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President: Mr. Max H. DORSINVILLE (Haiti).

Present:

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

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Health Organization.

Question of the future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII)) (continued)
[Agenda item 17]

Reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, on the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (T/1426 and Add.1, T/1427, T/1434) (continued)
[Agenda item 6]

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Betayenné and Mr. Pinon, special representatives of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration, took places at the Council table.

Cameroons under French administration (continued)
GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the approaching independence of the Cameroons under French administration was a matter of great satisfaction to his delegation, which had ceaselessly urged the earliest possible achievement of that objective. Now that the Administering Authority had realized that the heroic struggle of the Cameroonian people could not be deterred by force of arms, it was important that no mistakes that might impede the

harmonious development of the Territory should be allowed.

2. The question of the unification of the Cameroons was therefore of particular importance and it was regrettable that the Trusteeship Council was considering the future of each of the two parts of the Cameroons separately. Such an approach complicated the consideration of a number of most important questions, and even involved dangers of reducing the prospects for the solution of the question as a whole. There were, however, numerous other obstacles which prevented the taking of a definite position at the moment on many important aspects of the problem, because the Council did not have at its disposal exhaustive information, which might become available in the very near future. Therefore, the delegation of the Soviet Union felt it necessary to postpone making its full statement until the resumed thirteenth session of the General Assembly, and it hoped that the Assembly would consider the Cameroonian question in all its aspects.

3. The Cameroons under French administration was nearing independence in conditions of extreme tension, for which the Administering Authority must be held responsible: certain political organizations of the people had been banned; as a result of continuous repression, part of the progressive population had either been exiled or had had to go underground or was in gaol. This repression had resulted in massive resettlements of whole villages and manhunts which were being conducted by armed patrols of the French army.

4. There was a movement in the Cameroons—the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC)—which advocated a simple and straightforward plan to resolve the present crisis in the Territory. The Administering Authority had tried to prove that the UPC was no longer in existence. That was also the contention of the Visiting Mission, and paragraphs 68, 90 and 91 of its report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427) provided an illuminating insight into the horrible methods, including the use of military forces, provocation and slander, which had been used in an attempt to wipe out that popular movement. It was deplorable that the Visiting Mission, which had found plenty of reasons for condemning the UPC for acts it had not committed, had not been sufficiently impartial to denounce the Administering Authority, which was responsible for the death of the most popular leader of the people, Ruben Um Nyobé. The fact that the UPC had valiantly resisted throughout many years of persecution proved not only that the party was still in existence, but that it enjoyed the whole-hearted support of the population. The UPC existed and would continue to exist as long as the people, who were the source of its strength, remained in existence. In paragraph 111 of its report, the Visiting Mission had itself admitted that a number of former supporters of the UPC had remained faithful to the party's programme.

5. In such circumstances, it was difficult to see how the problems of the Territory could be solved if the

UPC was kept outside its political life. It was necessary, first and foremost, to restore normal conditions in the Cameroons. The first step in that direction would be to declare a general and unconditional amnesty. The Visiting Mission had brought forth many arguments in favour of such an amnesty. It had clearly stated that it had had to listen to many petitions for amnesty, and that it had had occasion to read demands for amnesty at almost every turn in the southern half of the Cameroons.

6. The amnesty should be general and unconditional. Experience had shown that sops and half-measures in the form of a partial amnesty merely aggravated the crisis. The incomplete measures taken thus far had been described as a broad and general amnesty, while the Visiting Mission described them as an actually restricted amnesty. It was not coincidental that, in the course of the whole period of time that had elapsed since the law of 17 February 1958 had been promulgated, only fifteen applications for amnesty had been filed. The Visiting Mission's report showed that only some twenty people had been able to benefit by the so-called amnesty law of 17 February 1958. In April 1958 the High Commissioner had pardoned all those who, it was said, had not been convicted of crimes. But how could there be any question of pardoning innocent people? There was every indication that the new amnesty would have the same defect. According to paragraph 153 of the Visiting Mission's report, it was planned to "pardon those who have committed no crime" and to make the others subject to what was called "impartial justice".

7. It was impossible to restore normal conditions unless the people were guaranteed their democratic freedoms and the right to express their political opinions, and unless the decrees dissolving certain parties were annulled and all those exiled or deported were returned. Once that had been done, normal conditions would be created for taking measures aimed at unification and independence, one of those measures should be the holding of elections simultaneously in the two Territories for a constituent assembly which would proclaim the independent Cameroonian State not later than 1 January 1960. That was the plan proposed by the progressive organizations and supported by the majority of the people.

8. The attitude taken by the Administering Authority and the Visiting Mission on the subject of the elections was most strange: they completely ruled out any possibility of organizing fresh elections, on the grounds that elections had been held in December 1956. But it was common knowledge that those elections had taken place in an atmosphere of repression and terrorism and without United Nations supervision. It was regrettable that the Visiting Mission had not been able to verify the Administering Authority's statistics in that connexion, but it could at least have taken into account the well-established cases of corrupt practices and falsification. There was obviously a desire in certain quarters to impede or delay the realization of the Cameroonian people's aspirations.

9. One delegation had gone so far as to ask how the Cameroonian people would react if the date for their attainment of independence were postponed. That question had perhaps indirectly revealed the designs of certain colonialists. With the upsurge of national liberation movements, the colonialists were beginning

to understand that mere force was not sufficient and could not be relied on. Therefore they were taking all measures to split the national liberation movements and to create strife among them. Such tactics were consistently being demonstrated in the Cameroons. There could be no doubt about the purposes of those tactics and who was to gain through them. The USSR delegation hoped that the Cameroonian nationalist forces would see through the manoeuvres of the colonialists and that they would not allow themselves to be weakened by fratricidal strife.

10. Mr. YANG (China) recalled that under the terms of General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII), the Trusteeship Council was to transmit the reports of the Visiting Mission, together with its observations and recommendations, to the General Assembly not later than 20 February 1959, to enable the Assembly, in consultation with the Administering Authorities, to take the necessary measures in connexion with the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System in the two Territories. The Council had carefully examined the report on the Cameroons under French administration—and in that connexion he would like to express his appreciation of the impartiality and deep sense of responsibility with which the four members of the Mission had formulated their conclusions and recommendations. The Council had also heard the French representative's clear statement of the Administering Authority's point of view (953rd meeting).

11. It gave him particular pleasure to take part in a debate which was the prelude to the independence of the Cameroons under French administration, fixed for 1 January 1960, for he himself had been a member of two visiting missions to the Cameroons in 1952 and 1955. The Cameroons was to him a beautiful and prosperous country; and it was only natural that, after having made two trips there, he had taken great interest in the country and its people. Nothing could give him greater satisfaction than to see the Cameroons under French administration evolve progressively and peacefully towards the goal of independence.

12. His delegation was glad to note that under its new Statute the Territory had enjoyed full autonomy in its internal affairs since 1 January 1959 and that, according to paragraph 134 of the Visiting Mission's report, the terms of the new Statute and the clarifying provisions in its preamble afforded no grounds for doubt that the independence which the Cameroons would enjoy on the termination of the trusteeship would be full and complete. The Visiting Mission had concluded in paragraph 136:

"...the request that the Territory should become independent on 1 January 1960, which was approved in the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons by a large majority, is also supported by the great majority of the population. It therefore considers that it is not necessary to consult the population on this subject before the termination of trusteeship."

13. The Visiting Mission had also studied the important question of whether the present Legislative Assembly was of a truly representative character or whether fresh general elections should be held before the termination of the trusteeship. His delegation endorsed the Mission's conclusions as stated in paragraph 141:

"The Mission is of the opinion that on the whole the present Legislative Assembly is representative

in character. There are certainly insufficient grounds, in the Mission's view, for the holding of new general elections under United Nations supervision before the termination of trusteeship."

14. The Visiting Mission had nevertheless made two important suggestions, one relating to the holding of by-elections in the four constituencies where the disturbances had occurred, and the other relating to the adoption of a policy of reconciliation. His delegation was glad to know that the Cameroonian Government had decided to act on those two suggestions: the by-elections would be held before the attainment of independence, and further liberal measures, including a broad amnesty, were shortly to be introduced and put into effect. In the circumstances, he was happy to say that his delegation would support the Visiting Mission's conclusions and recommendations on the future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration, and in particular the recommendation in paragraph 172 of the report that the Trusteeship Council should propose to the General Assembly that it should "adopt a resolution providing for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement relating to the Cameroons on its attainment of independence on 1 January 1960".

15. In view of the fact that it had often been stated in the Trusteeship Council that good government was no substitute for self-government and that target dates should be fixed for self-government or independence, he was wondering how the Council could possibly turn down the request made of it by the Government of the Cameroons for full independence. His delegation was prepared to vote for any draft resolution designed to endorse the accession by the Cameroons under French administration to national independence on 1 January 1960. His delegation wished to congratulate both France on the excellent work it had done in the Territory and the people of the Cameroons and their leaders on the signal achievement they had made, under the govern-

ment of Mr. Ahidjo, on the Territory's march towards the goal of independence. His delegation was prepared, at the appropriate time, to welcome the new State of the Cameroons to the United Nations.

16. Miss TENZER (Belgium) said that the problem before the Trusteeship Council was an easy one to solve, since the Visiting Mission's report on the Cameroons under French administration provided a clear answer to any questions which might be raised.

17. The whole of the Territory was preparing to celebrate, on 1 January 1960, the attainment of its independence—the final objective of the Trusteeship System. According to the Visiting Mission, that decision by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons, a democratically elected body, was wholeheartedly supported by the great majority of the population. The present status of self-government prepared the way for independence, and the Territory's economic and social development and the manner in which the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly and Government were exercising the powers that had been transferred to them were a guarantee that the Cameroonians would be capable of assuming the responsibilities of independence.

18. The Council had now heard that peace within the Territory was to be still further strengthened by a broad amnesty, and that the Cameroonian Government intended to hold by-elections in the Sanaga-Maritime. Thus there had been a positive response to the two suggestions made by the Visiting Mission.

19. What valid reason could there be for postponing the termination of the trusteeship? Her delegation wholeheartedly endorsed the conclusion to which the Visiting Mission had come after a careful study of the situation, namely, that the Trusteeship Agreement should be terminated when the Cameroons under French administration attained independence on 1 January 1960.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.