



Wednesday, 27 November 1957,
at 3 p. m.

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Chairman: Mr. Thanat KHOMAN (Thailand).

AGENDA ITEM 13

**Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3595 and Corr.1,
A/3718, A/C.4/372) (continued)**

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Charles Assalé, Mr. Paul Soppo Priso and Mr. Jean Ekwabi, representatives of the Groupe d'action nationale du Cameroun, Mr. Ndeh Ntumazah, representative of One Kamerun, Mr. Félix Roland Moumié, representative of the Union des populations du Cameroun, Mr. Dika Akwa, representative of the Confédération des syndicats indépendants du Cameroun, and Mr. Jacques Ngom, representative of the Confédération générale kamerunaise du travail, took places at the Committee table.

1. Mr. NGOM (Confédération générale kamerunaise du travail) said that he wished to reply to the representative of Greece, who had asked at the previous meeting about the social programmes of the various organizations. The Confédération générale kamerunaise du travail (CGKT) took an active interest in such matters. At the congress it had held at Douala in 1956 it had drawn up a charter of requests for economic, social and cultural progress in the Cameroons. The charter had been transmitted to the High Commissioner, who had replied that such matters were now within the competence of the Cameroons Government. In the charter the CGKT had asked for the industrialization of the Territory, housing plans, improved communications, the modernization of agriculture and stock-breeding, the constitution of a national bank etc. Such a programme was clearly above party politics and might provide a useful basis for the Cameroons Government to work on.

2. Mr. AMEGBE (Ghana) asked what functions Mr. Dika Akwa had in mind for the police force which he had asked the United Nations to provide.

3. Mr. DIKA AKWA (Confédération des syndicats indépendants du Cameroun) explained that a police force accompanying a commission of inquiry would be responsible for protecting the members of the commission, supervising the implementation of any amnesty Act that might be adopted and maintaining order until the Cameroonians achieved independence, since France

was obviously incapable of assuming that responsibility.

4. Mr. NTUMAZAH (One Kamerun) considered that the police force would be able to prevent the type of incidents which had occurred in Togoland during the visit of the United Nations Commission on Togoland under French Administration and which had resulted in eighteen casualties.

5. Mr. NOGUEIRA (Portugal) observed that page 122, paragraph 8, of the Trusteeship Council's report (A/3595 and Corr.1) contained a reference to the murder of two candidates elected to the Cameroons Territorial Assembly. He asked who the candidates in question had been and to what political parties they and their murderers had belonged.

6. Mr. SOPPO PRISO (Groupe d'action nationale du Cameroun) replied that the two victims had been Dr. Delangué and Mr. Samuel Mpouma. The former, being new to political life, had had no opportunity of taking part in public affairs. The latter had been an ex-civil servant of moderate views. He did not know the political opinions of the murderers.

7. The CHAIRMAN thanked the petitioners.

8. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) asked permission to speak again, if the occasion arose, after the representatives of the United Kingdom and France had made their statements.

9. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) felt that it would not be in order to grant that request.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that according to the established practice the petitioners stated their views and answered questions put to them, but did not take part in the general debate. He intended to abide by that practice unless the Committee decided otherwise.

11. Mr. RIFAI (Syrie) said he did not consider the petitioner's request unreasonable. Unless he were mistaken the Committee had at past sessions authorized petitioners to be present during the general debate and to speak, if necessary, in order to clarify certain points. In any case he felt that the petitioners should be allowed a further opportunity to address the Committee if they so wished.

12. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) suggested as a compromise that the petitioners should be allowed to intervene, if they wished, before any draft resolutions on the question of the Cameroons were put to the vote.

13. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) supported the suggestion and urged the French and United Kingdom delegations to accept it.

14. Mr. JAIPAL (India) said he agreed that the petitioners should not intervene in the general debate but he pointed out that only recently, during the discussion on Togoland under French administration, the Committee had allowed Mr. Olympio to speak at the end of

the debate. He suggested that the petitioners from the Cameroons should be allowed the same latitude.

15. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) pointed out that in that case Togoland had been the item on the Committee's agenda, whereas it was now examining the Trusteeship Council's report, of which the Cameroons constituted only one chapter.

16. Mr. THORP (New Zealand) did not think that the right of petition through oral hearings was intended to extend to commenting on the statements of representatives of Member States made in the general debate. It had originally been the practice for petitioners to withdraw after answering questions, though there had recently been deviations from that procedure.

17. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) said that he was willing to agree that at a later stage of the debate a petitioner might, if necessary, ask to speak and he had no doubt, to judge from the precedents, that the request would be granted. Such a request was, however, out of the question at the present stage, when the general debate was about to begin.

18. Mr. KELLY (Australia) feared that the Committee might be on the verge of establishing a very dangerous precedent. If petitioners were henceforth to be allowed to take part in the debate, they would virtually acquire a new right in receiving the same treatment as representatives of Member States.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the general feeling seemed to be that if the petitioners wished to furnish supplementary information, it would be for any one of the members of the Committee to raise the question and for the Committee to decide. He suggested that that procedure should be followed.

20. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) and Mr. SMOLDEREN (Belgium) endorsed the Chairman's suggestion.

21. Mr. RIFAI (Syria) said that he had never asked that the petitioners should be allowed to take part in the general debate. He had merely upheld the right of petitioners to appear before the Committee and to furnish it with supplementary information. He pointed out to the representatives of France and the United Kingdom that although the Trusteeship Council's report embraced a number of different questions one of those questions concerned the Cameroons under French administration.

22. Mr. CARPIO (Philippines) said that the right of petition served a dual purpose: it enabled petitioners to bring before the United Nations questions of vital importance to their Territories, and it provided the United Nations with a valuable source of information. His delegation considered that it would be useful, in the course of the discussion, to be able to ask the petitioners for explanations. His delegation had once submitted to the Trusteeship Council a draft resolution (T/238)—which had been rejected as a result of an equally divided vote—according to which representatives of the Trust Territories would have taken part in the Council's debates concerning their own Territories. The Administering Authorities were allowed to speak freely about conditions in the Territories but it often happened that the Council did not hear the other side of the question.

23. He therefore proposed that the petitioners should remain at the Committee table.

24. Mr. SULTANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that once the Committee had agreed to hear the petitioners in order to obtain some details on conditions in the Cameroons, it could not subsequently discuss the matter out of their hearing. He expressed his surprise at the desire of some delegations to discuss very important matters vital to the peoples of the Cameroons behind closed doors, and to exclude the representatives of those two Territories whose views were needed in order to assess in its true light the whole situation in the Territories. He therefore strongly endorsed the Philippine proposal.

25. Mr. WELLS (United States of America) said that, since the Trusteeship Council's report dealt with a number of Territories, he saw no reason for the petitioners to be present during the entire debate.

26. In reply to a question from Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom), Mr. WIESCHHOFF (Secretary of the Committee) stated that, at the ninth session the petitioners whom the Committee had heard on the subject of the unification of Togoland and the future of Togoland under British administration had been allowed to remain at the Committee table throughout the discussion. Hitherto, however, each time the item under discussion had been the Trusteeship Council's report the petitioners had left the table after they had made their statements and answered the questions put to them by members of the Committee.

27. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) observed that the precedents confirmed his views on the matter. Since the discussion was a public one, the petitioners would undoubtedly remain in the room; if they wished for a further hearing, they would submit a request, which the Committee would be unlikely to refuse. In that way the formalities, at least, would be respected.

28. Mr. SMOLDEREN (Belgium) said that there seemed to be some confusion of ideas that was complicating the discussion. It was the annual reports of the Administering Authorities, not the petitions, which were the source of information on the Territories. The right of petition was merely the right for the inhabitants of those Territories to voice their complaints to the United Nations, in person or in writing. There could be no question of placing the petitioners on an equal footing with sovereign Member States. In the present case, the only solution would be to grant those concerned a fresh hearing if they had additional statements to make.

29. Mr. JAIPAL (India) said that he endorsed the Philippine proposal and would like it to be put to a vote, on the understanding that the Committee's decision should not set a precedent.

30. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) moved closure of the debate.

The Liberian motion was adopted by 29 votes to none, with 31 abstentions.

31. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Philippine proposal that the petitioners should be allowed to remain at the Committee table, without participating in the discussion.

The Philippine proposal was adopted by 32 votes to 17, with 17 abstentions.

32. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) said that he had voted against the proposal, which created a ridi-

culous situation in which the petitioners would remain at the Committee table to hear the discussions of all kinds of questions that did not concern them. The decision disregarded the genuine efforts that had been made to effect a compromise and it confirmed his doubts concerning the procedure followed by the Committee in hearing petitioners.

33. Mr. SMOLDEREN (Belgium) asked whether or not the hearing of the petitioners was finished.

34. The CHAIRMAN replied that, since the Philippine proposal had been adopted, the petitioners were entitled to remain at the table but not to take part in the discussion.

35. Mr. SMOLDEREN (Belgium) said that he understood from that reply that the hearing was finished.

36. Mr. CHAMANDI (Yemen) felt that the Committee

should take a vote to decide whether the petitioners should be heard if they wished to speak.

37. Mr. CARPIO (Philippines) said that the suggestion made by the representative of Yemen was implicit in his proposal.

38. Mrs. MORALES (Costa Rica) thought that the Committee should consult a competent authority on the principle involved, since the problem was bound to arise on future occasions.

39. Mr. THORP (New Zealand) pointed out that the debate had been declared closed.

40. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) wished it to be understood that in voting in favour of the Philippine proposal she had interpreted it as meaning that the petitioners could have an opportunity to make supplementary statements later.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.