

# UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL



Distr.  
LIMITED

T/C.2/L.322  
27 December 1957  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

Standing Committee on Petitions

## PETITIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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I. Petition from Mr. Vincent Bela (T/PET.5/889, section 5)

1. In a letter dated 4 November 1955 the petitioner, who has been capita of Nkolmékok village, Nkolbogo I Group, for the past twenty years, asks to be given the title of village chief, since his "sector" includes sixty taxpayers and Mr. Alexandre Merlin, the Administrator, had already proposed him as chief in 1939.
2. The Administering Authority states (T/OBS.5/99/Add.2, section 3) that the petitioner is in fact a notable (capita) of the Nkolmékok quarter. He could be appointed village chief only on the death of the present incumbent and after consultation of the people. In view of the meagre population there can be no question of turning his quarter into an independent village of which he could become Chief.
3. The Administering Authority states further (T/OBS.5/99/Add.3, section 2) that the petitioner, who is chef de quartier, is subordinate to the Village Chief and cannot therefore claim the latter post.

II. Petition from Mr. Robert Afiana (T/PET.5/889, section 6)

1. In a letter dated 2 November 1955 the petitioner, who comes from the Saa village, states that he has been unemployed since 24 July 1953, when he contracted an eye disease during one of his tours as seedling inspector (vérificateur-pépinieriste) in the Nkam region, Yabassi Subdivision. He asks to be given paid employment as an assessor, since he used to earn 250 francs a day before his sight was impaired and he has five children to support.
2. The Administering Authority states (T/OBS.5/99/Add.2, section 4) that the petitioner is neither entitled nor qualified to serve as an assessor to the Customary Court. The present assessors are completely satisfactory and have the proper certificates and the necessary qualifications.

III. Petition from Mr. Venant Ekenguele (T/PET.5/894, section 2)

1. In an undated letter, the petitioner, a native of Endama village, Endinding Group, Subdivision of Saa, states that he is unemployed and that he has eight children by his only wife. He asks for family allowances and, if that is impossible, for tax exemption. He also requests that group chiefs should be elected and not appointed.
2. The Administering Authority states (T/OBS.5/97/Add.2, section 1) that the petitioner has only one wife and is the father of nine children. His family circumstances in no way debar him from finding employment. For the past six years he has been growing food crops and his income from this source is apparently sufficient to maintain his numerous dependents.
3. For particulars concerning the appointment of chiefs, the Administering Authority refers to its annual report.

IV. Petition from Mrs. Suzanna Mbetumou (T/PET.5/894, section 3)

1. In a letter dated 4 November 1955 the petitioner, a delegate of Mefomo village, at Km 30 on the Yaoundé-Douala road, states that the dispensary and the social worker the Administration has promised them are not enough for Mefomo village; they need also "real nurses who know how to look after women so that they bear children".
2. The Administering Authority notes (T/OBS.5/97/Add.1) that the petitioner deplores the low birth rate and asks that capable nurses should be sent to give treatment to barren women. The Administering Authority refers to the population statistics and to the information about the health services given in its annual report.

V. Petition from the "Société des femmes Bomp" (T/PET.5/894, section II)

1. Mrs. Jeanne Mbebe and forty-six other women from the village of Bomp, Hagbe Canton, Eséka Subdivision, all members of the Société des femmes Bomp organized by the local committee of the UPC, complain in an undated letter that ever since

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the establishment of the Dibang dispensary women have been forced to go there for their confinements, although there is no resident physician and the maternity ward is much too small to accommodate ten mothers at the same time. They also complain that new-born babies catch all sorts of diseases in this place and have to sleep on rough boards unless their fathers make a bamboo bed for them.

2. The petitioners request immediate unification and independence for the Cameroons.

3. The Administering Authority observes (T/OBS.5/89/Add.1, section 1) that the above petition comes from members of a party that was dissolved by Decree of the French Government, dated 13 July 1955. The Administering Authority regrets that it is unable to consider a document prepared by persons claiming to belong to an organization that is prohibited by law.

VI. Petition from Mr. Otoló Clément and Mr. Tanga Ndjana (T/PET.5/894, section 12)

1. In an undated letter the authors of this petition, one a capita and the other a planter at Loua II; ask for a school and a dispensary for their village, Loua II. The nearest school is at EfoK, which is too far away for six-year old children. Mr. Otoló asks that the capitas who help the Chief to collect the taxes should be paid; the Chief is not paid but the Chief Regional Officer often gives him presents, while the capitas work hard for nothing. Both petitioners complain about the high rate of taxation and the constant decrease in the price of cocoa. Mr. Otoló's sole source of income is three bags of cocoa a year and he has four wives and three children to support. Mr. Tanga has two bags of cocoa a year and has four wives and four children to support. The Chief Subdivisional Officer is alleged to have "exempted Mr. Tanga from paying taxes because he had had a very serious fracture".

2. The petitioners also declare that they are opposed to the UPC and that they want only the French in the Cameroons.

3. The Administering Authority states (T/OBS.5/97/Add.2, section 4) that the village of Loua II in which the petitioners live is situated on the Saa-Obala road in the immediate vicinity of the hospital and school at EfoK and that there therefore seems to be no need to build another dispensary and school.

4. The Administering Authority states that it is true that in 1951 Mr. Tanga Ndjana fell from the top of a palm tree and fractured his left femur. He recovered long ago, however, and the income he derives from his plantation of 800 cocoa trees, which are in full production, enables him to provide amply for his family of three wives and four children. Mr. Tanga Ndjana is taxable under the second category and the rate of tax is in keeping with the size of his income. The Administering Authority refers to its annual report for particulars concerning the system of taxation.

VII: Petition from Mr. Mvondo Martin (T/PET.5/894, section 15)

1. In an undated letter the petitioner, a labourer at Nachtigal, states that he lost a foot while working for the Tangui Company in Douala, which paid him the sum of 3,000 francs in compensation. He adds that he had faithfully served the Company for three years before the accident and that he is in dire need of additional help; he has already applied to Mr. Aujoulat for assistance.

2. In its observations (T/OBS.5/97/Add.5) the Administering Authority states that it is true that Mr. Mvondo Martin was employed by the Tangui Company at Loum-Paris (Mbanga Subdivision) as foreman and that on 13 July 1936 he lost his left foot in an accident at work. He was then paid compensation to the amount of 3,500 francs, which represented over a year's wages. The petitioner, who declared himself satisfied at the time, now considers, in retrospect and in view of the depreciation of the franc, that this compensation was insufficient.

VIII: Petition from Mr. Mintoumé Enock Benjamin (T/PET.5/894, section 18)

1. In a letter dated 7 November 1955 the petitioner, at present at Ndjock-Bané, states that in 1954 he was obliged to leave the modern Secondary School at Nkongsamba on account of illness. Before he had recovered his father died and as there was no one to support him while he continued his studies he tried to obtain employment with the Administration, which referred him to his "father, Um Nyobe". He states further that his application for admission to the competitive examination for posts in the police office was returned with a note telling him to

apply to his "boss", Um Nyobe, because he is a Bassa, and that his application for admission to the examination for assistant teachers was similarly returned.

2. The petitioner states that, contrary to the statements of the Administering Authority, the indigenous inhabitants have to pay school fees for primary education. He wonders what good his education will have done him if he is unable to obtain a position. In conclusion he asks for the immediate unification and independence of the Cameroons.

3. The Administering Authority observes (T/OBS.5/89/Add.1, section 1) that the above petition comes from a member of a party that was dissolved by Decree of the French Government dated 13 July 1955. The Administering Authority regrets that it is unable to consider a document prepared by a person claiming to belong to an organization that is prohibited by law.

IX. Petition from Mr. Pouda Appolinaire (T/PET.5/894, section 20)

1. In a letter dated 4 November 1955 the petitioner, an ex-serviceman from Nega, Abam-Ngoé Group, Saa Subdivision, requests financial assistance to help him support his family.

2. The Administering Authority observes (T/OBS.5/97, section 5) that Mr. Pouda Appolinaire, an ex-serviceman demobilized in 1945, received the benefits granted to ex-servicemen of the Free French Forces; he was paid 3,421 francs in 1946. Mr. Pouda has never applied to the Ex-servicemen's Office for a loan.

X. Petition from Mr. Ekani André (T/PET.5/894, section 21)

1. In an undated letter, the petitioner, an ex-serviceman from the Djoungolo Subdivision, complains that although he served in the Free French Forces from 1940 to 1945 and made the necessary application, first in Paris and then at Yaoundé, where the military authorities in Paris told him to apply, he has not been paid his campaign gratuities, while European ex-servicemen receive theirs every three months. He adds that up to the time he was writing no Africans had

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received any gratuities. He concludes from that that racial discrimination is still prevalent in the Cameroons.

2. The petitioner complains also that the European Catholic priests abuse their power.

3. The Administering Authority states (T/OBS.5/97, section 6) that Mr. Ekani André, an ex-serviceman who enlisted in 1941 and was demobilized in 1945, received a gratuity of 4,407 francs in 1946. The Ex-servicemen's Office granted him a loan of 60,000 francs.

XI. Petition from Mr. Moussa Aboh and four of his colleagues in the SEITA (T/PET.5/894, section 22)

1. In a letter dated 3 November 1955, the petitioners, who are employed by the SEITA at Batschenga Station, Saa Subdivision, complain that in spite of their repeated requests the Administration has totally forgotten to settle their pension as ex-servicemen. They state also that "they do not want to have anything to do with the UPC".

2. The Administering Authority states (T/OBS.5/97, section 7) that the Société d'exploitation industrielle des Tabacs et Allumettes has obviously nothing to do with the claim put forward by Mr. Moussa Aboh. He is an ex-serviceman, forty-six years of age, and will be entitled to a pension at the age of sixty. Mr. Moussa let over seven years elapse before sending in his application for a pension, which was at first disallowed. He was, however, granted an extension of time for submitting his application. The matter is proceeding favourably.

XII. Petition from Mr. Mébina Christophe (T/PET.5/894, section 23)

1. In a letter dated 3 November 1955, the petitioner, an ex-serviceman, municipal councillor and director-founder of the Malima school at Nkog-Edzen, Saa Subdivision, complains that his application for a loan on trust of 500,000 francs, addressed to the High Commissioner through Mr. Douala Manga Bell, a Deputy, on 25 March 1950, for the purpose of starting a plantation of 5,000 cocoa trees,

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has not been granted. He states that he repeated this application four times without success. He transmits all the relevant documents on the question.

2. The petitioner also complains that, in spite of his claims, he has never received the family allowances to which he was entitled during his service in the Army in Indochina, and that the special gratuity of 18,750 francs due to him for enlisting in the Army for a period of four years was never paid to him. Moreover, he has never received any subsidy for the private elementary school which he opened in his village in 1955 and into which he put all his savings. If help is not forthcoming, he will be obliged to close the school.

3. The petitioner finally states that the economic situation of the Cameroons needs improving and that the Territory ought to have spinning mills, foundries etc. in order to develop export and import trade for the benefit of the Cameroonian people.

4. The Administering Authority states (T/OBS.5/97, section 8) that Mr. Mébina Christophe, an ex-serviceman, was granted non-repayable relief amounting to 20,000 francs CFA. In 1955 his enlistment gratuity and all the allowances to which he was legally entitled were paid to him, amounting to 30,981 francs.

XIII. Petitions from Mr. Daniel Tchock (T/PET.5/895, section 2, and T/PET.5/895/Add.1)

1. In a letter dated 6 November 1955 (T/PET.5/895, section 2) the petitioner, a notable of Hikoadjom village, Otélé Post, Makak Subdivision, states that in 1952 he built a rural school in Hikoadjom with the help of the population. This school was opened on 26 January 1953, with an enrolment of seventy-two pupils.

(Note by the Secretariat: This question is also raised in petition T/PET.5/517 - see documents T/OBS.5/80 and T/C.2/L.268, section 8). The petitioner complains that he was not paid for the months during which he taught, although he applied to the Administration in 1953 and in 1954. He states that the school now has four teachers, has twice presented candidates for the elementary school-leaving examination and now has additional classrooms built with the assistance of the inhabitants.



2. In a second letter, undated (T/PET.5/895/Add.1), Mr. Tchock complains that he has not yet had any reply to his first petition and states that he has still received no pay for the work done at the village school at Hikoadjom. He adds that he was called by the Chief Subdivisional Officer of Eséka on 24-25 September 1956 for questioning. He states that he was forced to leave his four children for some time and he complains that he has to pay second-category local tax.

3. In its observations on T/PET.5/895, section 2, the Administering Authority confirms the fact (T/OBS.5/98/Add.1, section 1) that in January 1953, Mr. Tchock opened a school in the village of Hikoadjom, in the Makak Subdivision. The Administering Authority points out, however, that the school in question was established and run without official authorization. It adds that this is not the first case of its kind and that it cannot recognize and subsidize a school which does not satisfy certain health and educational standards.

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