



UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Mistr.
GENERAL

T/C.2/SR.205
31 January 1955
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 11 January 1955, at 2.30 p.m.

DOCUMENTS INDEX UNIT **MASTER**

CONTENTS

FEB 2 1955

Petitions concerning the Cameroons under French Administration
(T/C.2/L.116) (continued)

PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. TARAZI

Syria

Members:

Mr. MASSONET

Belgium

Mr. BARGUES

France

Mr. SINGH

India

Mr. KARTSEV

Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics

Mr. CRAMER

United States of America

Also present:

Mr. BECQUEY

Special Representative
of the Administering
Authority for the
Trust Territory of the
Cameroons under French
Administration

Secretariat:

Mr. RANKIN

Secretary of the Committee

PETITIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION (T/C.2/L.116)
(continued)

XI. Petition from Mr. Emmanuel Bayiha and others (T/PET.5/224)

Petition from the "Bureau du Comité de l'Union des populations du Caméroun" at Bafoussam (T/PET.5/236) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN observed that two suggestions had been made: one by the Belgian representative, that that part of the Trusteeship Council's report relating to education in the Trust Territory should be communicated to the petitioners, and the other by the USSR representative, that the petitioners' observations with regard to the 1952 Visiting Mission should be noted.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) pointed out that the USSR representative's suggestion had nothing to do with the reply to be sent to the petitioners; he had merely suggested drawing the Council's attention to the petitioners' observations with regard to the Visiting Mission's report, so that the Council could bear them in mind, if it saw fit, when drawing up the terms of reference of the 1955 Visiting Mission.

With regard to the question of teachers' salaries in the Cameroons, he thought the Committee should inform the petitioners of the remarks made by the Special Representative at the 204th meeting.

Mr. CRAMER (United States of America) pointed out that the Committee was examining two petitions simultaneously, one of which (T/PET.5/224) dealt with general questions and with one specific incident, whereas the other (T/PET.5/236) referred only to that incident. The Belgian representative's suggestion dealt only with the reply to be given to the first part of the first petition; with regard to the incident described in both petitions, the petitioners' attention should be drawn to the written observations of the Administering Authority and the explanations given by the Special Representative.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the members of the Committee would like to have some additional information concerning the incident in question, and especially the real reasons for the demonstration by the pupils of the Technical College at Douala.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) was unaware of the underlying reasons for the pupils' attitude; the principal of the school, the Administrator-Mayor of Douala and a Cameroonian councillor of the Territorial Assembly had talked to the pupils but had been unable to obtain the slightest explanation.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked why the competent authorities had taken the serious decision to expel fifty-six pupils out of 260; that seemed a very high proportion.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) explained that it was the ring-leaders who had been expelled; it had been easy to pick them out for they had actually given their comrades commands by whistling. The Disciplinary Board had expelled only twenty pupils after the first demonstration; it was when all the pupils had decided to leave that the authorities had temporarily closed the school and expelled fifty-six pupils, twenty-six of them permanently.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked for further details concerning the petitioners' accusation that the Administration was still "drawing the full scholarship" in the name of the pupil Nvondo, who had died in 1952.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) explained that the boy Nvondo had been given sick leave at his father's request and had died at home. When the principal of the school had applied for a renewal of Mr. Nvondo's scholarship he had been unaware of his death; as soon as the parents had informed him of the fact, Mr. Nvondo's name had been removed from the list of scholarship holders. Furthermore the school had not drawn scholarship money to which it was not entitled, for its funds were allocated only on presentation of a statement of expenditure.

CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 20, which stated that the petitioners requested the reinstatement of all the pupils of the Douala vocational school. It was the Committee's duty to defend the interests of the petitioners as far as it was able. He wondered whether under the regulations it would be possible for the pupils who had been expelled to be reinstated.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) explained that the High Commissioner could issue a pardon if he saw fit; hence the Committee could ask him to reopen the question. He thought it only right to point out, however, that the question had been carefully studied by the competent authorities who had not taken so serious a decision except after due reflection.

The Trusteeship Council's recommendation would of course be communicated to the petitioners, who would thus be satisfied for the time being, but it would raise hopes which might subsequently come to nothing. He warned the Committee of the danger of taking a decision which might in the long run increase the petitioners' resentment.

The CHAIRMAN requested the Secretariat to draw up a draft resolution in the light of the suggestions made during the debate.

XII. Petitions from the Syndicats des petits planteurs de Ndangeng, Komo, Mvoua, Ngoya and Nkol-Kougda (T/PET.5/230)

Mr. SINGH (India) pointed out that the question raised in paragraph 1 had been considered by the General Assembly, which had adopted a resolution on the subject. That resolution might be brought to the petitioners' attention. With regard to the complaints set out in paragraph 2, the Trusteeship Council should draw the petitioners' attention to the observations of the Administering Authority.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) agreed with Mr. RANKIN (Secretary of the Committee) that in connexion with paragraph 2 it would be better to communicate to the petitioners the relevant passages of the parts of the Trusteeship Council's report dealing with the economic situation and the educational situation in the Territory.

Mr. SINGH (India) agreed.

The CHAIRMAN requested the Secretariat to draw up a draft resolution in the light of the suggestions that had been made.

XIII. Petition from a group of assistant teachers (T/PET.5/227 and Add.1 to 3)

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the substance of the petition was identical with that of petitions T/PET.5/224, T/PET.5/236 and T/PET.5/263; they all related to the educational situation and the Committee would no doubt wish to make similar recommendations with regard to all of them.

Mr. CRAMER (United States of America) did not understand the complaint summarized in paragraph 8: the petitioner himself said that the age-limit had been raised by two years and that as a result the number of candidates for the CEPE had fallen from fifty to about ten from each school. He asked the Special Representative if he could explain the matter.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) was unable to do so, for he himself did not understand the complaint. He did not see how the raising of the age-limit could decrease the number of candidates. As a matter of fact no decrease in the number of candidates for the certificate of primary and elementary studies had been apparent in recent years.

The CHAIRMAN inquired how the qualifications of the African teachers differed from those of the European assistant teachers.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) explained that the European assistant teachers held the baccalauréat de l'enseignement secondaire and were working for the certificat d'aptitude pédagogique. Only three of the African teachers held the baccalauréat, while the others had reached their grade through professional reclassification or by local competitive examinations. The European assistant teachers were therefore more highly trained than the majority of the African teachers. The authorities did their utmost to avoid placing African teachers under the control of European assistant teachers, but the exigencies of the service (transfers, vacancies etc.) must sometimes have forced the Department of Education to take such measures temporarily.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that conditions in the African and European boarding schools were very different. The observations of the Administering Authority did not provide any specific reply to the complaints of the petitioners concerning the food in the African boarding school. He asked if the Special Representative could give some information on the subject.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) pointed out that pupils in boarding schools, in every country and from time immemorial, were in the habit of complaining about the food provided. In the case under discussion, he himself had gone into the question. The quality and quantity of the food in both the African and the European boarding-schools were highly satisfactory; the meals were prepared under good hygienic conditions by a competent staff. All the pupils drank the same water - from the town supply - which was filtered at the water-works, piped to the town and filtered again in the school dining-rooms.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether Mr. Issac Moucheli had had any valid reason for absenting himself from duty for four days and whether any explanations which he might have given for his absence had been taken into account.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) said that he had absented himself without leave and without notifying the headmaster of the school. He had alleged that he had been informed by friends that his father had been murdered; he had at once left for home, had found his father alive - as he still was - but had remained at home for some days without informing his superiors.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that, according to paragraph 11, six holders of the baccalauréat had not yet been awarded the scholarships for which they were ipso facto eligible. He would like to know how they stood at present.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) replied that the six persons in question, who included one of the petitioners, had been awarded their scholarships and were studying in France.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Trusteeship Council might reply to the petitioners by transmitting to them the section of its report which would deal with education in the Territory and drawing their attention to the statements of the Special Representative, particularly with regard to the six scholarship holders. He requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution along those lines.

XIV. Petition from the Union des populations du Cameroun, Bureau du Comité centrale de Yaoundé (T/PET.5/263)

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) asked about the membership and functions of the Higher Educational Advisory Board.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) explained that the membership and terms of reference of the Higher Educational Advisory Board had been amended by an order of 15 July 1953. The Board gave the High Commissioner advice on all problems connected with public and private education; it also made recommendations on all questions which it considered within its competence. In addition to those in charge of the various branches of education, the Board included senior officials (political affairs, social welfare, labour, etc.), two representatives of the Territorial Assembly, appointed by the Assembly itself (at the present time, one African and one European), three representatives of private education (including one Catholic and one Protestant), one representative of the parents of European pupils and three representatives of the parents of African pupils.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that the petitioners were objecting to the Board's recommendations for the practical teaching of agriculture; the Administering Authority thought that the practical teaching of agriculture was a useful means of raising the standard of living of the rural population. He asked where, and for whose benefit, the pupils worked when receiving practical training in agriculture.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) replied that the practical work was done in the school gardens; every pupil was required to cultivate one square metre per year. The Higher Board was afraid that the pupils who held certificates of education might lose interest in agriculture; that was why it had recommended that pupils should do practical work at school and that the area cultivated by each pupil should be considerably increased, in order to develop the children's interest in agriculture, which was still the basis of the Territory's economy.

The crops grown were given to the children themselves and to the school canteens.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether the Administration had already taken steps to enable the Nkongsamba College and the Joss college to prepare pupils for the baccalaureate in secondary education.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) replied that the Yaoundé Lycée was still the only official school preparing pupils for the baccalaureate. The other schools had as yet only junior classes; the Administration was trying to increase the teaching staff so that the number of classes could be progressively enlarged: each school would, as it were, develop as it could.

The secondary school at Yaoundé prepared candidates for both parts of the baccalaureate. There were classes in philosophy, modern philosophy and elementary mathematics. It was too early to say whether the same would apply to the other schools; that would depend fundamentally on the number of pupils and hence on budgetary considerations.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the petition did not raise any specific question. The best method of replying to the petitioners would therefore be to send them the part of the Trusteeship Council's report dealing with the educational situation in the Territory. He asked the Secretariat to draft a resolution on those lines.

Petition from the "Bureau du Comité de Base de l'Union des Populations du Cameroun de Ndangeng" (T/PET.5/265)

The CHAIRMAN asked the Special Representative how information regarding the United Nations was disseminated in schools in the Territory.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) replied that the information was disseminated by the Department of Education, which issued news-letters to all teachers through the elementary school inspectors. In addition, leaflets and brochures on the activities of the United Nations were distributed in educational institutions.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) wondered whether the persons who had submitted the petition had also been the authors of the petitions to which Council resolutions 977 (XIII) and 1055 (XIV) referred. If not, the petitioners might be sent a copy of those two resolutions and of the resolution to be adopted in connexion with the petition appearing in document T/PET.5/260.

Mr. RANKIN (Secretary of the Committee) stated that a single incident was often referred to in a number of petitions; that was what had happened in the case in point. The petition before the Committee had not been submitted by those who had sent the petitions concerning the Foumban incident and the breaking up of a meeting at Eséka.

Mr. SINGH (India) pointed out that part of the Visiting Mission's report would be devoted to the dissemination of information concerning the United Nations. The Committee would be able to decide, by reference to the report, whether the petitioners' allegations were justified. The Committee should draw the petitioners' attention to the need to take the initiative and to act of their own accord with regard to the dissemination of information concerning the United Nations, as indeed in any other matter. If the petitioners did no more than complain and rely upon the Administering Authority, they would never achieve independence.

The CHAIRMAN asked the Secretariat to bear in mind the Belgian representative's suggestion in drafting the resolution.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.

XVI. Petition from the "Union des Populations du Cameroun", Comité Briqueterie (T/PET.5/264)

The CHAIRMAN observed that the petition was of a general nature and that the questions raised by the petitioners would be considered by the Council when it examined the Administering Authority's report. He proposed that that petition and others of the same kind should be referred to the Council for inclusion in its agenda.

Mr. RANKIN (Secretary of the Committee) pointed out that the petition would then be transferred from part A to part B of the Council's agenda.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) shared the Chairman's views but thought that a reply should be given to the specific complaints of the petitioners and that copies of the resolutions adopted in connexion with the matters raised in the petition should be sent to them.

With regard to paragraph 1, he had been astonished at the statement that freedom of petition did not exist in the Territory. Everyone was aware that the Committee received a very large number of petitions from the Cameroons under French Administration.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he too thought that the petitioners were entitled to receive a reply in respect of each specific instance cited in the petition.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the petition could be sent to the Trusteeship Council and the petitioners could be given a reply to the questions they had raised. The various suggestions made would be borne in mind.

XVII. Petition from Mr. Frédéric Ebongué Essoh (T/PET.5/259)

In reply to a question by Mr. CRAMER (United States of America), Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) said that the petitioner had completed his elementary course but had not obtained his school leaving certificate. He had not been admitted to the entrance examination for the sixth grade because his level of education was inadequate.

Mr. CRAMER (United States of America) proposed that the Committee's draft resolution should draw the petitioner's attention to the Administering Authority's observations.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that a further paragraph should be added recommending the Administering Authority to reconsider the petitioner's case.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) thought that it might be suggested to the petitioner that he should increase his efforts if he wished to obtain a scholarship.

Mr. BARGUES (France) did not think it wise to encourage mediocrity and laziness. He drew attention to the considerable efforts made by all the Administering Authorities in the matter of education and pointed out that the number of candidates for the various posts was higher than the number of posts available. The same applied to scholarships. That being so, he wondered whether it was wise to encourage a young man who had failed to pass an examination of an extremely low standard and whether there was any point in recommending the Administering Authority to show special favour to individuals who did not perhaps deserve it.

XVIII. Petition from the Vice-Chairman of the "Union des Populations du Cameroun" (T/PET.5/250)

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that the contentions of the petitioner and of the Administering Authority were completely different. He asked the Special Representative for his opinion on the matter, for a single infringement of the regulations did not seem to justify the final refusal to grant the permit in question.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) said that the refusal was an administrative decision which was within the exclusive competence of the High Commissioner.

In reply to a question Mr. MASSONET (Belgium), Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) said that at the administrative inquiry only the particulars noted by the police and sent to the legal authorities had been taken into account.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) wondered whether the authorities had explained the regulations governing transport operation to Mr. Mouaha when they had issued a provisional public transport licence to him.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) had no information to enable him to reply to that question but he pointed out that under French law no one could plead ignorance of the law. Particular importance attached to that principle when, as in the case of public transport, the lives of many people were involved.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether Mr. Mouaha could institute appeal proceedings against the High Commissioner or could make a fresh application for a permit after a certain interval.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) said that in a matter of that kind the High Commissioner had a discretionary power of decision but that Mr. Mouaha would certainly be able to make a fresh application for a permit after a reasonable period of time.

The CHAIRMAN asked the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution in which the Council suggested to Mr. Mouaha that he should observe the road vehicle regulations in future and drew his attention to the fact that it was open to him to make a fresh application for a permit on the expiry of the statutory interval.

XIX. Petition from Mr. Siméon Kangang (T/PET.5/257)

The CHAIRMAN explained that, following Council resolution 935 (XIII), the petitioner's claim now related in fact to a sum of 16,000 francs only.

(The Chairman)

According to the Administering Authority's observations, that sum covered customs duty charged in the normal course, after payment of the fine, on the goods imported by Mr. Kangang.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) thought that the Committee might confine itself to drawing the petitioner's attention to the Administering Authority's observations.

The CHAIRMAN requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution to that effect.

XX. Petition from the Chairman of the Association of the Veterans of the Bamiléké region (T/COM.5/L.26/Add.1)

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) wished to know why the Administering Authority stated that the persons concerned could not describe themselves as veterans, since the petition was submitted on their behalf by the Chairman of the Association of the Veterans of the Bamiléké region.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) explained that, while the persons concerned were not "veterans" in the strict sense of the term, since they had never taken part in hostilities, they were ex-servicemen. The Veterans Office assisted those who had served in the armed forces, regardless of whether they had actually fought.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether, if the members of the Association of Veterans enjoyed certain privileges, all its members, without distinction, would enjoy the same privileges.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) explained that, in law, a veteran had no privileges. He was, however, the holder of a veteran's card and if he had spent a prescribed period of time in a combat zone he received a pension. The Veterans Office had endeavoured to help all those leaving the armed forces to readapt themselves to civilian life. The action it was able to take was of a social character and it did not in any way constitute a legal privilege.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the phrase "the dismissed regional policemen since they never actually took part in hostilities" should be deleted from paragraph 4 of the summary of the petition (T/C.2/L.116).

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether the dismissed policemen could be re-employed.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) said that the dismissed policemen could not be reinstated in the same service because, after repeated warnings, dismissal was the only measure the Administration could apply to an unsatisfactory employee. The fact that a dismissed employee sent a petition to the United Nations could not justify his reinstatement; that would constitute a dangerous precedent. In the present case there was nothing to prevent the persons concerned from finding employment in another service.

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether the Administration had taken a humanitarian interest in the future of its dismissed employees.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) had no information upon which he could reply to that question. The petitioner stated, however, that the persons concerned each had several wives: in the Bamiléké region that fact meant that their families had land which was worked by the wives. It was the income they derived from their crops, in addition to their wages, that enabled them to maintain such large families.

He felt that an individual's financial position did not justify his exercising the right of petition; nevertheless, if the Trusteeship Council so desired, the Administration would inquire what had happened to the dismissed persons.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) proposed that the Committee should draw the petitioner's attention to the observations the Special Representative had made at the present meeting.

The CHAIRMAN asked the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution taking into account the views expressed in the Committee.

XXI. Petition from Mr. Antoine Edmond Lictarde (T/PET.5/223)

Mr. KARTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked how the letters of complaint the petitioner had sent to the French authorities could have been left unanswered.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) had no information upon which to reply to that question.

The CHAIRMAN wondered whether the petitioner could still approach the interregional labour inspector.

Mr. BECQUEY (Special Representative) said that in view of the relatively recent date of the events described in the petition, that procedure was open to him.

Mr. MASSONET (Belgium) felt that the Committee should encourage the petitioner to sit for the competitive examination for the post of Railway Administration officer referred to in paragraph 5.

The CHAIRMAN invited the Secretariat to prepare a draft resolution in which the Council encouraged the petitioner to sit for the competitive examination in question and pointed out to him that it was open to him to approach the interregional labour inspector.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.