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C O N T E N T S

	Page
<i>Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (continued):</i>	
(i) <i>Annual report of the Administering Authority for the year 1958;</i>	
(ii) <i>Petitions and communications raising general questions;</i>	
(iii) <i>Report of the Administering Authority on the separation of the administration of the Northern Cameroons from that of Nigeria (General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV))</i>	
<i>General debate</i>	263

President: Mr. Girolamo VITELLI (Italy).

Present:

The representatives of the following States: Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Burma, China, France, 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: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization.

Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (T/1526) (continued):

- (i) Annual report of the Administering Authority for the year 1958 (T/1494, T/1499, T/1524, T/1527, T/L.956 and Add.1);
- (ii) Petitions and communications raising general questions (T/PET.4/L.12-83; T/PET.4 and 5/L.35-74; T/COM.4/L.33, 36-38, 40, 42-47, 49-52; T/COM.4 and 5/L.3-6);
- (iii) Report of the Administering Authority on the separation of the administration of the Northern Cameroons from that of Nigeria (General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV)) (T/1530, T/1531)

[Agenda items 3 (c), 4 and 17]

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Field and Alhaji Ali Akilu, special representatives of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration, took places at the Council table.

GENERAL DEBATE

1. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) noted that there was a play of external and internal political forces at work in the Southern and the Northern Cameroons which would decide the destiny of the two parts of the

Trust Territory. The decision would be taken by the peoples of the Territory by means of the plebiscites, the impartiality of which would be guaranteed by the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner. The normal function of the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly to supervise the administration of the Territory was at the moment limited by the very fact that the process of winning independence had begun. No delegation had seriously criticized the way in which the process was being carried out. All that the Council could do was to take note of the process and transmit to the Assembly the relevant information and the suggestions made during the debate. The Bolivian delegation hoped that the decision to be taken by the people of the Territory would open up a great future for them and that it would transcend petty local considerations.

2. Mr. HOOD (Australia) was happy to note that the Council had adopted a realistic attitude on the examination of conditions in the Territory. Since the Territory was on the threshold of independence, there was little point in examining the conditions there in as detailed a manner as was done in the case of other Territories. What was more important and relevant was the other question included in the agenda: the future of the Territory.

3. The Council should be mainly concerned with the measures taken by the Administering Authority, in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 1352 (XIV) and 1473 (XIV), to effect the administrative separation of the Trust Territory from Nigeria and the democratization of the system of local government in the Northern Cameroons. The Administering Authority had in that respect submitted two reports (T/1526, T/1530) which testified to the thorough and energetic way in which it had set about its task. From the information provided to the Council, it was clear that the arrangements made for the administrative separation were practical and wise. While it was true that many public services such as customs, civil aviation, posts and telegraphs, would for an interim period have to be provided by Nigeria on an agency basis, the difficulties involved in recruiting personnel for those services gave the Administering Authority no alternative.

4. In the Northern Cameroons, the Administering Authority had, in addition, the task of reorganizing the local administration. He noted with satisfaction the measures which it had taken in that regard. The Commission of Enquiry which had been appointed to ascertain the wishes of the people regarding their regroupment into new administrative divisions and to make recommendations in that respect had endeavoured to take account of the wishes of a representative cross-section of opinion.

5. With regard to the possibility of introducing universal suffrage into the Northern Cameroons, a ques-

tion which had been raised during the debate, the United Kingdom representative had recalled that the Administering Authority had used all its influence to persuade the people, despite their reluctance, to agree to hold the forthcoming plebiscite on the basis of universal suffrage and he had explained that the population had done so only in deference to the wishes of the United Nations. The people of the Northern Cameroons had not seen fit to give women the right to vote in elections, and the Administering Authority had very wisely decided to respect their views. In that regard it should be noted that women had been able to attend the meetings of the Commission of Enquiry and had been perfectly free, had they so wished, to express their views on the granting of the franchise to women.

6. The Australian delegation was convinced that the Administering Authority had taken all the necessary measures in pursuance of the General Assembly's resolutions to prepare for the plebiscites to be held in March 1961, and felt that the Council should commend the Administering Authority for its efforts in that respect. All that remained for the Council to do was to take note of those measures and to bring them to the attention of the General Assembly in suitable terms.

7. Mr. MONTERO DE VARGAS (Uruguay) noted that it would have seemed reasonable for the Administering Authority to submit to the Trusteeship Council, apart from the two short reports on particular questions concerning the Northern Cameroons and the Southern Cameroons, an annual report for the year 1959, as it had done for the year 1958. The Paraguayan delegation, which had always recognized the value of the Administering Authority's work, regretted that the Council had only very limited documentation upon which to base its report to the Assembly.

8. The Paraguayan delegation wished to make the following observations. It hoped, in the first instance, that the Administering Authority would accelerate the reorganization of the police forces in both parts of the Territory, especially in the Northern Cameroons. The police personnel that would guarantee the maintenance of public order after 1 October 1960 should be recruited only in the Territory or, if that was not fully possible, the executive positions should be given to indigenous inhabitants. Secondly, the democratization of the system of local administration should be actively pursued in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV). The Administering Authority should, moreover, submit a complete and detailed report to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session. The Paraguayan delegation noted with pleasure that the Administering Authority continued to furnish considerable assistance to the Territory and hoped that the choice to be made by the Cameroonian people would bring them a prosperous future.

9. Mr. ACLY (United States of America) recalled that, in order to ensure that an atmosphere of freedom and impartiality would prevail during the two plebiscites to be held in the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration the General Assembly had recommended that, after 1 October 1960, when Nigeria attained its independence, there should be as complete a separation as possible between the Trust

Territory and Nigeria. From the information supplied by the Administering Authority, the United States delegation was convinced that the measures which the Administering Authority had begun to take would ensure to the greatest extent possible the administrative separation recommended by the Assembly and would guarantee the impartiality of the plebiscites.

10. In carrying out the wishes of the General Assembly, the Administering Authority had spared neither money nor effort, and the expenditure on the establishment of an administrative headquarters for the Northern Cameroons at Mubi would be useful, whatever the choice of the people with regard to their future. The Administering Authority was also to be commended for having declared itself ready to make up any deficit resulting from the administrative separation.

11. His delegation had been impressed by the measures taken to decentralize governmental functions and democratize the system of local government in the Northern Cameroons. The holding of the new plebiscite there on the basis of universal suffrage would have great educational value for the people and might help to break down the traditional opposition to female suffrage. In any event, the method of voting in elections could not be imposed from outside.

12. Events in the economic field during the past year had been equally encouraging. The fact that, whatever the outcome of the plebiscites, the Colonial Development Corporation was to invest £3 million in the Cameroons Development Corporation was noteworthy because of the effect that that event would have on economic development. The growth of the timber industry was being accompanied by the appearance of numerous small farms in certain regions opened up by the roads built by the timber companies. The construction of more than 100 miles of new roads by the local authorities in 1959, with the assistance of a UNESCO expert, should have a similar effect.

13. In the field of education, his delegation was glad to note a change in the attitude of parents towards the education of girls, as evidenced by the increasing number of girls enrolled in schools.

14. The United States Government wished to congratulate the people of the Territory, their Government and the Administering Authority on the notable progress made during the past year towards the early achievement of the objectives of trusteeship.

15. U THANT (Burma) said that, in its examination of the Administering Authority's annual report on the Territory^{1/} and in its observations on the latter's future, the Council should concern itself solely, at the present session, with the measures which the Administering Authority had taken or planned to take in order to give effect to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its fourteenth session.

16. With regard to the Southern Cameroons, the General Assembly had recommended among other things that steps should be taken to implement the separation of the administration of that part of the

^{1/} Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration: Report by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the General Assembly of the United Nations for the year 1958, Colonial No. 341 (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959). Transmitted to members of the Trusteeship Council by a note of the Secretary-General (T/1494).

Territory from the administration of the Federation of Nigeria before 1 October 1960. His delegation was aware of the practical problems which such an administrative separation entailed. It was, as the Administering Authority had pointed out, basically a matter of ensuring the maintenance of the services which were provided at the present time by the Nigerian Government. His delegation was generally satisfied with the measures already taken for that purpose and with the establishment of a separate public service and a Public Service Commission for the Southern Cameroons. However, it noted a negative feature in the transitional administrative arrangements relating to the services which the Nigerian Federal Government was to provide on a contractual basis: the service personnel was to be directly responsible to the Commissioner rather than to the Government of the Southern Cameroons. His delegation would like to know whether the Southern Cameroons Government had expressed any views concerning the fact that the service personnel was to be accountable to the Commissioner only.

17. His delegation also felt that the situation with regard to the Southern Cameroons police force was far from ideal. The senior ranks were not held by Cameroonians; at the present time, there were only eight Cameroonian senior police officers, who had been appointed less than five years earlier, and non-Cameroonians were to continue to hold senior positions in the police for many years to come. It was essential to accelerate the Cameroonization of all the services, especially the senior police ranks.

18. With regard to the Northern Cameroons, the same observations applied to the police force, which was to consist primarily of Nigerians, as in the past. The measures so far taken to give effect to the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV) concerning the separation of the administration of the Northern Cameroons from that of Nigeria, the decentralization of governmental functions and the democratization of the system of local government were satisfactory. However, one important aspect of the resolution had not been mentioned in the reports of the Administering Authority, namely the question of conducting the plebiscite on the basis of universal suffrage. According to the replies which the special representative had made to questions, the Administering Authority had made arrangements to register both men and women for the plebiscite, but the fact that women were to take part had aroused strong opposition and protests. That opposition was difficult to understand, since, as the special representative had indicated, there had been an important change in the people's attitude towards the education of girls and women.

19. He expressed his appreciation of the remarkable work done in the Territory by the United Nations specialized agencies, especially WHO and UNESCO,

20. Mr. EDMONDS (New Zealand) noted that, in their statements and questions, the members of the Council had concentrated on the political and administrative measures taken by the Administering Authority to implement General Assembly resolutions 1352 (XIV) and 1473 (XIV). If, as was to be anticipated, those resolutions were successfully implemented, the Northern Cameroons and the Southern Cameroons would indicate in March 1961 by means of plebiscites whe-

ther they wished to attain independence by joining the Federation of Nigeria or by joining the Republic of Cameroun.

21. However, the members of the Council had properly taken an interest as well in the important economic, social and educational progress recently achieved in the Territory, especially in the Southern Cameroons. His delegation welcomed in particular the success of the anti-yaws campaign, undertaken with the assistance of WHO, and of the new anti-leprosy campaign. It was pleased to note the increase in school enrolment. It had been happy to learn that, as a result of the Colonial Development Corporation's decision to invest £3 million, the Cameroons Development Corporation would for the first time have sufficient resources for a long-term development programme and that the investment was to be made regardless of the outcome of the plebiscite. Finally, the Administering Authority was to be commended for making an additional grant of £250,000 to the Southern Cameroons and for underwriting any budgetary deficits which might develop in either the Northern Cameroons or the Southern Cameroons in the next few months.

22. The Administering Authority had made vigorous efforts to implement resolution 1473 (XIV), dealing with the Northern Cameroons, which had appeared difficult to carry out. There had been a reorganization of administrative divisions for the purpose of separating the administration of the Cameroons from that of Nigeria and making certain administrative regroupings which were desired by the people. The new district councils were to be elected on the basis of universal male suffrage and, in their turn, were to elect representatives to the councils of the new Native Authorities. Those arrangements represented a sincere effort to democratize the system of local government. In the present instance, democratization did not mean simply introducing universal suffrage without considering local traditions and public opinion. Alhaji Ali Akilu had explained the difficulties which were encountered in any attempt to uproot ancient traditions overnight and revolutionize ways of thinking.

23. As far as the Southern Cameroons was concerned, resolution 1352 (XIV) also seemed to have been implemented with vigour and efficiency. It appeared reasonable that the functions previously exercised by the Nigerian Federal authorities should be exercised, during the interim period between 1 October and the date of the plebiscite, by the Commissioner rather than by the Premier or the legislature, as most of those powers would eventually be exercised by the federal or central Government, not by the regional authorities.

24. The Administering Authority thus appeared to have taken all the necessary steps to ensure that on 1 October 1960, when the Federation of Nigeria became independent, the administration of both the Northern and Southern Cameroons would be completely separated from that of Nigeria. The administration of each part of the Territory would be vested in an Administrator or Commissioner, who would be directly responsible to the United Kingdom Government. For practical reasons certain services were to be provided by the Nigerian Federation on a contractual basis. His delegation had noted with interest

the establishment of a separate Southern Cameroons public service and hoped that it would be possible to retain or to obtain from the United Kingdom, Nigeria or elsewhere the staff required to fill key posts which could not be filled by local recruitment.

25. The maintenance of public order was the first duty of the Administration, and was particularly important during the period of the plebiscite. He noted that the Administrator and the Commissioner respectively would have effective control over and responsibility for the police force in the Northern and in the Southern Cameroons, and was pleased that the Administering Authority was taking steps to bring the police force up to the strength which was considered necessary.

26. As his delegation had repeatedly stressed in the General Assembly, it was most desirable that before the people of the Territory decided with which neighbouring country they were to be united they should have a clear idea of the terms of such a union. It was confident that before the date of the plebiscite the Federation of Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroun would have indicated explicitly the conditions under which they would be willing to accept their brothers.

27. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) observed that because of the imminence of the plebiscite the debate had been dominated by consideration of the political problems affecting the future of the Territory. The Council had not, however, failed to consider the Territory's economic and social problems, the seriousness of which was accentuated on the eve of independence, and the Administering Authority was to be thanked for its statement that it was prepared to make an additional financial effort to help overcome the difficulties which would initially result from the anticipated administrative changes.

28. In the Southern Cameroons the examination of economic conditions was closely linked with that of the reports of the Cameroons Development Corporation, whose activities were limited almost entirely to agriculture. Year after year his delegation had stressed the need for greater diversification of the Territory's economy and the visiting missions, as also the Council, had often stressed the need to develop new sources of income. The United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, had expressed the view that new capital would be required to permit a partial adaptation of the economy, which until now had been a subsistence economy.

29. On the eve of independence it was imperative that the present state of affairs should be remedied and new production goals defined. Certain agricultural products should be processed locally so that they could be exported for a higher price; during the few months remaining to it the Administering Authority would doubtless launch a programme of industrialization based on the processing of such items. Better marketing of those products, the packaging of which had already been improved to meet the requirements of the world market, would be reflected in an increase in revenue—a consideration which would be of great importance once the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration had been separated from Nigeria. His delegation had noted that the Administering Authority was anxious to maintain the rate of

development and had granted the Southern Cameroons a further subsidy of £250,000.

30. In the Northern Cameroons the financial and budgetary situation was apparently more complex because of the administrative relationship with the Northern Region of Nigeria. The process of separation entailed the need to keep separate accounts for Cameroonian revenue and expenditure, which had formerly been calculated jointly with those of the Northern Region of Nigeria. His delegation noted that the Administering Authority had already begun to carry out that task and had stated its readiness to cover its financial implications.

31. The delicate problem of the future of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration, namely the union of the Territory with either the Republic of Cameroun or the Federation of Nigeria, was in no way a problem between France and the United Kingdom. Neither was it a matter of prestige or of competition between the Republic of Cameroun and the Federation of Nigeria, for no territorial claims were involved and the question was one which must be settled not by the Republic of Cameroun or the Federation of Nigeria but by the people of the Territory. They alone could make the choice, which was necessitated by the division forty years earlier of what had once been a single unit, and it would be a choice based on both sentiment and reason. Time had done its work; administration and language had done theirs. The people directly concerned should be able freely to express their wishes so that no doubt would remain as to their decision and the minority, whatever it might be, should willingly accept the choice of the majority.

32. Hence two sets of problems arose: those relating to the technical preparations for the plebiscite and those relating to the political conditions in which it would take place.

33. The problem of female suffrage in the North on the occasion of the plebiscite had been settled by General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV). The leaders appeared to have bowed to that decision in a spirit of understanding. That first step was important. Female suffrage would doubtless be extended in the near future to elections, in accordance with the practice which had now been observed in neighbouring Territories for several years.

34. The question of the physical preparations for the balloting was a very important one. In matters of detail it might be possible to make certain improvements over the earlier plebiscite. The use of separate ballot boxes for the two choices, for example, did not perhaps offer absolute security. On the occasion of the first plebiscite the openings in some of the ballot boxes, which had not been visible to the polling officers, had been obstructed at an early stage in the proceedings, so that the voters had had to place their ballots on top of the boxes, and the consequent need for frequent inspection of the polling booths had compromised the secrecy of the voting. The use of a single ballot box which would be constantly visible to the polling officers would seem preferable.

35. The problems relating to the political conditions in which the plebiscite was to be held were more complex. The General Assembly had insisted on the separation of the Cameroonian and Nigerian adminis-

trations but the situation differed as between the two parts of the Territory. In the South there was already a Government, although it was to be regretted that more powers had not yet been transferred to it; there was also a representative assembly. In the North it had been necessary to begin establishing a completely new administration. The Administering Authority had decided upon certain measures which were now being carried out and which should be completed by 1 October 1960.

36. The Government of the Republic of Cameroun, which would speak for itself when it took its seat in the General Assembly, had requested France to make known its views on the subject and to draw attention to certain pitfalls which should be avoided. It attached the greatest importance to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 1352 (XIV) and 1473 (XIV), regarded the administrative separation of the Territory from the Federation of Nigeria as one of the essential guarantees of the impartiality of the plebiscite and considered that that separation should be complete and should be carried out far enough in advance of the plebiscite to enable it to have a practical effect.

37. The steps taken with regard to the administration of the Northern Cameroons appeared, however, to be either unduly slow or of such a nature as to strengthen the influence of the Government of the Northern Region or of the Federal Government of Nigeria in certain respects. The Government of Cameroun therefore had reservations concerning the possible effects of those steps on the preparation of the plebiscite and hoped that the Administering Authority would take the administration of the Northern Cameroons directly into its own hands and guarantee strict neutrality during the transition period in which preparations for the holding of the plebiscite were being made. That was the position of the Government of the Republic of Cameroun.

38. Progress had unquestionably been made in the setting up of local authorities. Nevertheless, it appeared that whereas the Nigerian authorities on the border had relinquished their control, the influence of a central authority, namely the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria, had been strengthened. According to Alhaji Ali Akilu, that Government was to be consulted when the time came to decide what powers should be exercised by the heads of the Native Authorities and there had been other indications of the perpetuation of Nigeria's influence.

39. That situation should be remedied as quickly as possible, for the holding of a plebiscite in a country in which very important functions, such as the maintenance of public order, control over the public authorities and penal administration, to say nothing of the political influence which went hand in hand with administrative power, were exercised by a neighbouring country could well be questioned. That should be avoided, for it would be in the interests of neither the Administering Authority, nor the Federation of Nigeria, nor the Republic of Cameroun.

40. His delegation hoped that by 1 October 1960 all doubts would have been dispelled and the General Assembly could begin with a clean slate so that a regrettable situation which might be difficult to remedy would not arise in consequence of errors such as those which the United Nations had made in the recent past in attempting to solve similar problems. It was the duty of the United Nations to prevent the emergence of irredentist claims and to spare new nations from bitterness and tensions which could only be damaging to their stability, their prosperity and their harmony.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.