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CONDITIONS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Summary of Observations made by individual members of the Council
during the general discussion, and of the comments of the
special representative of the Administering Authority

I GENERAL

General considerations

1. The representative of New Zealand felt that the reports of the Administering Authority show that steady progress is being made in the Territory and commended the Administering Authority as well as the local authorities for that progress.
2. The representative of the United Kingdom pointed out the high quality of the reports produced by the Administering Authority from which all salient facts affecting all aspects of development in the Territory are readily appreciable.
3. The representative of the United States of America considered that the record of developments in the Territory during 1949 and 1950 was an encouraging one. In the political field, however, the advancement was somewhat less marked than in the economic field.
4. The representative of Australia agreed with other delegates that the reports of the Administering Authority for 1949 and 1950 show an

over-all result of sustained progress in all spheres which interest the Council. He specially commended the Administering Authority for the extent to which the ten-year plan of economic and social development was being implemented.

He added that the Administering Authority was taking due account of the various conclusions and recommendations previously expressed by the Trusteeship Council. He believed that the Council should not underestimate the efforts of the Administering Authority in its effort to introduce beneficial reforms in spite of the dead weight of local custom and traditional views.

5. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that it was essential to make the point that the information contained in the reports of the Administering Authority for 1949 and 1950 was insufficient and general in character. The reports failed to supply adequate information as to the participation of the indigenous population in the political and economic life of the Territory and in the administration of their country.

He stated that an analysis of the Administering Authority reports, of the report of the Visiting Mission and of the petitions showed that the French government had failed to abide by the requirements of the Charter with regard to the International Trusteeship System and to take appropriate measures with a view to promoting the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the people of the Trust Territory and its progressive development towards self-government or independence.

6. The special representative of the Administering Authority stated that if it were true that some questions were not answered in the reports as fully as some members of the Council might desire, one must consider that

these reports tried to paint a general picture and to reveal a general outline of French action in the Cameroons. If any additional information was required, questions could be asked of the special representative.

II POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT

General

7. The representative of New Zealand pointed out that in the political field progress was shown in the fact that the Territory's representative participates in legislation, the Territory had its own representative assembly, there were an increasing number of Africans in the administrative services and the judicial system appeared to be steadily improving.

The progress towards adult suffrage appeared to be promising, and plans seemed well advanced for the development of regional and municipal institutions.

8. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the Administering Authority had failed to adopt legislative or other measures to ensure the participation of the indigenous population in the legislative and judicial organs of the Government of the Territory, and had not promoted the establishment of local indigenous organs based on democratic principles.

9. The special representative of the Administering Authority stated that the Annual Report indicated the numerous steps taken to increase political participation by the indigenous inhabitants at the village level, in the new municipalities, in regional councils and the Representative Assembly.

Political organization and integration of the Cameroons into the French Union

10. The representative of China stated that while association of the Territory with the French Union was not without its benefits, it was essential to preserve its separate status so as to give it the kind of development which is called for by the Charter.

11. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that it was essential to note that the inclusion of the Trust Territory in the so-called French Union is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations; in particular, the solution of political questions had been removed from the competence of Cameroonian organs and transferred into the organs of the French Union.

The Trusteeship Council should recommend that the Administering Authority establish in the Trust Territory of Cameroons under French administration, legislative and administrative organs not subordinate to any organs formed on the basis of a union between the Trust Territory and the French colonies, and that for this purpose legislative and other measures be taken to ensure the participation of the indigenous population in legislative, executive and judicial organs of the Trust Territory.

Representative Assembly

12. The representative of the United Kingdom observed that it had been disappointing to the Trusteeship Council that it had proved impossible for the French Parliament to deal conclusively with the proposal regarding the modification of the existing powers and duties of the Representative Assembly. He observed that at the present stage of development it was legitimate to note that the legislative authority retained by the French Parliament over the French Cameroons limited substantially the field in which the Representative Assembly had power of decision. The representative

of France had demonstrated however that, although the main lines of policy were determined by metropolitan legislation, there was virtually no feature of the practical day-to-day direct administration of the Territory on which the advice of the Representative Assembly need not be sought.

He hoped that in the next annual report changes which had been agreed in the powers and functions of the Representative Assembly would be reported.

13. The representative of the United States of America expressed the hope that the draft legislation to extend the Representative Assembly's powers would be adopted and implemented in the near future and would provide for substantial legislative powers.

14. The representative of China stated that the Representative Assembly was the nucleus of an independent legislative body and its steady development a constant concern of this Council. He noted that the fourth and sixth sessions of the Council had recommended progressive extension of the Assembly's powers. While noting with approval the measures taken by the Administering Authority, he hoped the Assembly might soon be transformed into a real legislative body elected by a single college, gradually approaching universal suffrage.

He felt that the proportion of 24 indigenous to 16 European members in the Assembly should be rendered more comparable to the respective numbers of the Territory's inhabitants.

15. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the so-called Representative Assembly had no real rights under the constitution; and was merely an advisory organ of the High Commissioner. According to the report of the Visiting Mission (page 49), "the Representative Assembly's present competence is still essentially limited..."

and it is still statutorily deprived of legislative powers." Election to and composition of the Assembly were indicative of flagrant racial discrimination.

Administrative services

16. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the indigenous population of the Trust Territory was kept from real participation in the administration of the affairs of the Territory. All the more or less important posts in the Administration were monopolized by Europeans; full authority was concentrated in the hands of the French High Commissioner and French officials subordinate to him; according to page 53 of the 1950 report the number of indigenous inhabitants who hold even secondary posts in the general administration was being cut down.

Municipal government

17. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that he attached a great deal of importance to the steps which had been and were being taken for the development of local government through a decentralization of administration, in the north as well as in the south of the Territory. He felt that the Trusteeship Council might well commend the Administering Authority for its action in this field.

18. The representative of the United States of America regarded as the most interesting and promising the experiment of introducing in the N'Tem region the system of village bureaux. These bureaux, he added, opened the way for the development of more representative units of local government and he urged that they would be extended to other regions.

He noted the extension of the system of mixed communes to five urban centres in addition to Douala and Yaounde and that these new municipalities had African majorities. He hoped that the present system of

appointing members of the commission would be changed, introducing instead some kind of electoral system.

Administration in the regions

19. The representative of the United States of America noted with interest the plan for the reorganisation of the Council of Notables and their replacement by regional councils with more extensive powers and enlarged membership. He hoped that in 1951 a final decision on this matter and its implementation will take place.

He thought worthy of commendation the steps taken by the Administering Authority in creating four new administrative regions during the period under review as well as the re-opening of the N'Kam region in conformity with the Trusteeship Council recommendation based on petitions submitted to the Visiting Mission.

20. The representative of China noted that difficulties had been encountered in the conversion of Councils of Notables into regional councils. However he hoped this desirable reform would come to pass once the parties concerned are convinced of its usefulness.

He expressed interest in, and attached great importance to, the establishment of village bureaux. He was sure this experiment will, eventually, meet with success, and therefore hoped that the possible extension of this experiment to the Edea region and the Yaounde area as well as additional information on the whole subject would be included in future annual reports.

21. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the Administering Authority was carrying out a policy of encouraging the backward tribal system; it had taken no measures to set up local democratic organs of self-government in which the indigenous population

could participate.

In view of the fact that the tribal system which now exists in the Trust Territory and which is encouraged by the Administering Authority is incompatible with the progressive political development of the population of the Trust Territory towards self-government and independence, the Trusteeship Council should recommend that the Administering Authority take measures to ensure the transition from the tribal system to a system of self-government based on democratic principles.

Suffrage

22. The representative of the United Kingdom noted that substantial progress was indicated in the increased number of the electorate reaching now over half a million people.

23. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the overwhelming majority of the indigenous population was deprived of all political rights. Out of 813,963 adult African males in the Cameroons in 1950, only 70,881 enjoyed the right to vote. The number of indigenous women who participated in the elections to the Representative Assembly was infinitesimal. The first college, representing 10,252 Frenchmen had in the Assembly, one member for every 640 voters; the second college, had one representative per 125,000 indigenous inhabitants. The right of vote was enjoyed only by four-odd per cent of the indigenous population.

24. The special representative of the Administering Authority recalled that in four years the number of electors had increased from 12,000 to 116,000 persons and the recent electoral reform brought the number to 503,000. It was, therefore, not correct to say that only four per cent

of the indigenous population enjoy the right to vote.

Judicial system

25. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that judicial authority was wholly concentrated in the hands of Europeans; the European colonial officials in addition to discharging their administrative functions, continue to hold the posts of judges.

26. The special representative of the Administering Authority stated that judicial authority was not exclusively European. Two-thirds of the magistrates practising in the Cameroons were indigenous inhabitants.

: III. ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

General

27. The representative of New Zealand noted that there was considerable activity in the economic life of the Territory which was stimulated by large capital investments financed by internal loans at a low interest rate as well as by subsidies from the metropolitan government. Trade was increasing and although the value of imports exceeds the value of exports in 1949 and in 1950, the fact that a great percentage of imports consists of capital goods could be regarded as strengthening the economy of the Territory.

28. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the Administering Authority had failed to take the measures necessary to ensure the economic advancement of the Trust Territory in the interest of the indigenous population.

Agriculture

29. The representative of the United States of America commended the Administering Authority for attempting, with success, to increase the cultivation of export crops without neglecting food crops for domestic consumption.

He stated that the creation in 1949 of a new soil bureau is of particular interest and hoped that the people of the Territory, under the guidance of official of this bureau, will take effective steps to preserve the full soil resources of the Territory.

30. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that plantations, producing exclusively for export, are concentrated in the hands of European owners and companies ruthlessly exploiting the

indigenous population of the Trust Territory and making tremendous profits out of such exploitation. The report for 1949 indicates that 1/4 of the arable land is used for export crops.

31. The special representative of the Administering Authority stated that the indigenous inhabitants played a preponderant role in the production of export crops and some of the most important ones, such as cocoa were grown exclusively by the Cameroonian farmers. Only 212 of the 12,000 Europeans in the Territory were planters.

Land tenure

32. The representative of New Zealand felt that the Administering Authority should exercise great care in granting land concessions to non-indigenous inhabitants in order to safeguard the interest of the Africans.

33. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the Administering Authority was carrying out a colonial policy of alienation of indigenous land for the benefit of Europeans. The Trusteeship Council should, therefore, recommend to the Administering Authority that it should return to the indigenous population lands alienated from it in any way, and should prevent any further alienation of land from the indigenous population.

34. The special representative of the Administering Authority stated that only 0.8 per cent of the Territory's lands had been ceded to Europeans for agricultural purposes.

Forests

35. The representative of the United Kingdom agreed with the Administering Authority that a maintenance and establishment of adequate forest cover is

an essential feature of any effective soil conservation programme. He felt that the area of present forest reserves was too small for that purpose. He regretted that the Representative Assembly was opposed to this policy because the local population and their representatives had not yet come to understand the vital importance of the maintenance of forest cover for the future of the Territory. He suggested that the Administering Authority might consider asking the Food and Agriculture Organization to send an independent expert to review forest policy in the Cameroons and make recommendations regarding the policy which is technically best in accordance with the standards of that international organization. In his view the Council should urge the Administering Authority to persist in its efforts to extend the area of protected forests under conditions which would fully preserve to the local inhabitants all existing rights which could be exercised without infringing sound agricultural practices.

36. The representative of Belgium observed that serious misunderstandings had arisen between the indigenous inhabitants of the Cameroons and the Administering Authority on the subject of forest policy and of the private domain of the State. The duty of the Administering Authority was to leave to the indigenous inhabitants the free enjoyment of all their customary rights, but the forests did not belong to the local population as there was no customary property right. These forests belonged to the "private domain" of the Cameroonian State, a local collectivity, which took over the residual rights not exercised under indigenous custom. Royalties paid for forest concessions went legitimately not to the tribe which continued to exercise its traditional rights over the forest but to the State, the larger entity, whose development must be fostered by the Council.

37. The representative of the United States of America expressed concern over the opposition which had developed in the Representative Assembly concerning the scheduling of forest reserves the establishment of which was vital to the long-term economic future of the Territory. He stated that the Council might wish to suggest that the Administering Authority intensify its efforts to bring home to the people of the Territory the issues involved and the desirability of preserving the forest resources of the Territory. It was important to press forward to a solution of this problem with the support of the indigenous inhabitants.

38. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the establishment of so-called scheduled forests was one of the forms of alienation of land from the indigenous population. There was considerable dissatisfaction at the enormous size of the cutting concessions granted to Europeans, according to the report of the Visiting Mission. Petitions received indicated that millions of hectares of forest land had been alienated from the indigenous population under the pretext that a special regime had to be established for those forests.

39. The special representative of the Administering Authority stated that the French Government had no intention to leave in abeyance a problem as crucial to the wealth of the Territory as that of forest reserves, nor had they given up the "scheduling" of forests in the private domain. The present delay permitted the Administering Authority to convince the indigenous population that the "scheduling" already undertaken did not affect their customary utilization of the forests and was simply an attempt to prevent the destruction of the Territory's wealth. It had been stated that the "scheduling" of forest reserves meant the plunder of the legitimate owners

of the forests. Our legislation attempts to respect vested rights and undertakes the scheduling of forests only in an effort to preserve the dormant patrimony of the Cameroonian population.

Mines

40. The representative of China in referring to the Visiting Mission's report, stated that hardly anything had been done with regard to mining and that the mining potentialities had not been fully surveyed.

41. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that nothing had been done to develop the mining industry. Those resources which were being used were exploited not in the interest of the indigenous population but for the purpose of exporting.

Transport and communications

42. The representative of Belgium noted with satisfaction the considerable increase in appropriations for roads which went from 70 million francs in 1948 to 409 million in 1950.

Provident Societies and Co-operatives

43. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that, despite the opposition of the indigenous inhabitants and in total disregard of their interests, the Administering Authority had set up a system of State-sponsored societies or associations, membership in which was compulsory for all heads of indigenous families. They were just subsidiary organs controlled by European companies, which were occupied in pumping raw materials out of the Trust Territory.

Public finance and taxation

44. The representative of New Zealand noted that the budget of the Territory seemed to be in a sound condition.
45. The representative of Thailand considered as an encouraging sign the fact that each year since 1946 public revenue exceeded expenditure.
46. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the Trusteeship Council should recommend to the Administering Authority to take steps to replace the head-tax by a progressive income tax system, or, at least, by a system of income tax taking due account of the property status and taxable capacity of the population.

Ten-Year Plan for economic and social development

47. The representative of Belgium noted with satisfaction the truly remarkable increase in investments under the ten-year plan which promised to increase the prosperity of the Territory.
48. The representative of the United States of America stated that he is impressed by the substantial progress made under the Ten-Year Plan for economic and social development; particularly with respect to the development of new industrial establishments.
49. The representative of Australia felt that the extent of the development of factories, roads, bridges, harbour installations, shown by the reports was most encouraging and that the programmes of studies and research undertaken to coordinate activities under the ten-year plan deserved commendation.

IV. SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

Standard of living, social assistance and security

50. The representative of New Zealand noted with satisfaction the progress made towards improving wage rates and living standards.

51. The representative of the United States of America commended the efforts to stimulate the establishment of a social welfare programme particularly devoted to the improvement of conditions of women and children.

He shared the concern of the Council in the past with regard to the relatively low wage rates in the Territory and was glad to note the efforts to increase those wages. He considered that the wages were still too low. The Council might wish to recommend that the Administering Authority continue and extend its study of the standard of living in the Territory, review minimum wage rates at relatively frequent intervals and in general make every effort to see that wage rates continue to increase sufficiently rapidly to compensate for prevailing inflationary tendencies.

52. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the indigenous population of the Territory was living under conditions of misery and that miserable wages doomed African workers and their families to malnutrition and starvation. The average wage of an African worker was from 6,600 to 7,500 francs per year; which amounted to about 22 to 25 francs per day while 60 francs would not cover the cost of a decent meal in the poorest native restaurant.

He stated that it was abundantly clear that the Administering Authority had failed to take measures to implement the recommendations

adopted at the fourth session of the Council in which the Council insisted that the Administering Authority should take all possible measures to raise the wage level and standard of living as regard housing conditions, clothing, and medical and social services.

53. The special representative of the Administering Authority recalled that in 1944 a labourer received four Cameroonian francs while today he earns over 100. Although the cost of living had tripled during that period, there was still a considerable increase in real wages. As for the cost of restaurant meals, the information included in the Annual Report referred to establishments catering to African white-collar employees, businessmen and officials, not to labourers.

Last year the local government ordered a general inquiry on the cost of living in all parts of the Territory. Although some interesting data did emerge from this inquiry, it was carried out by the regular administrators already overloaded with work and thus did not provide enough material to generalize for the Territory as a whole. It was therefore decided to repeat the study with the help of primary school teachers who would devote their vacations to an inquiry into family budgets and the cost of living of the various groups in different parts of the Territory. The results, treated statistically, will no doubt interest the Council at its next meeting.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms

54. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that the report of the Visiting Mission and numerous petitions gave evidence of arbitrary arrest of trade union workers for their trade union activities, of political persecutions, etc. He stated that the

indigenous population is deprived of human rights. The Council should recommend to the Administering Authority that it cease its antidemocratic policy and the infringement of the rights and interests of the indigenous population.

Emancipation of women

55. The representative of New Zealand recommended that the Council encourage the Administering Authority to ameliorate the position of women in the Territory.

Public health

56. The representative of New Zealand urged the Administering Authority to continue efforts to ensure an adequate number of doctors as well as to increase medical facilities.

57. The representative of Thailand expressed the opinion that the number of doctors, both European and Africans, practising in the Territory, and the medical facilities available were insufficient for a population of nearly three million inhabitants.

58. The representative of the United States of America noted with satisfaction the increasing effectiveness of the medical services in the Territory and observed that in the long-run the medical needs of the Territory could only be met by training a large number of Africans. He found very encouraging the increase of African doctors in the year under review. The number of African doctors, however, was still too small to meet the needs of the Territory and he suggested that the Council might wish to urge the Administering Authority to intensify its efforts to train African medical personnel.

59. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that data contained in the report of the Visiting Mission, the reports of the Administering Authority and the petition received from the Territory, made it perfectly clear that the situation, as far as health services were concerned, was entirely unsatisfactory. Health service expenditures for 1950 amounted to about 125 francs per person, that is, about 70 cents per person per year. Hunger, misery, ignorance and deplorable health conditions had led to a high mortality rate. The Trusteeship Council should recommend to the Administering Authority that it should improve radically the health situation and, to that end, increase budgetary appropriations for health services.

60. The special representative of the Administering Authority stated that there was an agreement in recognizing certain shortcomings in public health work and that the number of doctors was as yet inadequate for all the needs of the Territory. However he reminded the Council of the considerable results already achieved which should not be minimized. The Territory was once replete with endemic disease like leprosy, syphilis and sleeping sickness which have been brought under control. There were 12,000 beds in the Territory's hospitals, representing 4,380,000 bed-days for a population of three million persons. Funds allocated to health measures represented 11.5 per cent of the Territory's regular budget, not to mention an additional 191 million francs which had been spent in 1950 from the ten-year plan funds.

Racial discrimination

61. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that an anti-democratic policy characterized by racial discrimination and gross infringement of the rights and the interests of the population had been carried out by the Administering Authority.

According to the petition received from the Executive Committee of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (T/PET 5/89 and T/PET.5/89/Add.1) "the racial discrimination still exists as regards wage scales and economic and social relations". The Visiting Mission noted in its report the complaints of the indigenous inhabitants that "racial discrimination is still practised in the matter of medical care, Europeans enjoying certain advantages not available to Africans".

The Trusteeship Council should recommend to the Administering Authority that it put an end to the anti-democratic policy pursued with regard to the local indigenous population, the policy marked by racial discrimination and gross violation of rights and interests of the indigenous population of the Trust Territory.

62. The special representative of the Administering Authority recalled the circular prohibiting in commercial establishments signs indicating the counters where different races should make their purchases, which he had read earlier before the Council. This circular indicated the concern of the French government to remove even the appearance of racial discrimination from commercial establishments.

V. EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

General

63. The representative of New Zealand stated that progress in the educational field seemed to be on the whole satisfactory. He noted, however, that more schools were being asked for in petitions and expressed the hope that the Administering Authority would continue to make every effort to meet this proper and laudable demand.

64. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that data contained in the report of the Visiting Mission, the reports of the Administering Authority, and the petition received from the Territory made it perfectly clear that the situation, as far as educational services are concerned, was entirely unsatisfactory. It is obvious, therefore, that the Administering Authority had failed to take appropriate measures to improve the deplorable situation prevailing in this field. The overwhelming majority of the people of the Cameroons continued to live in a state of illiteracy and ignorance. According to the information given in the report of the Administering Authority only 16 per cent of the potential school-age population were receiving schooling. The Administering Authority did not develop local languages and national culture. The Trusteeship Council should recommend to the Administering Authority that it should improve radically the educational situation and, to that end, increase budgetary appropriations for educational and cultural needs.

65. The special representative of the Administering Authority did not consider the teaching of French as an obstacle to the growth of local Cameroonian culture, but that the development of Cameroonian consciousness along with democratic administration and the general teaching of French would stimulate indigenous cultural values instead, as has been claimed, of demolishing them.

Secondary and higher education

66. The representative of Thailand felt that secondary and higher education should be further promoted since the future of the Territory depended upon the growth of an indigenous elite.