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PETITION FROM HEAD CHIEF LOUIS ABEL MAHOP CONCERNING THE
CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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COPY TO THE UN

to be considered as a PETITION

Poutkak, 10 April 1955

MAHOP Louis Abel, Paramount Chief of POUTKAK-NGAMBE

To the High Commissioner of the French Republic in the Cameroons

YAOUNDE

Through the Chief Subdivisional Officer of BABIMBI-NGAMBE
and the Chief of the Sanaga Maritime Region-EDEA

Sir,

I am the owner of a building at NGAMBE which the French Administration has been using since 1929 as a residence for the Chief Subdivisional Officer, but to this day I have received nothing from the Administration as rent or for the lease of this building. I must point out that this method of using other people's property has caused me material damages amounting to not less than TEN MILLION FRANCS CFA.

I therefore request the Administration to pay me not less than TEN MILLION FRANCS CFA in respect of the house for the period from 1929 to 1955.

Moreover, in 1939 the Administration confiscated my band consisting of 12 silver instruments, two drums and two cymbals. Since the band belonged to me and was seized by the Administration with utter disregard of the law, I consider myself grievously wronged and request you to compensate me and to return my band.

55-15365

The Government must make its position clear in this matter, Sir. Only two views are possible. Does the Government respect fundamental freedoms and the customary chiefs, regardless of their views? If so, the French Administration in the Cameroons must agree with me that its occupation of my house without compensation since 1929 and its seizure of my land are contrary to the law of the Republic and a violation of the right to own property and, moreover, that these acts have done much harm to a citizen who has the same right to live as any other man. Does the French Government not respect the Cameroonians' freedoms, as some of our fellow-countrymen have had the courage to point out? If that is so, the Administration will continue to occupy my property by force, in complete disregard of the law.

I am aware that to the Administration a chief is merely a thing, a weathervane who must have no views other than those advocated by the Administration and who must devote himself (and possibly, as in this case) sacrifice his property, to the cause of colonization. Because I reject this policy, and since I am an indigenous chief, the Administration will not fail to show the hostility with which it views me. Thus, I was receiving a chief's allowance of 11,000 francs in 1954, but since I petitioned the United Nations in the interests of truth, saying that as a man and a citizen I could not live in slavery in the camp of lies and corruption, I have been subjected to every form of administrative chicanery and my allowance has been reduced to 3,000 francs. Can this persecution stop me from defending my right to own property? I say no, with a clear conscience.

I trust that the representative of the French Republic in the Cameroons will take steps to compensate me and to see that my right to own private property is respected.

I have the honour to be, etc.....

(Signed) MAHOP Louis Abel
