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31 JUL 1951

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Flushing Meadow, New York,
on Friday, 13 July 1951, at 10.30 a.m.

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Chairman: Prince WAN WAITHAYAKON

Thailand

Members:

Mr. IESCURE	Argentina
Mr. WENDELEN	Belgium
Mr. SCOTT	New Zealand
Mr. SOLDATOV	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Mr. STRONG	United States of America

Also present:

Mr. SABBEN CLARE	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British Administration
Mr. GIBBONS	Special Representative of the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British Administration
Mr. LAURENTIE	France, Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French Administration
Mr. WATIER	Special Representative of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French Administration

Secretariat:

Mr. RAPOPORT	Secretary of the Committee
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EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION:
DRAFT FOURTH REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (T/AC.41/L.7).

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should follow its usual procedure of considering first the draft resolution and then the corresponding part of the report.

Draft resolution I (petition from the Ex-Servicemen's Union, Victoria, concerning the Cameroons under British Administration (T/PET.4/68))

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) said that the comment in paragraph 3 (b) of the resolution was presented as part of the Administering Authority's statement. He asked whether it was in fact a principle laid down by the Administering

/Authority or

Authority or a decision of the Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association.

Brigadier GIBBONS (Special Representative) explained that generally speaking the volume of work done by divisional councils was not sufficient to warrant the employment of paid secretaries and such duties were honorary. When necessary, divisional councils applied for funds to the regional council but the Victoria Division was so small that its request had had no chance of being granted.

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) asked by whom the request had been refused.

Brigadier GIBBONS (Special Representative) replied that it had been refused by the regional council.

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) thought that the resolution should mention the fact that the request had been refused by the regional council itself. The words "the request for a salary for a secretary was therefore refused by the Regional Council of the Nigeria Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association at Enugu" should be added at the end of sub-paragraph (b).

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote alternative A of draft resolution I (Belgium, New Zealand and the United States of America).

Alternative A was adopted by 5 votes to 1.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote alternative B of draft resolution I (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

Alternative B was rejected by 5 votes to 1.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the corresponding part of the report (pages 3, 4 and 5). The square brackets in paragraph 6 would be deleted.

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) asked that that part of the report should be amended so as to correspond to the resolution.

It was so decided.

Draft resolution II (petition from the Bakweri Land Committee (T/PET.4/69 and T/PET.4/69/Add.1))

Alternative A (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was rejected by 4 votes to 1, with 1 abstention.

Alternative B (Belgium, New Zealand and the United States of America) was adopted by 5 votes to 1.

The corresponding part of the report (pages 6, 7 and 8) was adopted unanimously.

Draft resolution III (petition from Mr. Joseph Ngu (T/PET.4/70) and petition from the French Cameroons Welfare Union (T/PET.4/71 and T/PET.4/71/Add.1) concerning the Cameroons, under British Administration)

Draft resolution III was adopted by 5 votes to none, with 1 abstention.

The corresponding part of the report (pages 8, 9 and 10) was adopted unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the report as a whole.

The draft fourth report as a whole was adopted by 5 votes to 1.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) explained that he had voted against the draft report because the Committee had rejected his delegation's proposals regarding two of the petitions. The purpose of his delegation's proposals was to improve the lot of the indigenous inhabitants whereas the proposal which had been adopted afforded them no protection, as they did not require the Administering Authority to act in their interests. He asked that his delegation's position should be recorded in the report.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the USSR delegation's position was set forth in alternative resolutions I and II. He would, however, mention the fact verbally when presenting the report to the Trusteeship Council as he had done the last time such a case had arisen.

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION
(T/PET.5/69, T/PET.5/69/Add.1, T/PET.5/83, T/PET.5/85, T/PET.5/86)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Laurentie, representative of France, and Mr. Watier, Special Representative of the Administering Authority of the Cameroons under French Administration, took their places at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN noted that four petitions (T/PET.5/95, T/PET.5/96, T/PET.5/97, T/PET.5/98; T/PET.5/69/Add.1) had been received after the time limit. He asked the Special Representative whether he would agree to the consideration at the current session of the four petitions which had not arrived within the prescribed time limits.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) replied that the only petitions which he was not in a position to discuss were T/PET.5/97 and T/PET.5/98.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether the Special Representative could assemble the relevant documentation in time for those petitions to be considered directly by the Trusteeship Council before the close of its session.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) stated that it was unlikely that the French Government would conclude its preliminary investigation of those petitions before the end of the session.

(a) Petition from Mr. Skouloukos (T/PET.5/69, T/PET.5/69/Add.1)

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) explained that Mr. Skouloukos the operator of government transports in the Cameroons in 1936 and 1937, had been fined a total of 188,200 francs for failure in the performance of his duties.

/At that

At that time the Commission de revision des marchés was considering methods of reducing the possible effects of the two successive currency devaluations in 1936 and 1937 on administrative contracts. Generally speaking losses were to be borne equally by the contracting parties. Mr. Skouloukos had requested an indemnity of 300,000 francs for losses sustained as a result of the devaluation and, in March 1939, was awarded a special indemnity of 115,000 francs. He considered that that sum represented the difference between the indemnity which he had sought and the fines imposed upon him. When the French Administration rejected that interpretation, he presented an appeal to the Conseil des contentieux and later to the Conseil d'Etat. He was finally ordered to pay the fines in 1944. He now considered that the indemnity of 115,000 francs which was due to him and which he had never wanted to accept, in the hope that the question of fines would be settled to his advantage, should be increased by a devaluation coefficient to 750,000 C.F.A. The Administration could not accede to that request because the gold clause did not apply to public debts. Moreover, the Administration pointed out that the delays had been caused by Mr. Skouloukos himself and that in fixing the amount of his fines, the Administration had not added any devaluation coefficient. Nor could the French Administration accept Mr. Skouloukos' offer to withdraw his request for an increase of his indemnity in exchange for a rural grant of 100 hectares at Obala and two licences for the sale of alcoholic beverages. Nevertheless in a spirit of conciliation, the High Commissioner in a letter to Mr. Skouloukos, dated 8 June 1951, had proposed an indemnity of 200,000 francs C.F.A. His only reply to that proposal had been the submission of a petition to the Trusteeship Council. Mr. Watier was of the opinion that an appeal could not be made to the Trusteeship Council to pronounce judgment in a case involving commercial debts.

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) pointed out that the petition referred to recent negotiations. He wished to know whether those negotiations related to the indemnity or whether other questions were pending.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) specified that only the question of indemnity was involved since Mr. Skouloukos had now recognized that the questions of fines and of the indemnity should be treated separately.

Mr. LAURENTIE

Mr. LAURENTIE (France) invoked rule 81 of the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council which provided that petitions should be considered inadmissible if they were directed against judgments of competent courts of the Administering Authority or if they laid before the Council a dispute with which the courts had competence to deal. The only exception was if the legislation of a country was incompatible with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. As that was not the case, he considered that the petition should simply be rejected.

Mr. LESCURE (Argentina) wished to know whether at the time of the rejection of his request the petitioner had been informed that it was possible for him to bring an appeal before a higher court.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) replied that the petitioner had not been specifically informed to that effect but that there was every reason to believe that he was aware of his rights. The petitioner had hoped to obtain better results by communicating with the Trusteeship Council than by appealing to a court.

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) proposed that the Committee should draft a resolution similar to previous resolutions in which rule 81 had also been invoked; moreover, the petitioner should be notified that he could bring his grievance before the courts at least with regard to the indemnity since the question of fines had been rejected by the Conseil d'Etat.

Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) asked whether payment of the indemnity was prescribed by law or whether it was purely an administrative measure.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) could not clarify that point but repeated that that had been the practice followed in case of losses sustained as a result of the devaluations of 1936 and 1937. He added that the decisions of the Commission de revision des marches were not mandatory and involved no commitment on the part of the Government.

/Mr. WENDELEN

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) pointed out that the decision of the Commission de revision des marchés was one of the factors taken into consideration by the courts and moreover, that the courts were fully competent in the matter. He therefore reiterated his proposal.

The Committee decided to request the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution along the lines indicated by the Belgian representative.

(b) Petition from "Union des Populations du Cameroun" (T/PET.5/83).

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) presented orally observations of the Administering Authority concerning the petition under discussion.

He reviewed the incidents which had led to the filing of the petition and which had occurred at the time of the Congress of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) held at Dschang. The Congress itself had not made any new contribution and the number of persons attending did not seem to have exceeded 200. At the time the Congress had met, however, there had been a review of electoral lists which had revealed irregularities and had led to the arrest of the Treasurer-General of the Association of Trade Unions of Dschang on a charge of issuing and using a false certificate.

The Congress had decided to protest against that arrest and had sent cablegrams to the United Nations, to the Rassemblement démocratique africain and to the Haut-Commissariat. At the close of the Congress, the Executive Committee had had a motion adopted condemning the attitude of the magistrate who had initiated legal proceedings against the trade union treasurer and had had him arrested. A delegation of seven members had gone to present the text to the magistrate who had drawn up a report charging them with written contempt of a magistrate and, on the order of the Procureur de la République, had initiated legal proceeding under article 222 of the French Penal Code. The members of the delegation had been committed for trial, and had requested provisional release which had been granted to one of them because of his advanced age. The magistrate at Dschang had relinquished jurisdiction over their case in favour of the Tribunal Correctionnel at Douala. Four of them, among them one who had escaped, had also been charged with rebellion because of their violence at the time of their arrest. Two had been acquitted and the third, sentenced to a term which he had already served in prison, had entered an appeal.

/Moreover

Moreover proceedings had been initiated against four other members of the Congress for libelling a magistrate by telegram. The Grand Jury had later ordered their provisional release.

Mr. Watier attributed the error committed by the members of Congress in attacking a magistrate to the fact that even advanced Africans still did not clearly understand the separation of powers and to the fact that the judge in question was African, a circumstance which had given his compatriots the impression that he was a minor official.

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) noted that, in addition to the specific question of the arrests, the petition raised a number of general questions such as forced labour and restrictions on freedom of association and of political opinion. In that connexion he called attention to the letter sent by the Comité directeur of the UPC to the local sections and reproduced in paragraph 94 of the report of the Visiting Mission to West Africa. The Comité directeur of the UPC had instructed its sections to present complaints to the Visiting Mission about forced labour and violation of political rights and freedoms, similar to those appearing in T/PET.5/83.

He thought therefore that, in the draft resolution to be submitted to the Council, the Committee should not deal with the accusations made by the petitioners because they had been instructed to present those accusations but should devote itself to the question of the arrests.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) regarded the case set forth by the petitioners as another manifestation of the anti-democratic and discriminatory policy pursued by the Administering Authority with respect to the indigenous inhabitants, in contempt of their rights and interests.

/In the opinion

In the opinion of the USSR delegation, the petition could not be treated lightly. Accordingly, it proposed that the Committee should adopt a draft resolution in which the Trusteeship Council would recommend that the Administering Authority should put an end to its anti-democratic policy toward the indigenous population, a policy which countenanced racial discrimination and the flagrant violation of the rights and interests of that population. The resolution should further recommend the restoration to the indigenous inhabitants of the lands which had been taken from them on various pretexts and by various means, and should invite the Visiting Mission to carry out an on-the-spot investigation with regard to forced labour and offences against freedom of assembly.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) observed that the Administering Authority could not fail to approve the idea of an inquiry by the Visiting Mission. He had not thought it necessary to reply to the accusations of petitioners who maintained that the Administration followed a policy of plundering and of curbing freedom of assembly, allegations which were in no case founded on fact. The allegations in question were merely statements of principle issued by the local sections in conformity with instructions received from the Comite directeur, as the representative of Belgium had pointed out.

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) shared the view of the Belgian representative as regards the lines along which the resolution should be drafted. He had two further observations to make.

First, with respect to an on-the-spot investigation by the Visiting Mission, the United States delegation felt, as always in such cases, that general questions such as forced labour or the land tenure system were a normal part of the Mission's field of study. Consequently, he thought that the Council should inform the petitioners that the Mission would visit the Cameroons in 1952, rather than explicitly inviting the Mission to investigate the case in point.

/Second,

Second, as regards the particular problem of separation of powers, the Administering Authority had indicated that it was taking steps to remedy the lack of career magistrates and that the separation of powers would soon be an accomplished fact. He felt, therefore, that the text of the draft resolution should refer not only to the resolution adopted by the Trusteeship Council, but also to the observations of the Administering Authority.

Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) agreed with the United States representative.

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) asked the Special Representative to clarify two points. First, he noticed that the petitioners, on page 12 of document T/PET.5/83, used the phrase "to justify executions and massacres". He wondered whether such incidents had actually taken place.

Second, he noted that the Special Representative had spoken of a "libellous telegram". Mr. Wendelen asked whether the telegram in question had been addressed to the United Nations or to the Administration.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) said, in reply to the first question, that there had been no bloodshed and that the case was clearly one of blackmail under threat of disturbances. As regards the second question, he believed that the telegram in question had been addressed to the magistrate himself.

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) noted that the petition claimed that a local officer of the UFC had been arrested for having signed a protest addressed to the United Nations. He asked for the comments of the Administering Authority on that point.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) pointed out that the allegation was unfounded, since the arrests had been justified on three counts: rebellion, libel, and contempt of court.

/Mr. SOLDATOV

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that after a careful rereading of page 53 of the report of the Visiting Mission to West Africa, he could see nothing unusual in the fact that the UPC, a political organization sanctioned by French law, should advise its local sections to transmit their complaints to the Mission, and, since they were perhaps not familiar with conditions throughout the Territory, that it should suggest to them the points to be emphasized. In the opinion of his delegation, the striking fact was that the letter in question had come into the hands of the authorities. He could only conclude that censorship was being employed, that the privacy of correspondence was being violated, and that the law which guaranteed freedom of correspondence in metropolitan France did not apply to the Trust Territory. It was clear, therefore, that despite the statements made by the Administration in its report, the indigenous population did not enjoy the same rights and freedoms as the population of metropolitan France.

Mr. LAURENTIE (France) pointed out that there were many ways of ascertaining the contents of a letter without opening the envelope. For example, a member of the organization, overcome by remorse, might confide in a third party the role which he was supposed to play.

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) pointed out that in any event the letter had reached its destination. It might well be that the local sections were not familiar with conditions throughout the Territory. Proof of that lay in the fact that as regards forced labour, for example, they had been unable to cite a single concrete case. Their accusations had therefore not been based upon facts, but upon instructions received from the Comite directeur.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stressed the fact that if forced labour had not existed in the Trust Territory, the Trusteeship Council would not have issued a request, at its sixth session, to the Administering Authority to take steps to abolish that practice.

/Mr. WENDELEN

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) was aware of the resolution adopted by the Trusteeship Council; but the Council had indicated clearly that it took note of the Administration's condemnation of forced labour, a practice which was, in any event, disappearing.

Mr. LAURENTIE (France) explained that the Council had been seized of certain cases of requisitioning of labour for public works. The Administering Authority had proved that in most instances, the indigenous inhabitants had merely been required to sweep the pavement in front of their houses. Accordingly, the Council had invited the Administering Authority to make it clear to the indigenous population that it was not a question of forced labour, but simply of the minimum of work necessary for the general good.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that his delegation's proposal met the requirements of the situation and, in fact, coincided with the statements of the French and Belgian representatives, which had stressed the necessity of an on-the-spot investigation of forced labour and violations of freedom of assembly.

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) pointed out that the United States proposal would achieve the same results and that if concrete cases existed, they would be brought to the attention of the Mission, which would transmit its conclusions to the Trusteeship Council.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that concrete cases could be found in the documents at the disposal of the Trusteeship Council, in particular, in certain petitions from the Cameroons under French Administration.

It was decided that the Secretariat should be asked to prepare two draft resolutions, one based on the USSR proposal, the other on the proposal of Belgium and the United States.

/(c) Petition

(c) Petition from the "Union des populations du Cameroun, Comité du village d'Akomnyada (Subdivision de M'Balmayo)" (T/PEP.5/85)

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) said that the complaints set forth in the petition under consideration had been investigated by the Administration.

He explained that the forestry reserve of Akomnyada had been classified in accordance with the regular procedure, under the decree of 3 May 1946 establishing the forestry system of the Cameroons.

That classification had given rise to no protests except that of Mr. Amougou Gueganin, who had received satisfaction. The classification of forests in an area having a very stable population could not inconvenience the inhabitants; their acquired rights were scrupulously respected, as they had been in the case under discussion. The obligations and conditions imposed under that classification were less extensive than in the case of State forests in France, and the present regulations represented the minimum safeguard necessary if the future of the country's forests was not to be seriously jeopardized.

Moreover, even though the laws in force provided for the jurisdiction of the tribunaux correctionnels in the matter, the Administration, in an effort at appeasement, had had recourse only to simple police court measures. Proceedings had been taken in twenty-seven cases, and fines and terms of imprisonment had been imposed; the total amount of the fines was not more than 21,600 francs. Those fines had had to be imposed to convince the inhabitants that the infractions of the decree for the classification of the forestry reserve must cease. Moreover, he wished to point out that in their classification of the forest of Akomnyada, the local authorities had based themselves on the recommendations of the Trusteeship Council, which had already stressed the necessity that the Administering Authority should take into consideration the needs of the Territory, without neglecting traditional communal rights.

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) asked the Special Representative what offences had been punished with fines or imprisonment.

/Mr. SCOTT

Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) asked whether the inhabitants had enjoyed foraging rights in the forest before the entry into force of the 1946 decree.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) said that the offences in question had been violations of the provision prohibiting brush fires or the felling of trees for the purpose of extending cultivable lands. Before 1946 the inhabitants had enjoyed the right to take firewood, fibres and raffia-grass from the forest, and they had retained that traditional right.

Mr. SIMONS (United States of America) thought that the Committee should refer in its draft resolution to the Council's previous resolutions on land legislation. Furthermore, the Administering Authority should be requested, wherever necessary, to take the appropriate measures to provide the inhabitants with additional arable land.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) said that the Administering Authority was giving fullest consideration to the needs of the neighbouring peoples as regards the extension of areas under cultivation. The vandalism which had been punished was in no way connected with the need to increase the areas under cultivation. It went without saying that if the population stated that it wished to extend the cultivated area, the request would be given sympathetic consideration by the Administration.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the Committee should adopt a draft resolution recommending that the Administering Authority should return to the indigenous population the land which had been alienated from it on the pretext of classification as forest reserves and that in the future the Administering Authority should not authorize alienation of land belonging to the indigenous inhabitants.

It was decided to request the Secretariat to draw up two draft resolutions; one on the lines suggested by the United States representative and the other in accordance with the USSR representative's proposal.

(d) Petition from the "Comite regional du Mourogo de l'Union des Populations du Cameroun" (T/EET.5/86)

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) went through the petition point by point.

He did not deny the allegation that the regional Chief had refused to make the administration building available for a public meeting of the Union des Populations du Cameroun. The building could not serve as a meeting place for an organization which had made political agitation its objective.

Concerning the request for the establishment of a permanent United Nations office in the Territory, he recalled that the Council had examined it at its sixth session and had decided to take no action on it.

With reference to police brutality of which certain indigenous inhabitants had allegedly been the victims, two successive inquiries by the Administration had revealed no specific accusations; the allegations had been invented and the testimonies evasive. It had not been possible to establish whether blows and injuries had actually been inflicted on the person of Missso Yacob Mbanga.

It was true that the forest rangers had pulled up the crops which the Bamileke immigrants had planted despite the Administration's prohibition. But it was not true that the plantations had been in full production or that any edible crops had been involved. In point of fact, the latter were tolerated in the forest reserves.

As regards the allegation that the indigenous inhabitants were excluded from utilizing the forests, the exploitation of the forests was not a monopoly of the European inhabitants. Any African could apply for and obtain a licence. He recalled in that connexion that the indigenous insurance company of Nkongsamba was now setting up a sawmill for the exclusive use of indigenous inhabitants.

It was likewise untrue that the indigenous inhabitants had been denied the exercise of their land rights. That allegation was based on a situation which had resulted from considerable Bamileke immigration into the region. The indigenous inhabitants refused to sell or lease their land to those immigrants.

/The allegations

The allegations regarding censorship of mail were also baseless. He recalled that the postmaster of the Loun post office who was a member of the Union des populations du Cameroun had been guilty of withholding mail for which he had been punished by the Administration. That was doubtless the reason why the UPC was now accusing the post office of Mbago of censoring the mail; so far the Administration had received no complaint of that kind.

With regard to the question of the extortion of funds from the market boys, he recalled that a "committee" had been set up in Moungo to protect the interests of the Bamileke. Certain Bamileke chiefs had collected small dues from African traders for the committee's treasury. When the market boys had asked to see the accounts, the Bamileke chiefs had claimed to have handed the funds over to the Sub-Division Chief. An inquiry on the spot had showed that that slanderous allegation had been designed to cover up embezzlement of funds by certain local politicians who were members of the UPC. The petitioners were perfectly aware of the situation, and it was a striking case of bad faith.

As regards market licences, it was true that a fee had to be paid for the right to sell in the market either by subscription or on a day-to-day basis. The fee which was small, was traditional.

Lastly, as regards the allegations that the police were guilty of arbitrary arrests, no such abuses had come to light during the Administration's inquiries.

Mr. WENDELEN (Belgium) thought that the petition under consideration raised a number of different issues and that the Secretariat should be asked to draw up a document summarizing the petition and the Special Representative's comments. In that way the Committee would be able to decide on it at a later meeting.

Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) agreed with the Belgian representative. He, too, thought that a clarification of the question would be useful.

He would like to have some particulars regarding the allegation that the indigenous inhabitants and in particular Mr. Miaso Yacob Mbanga had been maltreated.

/Mr. WATLER

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) said that those accusations had been investigated by the Administration and that no evidence of abuse had been found; Miaso Yacob Mbanga had been questioned, and it had not been possible to determine whether the allegations were true.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was surprised at the Special Representative's attitude of complete denial. He did not think that the facts mentioned in the petition could be the product of the petitioners' imagination. If the petitioners had been guilty of false allegations, the Administration would have been justified in prosecuting them, yet it had not done so; instead it had carried out investigations which rather surprisingly, had revealed nothing. He would not, therefore, accept the position taken up by the Special Representative. He asked that the Committee should examine all the official documents dealing with the facts listed in the petition. He also proposed that the Committee should recommend to the Administering Authority that it should put an end to its anti-democratic policy of tolerating flagrant infringements of the rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants.

Mr. WATIER (Special Representative) pointed out that his attitude was not one of systematic denial. He merely noted that each of the successive inquiries carried out by the Administration had shown the petitioners' bad faith. Moreover, the latter were fully aware that the Administering Authority in no circumstances wished to limit their freedom of petition, which was safeguarded by the Charter. It was regrettable that the petitioners should use that right to make slanderous allegations.

Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) said that he did not agree with the USSR representative who had questioned the veracity of the Special Representative's explanations. He further pointed out that the Committee would certainly not have time for the detailed inquiry which the USSR representative was requesting. A dangerous precedent would be set by adopting such a procedure.

/Mr. SOLDATOV.

Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it would be for the Visiting Mission which was supposed to go to the Cameroons under French Administration in 1952 to carry out an investigation on the spot.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the Belgian representative's proposal should be adopted; namely, that the Secretariat should be asked to prepare a paper giving the various questions raised in the petitions as well as the Special Representative's verbal explanations. The discussion would be resumed at the following meeting.

Mr. STRONG (United States of America) noted a certain analogy between the petition in document T/PET.5/83 and that in document T/PET/5/86. The Secretariat might usefully follow the same procedure with respect to both.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.