would recall that Mr. Dibonge laid special emphasis, during their talks, on the absolute necessity of your Office instructing the Commissioner of the Cameroons to ensure that the people of this territory are fully informed of the full implications inseparable from joining either an independent Nigeria or an independent Cameroun Republic. At that interview, Mr. Dibonge recalled a similar request made by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations to the Administering Authority during the May 1960 debates on the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (see pages 1 and 60 of the United Nations Review of July, 1960, Volume 7 Number 1). We quote, for ease of reference, from this Review:-

x x x x

"British Cameroons.

.....The administration was also asked to take appropriate steps to ensure that the people of the territory are fully informed, before the plebiscite, of the constitutional arrangements that would have to be made, at the appropriate time, for the decision at the plebiscite".

x x x x

6. Whereas the provisions of "The Nigeria (Constitutional) Orders-in-Council, 1954-1959", as regards the Constitutional status of the Southern Cameroons in an independent Federation of Nigeria are widely known in this territory, our future status in an independent Cameroun Republic is still in the 'dark-room'. To our knowledge, no active steps have, despite repeated official announcements, yet been taken to implement the United Nations' request reproduced above, and the people of the Southern Cameroons may as likely as not be faced with the same unfortunate situation as obtained in the northern part of the British Cameroons during the November 1959 plebiscite - to which the Northern Peoples

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Congress (DIKWA Divisional Branch) felt bound to invite the attention of the United Nations by means of a petition dated November 10th, 1959 - (compare Annex XI (b) to the report of the U.N.O. Commissioner for the supervision of the plebiscite in the (Northern) Cameroons under United Kingdom administration - U.N. document Distr. General, T/1491/Add.1 of 1 December, 1959). The main points raised in the N.P.C. petition of 10th November, 1959 were:-

- (a) Lack of proper publicity and information, and poor channel of public information by recruiting local uninformed men;
- (b) People were not told what is really at stake;
- (c) Misinterpretation of the questions to suit certain aims: the masses of the people were not educated as to the real implications of the questions.

7. We have already indicated in paragraph 17 et seq of our original petition of April 4, 1960, that acts of oppression and suppression of political opponents, and nepotism became the order of the day from the time the K.N.D.P. assumed the government of this territory. As we have expected, the 'Field-Milne' government have always looked with levity at the submissions made in our petitions. We are making it absolutely clear in this communication that great trouble is brewing in this territory because these two gentlemen have, for reasons best known to themselves, allowed the K.N.D.P. government to run roughshod over the feelings of responsible and well-meaning citizens of the Southern Cameroons. Unless the lawless and selfish ambitions of K.N.D.P. leaders are bridled in time, there is assuredly going to be an explosion in this otherwise peaceful country for which the Commissioner and his Deputy would be held accountable at the Bar of the Nations.

8. Scholarships to higher Institutions of Learning are now only awarded to the relations and friends of Ministers and their supporters regardless of whether or not they have the requisite qualifications or have secured places in any high Institution of Learning overseas. The recent awards of scholarships would not bear scrutiny. Promotions to the higher rung of the Public Service are now only given to K.N.D.P. supporters from a particular tribal group, and those who hold contrary political opinions and beliefs are condemned to mark time.

9. At the recent elections to the House of Chiefs, the very regulations for the conduct of elections, enacted by the K.N.D.P. - dominated Executive Council were set at naught whenever the elections went against their candidates. It will be remembered that the Southern Cameroons Constitution-Order-in-Council fully empowers the Commissioner in his own discretion to promulgate the regulations for establishing a Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs. Although these irregularities and excesses are well-known to the Commissioner and his Deputy, and despite protests, no active steps have been taken to check them.

10. To crown all the oppressive measures now being resorted to by the K.N.D.P. Government in order to consummate a totalitarian system of government in the Southern Cameroons - and to intimidate and influence Chiefs and people to vote their way at the forthcoming plebiscite - is a Bill entitled "The Recognition of Chiefs Law, 1960", which will be introduced during the forthcoming session of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly (compare pages C 40-42 of Supplement to Southern Cameroons Gazette No. 39, Vol. 6, 3rd September, 1960 - Part C). Hitherto chieftainship disputes have been few in this territory and those which did occur were settled satisfactorily and expeditiously under the provisions of "The Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs" Ordinance, Chapter 54, Volume 1 of the Laws of Nigeria. This law accords in its entirety with our native law and tradition, and there is, in our view, no urgent need for the Law proposed by the K.N.D.P. Government.

11. As has been rightly and aptly pointed out by "MOLONGO", the Bakweri Cultural Organisation, in a recent petition to the Commissioner of the Cameroons, the proposed "Recognition of Chiefs Law, 1960" has been framed to suit particular individuals favouring the Government Party, who happen to be involved in chieftainship disputes fomented by the K.N.D.P. It is an undisputed fact that Mr. John N. Foncha, as Premier and Minister of Local Government has more often than not actually interfered in local chieftainship disputes, and on several occasions has arrogated to himself the right to install chiefs, e.g. Porguson Williams of Victoria, former General Secretary of his Party, was installed by him as chief of Victoria in defiance of the popular choice of the community: in Modeka, Mongo, he installed the late Bille Ette with the sole purpose of making it easy for him to enter the House of Chiefs on the K.N.D.P.

ticket. Similar instances can be quoted in Mamfe and Bamenda Divisions. To sum up, the proposed Law, is not only superfluous (vide Cap. 54 of the Laws of Nigeria), but it also lacks statesmanship which makes laws stay even though government do change; it is manifestly oppressive and will provide a dangerous weapon in the hands of an already discriminatory and arbitrary Government. Further, it will build up a stream of resentment throughout the Southern Cameroons where there is no uniformity in the native law and custom on chieftainship, which, to say the least a state of affairs which is bound to react unfavourably to order and good government in this hitherto peaceful territory.

12. We would respectfully request, therefore, that an independent Inquiry, not manned by anyone connected with those now in authority in this territory at the moment, be set up to probe into these irregularities. The pattern of events now taking place in the Southern Cameroons at a time like this is a disgrace to the British Colonial Administration, which has established a reputation for impartiality, and the maintenance of democratic ideals in all British Colonial Territories in Africa.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) E.M.L. ENDELEY

(Dr.) E.M.L. Endley,
National President,
Cameroons Peoples National Convention

c.c.

His Excellency the High Commissioner for the
Southern Cameroons,
Government House, Lagos.

His Honour
The Commissioner of the Cameroons,
Buea.

The Secretary-General,
United Nations Organisation,
New York,
United States of America.
