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PETITION FROM MR. S.T. ARREY CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION (T/PET. 4/84)

Observations of the United Kingdom Government
as Administering Authority

The substance of this petition is that the petitioner, who was formerly a Grade III teacher in the Education Department, claims that he has suffered unfair treatment from the Department culminating in the charge of theft and dismissal from his post.

In 1949 he was informed by the Education Department that, while his outdoor work as a Rural Science Teacher was of average quality, his classroom work was bad to the extent that it was considered that he had not the mental capacity required of a teacher. He was warned in writing by the Deputy Director of Education, Eastern Provinces, that unless there was considerable improvement in both his work and conduct in the immediate future his next increment would be withheld. In fact, the petitioner's increment was deferred for six months instead of being withheld.

In May, 1950, the petitioner failed to comply with a request by the Assistant District Officer, Buea, (the Officer responsible for allocating quarters in Buea Station) to make available a Government quarter which he had been allowed to occupy and which was needed for a more senior official. He sent a letter on the subject through the Provincial Education Officer with a request that it should be forwarded to the Assistant District Officer. The Provincial Education Officer considered that the tone and content of the letter amounted to a serious breach of discipline and forwarded it to the Deputy Director of Education with a further complaint that the petitioner was contesting an instruction to proceed on leave on a particular date.

In view of the petitioner's known inefficiency as a teacher and his recurring recalcitrance in regard to the organization and discipline of the Education Department, the Deputy Director of Education recommended that his increment be withheld and this recommendation was approved.

These are the matters referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) - (h) of paragraph 8 of the petition. They are matters of internal discipline of the Education Department to which the petitioner was subject during the period of his employment and to which the petitioner rendered himself liable by his unsatisfactory conduct.

In March 1951 he was charged with stealing E.2.15 Od. the property of the Government School, Buea, in his capacity as a Government School Teacher. The Magistrate found him guilty but on his pleading for leniency discharged him on entering upon a recognizance to be of good behaviour. The Magistrate stated in passing this sentence that if he had not expected the Education Department to dismiss him he would have sent him to prison.

The fact that the petitioner, though found guilty, was discharged, left the Provincial Education Officer in some doubt as to his position. He sought advice and was directed that in view of the petitioner's conviction on a criminal charge he was dismissed from the Service. The petitioner was so informed in a letter dated 29 May 1951.

In the meantime, in a letter dated 19 April, subsequent to his conviction, the petitioner had applied for voluntary retirement and transport to his home.

The petitioner's dismissal deprived him of all his rights as a Government official and this disposes of the points raised in sub-paragraphs (i) and (j) of paragraph eight of the petition.

With regard to the question of the petitioner's Provident Fund contribution raised in sub-paragraph (k) of paragraph eight of the petition the Board of Management has decided that in view of his dismissal the petitioner should be paid the amount of his deposits with accrued interest, but that no bonus should be paid. This decision was conveyed to the petitioner subsequent to the date of his petition.