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PETITION FROM THE FRENCH CAMEROONS WELFARE UNION  
CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rule F of the  
rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

FRENCH CAMEROONS WELFARE UNION

Motto: Self-Help

General President's Office,  
BUEA, Cameroons under United  
Kingdom Trusteeship,  
20 April 1954

The Secretary General  
United Nations Organization,  
Lake Success, New York, U.S.A.

Sir,

Enjoyment of the Right of Suffrage by people of "French"  
Cameroons origin domiciled in "British" Cameroons.

With reference to the statements contained in the following documents of  
the Trusteeship Council:

- Page 9 of T/522 (General) of March, 1950,
- " 11 of T/AC.20/SR.15 (Limited) of March 16, 1950,
- " 18 of T/L.200 (Limited) of July 13, 1951,
- " 21 of T/1042 (General) of March 16, 1953,

I am directed by the Central Executive of the French Cameroons Welfare Union

to forward herewith, for the attention of the Trusteeship Council, copies of two petitions we addressed to the local representative of the British Administering Authority on August 2 1953, and March 23, 1954 respectively.

2. Having regard to the arguments adduced in both petitions coupled with the altered political status of the trust territory of the Cameroons under British Administration (the Cameroons will enjoy legislative and budgetary autonomy as soon as the redrafted Constitutional Instrument for the British Dependency of Nigeria comes into force), people of "French" Cameroons origin domiciled in the British sphere of the Cameroons wish to enlist the good offices of the Trusteeship Council with a view to the British Administering Authority according them the right of suffrage within the trust territory of the Cameroons under British administration.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

(signed) JABEA K. DIBONGE,

Jabea K. Dibonge, Honorary General President,  
French Cameroons Welfare Union

FRENCH CAMEROONS WELFARE UNION

Motto: Self-Help

General President's Office,

BUEA,

2 August 1953.

The Honourable  
the Commissioner of the Cameroons,  
BUEA.

Sir,

Enjoyment of the Right of Franchise by people of French  
Cameroons origin domiciled in British Cameroons.

With reference to the statement contained in the opening paragraph of your letter No. 206/2/203 of May 21, 1953, you will recall that Mr. John T. Ndze, M.H.R., raised this question during an interview we (namely, Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, M.H.R., Revd. J.C. Kangsen, M.H.R., Mr. John T. Ndze, M.H.R., V.T. Lainjo, M.H.R. and myself) had with you in your office on your return from KADUNA last month. We understood you to say that you made certain recommendations which are not repugnant to the "settlers" from the French Cameroons and which are being considered by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in consultation with other Commonwealth Governments.

2. I have recently come across the notes exchanged between the late Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, then British Foreign Secretary, and Count de Saint Aulaire, then French Ambassador to Great Britain, on September 21/November 13, 1923, which might assist Her Majesty's Government in resolving the legal difficulties involved. These notes are quoted in full in the "France (extradition) Order-in-Council, 1928", printed on pages 1569-1571 of the Supplement to the Laws of Nigeria, 1933. Paragraphs two to three of the Foreign Secretary's note read:

"2. It now appears desirable to extend in like manner the provisions of the aforesaid treaties to the territories of the Cameroons, Togoland and Tanganyika, in respect of which a mandate on behalf of the League of Nations has been accepted by His Britannic Majesty, and to the territories of the Cameroons and Togoland in respect of which a mandate on behalf of the League of Nations has been accepted by the French Republic, THE NATIVES OF THOSE TERRITORIES BEING REGARDED FOR THIS PURPOSE AS ASSIMILATED TO BRITISH SUBJECTS AND FRENCH SUBJECTS RESPECTIVELY/"

"3. His Majesty's Government would accordingly propose, if this course is agreeable to the French Government, that the present note and your Excellency's reply in similar sense should serve to place on record the understanding arrived at between the two governments in the matter."

This proposal was concurred in by the French Government.

3. In our view, both administering powers would seem to have admitted the fact that the indigenous people of the Cameroons are neither British nor French subjects, but that they are "assimilated to British subjects and French subjects respectively" in order to satisfy legal niceties (for example: the extension to both spheres of the Cameroons of the Extradition Treaty between Great Britain and France of August 14, 1876, and the additional Convention of October 17, 1908). His Majesty's Order-in-Council of 1928 would also appear to bear out our contention that the British Administering Authority is not legally entitled to insist on "French Cameroons Settlers" acquiring British citizenship by naturalization before participating in the administration of their own country. I am to refer, in this connection, to your own statement on page eleven of Trusteeship Council document Limited T/AC.20/SR.15 of 16 March 1950.

4. I am to suggest that this communication be referred to the Honourable the Chief Secretary to the Government. A copy has been endorsed to the Resident, Cameroons.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd) Jabea K. Dibonge,

General President

French Cameroons Welfare Union.

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