



TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Nineteenth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

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President: Mr. Rafik ASHA (Syria).

Present:

The representatives of the following States: Australia, Belgium, Burma, China, France, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Italy, New Zealand, Syria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The representatives of the following specialized agency: International Labour Organisation.

Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration (*continued*):

- (i) **Annual report of the Administering Authority for 1955 (T/1284, T/1304, T/1307);**
- (ii) **Hearings of petitioners from the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration (General Assembly resolution 1067 (XI))**

[Agenda items 3 (c) and 14]

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Deniau, special representative of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration, took a place at the Council table.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY AND REPLIES OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE (*continued*)

Political advancement (continued)

1. Mr. KIANG (China) asked whether the political reforms described by the French representative and the special representative had relaxed the tension in the Territory and, if so, to what extent political activity had reverted to normal.
2. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) pointed out that the reforms had not yet taken effect. The preparatory work leading up to the reforms had focused public attention on political problems and the public had followed the developments with the deepest interest.
3. Mr. BARGUES (France) added that political conditions had returned to normal throughout the Territory except in the Wouri and Sanaga-Maritime regions, where the influence of the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) and its affiliates was still felt. The impending reforms would considerably weaken the pro-

paganda disseminated by those parties since they would mark an important step towards ending the period of trusteeship, whose immediate termination was one of the measures demanded by the UPC. The French Government criticized the UPC not for its aspirations and ideas but for the means to which it resorted. The UPC was not the only party calling for the unification and independence of the Cameroons, but it sought to prevail by violence. By depriving the UPC of much of its propaganda, the reforms might well impel it to resort to violence as its only means of action. At the same time, however, as the new democratic institutions came to be understood by the population the UPC would gradually lose the support which made such violence possible. Indeed the political advancement of the past year had already cut the ground from under the feet of the UPC and its affiliates. It was to be hoped that political conditions in the Territory would become completely normal once the population as a whole realized the full advantages of the new institutions.

4. In reply to a further question by Mr. KIANG (China), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) explained that the eight votes cast against the draft statute in the Territorial Assembly represented the votes of the Groupe d'action nationale, which did not agree with the Administering Authority and the majority of the Assembly that the intermediate stage which the statute represented was necessary. In the opinion of that group, the Territory's independence should be proclaimed forthwith, although the effective transfer of powers might take place gradually.

5. Mr. BARGUES (France) added that in the Assembly of the French Union Mr. Soppo Priso, Chairman of the Groupe d'action nationale, opposing the draft statute, had advocated Cameroonian autonomy within the framework of the wider community along the lines of the Commonwealth of Nations rather than the French Union, which had become too restrictive; in his opinion the relationship between France and the Cameroons should immediately be given its final form in order to avoid domestic disturbances which might deter foreign investors and jeopardize the country's social advancement. Mr. Soppo Priso would have liked to see an immediate end to the Trusteeship Agreement for the Cameroons and the adoption of a statute somewhat along the lines of that actually adopted, the major difference being that the Cameroonians would discuss the provisions of that statute with a France that was no longer their Administering Authority.

6. Mr. KIANG (China) asked what had been the main issues during the electoral campaign preceding the elections in December 1956.

7. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that while in some constituencies the accent had been on local problems, in many others, particularly in the south, general political problems had been the main issue. The question that had given rise to the most heated discussion was that of an immediate end to trusteeship versus successive steps in that direction. Some candidates had called for immediate independence,

others had asked for the immediate recognition of independence as the ultimate objective and still others had felt that the Territory must pass through an intermediate stage during which trusteeship must continue. Each of the candidates had published a statement of principles. Most of the statements had dealt with the problem of independence; some had raised the question of unification and others had stressed the need for retaining close links with the Administering Authority. Every shade of opinion had been expressed. Mr. Assalé, who had subsequently been elected Chairman of the Groupe d'action nationale, had concluded his proclamation with a call for reunification, independence and national union. On the other hand, Mr. Mbida, who had later become Chairman of the Mouvement démocratique camerounais has stressed the need for an intermediate stage of internal autonomy vested in a Cameroonian legislative assembly and a Cameroonian government to prepare the country for total independence in a few years' time. By the time of the elections the voters had been fully aware of all the issues.

8. Mr. KIANG (China) asked whether the four political groups in the Territorial Assembly had come into being before or after the elections and whether they had any connexion with the political parties mentioned in chapter VI of the annual report.¹

9. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) explained that the four groups had taken final shape only after the elections. Nevertheless, during the electoral campaign a certain number of candidates who thought alike on the various problems had been linked by certain ties. The names used by the different lists of candidates were not the same as the names of the groups subsequently formed in the Territorial Assembly, but there was often a continuity of ideas between them. For example, the platforms defended by Mr. Mbida during the elections as a member of the Rassemblement démocrate chrétien and by his party in the Assembly, the Mouvement démocratique camerounais, were the same. Similarly, the Groupe d'action nationale in the Assembly expressed the ideas previously mooted by the Courant d'union nationale which had been active in various regions in the South Cameroons between June and November.

10. There was a similar relationship between the political parties mentioned in the annual report and the groups in the Territorial Assembly. For example, Mr. Ahidjo, the President of the Territorial Assembly was a member of the Bloc démocratique camerounais but in the Assembly he belonged to the Union camerounaise group. Senator Okala, on the other hand, who was one of the leaders of the Union sociale camerounaise, had not joined any of the political groups in the Assembly. It should be noted in that connexion that the political movements described in the annual report were not political parties in the strict sense of the term but rather study groups or political clubs.

11. Mr. KIANG (China) asked for further information on the efforts that had been made by certain political leaders to unite various parties in a single national union movement.

12. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that the leaders of several political parties had tried

to unite those parties on a common platform. The Courant d'union nationale was in the nature of a temporary association of individuals or groups rather than a political party in the strict sense of the term. It had originated on 9 June 1956 at a meeting convened at Yaoundé by Mr. Soppo Priso and attended by a certain number of members of various parties. A resolution had been adopted and the principal spokesman of the Courant d'union nationale had subsequently toured the South Cameroons trying to gather support for it. The resolution called for the unity of the Cameroons, the solution of the Cameroonian problem either by a supervised referendum or by the convening of an assembly elected by universal suffrage for that purpose. As a prerequisite for any action it requested the restoration of the right of free speech by means of a total amnesty. The resolution was said to represent a minimum programme and all Cameroonians were urged to support it. From the outset, however, rifts had appeared within the Courant d'union nationale. A number of the parties represented had disagreed with the substance or the form of the claims advanced and they had publicly disassociated themselves from the Courant d'union nationale in the Press.

13. The Courant d'union nationale had held a number of congresses, the last two of which had been particularly noteworthy. From the very beginning some spokesmen of the dissolved parties had attended the meetings of the Courant d'union nationale and had taken the opportunity to proclaim the ideas previously advocated by those parties. At the Dibombari Congress in early November a split had developed on the question of the national flag. As the Council would remember, the Union des populations du Cameroun had decided to adopt a flag with a black crab on a red ground. The majority of the Courant d'union nationale had refused to accept that flag on the grounds that it was too openly Communist. The Congress had adopted a flag with a black lobster on a green ground and a gold crescent, symbolizing the union of the South and the North. The spokesmen of the dissolved parties had been very annoyed that their flag had not been adopted. A second point on which difficulties had arisen was the municipal elections. The former members of the dissolved parties had wanted the Courant d'union nationale to call for a boycott of the elections but the Congress had finally rejected that idea. The final break between the Courant d'union nationale and the former members of the dissolved parties had come at the Ebolowa Congress at the end of November, when the leaders of the Courant d'union nationale had decided that it was in the Territory's general interest to take an active part in the December elections and to recommend all Cameroonians to go to the polls. The representatives of the dissolved parties had walked out of the Congress on the grounds that they could not agree to participate in elections for an assembly whose principal task would be to examine a statute prepared by the Administering Authority. They had maintained that the only possible solution was immediate independence negotiated with the representatives of the dissolved parties who, in their eyes, were the only true representatives of the people.

14. A number of leading Cameroonian politicians, such as the elected representatives of the North Cameroons—Mr. Ninine, Mr. Arouna and Mr. Ahidjo—had attacked the platform of the Courant d'union nationale in the Press. Mr. Mbida too, had taken a vigorous stand against it on the grounds that it was unrealistic and un-

¹ *Rapport annuel du Gouvernement français à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'administration du Cameroun placé sous la tutelle de la France, année 1955* (Paris, Imprimerie Chaix, 1956). Transmitted to members of the Trusteeship Council by the Secretary-General under cover of document T/1284.

constructive to reject the application of the *loi-cadre* in the Cameroons.

15. In reply to questions by Mr. KIANG (China) concerning the establishment and composition of the promotion committees and disciplinary councils for officials, Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that those committees and councils had been in operation for about a year. They were composed of representatives of the Administration and of the staff and were elected by the staff concerned. They were under the chairmanship of a senior official representing the High Commissioner.

16. There was no discrimination between French and African officials in the Cameroonian civil service. All the categories included both French and Cameroonian civil servants; each category elected its own representatives to the different bodies, choosing them for their ability alone, irrespective of geographical origin.

17. In reply to a further question by Mr. KIANG (China), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that so far as he knew there were at present no Cameroonians practising law in the Territory. Up to the present, most of the Cameroonians with a law degree had preferred to continue their studies in France rather than practice in the Territory, while the few who had returned to the Territory had applied for employment in the Administration.

18. U KYAW MIN (Burma) asked what powers the legislative assembly would have under the proposed statute.

19. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the powers of the legislative assembly were set forth at length, although not exhaustively, in article 9 of the statute. Among the areas of the Assembly's jurisdiction were the administrative organization of the Territory, which included control over all forms of communal organization and local administration, organization of the chambers of commerce, and organization of the electoral system with respect to local and municipal elections. Its jurisdiction would also include the entire legal and financial system of the Territory, all social services, public works and transportation services, and all agricultural and economic services. The Cameroonian Government would also have complete control over all officials in those services, whether African or European.

20. Mr. BARGUES (France) said that, in brief, the legislative assembly would have the power to decide all questions except those which were reserved to the central organs of the French Republic in accordance with France's continuing responsibility as the Administering Authority of a Trust Territory. France was still responsible for the defence of the Territory; it would therefore retain control of foreign affairs and defence. The Territory would continue to receive financial assistance from France and to be part of the French monetary and economic system; France would therefore retain control over monetary matters, credit, the customs system and the financial assistance it gave the Territory. France also remained responsible for safeguarding certain great principles common to all the Territories it administered; it therefore retained jurisdiction over civil liberties, the Labour Code—though not the application of labour legislation—the Penal Code and the system of administrative procedure. It also retained control over the curricula and examinations in secondary and higher education, since the diplomas were granted by or on behalf of French universities.

21. In reply to a further question by U KYAW MIN (Burma), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the legislative assembly would be competent to approve budgetary allocations in all fields within the jurisdiction of the Cameroonian Government.

22. Mr. BARGUES (France) pointed out that since 1946 the Cameroonian Assembly had had the power to pass on the budget and that the situation would be the same under the new statute except that the areas reserved to French jurisdiction would be considerably reduced.

23. U KYAW MIN (Burma) asked whether he was right in assuming that under the new statute executive powers would be transferred to the council of ministers.

24. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the Government of the Cameroons would have executive power over the administration of the Territory except for the services expressly reserved in article 38 of the statute. The powers of the prime minister in council were listed in article 17 of the statute; in general, that article conferred on him the same degree of executive power as that exercised by his opposite numbers in the Western European democracies.

25. U KYAW MIN (Burma) asked whether the Territorial Assembly had submitted any amendment to the draft statute which would abolish the requirement that the prime minister should be named by the High Commissioner.

26. Mr. BARGUES (France) replied that under the draft statute the prime minister would be appointed by the High Commissioner but could take office only after investiture by the assembly. In that respect the High Commissioner's function was analogous to that of the Head of State in France.

27. Replying to further questions by U KYAW MIN (Burma), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that no attempt had been made to codify the manifold systems of customary law existing in the Territory although efforts had been made to study and describe some of them. Generally speaking, those systems were evolving in the direction of a certain number of common principles and thus tending towards a unification which it would be undesirable to hinder by premature codification.

28. The reasons disqualifying people from voting were strictly laid down by law. They involved only a very small number of persons: those sentenced to penalties involving the loss of civil rights, the mentally deficient, and any others who were unable to exercise their civil rights.

29. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) asked whether it would be correct to assume that one of the reasons for the disturbances in the Sanaga-Maritime region during the last elections had been the fact that the proposed amnesty bill had not been passed and that consequently a part of the population had been unable to participate in the elections.

30. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that although that situation had been claimed as one of the reasons for the difficulties in the Wouri region and the disorders in the Sanaga-Maritime region, he did not endorse that explanation. Throughout the past year the dissolved parties, and particularly the UPC, had been conducting a vigorous campaign against the *loi-cadre*, saying that they would oppose any implementation of it in the Cameroons; yet the elections had been held in implementation of that law; consequently he did not

think that the amnesty question had been of major importance in connexion with the disorders. Moreover, the UPC had taken the position that the proposed amnesty was inadequate in any case.

31. Mr. BARGUES (France) said that during the eleventh session of the General Assembly he had erroneously informed the Fourth Committee that the time-limit for passage of the amnesty bill would expire on 12 February 1957. The time-limit had in fact extended to 1 March 1957. In any case, the bill had not yet been adopted and he assumed that the Council of the Republic had requested a further postponement owing to the disorders provoked in December 1956 by the UPC, whose members were the very people the amnesty had been intended to benefit. The bill would probably be adopted but not before complete information had been obtained concerning what part its possible beneficiaries had had in the recent incidents in the Cameroons.

32. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) pointed out that the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, 1955, had expressed the hope that the French Government would take steps to improve the situation in the Territory and that he himself had been in favour of an amnesty.

33. He asked for some information about the political platforms of Mr. Ninine, leader of the Union camerounaise in the Territorial Assembly, and Mr. Djoumessi, leader of the Groupe des paysans indépendants.

34. Mr. BARGUES (France), replying to the Haitian representative's first remark, said that the French Government fully agreed with him and with the Visiting Mission, as was shown by the fact that it had submitted an amnesty bill.

35. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) read an extract from a statement of principles by Mr. Ninine and the other candidates on his list to the effect that they intended to remain faithful to the idea of Franco-Cameroonian co-operation, which they believed to be the Territory's only hope of achieving the ends laid down by the Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement.

36. Mr. Djoumessi had claimed in his statement of principles that there were now Cameroonian capable of administering their country and had said that his party's first political action would be to demand the formation of a council of ministers responsible to the assembly, to manage the Territory's affairs, and consequently to demand the independence of the Cameroons, within a framework of political, economic and financial co-operation with France.

37. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) asked what was the exact legal status of the province of the North Cameroons which he understood had been established at the time of the debate on the statute and had been granted certain privileges in relation to the Territorial Assembly.

38. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) explained that the draft statute included a plan for the division of the Territory into provinces, as laid down in article 9 of the Act of 23 June. That provision did not mean that all the regions must necessarily be grouped in provinces, but merely that that could be done if desired. The provinces would be legal entities and would possess budgetary autonomy. The provincial assemblies would

also have certain advisory powers on matters connected with customary institutions.

39. The councillors of the North Cameroons had therefore considered that they were entitled to request the immediate establishment of a province. Some councillors of the West Cameroons had stated that they preferred to wait and see how the North Cameroons province functioned before deciding whether to ask for the extension of the provincial system to other parts of the Territory. It was clear from the debate that the establishment of provinces was regarded as a necessary step towards administrative decentralization and for the protection of customary and ethnic individuality.

40. One of the reasons why the North Cameroons representatives had wished for a province to be established at once was that in the south there were already many organs of local government in the form of *communes*, whereas in the north there were only two. The North had not yet enough men trained in local administration to enable the system of *communes* to be extended. Moreover, that system required abundant local resources, whereas the riches of the Cameroons were chiefly in the south.

41. In accordance with the draft statute, the North Cameroons provincial assembly would exercise the powers of a municipality in that part of the province which was not organized in *communes*. It would thus fill a gap and would re-establish the equilibrium of the Territory, which had been to some extent upset in favour of the South, for it would make available to the people of the North budgetary resources which so far they had been unable to tap owing to the absence of *communes*.

42. Mr. BARGUES (France) said that in a vast territory like the Cameroons, where communications were difficult, it was essential to avoid excessive centralization on the one hand and excessive decentralization on the other. It had been considered that both those dangers would be avoided by the establishment of provinces, which would form an intermediate stage between the Government and the regions. The establishment of provinces in the Cameroons had been contemplated for some time and was not a purely *ad hoc* measure.

43. He was under the impression that the Haitian representative feared that the creation of the province of the North Cameroons might accentuate the tendency to particularism in that part of the Territory. He did not think there was really much danger of that; if there were, it might be averted by the creation of other provinces.

44. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) confirmed the French representative's remarks. He would have felt less apprehension if the whole Territory had been divided into provinces, for he would have regarded that as a purely administrative measure, but only one province had been created and its functions had been enlarged by an amendment to the original draft. According to the information given by the special representative at the previous meeting, the northern provincial assembly would exercise a kind of veto power in the legislative assembly.

45. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the provision to which he had referred at the 761st meeting, according to which no law to which a provincial assembly was opposed would be applicable in the province concerned, had been included in the French Government's original draft statute. The Territorial

Assembly had merely defined and emphasized the need for the agreement of the provincial assemblies to any modification of customary institutions. The amendment had been introduced after a long debate in the Territorial Assembly and subject to the stipulation that the agreement of the provincial assemblies would be required only in connexion with certain purely customary matters.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.20 p.m.

46. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) recalled that at the 761st meeting the special representative had stated that the purpose of establishing a northern provincial assembly was to enable minority ethnic groups to oppose any measures which they regarded as being in flagrant opposition to their racial traditions and customs. He wondered what ethnic groups were concerned. He also asked whether the pagan Kirdi were represented in the Territorial Assembly.

47. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) emphasized that the provisions governing the provincial assemblies were of a general nature and would apply to any province which might be established in the Cameroons. They had been drawn up before the representatives of the North Cameroons had expressed the desire that the northern province should be established immediately.

48. It might be said that all ethnic groups in the Cameroons were minorities. There were innumerable races and tribes, but none large enough to form a majority. All those groups wished to preserve their individuality and any attempt to change things too rapidly would undoubtedly lead to trouble. A sentiment of national unity was slowly developing, but a feeling of separateness still persisted among the various ethnic groups.

49. The manner of representation of the Kirdi people in the provincial assembly would be decided on by the legislative assembly, in accordance with article 25 of the draft statute as amended by the Territorial Assembly. Furthermore, in accordance with article 21 of the statute, the members of the provincial assemblies would be the representatives of the regions concerned in the legislative assembly. That provision would ensure that there would be no opposition or conflict of powers between the provincial assemblies and the legislative assembly. There would also be representatives of traditional groups, collectivities and economic interests. The number of elected members and the method of their election to the provincial assemblies would be decided by the legislative assembly and might vary according to the circumstances of each province.

50. There were in the Territorial Assembly four or five non-Moslem representatives from the North, though the pagan Kirdi had elected some Moslem representatives.

51. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) earnestly hoped that tribal divisions would not be perpetuated in the Cameroons under French administration. When in the Territory with the 1955 Visiting Mission, he had had the impression that the Kirdi people lived somewhat apart from the rest of the population. He hoped that all the various elements of the population would be represented in the provincial assembly and that the Cameroonians would gradually develop into a homogeneous people.

52. Mr. HOOD (Australia) said that he had been interested in the references in the annual report and by the French representative to the system of parties in the Cameroons under French administration. He had understood the special representative to say that there was no direct relationship between the present groupings in the Assembly and the groupings described in the report itself. He asked whether there were any special alliances among the present groups.

53. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that most of the political parties mentioned on page 47 of the annual report were of a regional character, although some of them had a wider scope. They were rather study or working groups on political questions than political parties in the strict sense of the term. Many of them were, however, extremely active at the local level, as, for example, the Kumsze (Traditional Assembly of the Bamiléké People) and the Union tribale bantou, both groups which had seceded from the UPC in 1951 or 1952, owing partly to the feeling among some of the Bamiléké and Boulou that the UPC was a Douala and Bassa movement and partly to their disapproval of the methods used by the UPC.

54. The Australian representative had perhaps been surprised by the fact that the members of the Territorial Assembly had not presented themselves as members of any political parties at the time of the elections. The reason for that was that the members had been elected on a personal and not a party basis, the candidates stressing their personal activities and opinions rather than their adherence to one or another political party. That was one of the traditions of French political life which had been adopted in the Cameroons.

55. Mr. HOOD (Australia) asked whether the four political groups in the new Assembly had party organizations in the generally accepted meaning of the term and whether they met separately, drew up party programmes, organized public meetings and issued party literature.

56. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that the groups had engaged in specific and highly organized activity during the last session of the Assembly. Each group had met separately to discuss problems which were to come before the plenary meetings. Their elected chairmen and other officers had issued press releases and had carried on debates in the columns of certain newspapers. Each group had designated for each question one or several councillors to serve as its spokesman in the Assembly. That there was a certain degree of cohesion within each group had been demonstrated by the fact that one group had voted as a bloc against the statute, while three others had voted as blocs in support of it. The relations between those groups and the political organizations outside the Assembly were somewhat tenuous, being more a matter of personal relationships than of a hierarchical party organization.

57. Mr. HOOD (Australia) asked to what extent the representative elected to the Assembly in the December elections supported a programme aiming at unification of the Cameroons.

58. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that that question had been considered by each of the United Nations visiting missions which had gone to the Cameroons, and the conclusion had always been that the great body of the population was not interested in unification and that those who supported it had not formulated a precise programme for obtaining it. Some of the councillors elected to the Assembly had submitted

programmes envisaging unification. They had been mostly members from the south and south-west but in very large sections of the Territory unification was not an issue.

59. Mr. HOOD (Australia) asked what factors had influenced the people of the Territory to want to remain under trusteeship.

60. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the great majority of the population recognized the advantages and safeguards which the presence of the Administering Authority and the international system offered. Many Cameroonians felt that the Administering Authority's continued presence was the only guarantee of unity in the Territory, for tribal rivalries were rather violent not only between the North and the South but also among different groups in the south. The Cameroonians realized, moreover, that while they were capable of assuming responsibility for many aspects of the administration of the Territory, they had not yet enough trained men to take the responsibility in all fields and they thought it would be much more useful to serve an apprenticeship in the democratic system under preceptors experienced in parliamentary government. Many Cameroonians likewise appreciated the economic and financial benefits which the presence of the Administering Authority had brought to the Territory and were aware that their country was not yet economically self-sufficient. Its international status as a Trust Territory under United Nations trusteeship heightened their consciousness of their own dignity and individuality as Cameroonians. Finally, they realized that the termination of trusteeship would confront them with the necessity of making a choice regarding their future, which they were not yet ready to do.

61. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) wondered whether those reasons for the desire of the indigenous inhabitants to continue under trusteeship had been voiced in the Territorial Assembly when the statute was being considered, had been put forward in pre-election discussions or had been publicly expressed in some other form.

62. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the explanations he had offered were general in character and had represented arguments invoked both in the Territorial Assembly and during the electoral campaign.

63. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala), recalling that the French representative had stated at the 760th meeting that the statute could be amended by resolution of the legislative assembly, wondered if that meant that there was no limitation on the assembly's power to amend the statute.

64. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that as the article providing for the amendment of the statute had been added by the Assembly to the draft statute submitted by the French Government and had yet to be discussed by the new parliament, he was not in a position to reply.

65. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) asked whether the proposed amendment of article 19 of the statute would represent a first step toward a future federal organization of the Territory or would simply provide for a high degree of political and administrative decentralization within a unitary regime.

66. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that the councillors from the North who had introduced the amendment had made it clear that although they favoured a large measure of decentralization, they did

not wish to depart from the concept of a unitary State and thought that the adoption of an amendment setting up a province of the North Cameroons would be a guarantee of such unity in the future. It was not his impression that they had envisaged a federation, since that would entail geographical redistribution of political powers whereas the provincial assembly was for the most part empowered to deal with administrative matters only.

67. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) wondered whether the four political groups in the Assembly were likely to evolve into majority and minority blocs which would in effect constitute a government party and an opposition party after ratification of the statute.

68. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that although there had been heated debates within each group concerning the different articles of the statute, once the group as a whole had taken a stand most of its members had felt bound to support it. In typical parliamentary fashion the various groups had formed temporary blocs within the Assembly during the discussion of the statute, one group supporting another on a certain point with the understanding that it would in turn receive that group's support in a subsequent vote.

69. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) asked whether the special representative or the representative of France could comment on the argument repeatedly raised by petitioners in the Fourth Committee during the eleventh session of the General Assembly that the new statute represented a step toward integration of the Territory into the French Union and that it would prove an obstacle to the eventual unification of the two Cameroons.

70. Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the petitioners heard by the Fourth Committee had represented the opinions of the dissolved parties. It was true that one of those petitioners, Mr. Bebey Eyidi, was not actually a member of any of those parties but an individual well known for his connexion with them had accompanied him to New York in order to supervise the latter's activities and statements while he himself remained silent. The propaganda of the UPC itself was contradictory on that point, for while the chairman of the party, now residing in the Cameroons under British administration, had stated that the best proof of the UPC's power was the fact that it had forced the French Government to retreat and that the statute would not promote integration into the French Union, other members of the party had said that the statute did indeed represent a step in that direction. He himself thought that the statute would be more likely to promote centrifugal than centripetal forces.

71. With regard to the second point raised by the Guatemalan representative, the statute did not jeopardize the prospects for eventual unification, for it applied only to that part of the Cameroons which was administered by France. It was his opinion that the question of unification could be decided only when both parts of the Cameroons had ceased to be Trust Territories.

72. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala), recalling that the French representative had hailed the elections of 23 December 1956 as the first in "Black" Africa in which a deliberative assembly had been elected by universal adult suffrage, asked whether he had meant only Territories under French administration or the whole of "Black" Africa, including Territories under British administration.

73. Mr. BARGUES (France) explained that in the former Gold Coast and Togoland under British administration only those who had paid a poll-tax had been entitled to vote; but as women were not subject to that tax, the principle of universal suffrage could not be said to have been applied in their case.

74. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) recalled that on 25 March 1957 three important treaties had been signed in Rome by Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany establishing a common European market and joint atomic energy production. In one of those treaties reference was made to the Territories administered by those countries, and the list included the following Trust Territories: Togoland and the Cameroons under French administration, Ruanda-Urundi under Belgian administration, and Somaliland under Italian administration. He asked

what was the legal basis for the inclusion of the Trust Territories under French administration among the areas to be affected by the newly signed treaty establishing a common European market and what political consequences the Administering Authority thought the application of that treaty to the Trust Territories under French administration would have in relation to the objectives of the Trusteeship System. Finally, he asked whether the indigenous inhabitants or territorial authorities in the Cameroons and Togoland under French administration had been consulted in that connexion.

75. Mr. BARGUES (France) replied that he would not be in a position to answer those questions until the new treaty had been ratified by the parliaments of the countries concerned.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.